



# Learning for climate resilience programming

BRACED & Bond Resilience Learning Group workshop lessons  
March 2019



## Contents

<b>BRACED &amp; Bond Resilience Learning Group Learning Event: recommendations for future programming.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Design, setup, and implementation of climate resilience programmes .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Challenges faced in resilience programming.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>3. Final reflections .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Annex 1: List of workshop participants .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Annex 2: Key messages from BRACED final year evaluation .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Endnote.....</b>	<b>30</b>

### About Bond

Bond is the civil society network for global change. We bring people together to make the international development sector more effective. [bond.org.uk](http://bond.org.uk)

### About BRACED

BRACED is helping people become more resilient to climate extremes in South and Southeast Asia and in the African Sahel and its neighbouring countries. <http://www.braced.org/>

### History of the IRLG

The Interagency Resilience Learning Group (IRLG) began in early 2012, as a learning hub comprising humanitarian, development, and conservation Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and DFID. Initially, all IRLG members held a Programme Partnership Arrangement (PPA) with DFID and joined as part of the learning partnerships for PPA holders. However, in mid-2013 it was decided to open up membership to include non-PPA holders.

Many resilience debates were taking place outside of the domain of the PPA holders, so it was agreed to expand membership to non-PPA holders as well as academics and the private sector. Prior to the DFID funding agreements coming to an end in December 2016, it was decided to migrate the group to Bond, the UK body for organizations working in international development. Today the IRLG has 150 members from 56 different organizations. The IRLG is committed to being an open, multi-disciplinary network that provides a safe space to share experiences and generate learning and best practice.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors.



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# BRACED & Bond Resilience Learning Group Learning Event: recommendations for future programming

## Time frames:

- Strong project foundations are critical; time needed to establish partnerships with local stakeholders through adequate inception periods.
- Resilience isn't easy; longer project cycles needed, giving more time to deliver greater impact.
- Keep up the momentum; how to provide longer-term mentoring support and guidance beyond project completion; how to ensure sustainability of impact.

## Information, learning, and knowledge management:

- Project structures can complicate actions to deliver resilience; clarity from outset necessary on roles and functions of Fund Manager versus Knowledge Manager.
- Need downward accountability; reporting systems must include accountability to communities and partners and should be relevant to project outcomes.
- Internal learning not extracting knowledge; the Knowledge Manager should support learning within projects and implementing partners, not just extractive learning at the programme level.

## Coordination:

- Local DFID country office buy in crucial; improved interaction with donor country offices needed, rather than operating as a stand-alone isolated global programme.

## Flexibility:

- Be flexible not fixed; resilience programmes require the ability to work flexibly, thus anticipating and responding to changing priorities and contexts and adapting implementation to reflect the current circumstances.
- Budgets should be flexible and allow for adaptive management and include contingency and crisis modifiers.

## Targeting:

- Bottom-up resilience building must ensure the most vulnerable are identified and given a voice so that underlying causes of vulnerability are addressed.
- Leave no one behind; mainstream inclusion in programme processes considering gender, age, and the most vulnerable, etc. are required to ensure those most at risk are not further marginalized.

## Capacity building:

- Capacity building should focus on empowerment not just transfer of skills, and enable access to capacity support after the end of the project.
- Capacity building is not a gap that needs to be filled; how do we support communities and individuals to broker demand-driven services that are defined by their actual needs now and in the future?

## Policy and influencing:

- Policy influence must be integrated with programme outcomes, not tackled separately, and must include empowering communities to advocate for improved policies and services.

## Introduction

In September 2018, the DFID-funded Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (**BRACED**) programme and the Bond Resilience Learning Group hosted a workshop to explore what has been learned from designing and delivering large-scale climate adaptation and resilience programmes to date.

BRACED was originally conceived as a three-year, £140 m DFID investment in climate resilience building in the Sahel, East Africa, and South Asia – three regions facing numerous climate-related shocks and stresses. BRACED supported 15 consortia, comprising over 120 organizations, to deliver projects in 13 countries. The programme received an extension until 2019; however, the BRACED year three project annual reports were completed in 2018 (see Villanueva et al. (2018) for a synthesis and Annex 2 of this report for the key messages), therefore the workshop was a timely opportunity to reflect on what has been learned to date and to inform future DFID programmes.

With the collective experience in resilience programming of participating organizations, the workshop provided an opportunity to discuss assumptions and challenge our approaches

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The **Bond Resilience Learning Group** originated as the Interagency Resilience Learning Group (IRLG) in early 2012, convened as a learning hub comprising humanitarian, development, and conservation non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and DFID. In mid-2013, the group migrated to Bond, the UK body for organizations working in international development. Today the Bond Resilience Learning Group has 150 members from 56 different organizations, and is an open, multi-disciplinary network that provides a safe space to share experiences and generate learning and best practice.

The aim of the workshop, which brought together climate resilience practitioners and donors from over 25 organizations, was to consider recommendations for future resilience programming by exploring some of the approaches deemed fundamental to supporting resilience, and considering how programmes can be adaptive to changing and challenging contexts. With the collective experience in resilience programming of participating organizations, the workshop provided an opportunity to discuss assumptions and challenge our approaches.

This report summarizes discussions from the workshop and provides lessons for designing and delivering future resilience programmes. The outcomes from this workshop, however, are not in isolation from the previous learning and sharing of good practice that has been undertaken within the sector.<sup>1</sup> Lessons from previous collective learning within the Bond Resilience Learning Group are also incorporated where they relate to workshop discussions.

Following the structure of the workshop, the first part of the report looks at *how large climate adaptation and resilience programmes with various components and multiple partners can be designed, set up, and implemented effectively*. This focuses on:

- working in partnerships;
- management structures;
- reporting and information flows;
- working in challenging operating environments.

The second part of this report explores *challenges faced in resilience programming*. This centres on the following questions:

- Is it all about ‘scalability’?
- Are we working with the most vulnerable?
- Is capacity strengthening enough?
- What and how should we ‘influence’ in the policy environment?
- How long does it take to create impact?

# 1. Design, setup, and implementation of climate resilience programmes

## Working in partnerships

To deliver the multi-component and multi-level programmes required to support climate resilience building, and to achieve sustainability of impact within complex and changing environments, partnerships are essential. No one organization has all the skills necessary to tackle a specific problem and with the challenge of resilience-building in complex environments, multi-agency consortia are seen as the best approach to building resilience in practice. There are different forms of partnership in consortia and choosing the right people and organizations to work with is crucial. Knowing how to structure the partnership at the planning stage as well as creating strong synergies among partners throughout the programme lifetime is challenging. This section highlights some key considerations when establishing effective working partnerships.

It is important to support local organizations that are achieving positive impact at the grassroots level

### *Scaling-up through partnerships*

Partnerships with local entities are key to delivering community resilience – and working in partnership with government, especially local government authorities, is vital to ensure scalability and sustainability of activities. When planning and setting up resilience programmes, it is important to support local organizations that are achieving positive impact at the grassroots level and to connect with organizations that have a wide reach, to increase the collective impact. It is also important to map out where to make best use of existing capacity, identifying complementarities and synergies.

