

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
ECHO  
HUMANITARIAN AID OFFICE**



**EVALUATION OF 11 ECHO OPERATIONS  
IN THE FRAME OF THE FIRST DIPECHO ACTION PLAN  
FOR THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY**

**FINAL REPORT  
*SYNTHESIS***

**Dates of the Evaluation:** 01 May to 01 June 2001  
(Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia)

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This report has been produced at the request of the European Commission, financed by it, and the comments contained herein reflect the opinion of the consultants.

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**FINAL REPORT - SYNTHESIS**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

DIPECHO's<sup>1</sup> First Action Plan for the Andean Community financed 17 projects for a total of 5.3 million Euro. In May 2001, a two-member<sup>2</sup> evaluation mission went to Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru to assess 11 projects and to provide guidelines for future DIPECHO funding in the Andean region.

DIPECHO supports operations in disaster preparedness and prevention<sup>3</sup>. The Andean region faces a range of natural disasters including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, flooding, and drought.

Over the past few decades, natural disasters have become more frequent and costly, due to climate change<sup>4</sup>, demographic growth and man-made factors such as environmental degradation. National disaster systems often lack resources and capacity. They rely on international assistance to respond to natural disasters, rather than promoting preparedness and prevention.

### FINDINGS

#### **Relevance**

DIPECHO projects in the Andean region sought to improve disaster management through preparedness training, institutional strengthening, and pilot prevention measures. Projects targeted vulnerable, disadvantaged urban and rural communities, municipal agencies, and local disaster-related organisations such as Civil Defence and Red Cross. An estimated 12,300 people received training in disaster preparedness and prevention through DIPECHO projects. Tens of thousands of other people benefited indirectly from project results such as prevention works (e.g. dikes, retaining walls), municipal disaster plans and improved local preparedness.

#### *Efficiency*

The 17 pilot projects funded through the First Action Plan were isolated, geographically dispersed, and disparate in terms of objectives, local partners, and types of activities. The projects had a limited exchange of experiences and did not share training materials or methodologies, even though capacity development was a key component in all. Thus the programme's total impact was not greater than the sum of its parts, the individual project results.

Coordination was generally good between DIPECHO partners and local institutions in the project areas. However there was little coordination between the partners and national institutions (e.g. Civil Defence) or international organisations that were involved in disaster management. As a result, DIPECHO's programme was not well known or visible beyond the project communities. Coherence with other EU programmes was also poor. The Delegations were generally not interested because they considered DIPECHO projects to be humanitarian assistance, rather than development. There was no coordination between DIPECHO and development services such as DG-DEV and Europe-Aid. There was no deliberate complementarity between the disaster preparedness projects and policies of DIPECHO and Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> DIPECHO is the acronym for Disaster Preparedness of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office.

<sup>2</sup> Antoine Eric de Haulleville, economist, team leader, and Catherine Gander, disaster management specialist.

<sup>3</sup> **Preparedness** involves organising communities to better face a disaster and to reduce social and economic costs. It includes setting up early warning systems, training, and organisational support. **Prevention** refers to reducing the risks and impact of natural disasters. It includes building protective works like retaining walls, improving land-use policies, and strengthening disaster-related institutions such as Civil Defence.

<sup>4</sup> Climate change is considered one of the factors contributing to the increasing frequency and severity of El Niño in the Andean region.

Ten of the 11 projects evaluated were managed by NGOs from four countries (Spain, France, UK, Italy), while the other was implemented by PAHO<sup>5</sup>. Most projects had an European director on site. Projects where the European NGO played an effective role, and had a strong local partner, obtained better and more sustainable results. In accordance with DIPECHO's format, project management was based on activities rather than results. Project planning and monitoring were generally weak. About half of the project reports were late and/or incomplete. Efficiency was good, with the exception of two projects that failed to follow procurement regulations.

### **Effectiveness**

Of the 11 projects evaluated, eight worked at the local level, one at the national level, and two at the Andean regional level. Project results were particularly notable at the local or community level. Key local-level results included:

- **improved community capacity in disaster preparedness**, as a result of activities such as participatory training, community risk mapping, preparation of local disaster plans, simulation exercises, and the formation of volunteer brigades.
- **Better disaster prevention** through pilot works (e.g. dikes, retaining walls, terraces), which reduce the risk of damage and provide a model for replication.
- **New tools for disaster management** (e.g. technical studies, GIS data, early warning systems), which enabled local officials to improve disaster planning and lobby other levels of government for support.
- **Greater municipal capacity and commitment**, as evidenced in the preparation of local disaster plans, and the incorporation of disaster preparedness/prevention in municipal budgets, laws, and land-use or development policies.
- **Increased public awareness** about disasters, as a result of workshops with community groups, media coverage, distribution of educational materials, local events, and disaster content in school curricula.
- **Stronger local organisation and coordination** among disaster-related institutions (e.g. Civil Defence, municipal agencies, police, Red Cross), community associations, schools, and women's groups.
- **More participation of women** in disaster management, as well as their increased self-esteem and community leadership.
- **Greater role of children and youth** in disaster preparedness, through educational activities in schools and training as volunteers. Through this new role, youth gained social status and community recognition.
- **Empowerment and increased confidence** in the community's ability to identify and solve its problems.
- **Improved environmental management**, as a result of conservation activities (e.g. terraces and dikes to reduce soil erosion, reforestation) and environmental education. These small-scale, local initiatives were the extent of the programme's environmental impact.

At the national and regional levels, the main results achieved by three projects were:

- **creation of a national radio system** in Ecuador.
- **Strengthening of national disaster-related institutions** (Health Ministries, Red Cross, Civil Defence).
- **Improved inter-institutional coordination** nationally and regionally.
- **New bilateral agreements** for mutual cooperation in disaster response in border areas.

### ***Impact***

It was unclear to what extent the results achieved at any level would be sustainable. Some projects took steps to improve sustainability, such as building on an existing, long-term programme; involving a broad range of organisations; strengthening local capacity; integrating disaster management into municipal planning; and securing some follow-up funding. However there were several obstacles for sustainability. Disaster preparedness/prevention is a long-term process, so it was difficult to ensure a sustainable impact

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<sup>5</sup> Pan American Health Organisation

over DIPECHO's relatively short (one year) funding period. Local governments and community organisations lacked the necessary funds and technical knowledge to replicate pilot prevention works. Training and community education provided through the projects usually required some follow-up assistance. Given these limitations, only a few of the DIPECHO projects would likely be sustainable in the medium term.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Based on the lessons learned from the field mission, the evaluation prepared guidelines for future DIPECHO funding in the Andean region.

- The main **policy recommendation** was for DIPECHO to work at the local (community and municipal) level, for several reasons. A local focus would enable DIPECHO to build on the momentum of the ongoing decentralisation process in the Andean region. Some local governments, including those assisted through DIPECHO's First Action Plan, have started incorporating disaster management into their development planning and policies. DIPECHO's limited budget would have greater impact through local-level activities that are often more cost-effective and sustainable than national or regional initiatives. DIPECHO's structure also favours local activities, because most projects are funded through European NGOs. The comparative strength of NGOs is working at the local level, while they tend to lack credibility or clout at the national or regional level.

**⇒<sup>6</sup> DIPECHO should focus on disaster preparedness at the local level, coordinated and integrated with national and regional programmes.**

- **Strategic recommendations** for DIPECHO included a universal programme goal, a programme approach, a stronger regional office, more coordination with national and international institutions, and better links with other EU services.  
**A universal programme goal** should be shared by all projects. This unifying goal could be "to strengthen the capacity of local governmental and community organisations for disaster preparedness and prevention".

**⇒ DIPECHO should establish a single, clear programme goal.**

**A programme approach**, rather than a project approach, would facilitate the exchange of experiences and create synergy among projects. Project planning and design should include activities to foster national and regional integration.

**⇒ DIPECHO should build an effective regional programme that would have a greater multiplier effect and impact than isolated, unconnected projects.**

**⇒ DIPECHO and its partners should systematise their lessons learned and best practices related to gender and capacity development methodology and materials.**

**A stronger regional office** should play a significant role in creating an effective Andean programme. The regional office should provide more critical input for project planning, monitoring and reporting. The regional office could also offer technical assistance in areas such as results-based management or procurement. The office should participate in national and regional disaster networks. DIPECHO would likely have to provide more resources to enable the regional office to fulfil these expanded functions.

**⇒ DIPECHO should reinforce the regional office to enable it to play a greater role in programme coordination, monitoring, and dissemination.**

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<sup>6</sup> ⇒ indicates a recommendation.

**More coordination with national and international institutions** would enable DIPECHO to collaborate better, publicise its programme, learn about new training tools or approaches, and participate in disaster policy dialogue in the region.

⇒ **DIPECHO and its partners should participate in national disaster networks, and coordinate more with other international agencies.**

**Better links with other EU services** would help integrate disaster preparedness/prevention in longer-term, sustainable development. DIPECHO projects should be planned with the objective of connecting to Commission development programmes, particularly those aimed at environmental protection, poverty reduction and food security.

⇒ **DIPECHO projects should be planned as an integral part of a longer-term development programme, and better linked to EU development services.**

- **Operational recommendations** for DIPECHO would include improving partner and project election, introducing a results-based approach, developing a gender perspective, and extending project duration.

