



Fire Emergency Response in East Madagascar

EVALUATION



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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

COUNTRY	Madagascar
LOCATION	Sohihy, Masomeloka, Mahanoro District, Atsinanana Region
DISASTER	Accidental fire
PROJECT DURATION	1 February – 31 March, 2018
TARGET POPULATION	121 households who lost their homes and all possessions in the fire
PROJECT OBJECTIVE	121 houses

Donor: CRS Emergency Rapid Response Fund
Partner: Organisme de Développement du Diocèse de Toamasina (ODDIT)



TIMELINE

<i>January 1:</i>	An unattended cooking fire quickly spread, destroying 90% of the village
<i>January 13:</i>	Initial response of food and tarpaulin distributions
<i>January 28:</i>	Receipt of emergency funding; developed strategy with ODDIT
<i>February 10:</i>	Training of construction workers on cyclone-resistant techniques
<i>February 15:</i>	Beginning of house construction
<i>February 18:</i>	Developed fire safety sensitization poster
<i>March 19:</i>	Design and ordering of mosquito screens for most vulnerable households
<i>March 30:</i>	Completion of all home construction
<i>April 2:</i>	Follow-up site visits and photos
<i>April 3:</i>	Distribution of all fishing and farming tools

CONTEXT

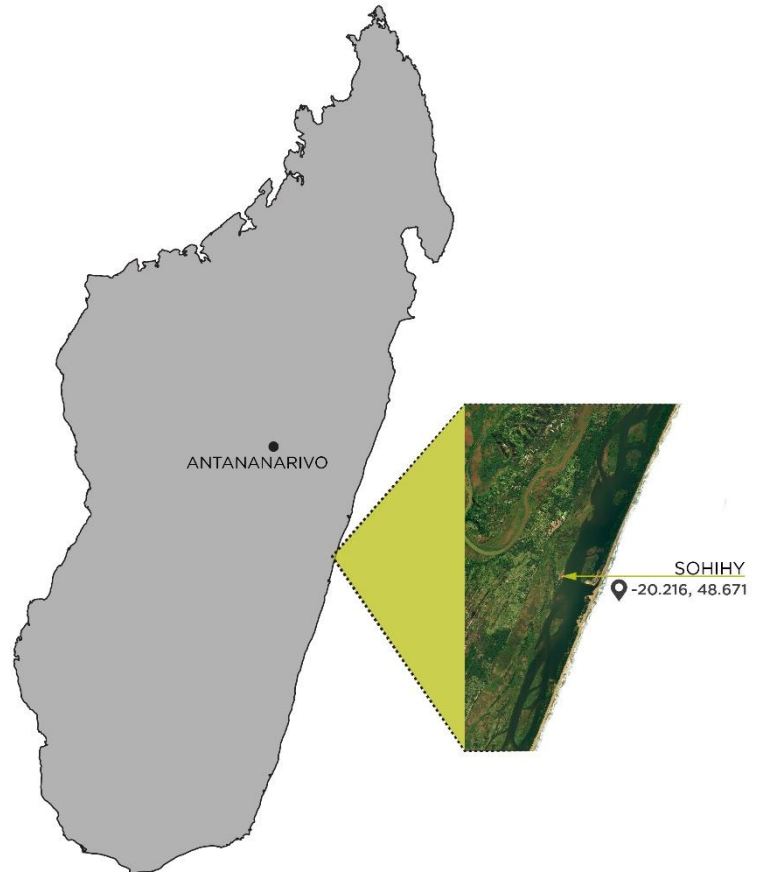
On the evening of January 1, 2019, an unattended cooking fire in the small fishing village of Sohihy, Masomeloka Commune, Mahanoro district, in the Atsinanana region. The fire quickly spread in the evening hours and before the citizens could rally a response, the fire had consumed 90% of the village, leaving 121 families homeless.

CRS ACTIONS

CRS utilized existing resources of the ongoing food security *Fararano* project to react quickly to the situation and provide support. They implemented their partnering organization in the Atsinana region, Organisme de Développement du Diocèse de Toamasina (ODDIT)

This program focused on two main activities:

1. **Resilience recovery** by distributing tarps, basic school, household, and kitchen supplies immediately after the disaster to avoid prolonged suffering, and distributing fishing and farming tools lost in the fire
2. **Rebuild 121 houses** using local materials and improved techniques that could withstand future storms for all those who lost their homes. The activity aimed to improve the skills and knowledge of local carpenters, community members, as well as beneficiaries themselves, to support the construction process and its follow-up activities to ensure quality work.



WHAT DID CRS DO?