#### **Decentralizing Climate Funds (DCF) in Senegal and Mali**

The Near East Foundation (NEF) is a US-based NGO that leads the BRACED DCF project. NEF have had an office in Mali for the past 30 years; as a result, staff have developed strong relationships in-country, which enables them to get programmes up and running quickly. NEF already had strong experience of empowering local communities with capacity-building activities and funds, but the government links that NEF developed through the DCF project were key to delivery. The opportunities to work with government on policy at a national level were not available at the outset of project; these only occurred after 2–3 years as the government links emerged naturally and built on the project’s successful work at municipality and county levels.

### *Time and cost of working in consortia*

It takes more time than is typically allocated to understand the local needs and identify which organizations (or groups of organizations) are best placed to implement activities, especially when this involves partnering with new organizations. Time is needed to properly assess community needs, risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities, and to then make sure that the partners complement each other in delivering the programme, particularly to implement a multi-faceted resilience-building approach. Time is also needed to build trust and develop relationships across partners.

While there are benefits to bringing together different organizations with complementary skills and areas of focus, working in partnership requires more complex and costly management structures, staff time for building relationships, coordination meetings and communication, and consolidation of diverse systems (for example, reporting, budgeting, procurement, communication protocols). Allocating sufficient time and budget for these efforts is critical to effective partnership working.

### *Working with local partners*

Different levels and types of due diligence are required of partners to align with increased efforts to ensure safeguarding and accountability, but established consortia can often limit flexibility in the ways of working across partners. In particular this may create an additional burden for smaller partners who may not readily have the systems in place to meet the additional accountability requirements. Also, the different needs and deliverables over the course of a project may require different partners at different times, but the need for accountability and due diligence pushes consortia towards being formed and cemented at the outset and therefore can be difficult to change later. In order to balance these important considerations, sufficient capacity is needed in partnership management to ensure accountability systems are in place and effectively implemented.

### *Capacity strengthening of partners*

In addition to capacity to meet reporting requirements, climate resilience programmes must prioritize strengthening local capacity to sustain the project and its impact beyond the end of the project. Generally, local organizations have stronger connections to communities and should be supported to continue to accompany these communities and provide or facilitate access to much-needed services after the project comes to an end. In BRACED, the most successful projects built on networks and capacities that already existed. Capacity strengthening is relevant for all stakeholders involved, including government partners, to ensure they have the capability to continue with future initiatives. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems must also help support capacity strengthening by recognizing capacity challenges of partners and developing solutions through good programme cycle management. Skills training in a formal environment is the typical method for capacity strengthening; however, storytelling and using concrete examples can be helpful to make sure messages land. Exchanges are also powerful tools, whereby partners can see others' experiences for themselves and gain inspiration from good practice – not only what worked but also what failed, and why.

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### Project-to-project learning and exchange visits

In the third year of BRACED, the Knowledge Manager set up a small ‘Collaboration Grant’ to support emerging yet unforeseen opportunities for implementing partners to exchange knowledge and foster synergistic learning. The grant enabled project teams to discover valuable new connections, knowledge, and know-how that was not built into annual work plans and log-frames. Three grants were awarded for cross-project exchange visits and learning events: an exchange visit between the Anukulan project in Nepal and the Myanmar Alliance project; a learning workshop for two Niger-based projects (SUR1M and PRESENCES) in Niamey; and a policy-related workshop involving three projects in Mali (DCF, RIC4REC, and SUR1M). Feedback showed that all recipients found the Collaboration Grant to be a useful cross-project learning mechanism, accommodating new or unexpected opportunities for collaboration, which were otherwise likely to take a back seat to traditional output-focused tasks.

### Participatory integrated assessment tool

CAFOD works in Sierra Leone with local partner KADDRO, the Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation. KADDRO’s mission is to develop the livelihoods of farmers. Historically, KADDRO’s approach was very much agriculturally focused due to their mission. In order to encourage integrated programming that builds the resilience of communities more broadly, KADDRO was trained to use a participatory integrated assessment tool. The innovative assessment methodology incorporated elements of disaster risk reduction (DRR), through the use of hazard, vulnerability, and capacity assessment (HVCA) tools; assessing vulnerabilities and capacities using the livelihood’s pentagon; linking with environment and water resource management; and issues underpinning gender disparities and structural matters, such as land tenure. The training of the assessment methodology included a hands-on practicum with the partner in the community. As a result, the designed intervention demonstrated many more linkages, operating across multiple sectors and scales, integrating advocacy, and fostering connections with local government efforts. Activities cut across food and nutritional security, income generation and markets, water and natural resource management, climate change adaptation, and land rights.

### Recommendations for working in partnerships

- Recognize and incorporate adequate time and effort in project plans for establishing partnerships. Partnerships should not be seen as incidental to the project – staff time and cost should be included by all partners in their individual organization workplans and budgets.
- Be flexible to evolving partner needs and capacities that may need to be addressed or strengthened over the course of the project. Ensure there is flexibility in budgets to allow for unforeseen issues, especially capacity building activities for partners. Partner capacity-strengthening plans should be developed and integrated into project design and delivery. Investing in local partners is investing in the long-term capacity of local people to build their own resilience.

Investing in local partners is investing in the long-term capacity of local people to build their own resilience

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- Longer project cycles (i.e. more than three years) are needed to effectively respond to the issues outlined above, such as building new partnerships, developing trust, conducting integrated assessments, and capacity strengthening. Longer inception periods should also be incorporated into projects, to allow time at the outset for relationship building with suppliers and local NGOs, identifying capacity needs, building knowledge and understanding of donor expectations, and establishing systems.

## Management structures

### *Fund management and knowledge management*

The BRACED programme has a unique structure in that a Fund Manager (FM) and a Knowledge Manager (KM), both commissioned through separate contracts by DFID, work closely with BRACED implementing partners (IPs). The role of the BRACED FM is to ensure that UK development assistance is used effectively, efficiently, and appropriately, and that BRACED delivers meaningful results for vulnerable people. The FM has two functions: 1) to ensure that recipients of UK development assistance are accountable for delivering on the agreed package of activities and results; and 2) to support partners to adapt to the ever-changing operating context in order to deliver the expected results of their projects. The role of the KM is to ensure BRACED is contributing to a sustained and transformational impact on people's resilience to climate extremes beyond the communities directly supported by funded projects. It does this through generating evidence and learning on resilience from across the BRACED programme to inform and influence the policies and programmes of practitioners, governments, and funding agencies. Evidence from across the BRACED portfolio and beyond is gathered through evaluations at different levels, thematic research, and original learning approaches.

Over the course of implementation, several challenges and recommendations have emerged from working under this structure. The lead agencies of the BRACED consortia have indicated that the complexity of the management structure at times has resulted in a lack of direct support to the projects. The focus of the FM and KM has been on upward and outward accountability (for example, reporting to the donor, capturing lessons for external audiences), rather than support to the projects themselves. IPs were also faced with heavy reporting requirements rather than prioritizing the development of local-level systems and continuity to ensure sustainability.

Additionally there has been an overlap of functions between the FM and KM, particularly in monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL). Both had responsibilities to deliver MEAL for different purposes, either reporting and accountability or broader learning within the sector. However, the regular data collection, reporting frequencies, requests for information from project consortia, and field visits from both FM and KM staff resulted in disproportionate and uncoordinated information demands on the projects to service their different needs (for example, information needs for annual learning events, mid-term/final evaluations, and regular financial reporting occurring at



the same time diverted consortia staff away from delivering project activities). This improved over time through collaboration and an overall better understanding of what was working well and streamlining between the KM and FM. Still, the multitude of requirements was seen as burdensome for some IPs, particularly when they occurred during times of busy project activity.