**Partner selection** should ensure that the European NGO and its strong local partner have: disaster-related experience; a solid relationship with communities and local authorities; strong skills in participatory capacity development; and a results-based approach.

⇒ **DIPECHO should select NGO partners which have disaster management experience, would have a particular value-added and would help build local capacity in order to increase sustainability.**

**Project selection criteria** should ensure that: the target population is vulnerable and disadvantaged; the project responds to local demand and needs; local institutions are actively involved and committed; and project activities and approaches are sustainable and replicable.

⇒ **DIPECHO projects should target and empower the most vulnerable communities, using participatory methodologies and materials that could be replicated by other projects.**

**A results-based approach** would improve the effectiveness and impact of DIPECHO's projects and programme. It would also make it easier for DIPECHO to evaluate and publicise its results within the EU and with the European public. DIPECHO and its partners should clearly define programme/project objectives and concrete, realistic results.

⇒ **DIPECHO should adopt a results-based approach to project planning, monitoring and reporting. This approach would clearly define expected quantitative/qualitative results and indicators, and measure project outputs, outcomes and impact.**

**A gender perspective** should be developed and integrated in DIPECHO's disaster preparedness programme. DIPECHO should consider having a gender adviser for its regional programme, who could help develop and promote a gender perspective.

⇒ **DIPECHO should incorporate a gender perspective in its regional programme, as well as in the planning and implementation of each project.**

**Project duration** was a limitation because DIPECHO provided funding for a year, while effective disaster preparedness is a longer-term process.

⇒ **DIPECHO should facilitate successive funding for projects that were effective and achieved a significant impact during their first phase.**

# **MAIN REPORT**



**EVALUATION OF 11 OPERATIONS IN THE FRAME OF THE FIRST ACTION PLAN  
FOR THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY  
(MAY-JUNE 2001)**

**I. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION MISSION**

**1. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

ECHO funded an evaluation of its disaster preparedness projects and programme in the Andean region in mid 2001. Of the eleven DIPECHO projects evaluated, nine operated in a single Andean country, while the other two were regional<sup>7</sup> projects involving three or more countries. The evaluation had two main goals: to evaluate eleven DIPECHO projects, and to provide guidelines for future DIPECHO funding in the Andean region.

As per the Terms of Reference, the evaluation objectives were to:

- assess the suitability of the operations with regards to existing needs and the level to which the operations had been carried out;
- assess the degree to which the objectives pursued were achieved and whether the means employed were effective;
- analyse the impact of the operations and ECHO's role in the decision-making process;
- check ECHO's visibility in the region and amongst local authorities and partners; and
- formulate precise and concrete proposals on the future funding of DIPECHO in the Andean Community.

**2. METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation involved three main phases of data collection and analysis. Preliminary briefings were held at the ECHO office in Brussels and its field office in Quito, Ecuador. ECHO staff provided background information and documentation on the projects to be evaluated.

For the field mission, a two-member team<sup>8</sup> visited Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia from May 1 to June 1, 2001. The evaluators interviewed or met with over 500 people from NGOs implementing the projects, community organisations involved in project activities, as well as national and international organisations involved in disaster preparedness and prevention. Two-thirds of the people interviewed were direct or indirect project beneficiaries, who were consulted using a participatory approach. The beneficiaries were usually consulted without the European NGO partners being present, in order to increase the independence and impartiality of evaluation findings.

The report writing required an indepth analysis of documents collected and interview material. The draft Synthesis Report and 11 project evaluations were presented at a debriefing with ECHO staff in Brussels on July 4, 2001. ECHO comments were then incorporated into the final evaluation report.

**3. LIMITATIONS**

Time was a very serious constraint as only 30 days were allocated for the evaluation of 11 projects and the regional programme. The evaluators had not been informed that projects were located so far apart and that transportation was limited and complicated (e.g. unsuitable airline timetables, lack of available

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<sup>7</sup> The term "regional" refers to the Andean region for the purposes of this report.

<sup>8</sup> Antoine Eric de Haulleville, economist, head of mission and Catherine Gander, disaster management specialist.

transport). In addition, it would have been impossible to visit all the subprojects within many of the projects to be evaluated, so a selection had to be made. A typical project evaluation would take three days: the first day to become familiar with the NGO and its objectives, the second day for field visits with the beneficiaries, and the third day to work through the questionnaire<sup>9</sup>. This did not include travel time, which could be up to two days to reach a project site, or a day to go from one country to another. In order to complete the required project evaluations in the limited time available, the evaluators were forced to separate for some site visits.

Field logistics also cost considerable time and effort. Most project visits had not been scheduled beforehand, so the mission had to arrange its own logistics in Peru and Bolivia. This was impeded by the fact that many of the contacts given to the evaluators were wrong.

The available documentation in Brussels<sup>10</sup> and in Quito was far from being complete. In particular, most of the partners' reports were only available at their field offices, notably the valuable annexes. A one-day briefing in Brussels was not sufficient for an evaluation covering so many projects.

Despite these limitations, the evaluators enjoyed the mission professionally and heartily thank all the NGOs for their hospitality, interest and unrestricted collaboration.

## **II. FIRST DIPECHO ACTION PLAN IN ANDEAN REGION**

### **4. RELEVANCE OF DIPECHO PROGRAMME IN ANDEAN REGION**

#### **4.1. Regional Context**

In the Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela), natural disasters are a way of life. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions have been recorded for hundreds of years. Over the past century, statistics have monitored the growing frequency and impact of disasters such as flooding, landslides, drought, other climatic hazards (e.g. hailstorms, frost and tsunamis), and post-disaster epidemics.<sup>11</sup> Certain geographical areas are more prone to particular disasters (e.g. El Niño phenomena in Ecuador, earthquakes in Peru, landslides in Bolivia).

It is difficult to quantify or compare the impact of disasters in Andean countries<sup>12</sup>. In Peru, more than 70% of destruction/damage to houses (more than 100,000) and 35% of deaths (1,900) in the last decade were attributed to hydrometeorological phenomena. In Ecuador, the respective figures are 83% destruction/damages to houses (13,000) and 87% of the deaths (850). In Bolivia in 1997-98, El Niño generated about US\$500 million in damages through droughts and floods.

National statistics often overlook small-scale disasters, which have only a local impact but account for two-thirds of total disaster-related costs. These smaller disaster have increased in number, partly because they are reported with more accuracy than before, but also due to climatic changes, demographic growth, and man-made factors like deforestation. Massive rural-urban migration has turned cities into world metropolises (Lima concentrates a third of the country's population). The new migrants colonise marginal lands that are unsafe for construction, thus increasing risk and vulnerability to natural disasters.

#### **Box 1. EL NIÑO.**

<sup>9</sup> The questionnaire was developed to cover the objectives outlined in the TORs, and took six to eight hours to complete with partners.

<sup>10</sup> The task manager was absent at the briefing session and the files available might not have been complete.

<sup>11</sup> Over the past 30 years in Latin American and the Caribbean, natural disasters have caused an average of 7,500 deaths per year and US\$1-3 billion per year in economic costs.

<sup>12</sup> See the attempt made by GTZ in the ECHO-commissioned report on the diagnostic study for DIPECHO Plan of Action, June 1999, page 14 and sq.

“El Niño” (Infant Jesus) was named by fishermen who noticed that around Christmas, some characteristics of the Pacific Ocean were altered, giving rise to unusually heavy and long rains. El Niño phenomena are based on a complex relation between atmospheric winds and the rise of temperature in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. Usually the eastern and south-eastern winds blow gently, blocking the drift of (warm) eastern Australian seawater towards the coast of South America. The winds can also blow strongly then halt suddenly, provoking an easterly severe heat wave that hits the coast of South America and generates intense rains. Scientists do not really know whether the triggering factor is the winds or the temperature increase. There is a tendency to attribute all abnormalities in the climatic conditions of South America to El Niño. (Its effect could also be global. Some correlation has been noted between El Niño and climatic changes in South Africa and even Central Asia.) The intensity and periodicity of El Niño have certainly increased over the last few decades. It is not known whether this is a temporary or permanent occurrence, or the exact relation between El Niño and global warming. Ecuador’s Meteorological Institute of Ecuador predicts another fierce El Niño in 2001.

National disaster agencies or systems in the Andean region tend to lack the necessary capacity, organisation, and/or resources. When a disaster hits, the organisation in charge of response (e.g. Civil Defence) is often sidelined by a politically-appointed, temporary body. The national disaster response is usually bolstered by international assistance, while volunteers from Civil Defence and the Red Cross, along with NGOs or community groups, struggle to respond at the local level. Inadequate disaster preparedness and response are generally due to a lack of funds, properly trained staff, political will, early warning systems or scientific data, public awareness, and community capacity. Until recently, most government disaster programmes, national organisations (Civil Defence, Red Cross<sup>13</sup>) and multilateral development banks (World Bank, IDB, and AsDB) focused on post-disaster humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation, rather than on disaster preparedness and prevention.

