

## PARES Case Study of Engagement & Involvement for Resilience

**Case Study Title:** Madagascar, Cyclones, Embedded & Equitable Partnerships

**Country/location:** Madagascar – five municipalities in Ambanja District

**Crisis/challenge type:** Cyclones and cyclone-related flooding

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### PARES Domain illustrated by this case study:

**Learning & Capabilities:** Long-term presence of NGOs, equitable partnerships of locals & external responders, delegation of decision-making authority & skills building collectively support long-term resilience.

### Recommended Actions

**Communities:** If you are partnering with an NGO and have built trust, consider approaching them for any additional support you have identified. Identify what resources and networks you can mobilise when you need to.

**NGOs and health program implementors:** Make long term commitments to the communities with whom you work and ensure strong local presence. Be led by community needs and engage with local knowledge, structures and resources to maximise the impact of your work. Invest in earning the trust of the communities with whom you partner.

**Government:** Coordinate and collaborate with NGOs who can work with you to support hard-to-reach communities. Facilitate and support NGOs to maintain a long-term local presence.

**Funders:** Commit to long term support for NGOs/implementing agencies and incentivise them to work in partnership with communities. Provide flexible funding, allowing grantees to pivot to respond to emerging local needs or stressors.

### Data for this case analysis

Primary data from respondents in five villages in five different municipalities: 20 key informant interviews, 5 focus group discussions.

## Key Message

Embedded NGOs that understand, respond to and work with communities will build trust with them. They can mobilise local people and local resources for joint actions, progress towards shared goals and, where necessary, are able to pivot to support communities on other needs (such as expanding from healthcare delivery to building wider resilience to cyclones – which ultimately protects health).

## Case study summary

NGOs who have been working in a region for a long time develop a good understanding of local communities. When they are willing to listen and respond to community needs, their work is more impactful and they build trust. When such an NGO saw that poor natural resource management practices caused persistent mangrove destruction and depleted fish stocks, they approached local leaders to ask if they could help. Local leaders were willing to work with them to mobilise local labour to help with mangrove restoration and riverbank protection. Communities negotiated material support (household goods) in return for their labour. These efforts, together with long-term support from the NGO for better natural resource management, enabled villagers manage marine resources more sustainably (both mangrove forests and fisheries), resulting in noticeable improvements to fish stocks (meaning better food and financial security) and better protection from cyclone wind damage.

## Detailed Explanation of engagement mechanisms

### **Context that provides the conditions in which the observed actions work**

In the coastal northwest of Madagascar communities rely heavily on marine resources, mangrove forests and fisheries. There are limited livelihood alternatives and high levels of poverty. Cyclones, which are becoming increasingly frequent and severe, regularly cause serious destruction of property and loss of life. They also affect flood fresh water supplies (wells) and latrines, leading to infectious and water-borne disease spread. Additionally, progressive over exploitation of mangroves and overfishing has led to depleted fish stocks and reduced mangrove forest cover, increasing their vulnerability to the effects of strong winds during cyclones. Lack of resources prevents villagers from being able to take action such as building defence walls, flood-proof wells and latrines

or restoring mangroves. No technical or financial support is forthcoming from either central or local government for such actions, and communities are aware of the need for self-reliance.

In the region one NGO was providing support for the sustainable management of fisheries, along with mangrove restoration and protection. It also provided healthcare at local level, working with networks of community health workers. It was widely known and trusted locally.

### **The actions (mechanisms) that were observed to lead to resilience outcomes**

A locally present NGO working on marine resource management recognised the need for mangrove protection and better fisheries management approached the village leaders to see whether they could help. Being known locally, the leaders agreed and a program of work was developed in which the NGO provided mangrove plants and villagers provided labour to plant them. The NGO also asked what compensation the villagers would like in return for their labour, and various household goods and utensils were provided. As part of its long-term commitment to the community the NGO provided training and support to establish more sustainable fisheries management alongside mangrove protection and restoration activities.

### **Observed outcomes**

Locally led marine resource management and governance structures and processes have been developed, with fish stocks showing signs of recovery. Villagers observed that since the mangroves were replanted and protected from cutting, fish stocks are recovering further, the village has been much better protected from cyclones and suffers less material or flooding damage. This has resulted in better recorded health outcomes (relating to nutrition, gastro-intestinal infectious and infectious-diseases). It has also led to greater food and financial security.

The flexibility and long-term commitment of the NGO to work with communities to provide for their needs, reinforced the feeling of trust towards the NGO.

## Case evidence

Vignettes #17, 18, and 19 in Madagascar – Cyclones – Supporting Evidence document.

## Related Case Studies

### **Social Relations and Structures**

Madagascar – Cyclone – Social Capital & Collective Action

### **Operational Systems**

Madagascar – Cyclone – Communication & Information Systems

## Other Relevant Case Studies

### **On Flood response**

Uganda – Flood – Knowledge Systems Integration

Uganda – Flood – Drought – Social Capital and Collective Action

Uganda – Flood – Drought – Multi-stakeholder Coordination

Uganda – Flood – Drought – Embedded and Equitable Partnerships