Ensuring roles and responsibilities are communicated clearly and regularly across all programme partners is important to avoid misunderstanding. As both the FM and KM comprised separate consortia that saw changes of individuals and roles within the teams, there was at times confusion around roles and responsibilities among the partners about who was making requests for information and for what purpose.

Having team members with the right skillsets and experience for their particular function is vital. Irrespective of the overall duties of the management component – whether generation and sharing of learning or accountability to the donor and oversight of expenditure – different types of skills are needed to deliver these responsibilities and should have specialized appointed people within both FM and KM functions. These may include general programme management, financial management, data analysis, relationship management, and capacity-building support.

### *Interaction with donors*

Although there had been significant lessons for resilience programming through BRACED, not all DFID country offices were taking the learning on board in the design of new programmes

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Within the BRACED programme, the KM and FM work directly with DFID UK staff, but opportunities to engage with their counterparts in-country were not always realized and it is felt that there are big differences in experience and understanding of project activities between the in-country and UK DFID staff. IPs found that although there had been significant lessons for resilience programming through BRACED, not all DFID country offices were taking the learning on board in the design of new programmes. Opportunities to influence the broader enabling environment (for example, government or donor portfolios, national-level government policies and strategies) were not always maximized because of this failure to link efforts supported by donor headquarters with other projects being managed and delivered in-country. Individual projects on their own have limited impact in influencing the broader policy environment; however, if efforts were combined with other programmes, the BRACED projects and others would have greater potential to create transformational change.

Learning from other DFID-funded programmes has also been difficult. Due to the way programmes are structured, with the management largely outsourced, information is often held by externally contracted agencies rather than institutionally held within DFID, and thus new programmes are often seen as starting on a blank page rather than building on the successes and failures of previous programmes. This was also highlighted by the [Independent Commission for Aid Impact \(ICAI, 2018\)](#) performance review, which assesses how well DFID has mainstreamed resilience into its portfolio. DFID was given an ‘Amber/Red’ score for learning, indicating that learning often occurs within projects and from one project to its successor project, but ‘there is less evidence of lessons and experience being shared more widely between programmes within country portfolios, or from one DFID country office to another, despite the cross-cutting nature of resilience’ (ICAI, 2018).

### Recommendations for management structures

- Establish strong coordination mechanisms between fund management and knowledge management functions within programmes to ensure clarity over roles and responsibilities. These should be clearly communicated to implementing partners and project stakeholders early on.
- Put in place clear and effective communications protocols between management and implementing partners and streamline communications to reduce confusion and competing requests.
- Strike a balance in information extraction for management purposes – whether for monitoring, reporting, or learning – so as not to create unnecessary burdens on implementing partners or the communities and individuals we are aiming to help. Information extraction is not merely for accountability purposes but should also be utilized to support meaningful learning. However, there should be greater coordination to ensure that it is not disproportionate and that competing/multiple requests are not made at the same time or during times of intense project delivery.
- Foster stronger interaction and collaboration between donor headquarters and country offices in design and throughout implementation to ensure benefits can be maximized in-country and lessons shared across other programmes within the country/region. Creating transformational change in policy environments has greater success with combined efforts through multiple actors (including local organizations) and projects.

## Reporting and information

Iterative learning and adaptive programming is essential for supporting resilience-building

Project reporting requires information to flow upwards (from project activities, project participants, etc.) but the reporting requirements are typically dictated by and used by management with limited use to project staff working on the ground. Ultimately partners need to demonstrate that they comply with donor requirements and, although reports are a means to this end, often this information is not tailored towards learning or showcasing project achievements. This can often result in a lack of buy-in from project staff. Iterative learning and adaptive programming is essential for supporting resilience-building; as risks and needs change over time, activities need to adapt. During a previous learning event, Resilience in Practice, the Bond Resilience Learning Group highlighted the need to ensure that MEAL supports flexible learning, ensures learning for communities, and enhances downward accountability to project participants (Interagency Resilience Learning Group, 2017).

### *Reporting*

The BRACED programme is made up of three components: implementation, fund management, and knowledge management; however, some parts of the design were put in place before others, creating sequencing conflicts. For example the reporting structures for IPs managing BRACED projects were in place before the KM or FM were contracted. With a significant learning component built into BRACED, donor reporting requirements were expansive and put pressure on

local partners. At the workshop some BRACED partners highlighted that local partners commented that almost 25 per cent of their time was taken up with donor reporting, requiring cumbersome reports of over 100 pages as well as additional annual reporting.

The indicators that were selected for reporting appeared to be aimed solely at DFID – detailing complex key performance indicators required for International Climate Fund (ICF) reporting. In addition, developing uniform indicators that would work and be meaningful across 15 countries proved that it was hard to find indicators that worked for everyone.

### *Measuring resilience*

Levels of resilience change as risks and hazards vary, and as individual, household, and community capacities and vulnerabilities change. Measuring resilience during a project may indicate improvements, but the real test would be measuring resilience four years after the project has ended. Learning from and assessing how well communities and households manage after a project ends, is an as yet untested reflection of the impact of resilience programmes.

BRACED has adopted the '3As framework' to track and assess progress on interventions, organized around three resilience capacities: anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive

At the programme level, BRACED has adopted the '3As framework' to track and assess progress on interventions, organized around three resilience capacities: anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive. This has proven to be a useful tool for planning interventions, helping to ensure that a comprehensive approach to building resilience is being adopted, as well as an approach to tracking progress from resilience-building activities. Yet there are limits to how the 3As framework can help support analysis and explain the processes that are leading to change: the indicator structure for the 3As compartmentalizes the capacities, which masks some of the complementarities and trade-offs between them. These trade-offs require more attention in future resilience programming. In particular, the long-term approach that is needed to build adaptive capacity and is required by project implementers appears to conflict with the shorter-term 'response'-driven approach communities need for building absorptive capacity.

It is important to consider not only the amount of time between baseline and endline in order to detect change, but also at what time of year (the month or season) data is collected. For many of the BRACED countries, recurrent annual drought and heavy rains are a part of life and often lead to times of hardship and abundance, respectively. While these periods are becoming increasingly difficult to predict, owing to the already present effects of climate change, some effort should be made to align the timing of data collection to avoid introducing a known source of potential bias.

#### **Measuring subjective resilience in Myanmar**

The **BRACED Rapid Response Research** project (Jones, 2018) tracks how people recover in the aftermath of disasters in Myanmar through the use of mobile phone surveys to collect near-real-time survey data in difficult to access environments. Surveys are delivered over the phone via a remote

call centre in Yangon, allowing data to be collected at a fraction of the cost of traditional household surveys with information feeding back in near real time. Resilience has traditionally been measured via objective means (i.e. taking external measurements by observing households or one-way collection of information through surveys). These are normally expert-driven, with assumptions made about the factors that support other people's resilience. Subjective tools take a very different approach, making use of people's knowledge of their own resilience and the factors that contribute to it. Tools for measuring subjective resilience seek to quantify levels of perceived resilience using standardized survey methods (similar to how information on subjective wellbeing is collected). Every round of the survey data allows for more nuanced information to be collected, painting a picture of how households are dealing with localized shocks and stresses on the ground. This is presented in the [Resilience Dashboard \(BRACED, n.d.\)](#).