#### 4.2. Disaster-Related Concepts

##### **Box 2. DEFINITIONS**

DIPECHO’s mandate covers disaster “preparedness” and “prevention”. Disaster preparedness, prevention, response and mitigation are concepts utilised in the present report. While precise definitions are still under international debate, their meaning here is as follows:

- **Response** is an immediate, short-term reaction to alleviate the effects of a natural disaster. It relates to activities such as rescue, first aid, and humanitarian assistance.
- **Preparedness** involves organising communities to better face a disaster and to reduce its social and economic costs. Preparedness includes setting up early warning systems, training, and institutional or organisational support.
- **Prevention** refers to reducing the risks and impact of natural disasters. It includes building protective works such as retaining walls or dikes, improving land-use policies, and strengthening disaster-related institutions such as Civil Defence.
- **Mitigation** relates to the measures taken to reduce the consequences before, during or after a disaster strikes.

#### 4.3. What is DIPECHO?

DIPECHO is the acronym for Disaster Preparedness of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office. Article 1 of Council Regulation No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid stipulates that “such aid shall also comprise operations to prepare for risks or prevent disasters or comparable exceptional circumstances”<sup>14</sup>. DIPECHO was created specifically to meet those objectives.

<sup>13</sup> See the recently published (June 2001) Red Cross annual report on the matter.

<sup>14</sup> DIPECHO is in tune with the Madrid Declaration of 14 December 1995, the Opinion of the European Parliament’s Committee on Development and Co-operation of 26 November 1997, the International Decade for

The primary goal of DIPECHO's policy for disaster prevention and preparedness is to reduce communities' vulnerability, hence the number of victims and the related social cost. DIPECHO's core activities are: (i) human resources development, (ii) management and institutional strengthening and (iii) demonstration microprojects.

DIPECHO's activities are regional (SE Asia, Caribbean, Andean Community, Central America). Operational Actions Plans were designed from 1998 onwards and included diagnostics, objectives setting, selection of projects presented by partners (mainly European NGOs), and supervision. Six Actions plans have been launched so far (two each in Asia and Central America, one in the Caribbean and one in the Andean region). DIPECHO is organically attached to the operational units of ECHO. Its budget lines are B7-210 and B7-219.

#### 4.4. First DIPECHO Action Plan for Andean Community

The First DIPECHO Action Plan for the Andean Community was based on a diagnostic carried out by GTZ in the region in May 1999, and a meeting held in Lima in June 1999. The Action Plan's general principles, the basic priorities and the operational modalities, were as follows:

- Preparedness and prevention must focus on flooding, landslides and earthquakes.
- Actions must have a regional dimension, or be replicable elsewhere in the region.
- The focus of action must be on preparing the communities most vulnerable to disasters.
- Preparedness activities must include training and/or awareness-raising to ensure sustainability.
- The involvement of disaster-related institutions at all levels must be ensured.

The First Action Plan funded 17 projects in the Andean region, for a total of 5.3 million Euro. 13 of these projects worked in selected communities in a single country, while the other four were regional projects involving three or more Andean countries. For the present evaluation, ECHO selected 11 Andean projects that are summarised in the Table below.

**Table 1. Overview of 11 Projects Evaluated in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia**

Country	Project Title	Partners (Country)	Category, Rating	Achievements
Bolivia	Strengthening of local capacity in disaster preparedness and prevention in Caripuyo municipality.	Medicus Mundi Navarra (E)	Local, ***	Community-based, training of brigades, small prevention works, sustainability.
Bolivia	Building prevention awareness and an early warning system in the Tarija Department.	Nuova Frontiera (I)	Local, ***	Community-based, early warning system, GIS, institutional integration and strengthening, medium-sized prevention works, sustainability.
Bolivia	National plan for prevention and mitigation of natural disasters (flooding, drought, fire).	Secours Catholique Français (F)	Local in four national locations, *	Community-based approach, training of leaders, small prevention works.
Ecuador	Risk prevention and mitigation: Implementation of a national VHF radio network.	Croix Rouge Française (F)	National, **	VHF national radio network, radio operator training, sustainability.
Ecuador	Emergency prevention and mitigation in rural areas of Guayas province.	Solidaridad Internacional (E)	Local, ***	Awareness, participatory approach, community-based development.
Peru	Disaster prevention,	Médicos del	Local, **	Awareness in shantytowns,

Natural Disaster Reduction, the 1994 Yokohama conference, as well as other regional and interregional initiatives.

	preparedness and response in Lima and Callao.	Mundo (E)		community development, training of brigades, small prevention works, institutional integration.
Peru	Prevention and preparedness for landslides and flooding in communities in Rimac watershed.	MPDL (E)	Local,***	Urban awareness, training, community-based approach, small prevention works, sustainability.
Peru	Seismic prevention and preparedness for responding to emergency situations in two critical zones of Lima.	OXFAM (UK)	Local, **	Awareness in shantytowns, community development, building rehabilitation, training of brigades.
Peru	From a healthy household to a safe community.	Cruz Roja Española (E)	Local, *	Strengthening of Peruvian Red Cross, awareness in shantytowns, community development.
Regional	Seismic reinforcement of adobe households in Peru and in the Andean region.	CIDEAL (E)	Regional	Appropriate, low-cost, anti-seismic technologies.
Regional	Disaster vulnerability reduction in the health sector.	PAHO	Regional, ***	Health sector awareness, SUMA methodology, sustainability.

\*\*\* Excellent project

\*\* Good project that could be improved

\* Project achievements should have been much higher  
no rating means no apparent achievements

#### 4.5. Project Assessment

Project partners had worked with ECHO and most had previous experience in their target country. Table 1 shows that four of the projects that achieved the best results were implemented at the local level (Medicus Mundi Navarra, Nuova Frontiera, Solidaridad Internacional, MPDL), while the fifth (PAHO) worked at the national and regional levels. The most effective projects used a community-based, participatory approach. Most of them included some small prevention works on a pilot basis. All of them worked closely with existing local institutions (Civil Defence, Red Cross, Police, fire department, and municipalities). Four of the best projects had a resident European expatriate co-ordinating the implementation, and a close relation with their respective HQ.

There were three good projects (Croix Rouge Française, OXFAM and Médicos del Mundo). They suffered from an over-emphasis on engineering issues and weaknesses in institutional integration (OXFAM), or mistakes in procurement needs identification (Médicos del Mundo and Croix Rouge Française).

Two projects were poorly implemented and achieved relatively little (Secours Catholique and Cruz Roja Española). Their weakness resulted from a lack of clearly identified objectives, the absence of the European partner, or little co-operation with local disaster-related institutions. The projects were reactive rather than proactive. They should have been monitored more closely so that possible corrections could have been made in time. The final project should be stopped because of a complete lack of collaboration between the European NGO (CIDEAL) and its local partner. A project could not function without agreement on common objectives and activities.

#### 4.6. Scope and Beneficiaries

The First Action Plan listed an array of local, national and regional priorities, which were too comprehensive to be implemented with DIPECHO's modest budget. Two of the evaluated projects (CIDEAL, PAHO) were considered regional in scope, however only one (PAHO) had effective regional

activities because the other was not operational. The PAHO project also worked at the national level, building the capacities of disaster institutions, Civil Defence, and the Red Cross. The second project that worked at the national level created a radio network in Ecuador (Croix Rouge Française).

The other eight projects worked at the local level, with little connection to national programmes. The projects targeted community organisations and municipal agencies. Direct beneficiaries were the estimated 12,300 people who received training in disaster preparedness and prevention. The indirect beneficiaries were tens of thousands of people who would benefit from project results such as prevention works, municipal disaster plans, and improved local preparedness. They included community leaders, women, and local institutions such as Civil Defence, fire fighters, police and SAR<sup>15</sup>. Some projects managed to involve these institutions in common activities that would enhance sustainability (Nuova Frontiera, Médicos del Mundo, MPDL, Medicus Mundi Navarra). The eight local projects helped empower communities and strengthen local capacity, as discussed below in §5.1.

## **5. PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS AND RESULTS**

### **5.1. Improved Disaster Preparedness and Prevention**

The main objective of the DIPECHO projects in Andean countries was to strengthen disaster preparedness and prevention. Those terms were not always clear to the NGOs involved, and in some instances there was confusion between prevention/preparedness or preparedness/ response. Some projects even included response or emergency assistance as one of their objectives (OXFAM, Médicos del Mundo). In consequence, project objectives were sometimes misleading.

At the local level, the community-based approach proved to be effective. In most cases, community organisations and municipalities were enthusiastic and fully supported project activities. The exceptions were Secours Catholique and Médicos del Mundo. Disaster-related local entities participated, especially Civil Defence. However Civil Defence involvement at the local level was not necessarily sustainable because it relied mainly on volunteers and had no budget to continue activities after the projects ended.

The incorporation of disaster management into local planning and policies was especially dynamic in Bolivia where new laws made it mandatory. The Popular Participation Law gave municipalities 20% of the State budget to be spent on development, including disaster prevention works. The law was promulgated as part of the government's decentralisation policy, and was subject to community scrutiny of fund utilisation. Some DIPECHO partners in Bolivia used this law to integrate local authorities into their projects (Nuova Frontiera, Medicus Mundi Navarra) and ensure sustainability. Similarly the Civil Defence Law was a step towards demilitarisation insofar as funds now come from the State budget and not the army. The Civil Defence Law also makes it mandatory for municipalities to have a civil defence service.