ODDIT had been working in the area for many years, which made it easy for CRS to establish important partnerships with regional stakeholders. CRS was first alerted to the project by a partnering organization, Madagascar Water Project (MWP), who had been building latrines and wells in the area at the time of the fire. A Rapid Assessment was conducted, and a proposal was developed. Once emergency funding was secured, ODDIT and CRS worked with the town leadership and villagers to identify the best process of implementing the construction project of building 121 houses in two months (as dictated by the donor requirements). The project encouraged commune involvement through close communication with community leaders. An initial meeting was held with the formal and traditional leaders of the communities receiving aid to:

- provide an overview of the project and the implementation process with input from village leaders
- solicit and ensure local authority understanding and commitment to the project activities and goals
- identify the disaster risk management committee in the commune

At the beginning of the year 2019, the Ministry of the Environment put a strict limit on all new forest cutting which restricted the acquiring of local materials. CRS met with all stakeholders and ministry partners in order to acquire the appropriate permits for the purchasing of materials and begin construction. The project team introduced the field activities and next steps to the local authorities:



- identifying beneficiaries as those who lost their home in the fire
- identifying tools that had been lost in the fire but needed by the community for livelihood activities
- identifying distributions conducted by other organizations and government partners so as to avoid doubling of efforts
- plan project timeline and implementation

◀The village president explains what happened to Sohivy on January 1, 2019

RESILIENCE RECOVERY

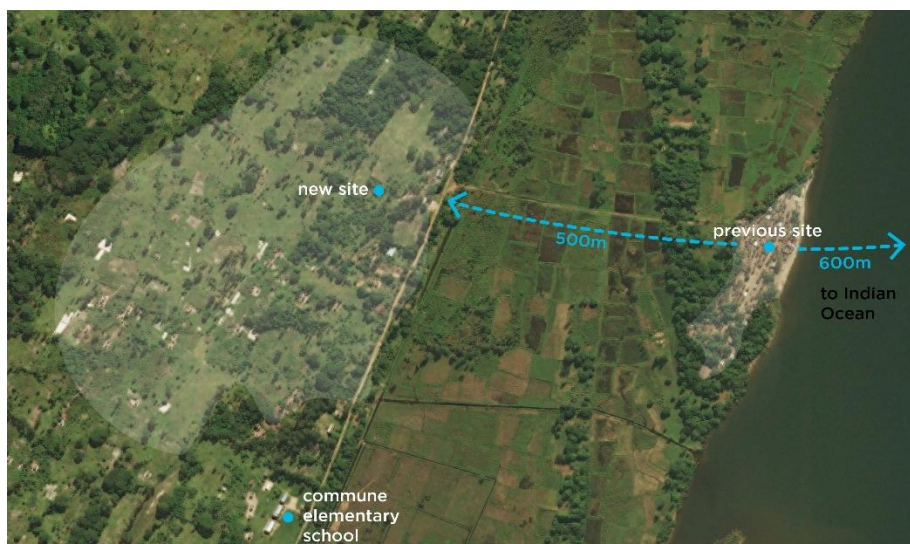
ODDIT distributed tarps, basic house, kitchen, and school supplies to each household affected by the fire immediately after the incident. After securing funding, CRS met with local leadership to establish what other tools were lost in the fire that are crucial to livelihood activities in this area. A fire safety messaging tool was developed to be used for sensitization and to be posted around the village. At the completion of the house construction, ODDIT distributed to the community:

- Fishing nets and poles
- Shovels and hoes
- SILC tools
- Fire safety education

ODDIT field agents use the fire safety messaging tool to sensitize the community about how to reduce risk of fires in the home and community ▶



In addition to receiving aid in the form of tools to regain independence and self-reliance, the community was relocated to a safer location. The village of Sohivy was originally located on the Pangalane Canal, only 600 meters from the Indian Ocean. This site was vulnerable year-round to rising sea levels and harsh ocean winds, but especially dangerous during cyclone season, when the site was partially or completely under water for three months at a time. CRS worked with local authorities to relocate the village to higher ground, to a site that was acceptable to traditional leaders, neighboring villages, and residents of Sohivy, who still had year-round access to the canal for fishing and transport but provided better protection.



RESULTS

121 households received necessary tools and their resiliency as a community was improved overall. The site relocation not only provided shelter from the flooding and harsh winds, but also the new site allowed the houses to be spread much farther apart than the previous site, lessening the danger of a future disastrous fire.