At the individual project level, resilience is understood in different ways, and different working definitions are used for the purposes of project-level monitoring and evaluation. For example, the [BRACED Myanmar Alliance project \(2016\)](#) defined five dimensions of change (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 [Five dimensions of change for measuring resilience at household level in Myanmar](#)  
 Note: [These dimensions of change were developed and contextualized for the three climatic zones \(coastal, hilly, and dry\) of Myanmar to reflect a variety of potential disaster- and climate-related shocks and stresses](#)

Resilience is not just about capacity to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to shocks and stresses but also to transform systems and structures

The Bond Interagency Resilience Learning Group (2017) explored transformation as a resilience capacity in the joint learning paper [What Does Resilience Mean in Practice?](#) Transformative capacity refers to being able to influence the broader environment of government policies, regulations, natural environment, decision-making structures, and power relations which either enable or hinder people from building their resilience. Helping people to increase their capacity to influence for transformative change is a process, which is critical for the sustainability of project achievements and resilience built. The strong value-for-money focus given to monitoring outputs and outcomes and numbers of people reached can often exclude the importance of these unseen processes. Resilience is not just about capacity to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to shocks and stresses but also to transform systems and structures. This takes time to implement and is more difficult to measure, as it is often beyond the individual influence of one project and the impact may not be seen until after a project ends.

### The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA)

The ZFRA is a diverse partnership focusing on finding practical ways to help communities in developed and developing countries strengthen their resilience to flood risk. The alliance comprises nine members: Zurich Insurance Group working with the NGOs Concern Worldwide, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Mercy Corps, Plan International; and Practical Action, as well as research partners the International Institute for Applied Systems and Analysis (IIASA), the London School of Economics (LSE), and the Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-International (ISET). The ZFRA has worked for over five years in 11 countries and has been extended for an additional five years in nine countries, in recognition of the time taken to build resilience. In addition the ZFRA has invested considerable resources in developing a resilience measurement framework, a tool that aims to take a snapshot of a community's resilience at a moment in time; a tool that can be applied after a project has ended and thus provide a way to assess resilience long term. Thus, the ZFRA is contributing not only to building resilience in the countries and communities where the alliance works, but also to understanding the underlying factors that build resilience in each unique context.

### Recommendations for reporting and information

- Ensure information flows from top to bottom as well as bottom to top. Rethink reporting systems as multi-directional to facilitate accountability to communities, partners, and suppliers – not just donors. Include mechanisms for measuring community satisfaction that strengthen good governance, participation, and citizens' voice (e.g. CARE's Community Scorecard approach; CARE, 2013). Learning and information is critical for communities and households for decision-making and to understand what is and is not working, so information that is gathered for the project can be shared with communities and households to help their own self-reliance and resilience ([Interagency Resilience Learning Group, 2017](#)).
- Ensure reporting is relevant to project outcomes and measuring project/context-specific lessons and results – generic indicators result in lessons being lost through aggregation. Make reporting more flexible and move towards a culture of transparency and trust that recognizes the importance of learning from failure and not focusing only on accountability and risk.
- Undertake post-project monitoring and evaluation and incorporate this into the project cycle rather than the current approach of squeezing in final evaluations before project activities have finished (and realigning budgets and workplans to cater for this). Consider monitoring one to three years beyond the end of a project to determine the sustainability and impact of the project, and how well people are continuing and coping with risks.
- Trying to measure resilience can help projects assess and demonstrate the impact of good practice on the ground. It also helps to identify barriers or bottlenecks preventing resilience from being enhanced. By consciously attempting to measure resilience, we may ultimately fail, but the learning generated contributes evidence to increasing our understanding of resilience in practice.

Make reporting  
more flexible  
and move  
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## Adaptive programming to support working in challenging operating contexts

The key to adaptive programming is ensuring that evidence-informed decision making becomes a routine part of programme delivery. This requires programmes to use a range of MEAL approaches throughout the course of a project (and not just for reporting upwards), reflect on changing circumstances/assumptions and what MEAL information is telling us about what is or is not working, and having flexibility to adjust project activities and budgets based on analysis of this information.

Responding and adapting to the changing context is a key enabling process for building resilience

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Responding and adapting to the changing context is a key enabling process for building resilience. Resilience-building approaches therefore require flexibility in planning and spending. This was a key finding from the **BRACED programme-level synthesis** of project annual monitoring and results reporting (Villanueva et al., 2018). Adaptive and flexible approaches are needed to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of project activities. While the activities themselves may not need to change, the order and way in which they are implemented might. This is to deal with potential trade-offs, mitigate the risks for future maladaptation, and to avoid being locked into one resilience pathway. The Bond Resilience Learning Group have highlighted that this is especially important when working in complex, uncertain, and dynamic operating environments (Interagency Resilience Learning Group, 2017). The BRACED KM has recently commissioned a learning review of issues affecting the delivery of climate resilience programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The review (due to be published in mid-2019) focuses on operational considerations, and as part of this is exploring adaptive and flexible approaches to programming in more detail.

BRACED partners working at the local level have been vital in brokering access to technical skills, organizational capacities, and local knowledge, providing inputs and staff members even in hard-to-reach areas or during times of crisis or conflict. Recognizing that a more flexible management approach is necessary in the fragile and ever-changing contexts in which the programme operates, the BRACED FM has developed an 'adaptive fund management' approach, which is applied to its oversight of BRACED projects. This involves working closely with project partners to support them to deliver and adapt in challenging operating contexts through flexible approaches to budgeting, work-planning, and reporting, at the same time as ensuring accountability and achievement of results. According to the FM, most BRACED projects have changed their plans in some way either because of the changing contexts in which they operate, or in response to the lessons learned from implementing activities on the ground.

Adaptive programming requires implementation, monitoring, learning, and adaptation to be undertaken simultaneously, not sequentially. A major challenge for projects is how to practically change course as implementation is under way, while needing to demonstrate results against logframes and contractual deliverables.



### Improving Resilience in South Sudan (IRISS)

In response to the deteriorating humanitarian and conflict context at key points during the project, the FM worked with the implementing partner Concern Worldwide to adjust activities to the needs of the communities they were working with in South Sudan. This included, for example, suspending complex value chain development, and instead concentrating on local market and value chain development, and cash-for-work to support immediate food needs and improve dykes to protect fields against immediate flood risk. The introduction of cash-for-assets showed responsiveness and flexibility, though there are some question marks over durability of the assets with the uncertainty of the crisis. The redirection of activities in response to humanitarian crises allowed people to have their basic needs met while also protecting hard-won gains; however, this required a flexible approach to accept that some activities may not have long-lasting impact – DFID referred to this support as Humanitarian+.

Flexibility is needed to respond to the very shocks and stresses that climate resilience programmes are set up to support stakeholders to deal with. Flexible funding mechanisms to enable projects to anticipate, respond, and adapt to shocks and stresses are important for ensuring that programmes are themselves resilient and appropriate.

### PHASE Crisis Modifier in the Sahel

In November 2015, DFID linked the humanitarian fund, Providing Humanitarian Assistance for Sahel Emergencies (PHASE), to the BRACED programme. Focused on the Sahel, this ‘crisis modifier’ was designed to enable early action and rapid response to new humanitarian needs that manifested in project areas. In doing so, the crisis modifier intended to protect the development gains BRACED projects had made.