Disaster prevention projects were well received when they included demonstration microprojects (e.g. dikes, terraces) that addressed specific community concerns (Medicus Mundi Navarra, MPDL, Nuova Frontiera). Local authorities also appreciated having physical works that remained after the projects ended (warehouses in Lima-Callao, radio network in Ecuador). However theoretical disaster awareness programmes did not take root as well. Communities and municipalities alike lacked the financial means and technical knowledge to undertake prevention works, and were not interested in discussing in abstract the need to undertake such works (Secours Catholique). The lack of pilot prevention activities would also make it more difficult for LRRD actions downstream.

National disaster programmes are not effective in the three project countries visited. The existing programmes are reactive and operational only following disasters. They are often politicised or militarised (Civil Defence), which does not build community confidence. On the other hand, there was significant

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<sup>15</sup> SAR, Search And Rescue volunteers squads are usually under Air Force leadership, and are quite active in disaster preparedness in Bolivia.

community interest in DIPECHO preparedness projects. Disasters are a way of life in most communities. Any project to improve disaster preparedness and organisation is well received. Women and youth are especially interested, particularly in shantytowns where they play a more prominent role than in rural villages (Médicos del Mundo, OXFAM, Cruz Roja Española). By participating in disaster preparedness activities, women and youth receive training and gain social stature. Disaster preparedness projects fill a void at the local level.

## **5.2. Empowering Civil Society**

The most striking result of DIPECHO's programme was the strengthening of civil society in project areas. While several NGO partners would have expected this result, they found it hard to reflect given DIPECHO's report format. Projects attempted to use a participatory approach to build community ownership and sustainability. Local partners in all projects reported communities being empowered through better organisation, more participation, and greater awareness and understanding of local problems. Municipalities, which constitute part of civil society, responded positively in a number of projects, especially where the law made it compulsory, as in Bolivia. In some cases, preparing together for disasters served as a catalyst to stimulate community action on other issues, e.g. building a bridge (Nuova Frontiera), a more effective Municipal Development Council (Medicus Mundi Navarra) or the incorporation of the police in Lima shantytowns (Médicos del Mundo).

## **5.3. Strengthening Local Capacity, Local Governance and Decentralisation**

DIPECHO projects strengthened the capacity of community organisations to discuss their concerns with local authorities. They also assisted municipal officials to negotiate disaster preparedness issues with provincial or national government agencies. The projects empowered local institutions, boosted their pride and self-confidence, and served as a catalyst for seeking a greater role in managing their own affairs. DIPECHO projects contributed to the ongoing discussion about local governance. The decentralisation process in Bolivia was reinforced through projects that took advantage of new laws to put disaster preparedness on the political agenda and municipal budget, thus improving sustainability. Several municipal disaster plans were prepared, some utilising GIS technology (Nuova Frontiera, Medicus Mundi Navarra).

## **5.4. Community Education**

Several projects involved children, youth, and the education system (Medicus Mundi Navarra, Nuova Frontiera, Secours Catholique, OXFAM, Médicos del Mundo). Disaster preparedness was incorporated in the school curriculum in two places (Nuova Frontiera, Medicus Mundi Navarra). The response was enthusiastic and most of the *brigadistas* were recruited in schools.

## **5.5. Capacity development**

### **5.5.1. Methodology**

Most DIPECHO projects used some variation of a community-based, participatory approach. This differs from the top-down approach that is still prevalent in the region, whereby outsiders tell communities what their problems are and how to solve them. The bottom-up approach enabled communities to begin identifying and resolving their own problems. Participatory methodology included having communities assess risks and hazards, prepare municipal and household risk maps, and undertake prevention pilot projects. Some projects developed and applied a participatory approach successfully (Medicus Mundi Navarra, MPDL, Nuova Frontiera), while others had a weaker methodology (Secours Catholique, Cruz Roja Española).

### **5.5.2. Materials**

Each project had its own training and educational materials. One project utilised without any adaptation the material produced by OFDA (Secours Catholique). Others produced their own materials, adapted or not from various existing sources (Médicos del Mundo, OXFAM, MPDL, Nuova Frontiera, Solidaridad

Internacional, Cruz Roja Española). Capacity development materials were not shared among projects or systematised. The result was an array of diverse and often confusing materials.

### **5.6. Building Inter-Institutional Co-ordination**

Most projects contributed to building co-ordination and co-operation between local institutions (e.g. Civil Defence, Red Cross, municipal governments, NGOs, police, fire fighters, SAR). Limited resources were a deterrent, as institutions were less interested in joint activities if they would not gain anything themselves. Inter-institutional co-ordination in Bolivia was facilitated by the Popular Participation and Civil Defence laws. One project (PAHO) improved co-ordination between health ministries and Civil Defence institutions at the national and regional levels.

## **6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1. Project Selection**

DIPECHO's Action Plan defines its policy of contracting European NGOs (partners) to implement projects. NGOs present project proposals in accordance with the Action Plan. ECHO reviews the proposals, selects some, negotiates the content, and possibly signs the contract. The project proposals must follow the DIPECHO format, which is adapted from the ECHO format and does not reflect DIPECHO's specific objectives. The NGO proposals for DIPECHO's Andean programme were of a mixed quality. Usually the reference to conformity with the Action Plan was weak, and some sections were not completed.

However project selection by the ECHO task manager was generally good. HQ or the Quito office often asked pertinent questions or requested clarifications that sometimes led to substantial changes in project documents. This screening role was extremely useful and should be developed further. ECHO 3 takes the screening process seriously, which has led to many projects being curtailed, amended or re-dimensioned. However given that the task manager had to devote most of his time to ECHO projects, some DIPECHO project proposals did not receive enough attention. DIPECHO's regional office in Quito seemed understaffed to be able to properly screen project proposals, among its other diverse tasks. Due to the technical nature of some project proposals, outside short-term technical expertise should perhaps be considered. The Quito office should play a more active role in gathering, analysing and relaying key project information.

### **6.2. Planning**

The NGOs evaluated had differing degrees of project planning expertise. Some NGOs carried out an extensive analysis of the country's background that seemed unrelated to project objectives and planning (Médicos del Mundo). That generally replaced the project rationale. Others quantified the objectives, or inversely they only indicated in general terms what the objectives were (Nuova Frontiera, OXFAM). Most projects were planned based on activities rather than results. Some of the projects evaluated used a variation of the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA). However most of the projects just completed the standard format provided by DIPECHO, which is based on the ECHO model and designed for emergency projects. This format for reporting results focuses on quantifying the activities or outputs of each project and does not require a results-based approach. Work plans were essentially quantitative and activity-based. Partners found it hard to include or analyse qualitative results achieved at the outcome or impact level. The short-term nature of project funding did not allow partners to measure and report on medium or long-term results. This made it difficult to assess the impact of projects that were expected to contribute to a longer-term social process, e.g., capacity development, conscientisation, coalition building and community participation.



### **6.3. Monitoring**

Very few projects did systematic monitoring. Most monitoring was performed on an ad-hoc basis, mainly through periodic staff meetings. That usually worked well when a strong expatriate director was present, with support from the European NGO (the five best projects). It also worked well when the local NGO was experienced (OXFAM). It failed when none of those conditions were met.

European NGOs had primary responsibility for project monitoring. A few projects were never, or briefly, visited by the European NGOs' staff from HQ (Secours Catholique, Cruz Roja Española, OXFAM). Some projects received only an occasional visit from the NGOs' field office. DIPECHO in HQ and in Quito could also have done more project monitoring. The regional office was understaffed (one professional head of the office, and one assistant, the latter since May 2001 only). When the Lima sub-office was closed in December 2000, its responsibility for covering Peru and Bolivia shifted to Quito. The Quito office had a heavy workload, however several projects were never, or briefly, visited (Cruz Roja Española, MPDL, Secours Catholique). The evaluation mission faced similar time constraints, in that it had to select some subprojects from the 11 projects visited.

### **6.4. Reporting**

The European NGO was supposed to provide timely quarterly reports according to an ECHO blueprint. The reports were seldom presented on time, and their content varied widely. In some cases, the European NGOs screened field reporting before sending the reports to ECHO in Brussels, which sometimes resulted in a distortion or omission of information. In other cases, the European NGOs merely transmitted to ECHO the field reports without making substantive changes, which occasionally resulted in inadequate reports that did not meet ECHO guidelines. Most of the final project reports were incomplete and failed to clearly present project results. When quantitative results were included, there was no analysis of project achievements, as per the required ECHO format.

## **7. EFFICIENCY**

Efficiency of project management by NGOs was generally good, with two exceptions (Secours Catholique, CIDEAL). The cost breakdown was usually justified in comparison with the activities carried out. However there were some weaknesses. Reserve funds seemed to be considered as an additional budget that was automatically approved. Use of reserve funds should be adequately justified and better scrutinised.