The tools provided to the beneficiaries once the house construction was complete were as follows:

N ^o	Description	Qt	PU (USD)	Total (USD)	Notes
1	Fishing net	242	7.84	1897.28	2 per HH
2	Fishing accessories	242	7.028	1700.776	2 per HH
3	Net threading replacement	363	1.68	609.84	3 per HH
4	Lifejacket	121	9.8	1185.8	1 per HH
5	Spade	242	1.82	440.44	2 per HH
6	Hoe	121	0.98	118.58	1 per HH
7	Shovel	121	1.68	203.28	1 per HH
Total				6155.996	

REBUILD HOUSES

This project aimed to provide beneficiaries with more secure, sustainable houses that are more resilient to natural hazards such as cyclones and fires while using affordable, local materials. Local carpenters were trained on the construction techniques and will be able to share and use their knowledge for future construction in the communities to ensure adoption. For the most vulnerable households with pregnant women and/or children, CRS designed a mosquito screen specific to the house design for the (2) doors and (1) window to lessen the mosquito prevalence in the house without negatively impacting the daily activities in and around the house.

TRAINING OF LOCAL CARPENTERS

An important element of the project was to utilize the skill of local carpenters, and to show how to use Malagasy style and local materials to build a better, stronger house. In addition to the techniques used by CRS and ODDIT in previous cyclone-resistant construction response projects, the carpenters also learned:

- How to build to lessen the prevalence of mosquitos in all the houses by closing key entry points for anopheles (malaria-carrying) mosquitos
- How to use used motor oil to improve the lifespan of the wood members by making them impervious to water and insect damage

INVOLVEMENT AND OWNERSHIP OF THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

To ensure efficiency of the program and provide a sense of ownership within the communities, all stakeholders took on responsibilities to aid the process:

- The village president and traditional leaders were charged with facilitating the project overall
- Quality local suppliers delivered construction materials directly to the villages
- A simplified house design was developed with local carpenters to ensure the technical adaptations were fully understood and implemented

Beneficiaries were required to participate in the construction of their house to encourage the sense of “home” and ownership, as well as speed up the project process to ensure completion within the time constraints of the emergency funding. Alongside the trained carpenters, all beneficiaries were required to:

- Dig holes for posts
- Tie the roof to the structure
- Weave wall panels

A beneficiary, his friend, and the trained carpenter weave the wall panels for the almost completed house ►



RESULTS

CRS and ODDIT built 121 houses using local materials with improved standards and techniques for cyclone resistance on a site protected from winds and flooding.



◀ A beneficiary ties his roof onto the frame, taking on the required beneficiary participation

CONCLUSION

Overall the project framework objectives were achieved. All the activities implemented were of crucial importance for the beneficiaries recovering from the fire. 121 households received resiliency and recovery aid, tools for regaining livelihoods, a stronger house that will keep them safe against future hazards and lessen mosquito prevalence in the house, and fire safety education.



LESSONS LEARNED

CRS has utilized ODDIT as an implementing partner for many years, and results and partnership have always been successful. Working with a trusted partner is a key element of a successful project. The partner staff, and more importantly, the field agents, knew the site context and were trusted to impart the project messaging to the beneficiaries.

However, due to time constraints of the project and the past successes of the CRS/ODDIT partnership, the project strategy was developed quickly and not fully fleshed out with the partner beforehand. An orientation could have smoothed out the small hiccups experienced over the course of the project.

CHALLENGES

The Emergency Rapid Relief Fund (ERRF) mechanism utilized for this project required a maximum timeline of 60 days. The project was designed to be completed well within the time limit, however there were issues that slowed the project:

The fund was awarded at the end of January, allowing the project to be conducted over February through the end of March. Traditional practice of the Atsinanana region disallows any construction during the month of February. As the fund was awarded at the beginning of February and ending by the beginning of April, the team decided to construct all the trusses on the ground, and organize all the

materials to arrive during February, allowing time for house framing and finishing to be started and finished during the month of March.

CRS, ODDIT, and village leadership decided it was best to move the village site to higher ground to provide more protection, especially during cyclone season, to the residents. This led to the houses being much further spaced out, helping safeguard against future fires; however, a village center, something important to the residents of Sohihy, was lost. This brought about issues when overseeing construction, and organizing meetings with residents, especially as the beneficiaries were required to participate in the construction. This proved difficult to keep track of who was working and who was not. This was extra stress on the (2) field agents who were required to provide technical support, answer questions, and keep daily progress of the project and report to ODDIT and CRS. This was solved by the village leadership implementing a committee to oversee residents' participation and ensuring everyone was being treated fairly and receiving appropriate aid and support.

NEXT STEPS

In October of 2018, the organization Madagascar Water Project (MWP) built two water pumps in the village of Sohihy, both were destroyed in the fire of January 2019. Now that residents of Sohihy can begin to rebuild their lives, the lack of clean water on the new site remains a large problem. MWP has agreed to build three pumps on the new site per CRS's request. Until then residents are forced to gather dirty water from the canal. MWP plans to start construction next month.