The PHASE funds were used for a variety of interventions, from refugee resettlement negotiations to cash-for-work programmes to offset food insecurity, to providing food aid and essential equipment after homes were destroyed in flash floods. An **evaluation** of the PHASE funding mechanism explores the process and results of building humanitarian finance into a resilience-building programme (Peters and Pichon, 2017).

The case studies featured in the report on managing conflict-related displacement in Burkina Faso, flooding in Mali, and food insecurity in Niger demonstrate that, when employed effectively, crisis modifiers offer a practical means to enable early action and response to emerging crises. Evidence from the use of the PHASE crisis modifier suggests that crisis modifiers can support a more flexible aid system if they are accompanied by a shift in the way development actors design programmes and respond to predictable risks and if managers are set up to disburse these funds quickly and efficiently. To be effective, crisis modifiers should also be deployed alongside adaptive programming approaches to ensure there is flexibility to deal with transitions into recovery and between emergency and development programming.

Foster open, trusting relationships between donors and implementing partners, supported by frequent communication

### Recommendations for adaptive programming

- Put in place contractual arrangements that support flexibility. Mechanisms to support adaptive programmes include multi-year funding with degrees of budget flexibility; contingency funds or crisis modifiers with processes to enable rapid and locally delegated decision-making for shifts in activities; funding set aside for learning and project adaptation; phased implementation, regular reflection, and adjustment incorporated into the project cycle.
- Design adaptive and realistic logframes that allow for changes in project interventions while still meeting broader project outcomes and objectives. Explore different approaches to indicators that can be measured even when project activities change and demonstrate how those different activities can lead towards the same impact. There is a need to better understand how these different approaches can meet acceptable levels of quality and accountability required by donors.
- Consider whether logframes are necessary to the programme. Given the need for flexibility and adaptive management in resilience programming, and that much of resilience programming is in challenging environments, are there other ways to ensure accountability to donors without being bound to delivery of a rigid logframe?
- Foster open, trusting relationships between donors and implementing partners, supported by frequent communication regarding contextual changes and evolving community and household needs. Seek alignment in attitudes, risk appetite, and flexibility of processes among all stakeholders at the outset.

## 2. Challenges faced in resilience programming

With the collective experience in the room in both humanitarian and development programming, the workshop provided an opportunity to discuss and question core assumptions often made when designing and implementing resilience programmes.

### Is it all about scalability?

For many donors, in any type of programming, greater impact is associated with reaching as large as possible a population group. Often, if a project is deemed 'successful', there are requests to 'scale-up' its activities and extend outreach. Based on our experience in resilience programming, is 'bigger better'? How do we reconcile the tensions between taking activities to scale, having a greater impact, being cost effective, and yet ensuring programmes are community-driven and based on self-identified needs and priorities? Is the impact sustainable or will some targeted population groups require assistance in future years because we focused too much on 'numbers reached'?

In the workshop, participants reflected on three key considerations for scaling-up resilience programming: scope, range, and approach.

At project design stage, ‘scope’ should be determined by questioning if the resilience project or activities are aimed at scaling-up ‘horizontally’ or ‘vertically’. Horizontal scale-up is defined as increasing the geographical coverage and, subsequently, the number of project participants. Vertical scale-up is about increasing the diversity of resilience-building activities among the targeted beneficiaries to deepen the impact or increase the intensity of engagement. Among BRACED practitioners, it has been reported as advantageous to concentrate on a smaller group to achieve a greater medium- to long-term impact. This was a key finding in the BRACED Impact Evaluations. To use an agricultural analogy, decision-making on the scope of scalability rests on: ‘Sprinkle many versus water a few’ (based on local community metaphor).

Community implementation complemented by policy-influencing activities at various levels is the foundation for scalability

With regards to ‘range’, resilience-building projects/activities need to be ambitious in terms of stakeholder involvement. The BRACED programme has illustrated that community implementation complemented by policy-influencing activities at various levels is the foundation for scalability. Governments at local, sub-regional, and national levels must engage with community resilience-building activities. With this intensity of engagement, real-time, evidence-based resilience programming can influence government decision-makers to focus on resilience in Disaster Risk Management and development strategies and/or plans at all government levels. Scalability is dependent on government buy-in and investment in resilience building, which requires resources for capacity building as well as systems that embrace community-informed decision-making mechanisms in urban and rural resilience-building strategies, plans, and policies.

Finally, on the question of ‘approach’, resilience building at scale must concentrate on contextually appropriate approaches as opposed to activity packaging. BRACED programming across 13 different countries – varying in ecological systems, socio-political contexts, and economic realities – has shown that there is no one-size-fits-all package of resilience-building activities to be ‘scaled-up’. What is scalable are the approaches and tools developed, which can be shared and utilized in different contexts with the understanding that the solutions are dependent on the specific vulnerabilities and contextual realities faced. Therefore, all approaches have in common the theme that scalability of resilience programming is dependent on a partnership-based analysis and solution-seeking processes that ideally take place within and outside the project cycle on a continual basis and influence all stakeholders to take action.

#### **Plan International’s Integrated Approach in the Lake Chad region**

Plan International’s (2016) [Lake Chad Programme Strategy](#) (2018–2023) places resilience building at the heart of its activities, allowing for scalability across its outcomes within the functional areas of humanitarian, development, and social cohesion. The protracted crisis in the Lake Chad Basin region affects more than 17 million people living in north-east Nigeria, the far northern region of Cameroon, Niger’s Diffa region, and Chad’s Lake region. The crisis has unfolded in a geographical area beset by chronic fragility where poverty,

environmental degradation, gender inequality, and lack of employment prospects for young people fuels extremism. Plan International's Lake Chad programmatic approach enables a holistic response to the humanitarian needs of the affected population, while simultaneously tackling the underlying causes of the crisis, promoting social cohesion and resilience, and transforming gender norms by removing the barriers that keep girls from achieving their full potential and exercising their rights. The programmatic strategy coordinates projects to work between the nexus of humanitarian and development efforts, promoting resilience building focusing on girls, boys, and their communities to deal positively with present and future natural and socio-economic shocks and stresses.

During the workshops, there was discussion around 'innovation', with some differing points raised. A reflection was made about how often 'innovation' is emphasized in programme design, but less value is placed on continuing to implement good ideas and existing practice. It was also suggested that development agencies could focus on innovation and testing, and then have stronger links with institutions that have the ability to take them to scale. However, it was countered that there should be scaling out (i.e. replicating for broader reach) of programming through civil society, not just scaling up (i.e. strengthening existing systems to deliver more) by donors/UN/government bodies.

#### Recommendations for scaling up

- Conduct post-project monitoring visits to determine not only if community-based resilience activities are being practised but also explore further if there has been a natural uptake and activity replication beyond the original targeted community groups. Post evaluations allow the flexibility to question if resilience-building activities have extended to reach indirect project participants. Key questions include: are there resilience approaches still being utilized by communities and/or individuals and have these practices evolved? Are resilience-building activities being replicated in neighbouring communities not originally targeted under the project? These questions can only be appropriately addressed after project closure and can provide valuable feedback as to the effectiveness of resilience programming and the potential for scalability. This information can demonstrate what approaches are most effective in resilience-building to ensure community knowledge transfer across a larger geographical range.
- Determine the project scalability 'scope' at an early stage, for example prior to or during project inception. The key question to explore is: is the project striving to reach a larger number of vulnerable people (horizontal scalability) or 'deepening the impact' with regards to a specific targeted group (vertical scalability)? This will determine who is involved, in addition to guiding budgeting within the project timeframe and anticipated activities 'post-project'. Scalability requires community and government buy-in, continual stakeholder analysis, and stakeholder capacity building.
- Invest in parallel tracks of community-level implementation and policy influencing. The two approaches go hand-in-hand due to the duality of local evidence in line with medium- to long-term impact. Governments

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capacity  
building

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are reluctant to scale-up resilience building approaches without evidence in practice illustrating the applicability in relation to their communities' vulnerabilities in the face of local shocks and stresses.