Procurement rules were rarely adhered to. Procurement rules and regulations should be better explained to partners. DIPECHO in Quito and/or Brussels should certainly monitor them better. There was one example where an ill-managed procurement procedure caused a significant delay in project completion (Croix Rouge Française). However the partner faced its responsibilities and used its own funds to finance a project extension in order to deliver the expected output. A decision on building two warehouses in Lima and Callao was probably not justified in relation to the already established capacity. More pertinent information would have avoided that investment (Médicos del Mundo).

The projects' quarterly financial reports were often delayed. That process should be improved, because financial reports provide a warning about project implementation (e.g. budget spending rate) that is an important management tool.

## **8. CO-ORDINATION, COHERENCE, COMPLEMENTARITY<sup>16</sup>**

### **8.1. Co-ordination**

#### **8.1.1. Co-ordination with European NGOs and Local Partners**

Most of the DIPECHO projects were funded through European NGOs that had previously worked with ECHO. Relations between DIPECHO and its European partners were generally good, although a few partners reported that they would have liked to receive more technical feedback from DIPECHO after its monitoring missions (MPDL, Medicus Mundi Navarra). The NGOs also requested a copy of the present project evaluations in order to learn what their weaknesses/strengths were and to improve their future performance.<sup>17</sup>

European NGOs were financially and technically responsible for the satisfactory management and timely completion of the projects. The European NGOs were also expected to provide quarterly project reports, as discussed in §6.4. Projects depended on a close relationship between the European NGO and its local partner. Most projects had a European director on site during implementation, however a few projects (OXFAM, Secours Catholique) were fully sub-contracted to a local partner. This approach succeeded when the local NGO was experienced and capable (OXFAM-PREDES in Peru), but did not work with an inexperienced partner (Secours Catholique-Caritas in Bolivia). DIPECHO did not seem to have a firm policy concerning the presence of a European project director. Most project proposals included the presence of a full or part-time European project director.

A few projects (Médicos del Mundo, Nuova Frontiera ) depended on the leadership of a European expatriate who worked without a specific local counterpart. Other projects (e.g. MPDL, OXFAM) had a strong local partner, which in the latter case overshadowed the relatively weak local representative of the European NGO. One European partner (Secours Catholique) was not represented at all in the country. Some of the European NGOs had no previous experience or commitment to disaster management. One local partner referred to an NGO (CIDEAL) as “opportunistic” for entering disaster preparedness to take advantage of new DIPECHO funding. However most of the European NGOs that managed DIPECHO projects helped strengthen their local partners (Nuova Frontiera, Médicos del Mundo, French Red Cross, Solidaridad Internacional, MPDL, Medicus Mundi Navarra).

The scope and impact of projects managed by European NGOs depended on the credibility and effectiveness of local counterparts. In cases where the local partner was strong, and the European NGO played an effective role, project results were better and more sustainable. Effective partnership is based on trust, mutual accountability, shared commitment to goals (as outlined in the *DAC Guidelines on Poverty Reduction*). Without these conditions, it is difficult to develop a partnership, and that can lead to fundamental problems. If these differences are not resolved at the outset, it is better to cancel the project (e.g. CIDEAL-CERESIS). Effective partnership takes time to evolve, and is unlikely to develop through a single one-year project, as was the case for some of projects evaluated. In other projects, European NGOs (e.g. Solidaridad Internacional, Medicus Mundi Navarra, Croix Rouge Française) already had a long-term relationship and commitment to their local partners that was reflected in their good project implementation.

Local partners did have access to DIPECHO HQ or the field office in Quito. The Quito office did not want any direct relations with the local partner and would only deal with the European NGO. Contact with local NGOs was limited to special meetings (e.g. the 1999 Lima Meeting organised by ECHO to discuss the Action Plan) and field visits. While a single line of communication is easier to manage, the DIPECHO field office should consider the advantages of establishing some direct contact with local NGOs.

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<sup>16</sup> Co-ordination relates to collaboration with other international, national and local institutions. Coherence refers to relations with other Commission services. Complementarity relates to Member States programmes and policies.

<sup>17</sup> Apparently ECHO intends to distribute the project evaluations to partners involved.

### **8.1.2. Co-ordination between DIPECHO partners and projects**

Co-ordination between DIPECHO projects and partners was weak, even though some projects had similar objectives and worked in the same area. For example, OXFAM and Médicos del Mundo both targeted Lima's shantytowns, yet they worked in isolation, with no exchange of information or methodology. There was even lack of co-ordination within the same project. For example, each of Caritas' four subproject facilitators did not know what the others were doing. In general, there was little contact among the DIPECHO projects, so they lost the opportunity for potentially beneficial cross-fertilisation. However many projects managers requested that ECHO organise co-ordination meetings at the regional level to offset the apparent lack of co-ordination and complementarity.

### **8.1.3. Co-ordination with Other Local, National and International Institutions**

Within the project areas, there was usually good co-ordination between DIPECHO partners and the local institutions involved in disaster management, with a few exceptions that were highlighted in the individual project evaluation reports. Municipalities, community organisations, the local Civil Defence, police, fire fighters and the Red Cross were often involved in some aspect of project implementation, and they collaborated fully. The activities of the projects were generally well known and supported locally. In a few cases, there was opposition to DIPECHO projects, usually based on local politics and distrust of the growing involvement of civil society.

At the national level, however, there was a surprising lack of collaboration or co-ordination between the partners and national institutions. In some cases (OXFAM, Secours Catholique), this was deliberate and reflected a lack of confidence in the effectiveness or commitment of national structures. The military nature of Civil Defence systems worsened this problem, because many communities distrusted the military, especially in Bolivia and Peru. Rivalry between Civil Defence and the Red Cross also made it harder for projects to co-ordinate with both institutions at the national level.

#### **Box 3. CIVIL DEFENCE.**

National Civil Defence systems are the main disaster response mechanisms in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. Civil Defence institutions have small budgets, so their role is usually limited to emergency response and occasional preparedness training. They do not work in disaster prevention or mitigation.<sup>18</sup> The Civil Defence system is comprised of the armed forces, police, government ministries, scientific institutes, the Red Cross and service organisations. It has national, provincial and local committees, which operate mainly with community volunteers. However national Civil Defence institutions are staffed by armed forces personnel who generally have little disaster management experience. The Civil Defence's centralist military structure and approach make citizen participation more difficult, especially at the local level. Public trust in Civil Defence has been eroded after several high-ranking Civil Defence officials were accused of corruption over the past few years.

The lack of collaboration with international organisations was even more acute. UNDP and PAHO are very active in disaster preparedness and have valuable information and documentation. They implement projects of their own in some sectors that overlap with DIPECHO (e.g. disaster preparedness training, risk mapping, inter-institutional co-ordination). However there was little contact between them and DIPECHO partners. One notable exception was Nuova Frontiera that collaborated with UNDP's disaster unit in La Paz.

There could also have been closer contact between DIPECHO's regional office in Quito and the international organisations active in the Andean countries. Better mutual knowledge and information would improve the overall effectiveness of disaster programmes and publicise ECHO's objectives and programmes.

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<sup>18</sup> DG-Development and US SOUTHCOM are currently studying proposals to strengthen national Civil Defence systems in the Andean region.

## **8.2. Coherence**

### **8.2.1. DIPECHO Relations with the Delegations**

There is little co-ordination between DIPECHO and the Delegations. The Delegations are generally not interested in getting involved in DIPECHO (or ECHO) operations. They consider that humanitarian aid (and they equate DIPECHO's projects with humanitarian aid) is not part of their mandate, which focuses on development aid. The Delegation in Lima promotes development aid, channelled mainly through budget support to national development projects, thus it is not interested in ECHO/DIPECHO activities that it does not consider to be beneficial to development. The Delegation in Bolivia is more open to NGO activities and consequently more interested in DIPECHO projects. The officer assigned to handle NGOs has demonstrated an in-depth knowledge and interest in DIPECHO's activities. Even though the Delegation in Colombia has an ECHO officer, very little information on DIPECHO can be obtained there. It is only available at DIPECHO's regional office in Quito.

The Quito office seems isolated and is seldom visited by DG-Development missions. Consequently it has very little information on what the DG is doing in the countries it is responsible for. The situation was worsened by the November 2000 closure of the DIPECHO's Lima office, responsible for Peru and Bolivia. The relatively little information received by Quito comes mainly through the friendship between the DIPECHO correspondent and the Head of the Delegation in Colombia. There also seems to be some ambiguity and/or confusion between ECHO and DIPECHO representations in the Andean countries.

While the Delegations focus on development aid, they nevertheless represent the European Union and ECHO is part of it. Thus it is unfortunate that attempts to establish a dialogue on common issues (e.g. LRRD) are not successful.

### **8.2.2. ECHO and DG-Development**

The relations between ECHO and DG-Development in Brussels are structurally weak. For example, DG-Development is considering a regional project to strengthen the Civil Defence systems in the Andean countries. This project has been in the pipeline for the last two years, and directly overlaps DIPECHO's mandate, however ECHO HQ did not know about it. Similarly ECHO has little knowledge of Food Security activities in the Andean countries, although there is considerable potential for joint action.

