

MODULE 5 BENEFICIARY FEEDBACK LOOPS AND COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS

PART 4 CASE STUDY 3

In this part of module 5, we will explore the **third case study concerning the Comoros Islands Floods.**

In 2012, the Government of the Comoros Islands declared a State of Emergency following flash flooding. The islands, which lie between Madagascar and Mozambique, were battered by torrential rains which caused heavy floods, landslides and rockslides.

According to a joint assessment by the Comoros Government and humanitarian agencies, nearly 50,000 people were affected by the rains, including more than 9,000 who were forced to leave their homes. Access to affected villages was limited, electricity supplies and telephone lines were cut, and communications were severely affected.

In the long term, soil erosion caused by floods and landslides affected agricultural land's fertility and productivity. The severe floods shifted a lot of rubble, waste, and debris into the fields designated for arable farming. It was consequently difficult to plant the usual crops, let alone get a good crop yield. This was a good opportunity for humanitarian agencies to implement cash-for-work projects to clear the debris and plant the crops and this would have been very relevant and useful for poor local communities.

Instead of this, however, the response of many NGOs was to distribute BP5 biscuits to affected communities. Normally, these are usually only used in famine conditions. Very few people actually consumed the biscuits and so although distribution was conducted successfully, *the NGOs failed to engage with the communities to ask about their priority needs* or whether they would in fact eat BP5 biscuits. This example illustrates the consequences of *NGOs' complete failure to engage with communities* with regard to an appropriate type of disaster response.