- For 'hardware' scalability to be possible there must be an investment in 'software'. Although hardware investments, such as climate-related equipment, ICT solutions, or materials may be easier to scale-up, there is a prerequisite for training and maintenance processes (i.e. 'software' support) that must complement such provisions.

## Are we working with the most vulnerable?

### *Determining who is vulnerable*

Where programming is meant to support the 'most vulnerable' to increase their resilience to shocks and stresses, defining vulnerability can be difficult and there is a difference between poverty and vulnerability, although they are closely interrelated. Vulnerability can be due to discrimination, possibly resulting from ethnic differences, gender, or disability, and so the most vulnerable in a community may not be the most visible – therefore identifying and targeting the most vulnerable can be a considerable challenge.

Who defines vulnerability in any given context? Do NGOs define vulnerability, or do communities define vulnerability according to their own criteria? In addition, does labelling certain people as the 'most vulnerable' create stigma and have negative consequences? While it is necessary that the most vulnerable benefit from project interventions, it can be argued that projects which only target the most vulnerable may not be supported by local leadership and other members of the community, who may actively attempt to limit the benefits. Whereas if projects provide tangible benefits to more than just the most vulnerable, there may be broader support, potentially making the impacts more sustainable.

When targeting the most vulnerable it is essential to identify and understand vulnerability, and so good analysis is important (bearing in mind the point above about who defines vulnerability). This has been highlighted previously by the Bond Resilience Learning Group: 'By investigating the geographic and social factors driving vulnerability – such as gender, race, ethnicity, cultural practices, and age – we can better understand the kinds of threats different groups face, informing which populations we target for future interventions, and how' (Interagency Resilience Learning Group, 2017). Also, vulnerability is dynamic and changes as risks and capacities change, so vulnerability analysis is not a one-off exercise at the outset of a project but should be repeated and revisited regularly throughout the project.

It is essential to identify and understand vulnerability, and so good analysis is important

### **Tools for assessing and analysing resilience and vulnerability**

CARE has developed various participatory approaches and tools to understand how gender and other factors intersect to influence people's vulnerability and capacity. These include: the [Gender Equality Framework \(CARE International, 2018\)](#); gender analysis (the systematic attempt to

identify key issues contributing to gender inequalities and thus contributing to poor development outcomes); **Rapid Gender Analysis** (CARE International, n.d.) in emergency contexts; Gender-sensitive Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (**GCVCA; CARE International, 2014**) (a participatory methodology to understand the implications of climate change on the lives and livelihoods of poverty-affected people with a gender lens); inclusive planning; and monitoring change from a gender perspective, including social norms and power dynamics. These have helped CARE to better recognize the different ways in which women, men, girls, and boys are exposed to and are sensitive to different risks, shocks, and stresses.

Plan International's **Child-Friendly Feedback Mechanisms Guide and Toolkit** (2018) guides civil society actors to be accountable to communities with which they collaborate in terms of both humanitarian and development actions. Feedback mechanisms are key to accountability as they provide children, young people, and communities with relevant information and the opportunity to provide feedback. Not only does this lead to more effective programming but it also contributes to the empowerment of communities, including children and young people. Feedback mechanisms have been found to play a critical role in safeguarding children and young people in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes preventative action and handling complaints about any breaches of organizational safeguarding policy and codes of conduct for staff, partners, and associates.

The most vulnerable people and communities should be assisted to tackle the long-term, underlying causes of their vulnerability, and this should be done in a way that is sustainable

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Due to the dynamic nature of vulnerability, and the challenges in identifying and reaching the most vulnerable, there needs to be flexibility built into interventions, drawing on adaptive management principles and approaches. Learning needs to be an integral part of programming, with feedback loops to trigger adaptations and adjustments in response to changes in contexts, with project teams and donors being open to changing needs. Monitoring the impact of interventions also helps improve understanding on the people the interventions are supporting – it should not be assumed that project activities will always be supporting the most vulnerable or are even designed to do so, and iterative learning can help tailor interventions towards the kind of support that different people need.

### *Addressing immediate and long-term needs*

A major challenge for addressing vulnerability is finding the balance between dealing with immediate needs and tackling longer-term issues. If projects are supporting the most vulnerable in building their resilience and addressing the root causes of vulnerability, they need to work towards lasting solutions. The most vulnerable people and communities should be assisted to tackle the long-term, underlying causes of their vulnerability, and this should be done in a way that is sustainable. However, this is likely to mean that the benefits of such actions are not seen or felt for a considerable time. Within contexts which face regular crises, it is often necessary to address immediate needs alongside tackling underlying issues, to uphold our humanitarian imperative to save lives and relieve suffering.



### Strengthening existing systems of solidarity

In Gao, Niger the BRACED SUR1M project aims to build resilience to climate extremes at scale through a gender-responsive, community-centred disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation approach. SUR1M fosters women's empowerment by promoting Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC). Since January 2018, SILC have been established in the communes of Gounzoureye and Soni Aliber. In addition to weekly meetings, the SILC group named 'IR NAATA' of Kokorom village has initiated an income-generating activity called 'mats of resilience'. After observing that the poorest and most vulnerable members of the group had difficulties consistently contributing the weekly savings requirement of the SILC, the group started thinking of ways to allow all members to remain active.

The resilience mats are produced with local materials by all the members and then given to a vulnerable member of the group to sell at the market. She can then use the money to make her SILC contribution. This is an old self-help custom that has been revitalized by the group with support from SUR1M. In addition to providing financial rewards, the group meetings are now also contributing to social cohesion, unjustified absences are rare, and the group is generating more savings because all the members can contribute.

### Recommendations for addressing vulnerability

- Engage with communities in determining vulnerability and identifying the 'most vulnerable' through participatory processes that are designed to ensure marginalized people have a voice.
- Allow sufficient time, budget, and attention to these participatory processes at the outset of projects and incorporate continual analysis throughout project implementation to assess whether the interventions are reaching and positively supporting those they are intended to (noting that projects may not always be designed to reach the most vulnerable and/or it may be hard to ascertain who is the 'most vulnerable' prior to analysis because they may be almost invisible at the start of the project).
- Ensure humanitarian interventions are coupled with efforts to tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability, and that resilience programming includes mechanisms to respond to emergencies and crises throughout the multi-year duration of the project.
- Understand existing social structures that can be strengthened and made more inclusive as part of the intervention and build on these as entry points for sustainable impact.

Ensure humanitarian interventions are coupled with efforts to tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability

## Is capacity strengthening enough?

An essential element of supporting resilience is helping to increase the capacity of vulnerable members of communities. In projects, this often manifests as skills training and workshops, but if people need to gain new skills and different capacities to adapt to future risks and hazards/shocks that may be different, what capacities do they need to gain these skills themselves after

a project ends? Often capacity strengthening can be reduced to measuring numbers of training sessions delivered and numbers of participants, but is this a true assessment of the deeper capacity needed for continued resilience to future shocks and stresses?