The lack of co-ordination between DG-Development and ECHO is particularly detrimental for DIPECHO. DIPECHO finances demonstration microprojects (e.g. retaining walls, terracing, dikes) that constitute development initiatives rather than human assistance. These physical works are linked to participatory approaches that include awareness-raising, education and training. Communities learn how to construct and maintain the preventive works, thus building local ownership and commitment. Many of the pilot projects supported by DIPECHO could be replicated on a larger scale as part of longer-term development programmes. The needs have been identified, the human resources exist, expectations have been created, and institutional support exists, mainly at the municipal level. These are the factors upon which DG-Development built many of its projects elsewhere. Stronger links between DG-Development and DIPECHO would be mutually beneficial. The sustainability of DIPECHO's activities would be ensured, while DG-Development would take over in areas already tested by DIPECHO. The European Union would demonstrate that it has a common approach and rationale for its development activities.

## **8.3. Complementarity**

Several European Member States and other entities (e.g. municipal governments) support disaster preparedness projects in the Andean countries. Spain is particularly active, along with Italy and France. However there is virtually no co-ordination or complementarity between the disaster preparedness projects and policies of DIPECHO and Member States.

## **9. IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

### **9.1. Impact**

At local level, DIPECHO's First Action Plan had a real impact, especially through the five excellent projects (Table 1) that fully applied the community-based participatory approach. Disaster preparedness training combined with demonstration preventive works were well received, particularly by women and youth in shantytowns, and by rural communities. The main impacts are analysed in §5.1.- 5.6. above.

At national level, however, the DIPECHO programme had little impact. The projects did not promote the integration of disaster prevention into national planning or legislation, or raise awareness among policy-makers. Relevant national and international organisations were not familiar with the objectives, activities and results of DIPECHO's programme. Thus it was not surprising that DIPECHO had little influence. The lack of co-ordination between DIPECHO and other international organisations led to some overlapping (e.g. disaster preparedness training). This situation was partly due to the disinterest of the Delegations that did not consider ECHO as an EU programme requiring their support. It was also due to the isolation of DIPECHO's Quito office that did not have the required staff to ensure visibility within the aid community.

### **9.2. Sustainability**

Sustainability is the basic yardstick to measure programme impact. Only five DIPECHO projects were likely to be sustainable in the medium term. Most projects promoted community-based disaster training and awareness, which would require some ongoing technical support and input. DIPECHO projects are limited to one year. While this is usually sufficient to initiate the activities and to achieve short-term results, it is not long enough to guarantee sustainability. Without the occurrence of a disaster and/or refresher training, both the raised awareness and lessons learned could quickly fade away. The sustainability of prevention works was even more difficult, because communities lacked the funds and the technical knowledge to carry on or replicate the pilot activities.

Sustainability depends on continued funding. DIPECHO partners rely on international donors, so they must raise funds to consolidate their disaster management activities. Due to donors' regulations and lack of available funding, partners often have to end unfinished work without ensuring its sustainability. Given that indefinite international funding is neither possible nor appropriate, national or local funding is the only solution. Some DIPECHO projects secured funding to continue their activities (Medicus Mundi Navarra, Solidaridad Internacional, PAHO). By taking advantage of government funds available through new decentralisation laws, two projects in Bolivia were considered sustainable (Nuova Frontiera, Medicus Mundi Navarra). Sustainability could also be ensured when an international organisation used its own resources to continue disaster preparedness (PAHO), or when a national partner contributed (Ecuadorian Red Cross with Solidaridad Internacional). The VHF radio network in Ecuador (Croix Rouge Française) would be sustainable as long as the local partner did proper maintenance. However the sustainability of several DIPECHO projects (Médicos del Mundo, OXFAM, Cruz Roja Española) was questionable. Some of them might become sustainable if they were to receive additional DIPECHO funding. DIPECHO is willing to fund successive phases of a successful project, based on solid justification and replicable criteria.

## **10. VISIBILITY**

All projects used conventional visibility techniques (T-shirts caps, stickers etc.). Some projects arranged newspaper, radio or TV coverage of local activities (MPDL, Medicus Mundi Navarra, OXFAM, Nuova Frontiera, Solidaridad Internacional). All material for training and public education (manuals, booklets, pamphlets) bore the ECHO logo. In one instance, the ECHO logo on the leaflet was not correct, and the partner's mission statement were more proselytical than factual (Secours Catholique).

The projects did create awareness of DIPECHO and the European Union at the community level. However national disaster institutions, especially Civil Defence, had little contact with the DIPECHO programme and were not familiar with its activities and results<sup>19</sup>. The national Red Cross Societies were better informed because they were participating in DIPECHO projects.

International organisations, including specialised ones such as OCHA, were also unaware of DIPECHO's activities. They seemed interested in learning more about DIPECHO, exchanging information, and exploring the possibility of collaborating.

## **11. HORIZONTAL ISSUES**

### **11.1. Gender**

Women generally comprised more than half of the participants in project training activities. The main exceptions were two projects in rural communities in Bolivia (Medicus Mundi Navarra, Nuova Frontiera), where women's participation was by restricted by their husbands and by their heavy workload that prevented them from attending regularly. In general, women and youth were enthusiastic participants in training and preventive works.

Most DIPECHO projects did not take specific steps to encourage women to participate, or to get men involved in cases where they did not take part, even though they recognised existing obstacles. However a few of the projects (MPDL, Solidaridad Internacional) had quite a strong gender component. When specifically asked, several NGOs expressed interest in promoting gender equality in a more systematic way, even though they were not required to do so by DIPECHO.

### **11.2. Environment**

Some of the projects evaluated had a significant environmental impact (Nuova Frontiera, MPDL, Medicus Mundi Navarra). Those projects involved constructing preventive works such as retaining walls, terraces, or irrigation systems, or promoting sustainable agriculture. Another project (Cruz Roja Española) included community clean-up and garbage collection. These activities had a direct and positive environmental impact at the community level. Pilot microprojects such reinforcing river embankments or reforestation also had the potential to have a broader impact by being replicated through follow-up development projects.

## **12. LESSONS LEARNED**

Lessons learned can be categorised as follows:

- **Programme and Strategy.** The First DIPECHO Action Plan was over-ambitious and represented more of a wish-list than a practical strategy. Due to the limited duration and available funds for DIPECHO projects, too broad objectives could not be achieved (Secours Catholique). Project objectives should be limited and specific, relating more closely to the Action Plan. The lack of coordination between DIPECHO projects resulted in the selection of two similar projects in contiguous locations (OXFAM, Médicos del Mundo). A regional disaster preparedness program has greater impact than a series of isolated projects that work only at the local level.
- **Project Selection.** The selection of projects was satisfactory. Projects were in line with the First Action Plan as a result of screening by HQ and Quito office. However better project results and a lighter workload for DIPECHO could be obtained by using external expertise to assess complex technical projects like the radio network in Ecuador (Croix Rouge Française). The

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<sup>19</sup> For example, the head of Bolivia's Civil Defence did not know ECHO, or the EU, however he was newly appointed.

questionnaire for project selection was too emergency-oriented for DIPECHO activities. The questionnaire was geared towards quantitative criteria, and did not allow for qualitative results. Some entries filled out by partners were too opportunistic or comprehensive to be plausible. Supposedly “national” projects did not achieve much (Secours Catholique, Cruz Roja Española). The advantages of having a programme spread across disperse, distant regions should be weighed against the risks of a project spreading itself too thin and not having a lasting impact in any project area. The time and cost involved in travel to distant project sites should also be factored into the selection of project sites.

- **Partner Selection.** Stricter criteria for the choice of partners would enhance project results. Partners with a proven experience in disaster preparedness are immediately operational. Due to the short length of DIPECHO projects, partners with too large an inception period should not be considered.
- **European and local partner.** Most of the projects that failed to deliver fully the expected results had no European partner present on site. An exception was PREDES (OXFAM), which relied on its extensive disaster management experience. Trust and previous working relations between local and European partners should be a prerequisite.
- **Pilot prevention works** were important to increase community participation and awareness of disaster preparedness. They helped community members see the practical application of what they learned through workshops.
- **Participatory Methodology.** The participatory approach to capacity development proved to be the most effective and sustainable. It might mean a slower start to project implementation as it takes time to develop a community-based methodology. The best DIPECHO projects adopted that approach, which empowered local organisations and communities. It was especially appropriate for fostering participation by women and youth. On-site training on site proved more beneficial than transporting the trainees to special locations. Training results might not be sustainable without ongoing support and refresher courses. Given that capacity development was a key component in each DIPECHO project, it would have been useful for project teams to exchange experiences about possible methodology and materials before implementing their training programs.
- **Visibility.** DIPECHO was not well known by disaster-related national or international institutions. The Quito office worked in isolation from other initiatives. Visibility would be improved through closer contact with other related national and international entities. This would entail greater participation in disaster management meetings, seminars, and conferences.
- **Result-based approach.** Project planning, monitoring and reporting by partners were generally weak. They could be improved through the use of a results-based approach.
- **Sustainability.** Only five projects were likely to be sustainable (Nuova Frontiera, Medicus Mundi Navarra, PAHO, Croix Rouge Française, MPDL). Factors contributing to project sustainability included having: a strong local partner; a long-term commitment by the local partner and/or European NGO to the target area; municipal government involvement; the participation and empowerment of local organisations; local ownership of project activities and results; and increased community awareness.