Capacity-building for resilience must look beyond just bringing in trainers to train, but towards empowering communities and households to identify what skills they need and to know where and how to get them. This requires a shift away from seeing capacity building as a deficiency among communities and households, like a gap that needs to be filled, but as brokering a demand-driven service that is defined by communities and households themselves. It should be part of a layered and tailored approach – not just individual trainings but a series of activities and connections that build on one another. Progressing beyond conventional one-off trainings, capacity strengthening can include refresher sessions, establishing mechanisms for putting skills into practice (e.g. simulations, demonstrations), learning groups/circles for reinforcing and strengthening learning, exchanges with other communities, and so on.

Community  
leaders  
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continue  
capacity-  
building  
beyond a  
project

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Being able to strengthen one's own capacity after a project ends requires risk analysis, identification of opportunities and skills needed, knowledge on where to access those skills, and the ability to secure the services that can provide skills and information transfer. Community leaders can help to continue capacity-building beyond a project, but connections with peers, institutions, and other providers are also important to ensure that skills can be updated in future without the intervention of a project.

#### Recommendations for strengthening capacity

- Encourage flexibility in defining capacity-strengthening needs. It is not necessary to pre-determine all capacity needs at the start of a project, but these should evolve from experience and discussions with communities. The focus of skills-building activities should be open to adjustment as needs change over time.
- Focus on empowerment and self-directed learning, not just skills. Make sure those targeted are able (have the 'know-how' and confidence) to pursue further knowledge without the project intervening.
- Foster linkages to enable capacity strengthening beyond the end of a project and for new skills and capacities to be accessed as they arise. Build peer-to-peer links (trainer-to-trainer, community-to-community, etc.) to facilitate effective capacity building, link communities to providers and resources for future capacity strengthening and accessing new skills. Invest in strengthening of the whole skills and knowledge 'supply chain' (government services, providers, communities), supporting and working with local networks to maintain links after projects end.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of capacity strengthening to measure impact. Develop better definitions and understanding of what impactful capacity-building looks like and how it can be measured (the impact beyond the training), focus reporting on effectiveness, not only on numbers of participants as logframe indicators.

## What and how should we influence in the policy environment?

For resilience building to be effective and transformative capacities built, there should not be a distinction between policy and programming, as we recognize that influencing change at several levels is a programmatic intervention. The policy context is the overarching environment under which programmes sit and its integration into programme strategy is critical for meaningful and lasting impact.

### *Influencing policies*

Thorough and robust political economy analysis is needed to understand the policy levers – good political economy analysis can help identify and understand contradictions in policy and legislation, thus opening up channels for different sectors to engage and exchange on building more effective policies and practices for resilience. For effective policy or legislative change, projects need to be as specific as possible on their policy ask and link this directly to the drivers of specific vulnerabilities. Using vulnerability as the lens for the political economy analysis allows projects to ensure that the policy outcomes will create the enabling environment to build resilience.

Challenges to effective policy, however, might not always be addressed by creating new or changing existing policies but by supporting policy implementation. For policies to be implementable, it may not be about the policy itself but about clarity around roles and responsibilities, having adequate finance and other resources, and whether the policy outcomes are realistic. Also, many sectors help people build their resilience, and coherence between different sectoral policies and how well they are implemented collectively can impact on people's resilience, such as policies on social security, land-use, environment, health, water resource management, and urban planning.

### *Influencing the policy environment*

Policy influencing is important for creating transformative change, but is the changing of individual policies truly transformative? In resilience programming with components focused on advocating for policies that help the most vulnerable deal with shocks, stresses, and the impacts of climate, there is the potential risk of not challenging the broader policy environment itself to be inclusive and open to influence by the most vulnerable themselves. For people to continue to improve their resilience, they need to be able to influence their own policy environment in future so that the most at risk can have their say in future policy debates.

Resilience projects often focus on bottom-up action, but do these always give communities an effective voice, and particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized? We need to accept a realistic assessment of how far bottom-up policy influencing can reach, and the actual level of engagement and collaboration among communities and local civil society that is necessary to enable this to happen. One often underutilized area is to increase transparency on implementation of existing policies to demonstrate accountability to communities, which could be broadened to include donor policies as well.

Policy influencing is important for creating transformative change, but is the changing of individual policies truly transformative

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It is important to engage local communities, understand the vulnerabilities and the voice and values of those vulnerabilities, and then mobilize communities recognizing that change for resilience building may be down to personal influence and values. Hence it is critical to clearly identify actors, the entry points, and the evidence necessary to deliver the change desired. In some cases, disaster events can be opportunities to change broader policy systems, where resilience policies are revisited and updated in the aftermath of an event.

### **Land reform in Nepal**

Following the Nepal earthquake in 2015, CAFOD and its partners Cordaid and Parivartan PATRA supported a recovery project in Rasuwa District in Nepal, involving housing reconstruction, livelihoods, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and DRR. One component of this project was to ensure that people without legal land rights, such as those who had been living on *Birta* (grantee land) and *Guthi* land (trust land) for many years, could obtain legal access to land to enable them to benefit from the government's housing reconstruction grants and new livelihoods opportunities. This involved collaboration with the local organization, District Land Rights Forum (DLRF), who had been working on land rights issues for local farmers for many years. Through the project, DLRF worked with vulnerable groups such as displaced people, *dalits*, minority ethnic groups, and single women, preparing documentary evidence so that they could obtain land certificates from the local government, and supporting their applications for shelter grants. This was slow work, but after three years, 90 families had received new land certificates and by the formal end of the project in April 2018, a further 200 families were in the process of land registration. In collaboration with those affected and local communities, DLRF has also advocated to district and national government on land rights policy issues, such as male and female dual ownership changes in land registration certificates, to enable women to access shelter grants.

### **Southern Voices on Adaptation, CARE**

CARE's Southern Voices on Adaptation project was first initiated in 2008 and has continued over the past 10 years through funding by the Danish government (Southern Voices on Climate Change, website). The project supports southern civil society organizations from Asia, Africa, and Latin America in advocating for climate change policies, both nationally and globally, that benefit poor and vulnerable people. Southern Voices has established a southern network of civil society organizations involved in advocacy on climate change, facilitated South–South exchanges and sharing, developed joint principles of adaptation that are applicable for all regions, delivered capacity building for civil society on advocacy and influencing, and developed numerous advocacy toolkits (Southern Voices on Climate Change, 2014). The focus on empowering local actors to have a voice and influence in their own policy environments cultivates the transformational capacity needed for building resilience to climate change.

## Resilience programmes must integrate policy and programming outcomes

### Recommendations for policy influencing

- To strengthen resilience and have sustainable impact, resilience programmes must integrate policy and programming outcomes and not attempt to tackle them separately. Policy objectives should be based on reducing vulnerability of communities and households and reducing the challenges to delivering resilience-building interventions, and programmes need to be tailored to the policy environment they are operating within.
- Focus on empowerment to influence the system, not just changing individual policies. Consider strengthening entire systems of policy development and implementation, looking at government services, providers, local civil society, and communities and then identifying where there are critical capacity limitations. Empower communities to be able to pursue their policy change ambitions. Mainstream inclusion in policy processes (gender, age, most vulnerable, etc.) to ensure those most at risk are not further marginalized and are able to have a voice in policy processes.
- When thinking about transformative change, explore a range of options and do not assume that policy change is necessarily more significant than behaviour change or systems change. Advocating for new policy without capacity and budget will not change outcomes.
- Consider how technology can lead to fundamental shifts, for example downward accountability or transparency in decision-making. Explore opportunities that technology provides to enhance communication, networking, and information sharing as well as to increase and reinforce transparency and accountability between actors.