### **III. FUTURE DIPECHO PROGRAMMING IN ANDEAN REGION**

#### **13. REGIONAL CONTEXT FOR DIPECHO PROGRAMME**

##### **13.1. Rationale**

The rationale for future DIPECHO programming in the Andean region is similar to the justification for its first Action Plan there. Disaster preparedness and prevention have become even more important than they were a few years ago. The number of natural disasters and severe weather events in the Andean region continues to rise, due in part to climate change. The social and economic costs of these disasters have also increased significantly, largely because of human intervention. Several factors have caused increased risk and vulnerability to disasters.

Widespread poverty has left the majority of the population living in structurally weak adobe houses, which have low resistance to natural disasters, in the most vulnerable urban and rural areas. Poverty and demographic growth have led to environmental degradation, including deforestation, soil erosion and the over-exploitation of land and other natural resources. Environmental degradation has increased the risk of landslides, flooding and other disasters. Land shortages have spurred the urbanisation of new regions in the Andes and the Amazon basin, accompanied by the construction of roads and infrastructure that also augment disaster vulnerability. Millions of rural poor have migrated to precarious shantytowns in megacities, as part of a process of rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation. Most governments in the region have limited resources, inadequate land-use planning and building codes, and little disaster management capacity.

Andean countries continue to rely upon post-disaster international assistance and expensive reconstruction processes. This reactive approach is not only costly in terms of lives and assets lost, but is unsustainable as natural disasters increase world wide and international assistance decreases.<sup>20</sup> Governments, international donors, and non-governmental organisations are becoming more aware of the need to focus on disaster preparedness and risk reduction. This is the area where DIPECHO should intervene.

##### **13.2. Current Disaster Management Priorities**

The current priorities for disaster management in the region include the need to strengthen:

- national disaster systems, comprising Civil Defence institutions and government ministries in key sectors (e.g. energy, transport, health, and education).
- civil society capability (which is limited in part by the military nature of the national disaster system), especially at the local level.
- scientific data, including risk and vulnerability assessments, related to natural disasters.
- co-ordination and communication between government, civil society, scientific institutions, and universities.
- links between disaster management institutions and initiatives at the local, provincial, and national levels.
- regional co-ordination, co-operation, communication, including building an effective regional network and establishing bilateral agreements.
- disaster preparedness and risk reduction (or prevention) policies, programs, and practices.

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<sup>20</sup> This point is further developed in *Natural Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Overview of Risk*, Céline Charvériat, Inter-American Development Bank, and October 2000.



## **14. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIPECHO**

### **14.1. Disaster Preparedness Mandate**

ECHO's mandate covers disaster preparedness and prevention. Preparedness is promoted through short-term projects to provide training, institutional strengthening, and public education. Prevention is limited to demonstration pilot activities, which increase the impact of preparedness projects and which could be replicated by government agencies or other donors. Longer-term, larger-scale disaster prevention is funded mainly through other Commission services in charge of development assistance.

**⇒<sup>21</sup> DIPECHO should continue to focus on disaster preparedness projects, supported by pilot prevention activities.**

### **14.2. Local Level Focus**

There are several reasons why DIPECHO's Andean programme should focus its efforts at the local (community and municipal) level. Local organisations are the first line of defence, i.e. the first ones to respond following a disaster. They usually have to manage the situation for several hours until outside help can arrive. Despite the importance of local organisations, relatively little has been done to strengthen their disaster preparedness or response capability. Most governmental and donor programmes have concentrated on preparedness at the national level for large-scale disasters. These programmes tend to overlook the small-scale disasters that account for about two-thirds of human suffering and economic costs. Communities rarely receive assistance to prepare for, or reduce the impact, of these smaller disasters.

A local level focus would also enable DIPECHO to build on the momentum of the ongoing decentralisation process in the Andean region. Decentralisation represents a significant opportunity, as more power and resources are being transferred to local governments for disaster preparedness and other activities. Some local governments, including those assisted through DIPECHO's First Action Plan, have started incorporating disaster management in their development planning and policies.

Disaster preparedness and prevention is an area where local-level activities can be more sustainable and cost-effective than national or regional initiatives. This is particularly true in the Andean region, where most countries lack a strong, credible national disaster system and there is no regional co-ordinating body for disasters. Some donors (e.g. UNDP, DG-RELEX, US SOUTHCOM) and financial institutions (IDB, CAF) are currently developing projects to strengthen national disasters systems or to create a regional mechanism. National and regional projects tend to be costlier, have more ambitious and broader goals, and do not necessarily target the needs of the most vulnerable population as well as local projects. Given that other organisations are involved at the national and regional levels, and that those initiatives are costlier than smaller-scale local efforts, DIPECHO should invest its limited resources to achieve realistic, concrete results at the local level.

DIPECHO's structure also favours local-level projects. Most DIPECHO projects are funded through European NGOs. The comparative strength of NGOs is working at the local level, while they tend to lack credibility and clout at the national or regional level. In order to have an impact at the national or regional level, DIPECHO would need to use different funding channels or create mechanisms to network and amplify local experiences. DIPECHO's relatively small projects of a one-year duration are more likely to have an impact at the local level, where incremental change can occur faster than in the more complex national arena. However community projects should be linked with other disaster preparedness initiatives at the national and regional levels.

**⇒ DIPECHO should focus on disaster preparedness at the local level, co-ordinated and integrated with national and regional programmes.**

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<sup>21</sup> ⇒ indicates a recommendation

## **15. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIPECHO**

### **15.1. Universal Programme Goal**

The DIPECHO programme should have a single, unifying goal shared by all projects. This would include a clear definition of what DIPECHO means by “preparedness” and “prevention” (as discussed above in Part II). This universal goal could be “to strengthen the capacity of local governmental and community organisations for disaster preparedness and prevention”.

**⇒ DIPECHO should establish a single, clear programme goal.**

### **15.2. Types of Activities and Expected Results**

The DIPECHO programme in the Andean region should support two types of activities at the local level: capacity development/institutional strengthening and identification/reduction of physical risks. These activities should be oriented towards achieving a common set of expected results, as explained below in §15.3.

Capacity development and institutional strengthening activities would be aimed at both community organisations and municipal authorities. They would include training in areas such as disaster risk assessment, management and response; the formation of community volunteer brigades; and public education. Projects would seek to strengthen and build links among all components of local and provincial disaster committees, such as community organisations, women’s associations, NGOs, the Red Cross, Civil Defence, schools, as well as municipal and provincial government agencies.

Identification and reduction of physical risks would include setting up early warning systems and community risk mapping to identify local hazards and vulnerability. The risk maps would combine empirical knowledge and scientific data (e.g. GIS, aerial photos, topographic information, and remote-sensing imagery). The risk assessments would be used to produce community disaster plans, as well as to support municipal development planning and policy-making in areas such as land use and building codes. DIPECHO could also support demonstration microprojects in disaster prevention, such as reforestation, land terracing, and the construction of retaining walls and dams. The demonstration microprojects would enable community members to apply what they had learned in training and see concrete ways to reduce the impact of disasters. They would also provide a model to be replicated on a larger scale by governments or donor agencies.

**⇒ DIPECHO should support capacity development and risk reduction activities.**

### **15.3. Programme Approach**

DIPECHO should establish a programme approach, rather than a project approach, in the Andean region. The 17 pilot projects funded through the First Action Plan were isolated, geographically disperse, and disparate in terms of objectives, local partners, activities and methodologies. They had limited exchange of experiences and did not create the basis for replication. Thus the total impact of the programme was not greater than the sum of its parts, the individual project results. There was no inherent advantage or value-added to having a nominally “regional” programme.

The new DIPECHO regional programme should facilitate the exchange of lessons learned and best practices among all its projects. It should create synergy among projects and build collective knowledge. Project planning and design should include activities to foster national and regional integration.

DIPECHO’s programme in Central America promotes co-ordination through CEPREDENAC, a regional disaster management organisation. Unfortunately there is currently no comparable institution in

South America, or the Andean region.<sup>22</sup> Thus DIPECHO would have to use other mechanisms and approaches to multiply the impact of local projects at the national and regional levels.

When all the projects share the same objective and work towards common results, building an integrated regional programme is easier and more effective. The main mechanism to ensure co-ordination would be through a stronger Andean regional office, as discussed in the next section. The regional office would arrange at least two daylong meetings of all DIPECHO projects over the one-year funding period, as well as regular meetings of projects in each country. These meetings should be participatory workshops designed to share information and lessons learned, have an in-depth discussion of key issues such as capacity development, and facilitate follow-up links between projects. Follow-up activities could include field visits or short work exchanges between NGOs. The exchanges could involve project staff and/or a few local counterparts.

DIPECHO could provide small grants of additional “bonus” funding to stimulate creative networking on a horizontal basis among NGOs, and a vertical basis between local projects and other initiatives at the national and/or regional levels. For example, DIPECHO projects could disseminate their local experiences through existing national networks such as the federations of municipalities. DIPECHO could organise a national event in each country, and/or a regional event, which would include its partners and other key players (e.g. Civil Defence), to share experiences and raise awareness about the DIPECHO programme. DIPECHO should also develop a mechanism to share lessons learned between its Central American and Andean programmes, because they support similar, community-level disaster preparedness projects.

DIPECHO’s Andean office could provide technical support to facilitate the sharing of experiences. For example, an adviser on gender or capacity development, who was also familiar with best practices in the Andean region, could provide technical assistance to all the projects and promote exchanges. Given that capacity development would be an important component of the regional programme, DIPECHO projects should systematise their training materials and methodologies. Projects would likely be more cost effective and have a greater impact if they used similar materials and approaches.

**⇒ DIPECHO should build an effective regional programme that would have a greater multiplier effect and impact than isolated, unconnected projects.**

**⇒ DIPECHO and its partners should systematise their lessons learned and best practices related to gender and capacity development methodology and materials.**

#### **15.4. Regional Office**

As discussed above, DIPECHO’s Andean office should play a major role in creating an integrated, effective regional programme. The regional office should also provide more critical input for project planning, monitoring and reporting. The regional office could offer partners technical assistance in areas such as results-based management or procurement. The office should participate in, or at least be aware of, national and regional disaster networks, as discussed below. DIPECHO would likely have to provide more resources to enable the regional office to fulfil these expanded functions.

**⇒ DIPECHO should reinforce the regional office to enable it to play a greater role in programme co-ordination, monitoring, and dissemination.**

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<sup>22</sup> The lack of a regional disaster organisation reflects limited progress in the regional integration process, for example the relative weakness of initiatives such as Mercosur and the Andean Pact. Possible candidates for regional disaster co-ordination include CERESIS, an inter-governmental institution, however its focus is limited to seismological research. La RED connects NGOs and researchers, but it has little clout with governments in the region. OFDA and US SOUTHCOM are currently doing a feasibility study to assess the possible creation of a new regional organisation that would link governments and all components of national disaster systems, including Civil Defence institutions.

## **15.5. Co-ordination with National and International Institutions**

At HQ and field levels, DIPECHO works in isolation from other international or national disaster management institutions. This is partly due to DIPECHO's limited financial and human resources. To the extent possible, however, DIPECHO's regional office and its project partners should participate in national disaster networks or bodies, in order to co-ordinate better with other players and to disseminate DIPECHO's experience. These would include national disaster systems (e.g. Civil Defence, key ministries), research centres, NGO networks, and associations such as the federation of municipalities.

**⇒ DIPECHO and its partners should participate in national disaster networks.**

DIPECHO should also improve its co-ordination and communication with other international actors (e.g. UN agencies, IFRC, World Bank) in order to better plan and target its projects, raise DIPECHO's international profile, publicise its experience, and enable it to take part in policy dialogue on disaster prevention in the region. In some cases, other bilateral or international agencies could have useful disaster management tools or approaches to share with DIPECHO. For example, GTZ, IFRC, OFDA<sup>23</sup> and their national partners have developed effective training materials and methodologies for disaster preparedness and prevention at the local level.

**⇒ DIPECHO should co-ordinate more with other international agencies to exchange experiences and disseminate DIPECHO's experience.**

## **15.6. Links with Other European Commission Services**

Disaster preparedness and prevention should be an integral part of longer-term, sustainable development. DIPECHO's short-term disaster preparedness projects have limited impact and durability unless they are linked to longer-term development programmes. This reflects DIPECHO's objective of funding innovative pilot projects that can be replicated by governments or other donors.

DIPECHO and other Commission programmes should try to work with the same partners, in the same areas, with complementary longer-term goals. DIPECHO projects should be planned with the objective of connecting to Commission development programmes, particularly those aimed at environmental protection, poverty reduction and food security. ECHO should have better co-ordination and stronger ties with DG-DEV and RELEX. They could start by exchanging information about their respective disaster management initiatives, discussing project selection, then developing a joint action plan and establishing mechanisms through which DIPECHO projects could seek longer-term funding through the Commission's development services.

**⇒ DIPECHO should have better coherence with the Commission's development services.**

**⇒ DIPECHO projects should be planned as an integral part of a longer-term development programme.**

## **16. OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIPECHO**

### **16.1. Partner Selection**

Assuming that DIPECHO will focus on local-level disaster preparedness, it should continue working through European NGOs. An appropriate European NGO partner should:

- have experience in disaster preparedness at the local level (e.g. Medicus Mundi Navarra, MPDL, and Nuova Frontiera ).

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<sup>23</sup> OFDA indicated that it would be willing to share with DIPECHO its training materials and methodology for capacity development in disaster management at the community and municipal levels. OFDA could provide contacts with effective local partners, as well as technical assistance if needed. (See the Annex that outlines other institutional players in disaster management.)

- Have a strong local partner with extensive experience in disaster preparedness (e.g. PREDES).
- Preferably have (the European NGO and/or local partner) previous experience working in the proposed project area and have developed a solid relationship with communities and local authorities; and/or longer-term plans to continue working there after DIPECHO funding ends in order to improve sustainability.
- Strong skills in participatory capacity development with community and municipal organisations.
- The ability and commitment to do results-based management.

**⇒ DIPECHO should select NGO partners which have disaster management experience, would have a particular value-added and would help build local capacity in order to increase sustainability.**

**⇒ DIPECHO should develop more dynamic partnerships with European NGOs, to engage in dialogue, share lessons learned and provide technical assistance when required.**

## **16.2. Project Characteristics**

An effective DIPECHO project should:

- be located in areas that are most vulnerable to natural disasters, especially flooding, landslides and earthquakes.
- Target the most marginalised and vulnerable communities that do not receive support from the government or other sources.
- Strengthen existing local institutions and capacity.
- Require a firm prior commitment of local participants (e.g. community organisations, municipal authorities).
- Respond to local demand and needs, rather than be driven by the NGO or donor agency.
- Use a strong, participatory, bottom-up approach to empower communities and raise public awareness.
- Build local ownership.
- Establish links and cooperation among different local institutions and actors.
- Foster links with other local projects, as well as with national disaster systems and regional initiatives.
- Disseminate lessons learned and best practices through participation in provincial and national disaster networks.
- Be replicable. The project should include a plan to systematise its lessons learned and replicate the experience elsewhere. Materials produced by the project should also be appropriate for possible use by others.
- Be sustainable after project funding ends. A project should define its expected results and activities to promote sustainability.

**⇒ DIPECHO projects should target and empower the most vulnerable communities, using participatory approaches and materials that could be replicated by other projects.**

## **16.3. Results-Based Management**

Project planning, monitoring and reporting during DIPECHO's first Andean programme was based on activities rather than results. That made it difficult to assess the impact of projects or the overall programme. Given that the second regional programme will likely have a lower budget, it will be imperative to clearly define programme/project objectives and concrete, realistic results. The second programme should be results-based, and develop a new type of operational fiche with elements of a Logical Framework Analysis (LFA).

DIPECHO's regional office should play a greater role in this new results-based approach. It should monitor projects more closely, report to HQ on results achieved, and provide feedback to NGO partners

on the strengths/weaknesses of their projects. If NGO reports are not submitted on time, the regional office should temporarily freeze project funds.

Having a results-based approach would make it easier and more effective for DIPECHO and its partners to publicise programme results within the EU and with the European public.

**⇒ DIPECHO should adopt a results-based approach to project planning, monitoring and reporting. This approach would clearly define expected quantitative/qualitative results and indicators, and measure project outputs, outcomes and impact.**

#### **16.4. Gender Perspective**

It is important to assess the differential role of women in disaster management, as well as the gender-specific impact of disasters. DIPECHO and its partners need to develop a gender perspective in their disaster preparedness projects.<sup>24</sup> Some material already exists on the subject of gender equality in disaster management, which could serve as a starting point for DIPECHO.

Gender equality is one of the horizontal themes that could be strengthened through DIPECHO's regional Andean programme. Even though gender conditions are different between regions of each country, and among countries, there are still valid experiences and lessons to be shared on a regional basis. DIPECHO could promote south-south capacity development in gender. For example, Peruvian indigenous women's organisation could provide disaster preparedness training with a gender perspective to a Bolivian counterpart.

**⇒ Gender should be incorporated into the planning and implementation of each project, as well as the overall regional programme. DIPECHO should consider having a gender adviser for its regional disaster prevention programme, who could help develop a gender perspective and best practices.**

#### **16.5. Financial Management**

**⇒ DIPECHO should only grant reserve funds with appropriate justification, not automatically.**

**⇒ DIPECHO should update its salary scales for local personnel to better reflect the higher cost of living in Andean countries.**

#### **16.6. Project Duration**

Given that disaster preparedness is a long-term process, DIPECHO should have a mechanism to facilitate funding a successive phase of an effective project.

**⇒ DIPECHO should consider successive funding for projects that were effective and achieved a significant impact during their first phase.**

#### **16.7. Technical Assistance**

DIPECHO needs to strengthen its procurement procedures. Project partners require either training or technical assistance in procurement. DIPECHO's regional office or HQ should establish a database of short-term technical experts in areas such as procurement.

**⇒ DIPECHO should consider hiring short-term technical expertise to assess complex or technical project proposals.**

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<sup>24</sup> A separate report is being prepared by evaluator Catherine Gander to help DIPECHO integrate a gender perspective in disaster preparedness.