## How long does it take to create impact?

In the workshop, participants were asked to determine how long it would take to deliver typical resilience project activities and achieve resilience outcomes within a three-year timescale and a nine-year timescale. This comparison drew out clear lessons on timescales and project impact for building resilience.

It was agreed that more discrete activities such as delivering training or setting up an irrigation scheme can be done in the first few years of a project in a best-case scenario (i.e. less challenging operating environments). Activities and outcomes that require deeper systems changes (e.g. changing government policy, establishing early warning systems) take much longer and often go beyond a three-year project duration. It was highlighted that three-to-five-year project timescales reflect political cycles, rather than how long it would actually take to deliver something sustainably and effectively. There is also a distinction between how long it takes to set something up/complete an activity, and how long it will be sustainable on its own. An example was given of farmer field schools, whereby establishing the group and supporting it throughout the project does not automatically mean that it will have the means to continue after the end of the project, even if the farmers still feel there is value in continuing.

Activities can be delivered within a three-to-five-year timeframe of a project, but building resilience requires a different type of support after a project ends to ensure sustainability of the capacities that have been strengthened. A proposed way to structure programmes differently was to have longer timeframes with two distinct phases in which activities are delivered in the first three-to-five-years, and arms-length support provided over several subsequent years (not implementing, but providing advisory assistance to communities and building independence and sustainability of impact).

With these two phases, implementing partners would have the scope to plan across them and devote sufficient effort towards empowerment, sustainability, and long-term impact. The current paradigm means agencies are only able to focus on delivering activities and limiting these based on what can be done within the project timeframe (rather than thinking about longer-term processes that will best support resilience within that particular context). This would require contracts with donors that enable IPs to continue to engage and provide assistance on an as-need basis to communities beyond the end of the implementation phase of a project, similar to being a service provider with communities as the clients.

The collective call by NGOs to donors for longer timeframes for resilience programmes is not to do the same project activities over a longer period, but to work in a different way and for better impact (Interagency Resilience Learning Group, 2017). A longer inception period would help improve building and strengthening of relationships with stakeholders and partners and provide more time for more meaningful consultation and participation with communities. Longer periods of programming allow projects more time for nimbleness to test and trial and for adaptive management, rather than pressure to deliver outputs. Transformative system and policy changes that require multiple years of effort can be planned for, and better monitored to assess if desired changes are taking place. Continuing engagement beyond the end of project implementation can include post-project monitoring to determine impact and troubleshoot if needed. Beyond individual projects, national strategic planning and policy development with a range of stakeholders can help ensure programmes are coherently designed and working towards collective resilience outcomes.

#### Recommendations on timescales for resilience projects

- Design resilience programmes with longer timeframes which allow for dedicated effort towards activity implementation and sustainability in two phases:
  - *Phase 1.* Inception phase and implementation of discrete project activities (e.g. project inception period, community risk analyses, delivery of capacity strengthening, establishing community-level groups, investing in community assets and resources).
  - *Phase 2.* Provision of advisory services to communities and strengthening self-reliance (e.g. post-project monitoring and evaluation, further needs and risk analyses with communities, linkages to other service providers, provision of additional technical support, establishing local accountability mechanisms with government and service providers, continuation of policy-influencing activities).



- Facilitate collaboration with national entities, local organizations and donors to ensure better design of programmes to meet needs in-country over a longer timeframe. For example, the German government has established an in-country strategic group of national government departments, NGOs, and local civil society organizations to help strategic thinking and programming over a 12-year time horizon. Could something similar be explored in the UK?

### 3. Final reflections

As a flagship resilience programme, BRACED provides a unique opportunity for a wide-ranging suite of resilience projects led by different implementing agencies to test partnership working and programme management structures, to help demonstrate what does and does not work in building resilience across different contexts, building evidence across a diverse portfolio of projects. Coupled with the Bond Resilience Learning Group members' experience in delivering resilience programming globally, contributing towards international communities of practice on resilience and advocacy within global policy arenas, the views shared during the learning event are rooted in considerable organizational experience and expertise.

Efforts to strengthen communities and the most vulnerable must focus on holistic interventions across multiple scales

The recommendations captured in this report reflect the overarching view that the nature of resilience (i.e. being able to deal with shocks and stresses now and in the future) means that efforts to strengthen communities and the most vulnerable must focus on holistic interventions across multiple scales. This includes changing behaviour and social norms, transforming vulnerabilities, and building capacities, supported by continual analysis and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and risks, combined with systems change and influencing to create an enabling policy environment. These outcomes are much more complex and take a long time to develop and embed. Project design, budgets, monitoring, reporting, and implementation of resilience programmes need to be structured to enable flexible programming, allow longer timeframes, promote adaptive management, and, most importantly, for the direction and outcomes to be driven by communities and households themselves in order to have lasting impact.

### Annex 1: List of workshop participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Title</i>
Jen Abdella	Near East Foundation	Senior Practice Area Lead – Environment & Natural Resources
Chiara Ambrosino	iDE Global	Senior Advisor, Climate and Resilience
Stephanie Andrei	KPMG	BRACED FM Impact Manager
Christopher Belperron	Save the Children	Risk and Resilience Senior Advisor

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Title</i>
Alan Brouder	Concern	Senior Resilience Adviser
Valeria Drigo	Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction	Advocacy and Learning Coordinator
Richard Ewbank	Christian Aid	Global Climate Advisor
Vincent Gaaney	DFID	Climate Resilience Advisor
Jonathan Garrard	Farm Africa	Deputy Director of Programmes
Jason Garrett	World Vision	Senior Resilience Programme Adviser
Andrew Harrington	BBC Media Action	Senior Project Manager
Maggie Ibrahim	World Vision	Preparedness and Livelihoods Manager
Sheri Lim	CARE	Climate Change & Resilience Team Leader
Jane Mackenzie	Tearfund	Resilience Officer
Colin McQuistan	Practical Action	Senior Adviser, Climate Change & Disaster Risk Reduction
Hannah Mutawi	Islamic Relief Worldwide	Humanitarian team
Aimee Neaverson	ODI	BRACED KM Director of Operations
Catherine Pettengell	Bond DEG	Bond Development and Environment Group (DEG) Coordinator
Nicky Robertson	WWF	Regional Manager, International Conservation Programmes
Charlotte Rye	ODI	BRACED KM Communications Officer
Jenna Saidi	DFID	Policy Manager
Vidhisha Samarasekara	KPMG	BRACED FM Head
Kamal Shah	KPMG	BRACED FM Deputy Head
Danielle Skidmore	CAFOD	Humanitarian Funding Officer Africa
Moira Simpson	Plan International	Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience Advisor
Nathalie Thomas	Y Care International	International Programme Coordinator
Maarten van Aalst	Red Cross Climate Centre	BRACED KM Co-chair of Steering Committee
Zoe Windle	ODI	BRACED KM Project Officer
Annette Wulf	WHH	Public Funding Officer

## Annex 2: Key messages from BRACED final year evaluation

- *Resilience building is not just determined by what you do but how you do it.* Programmes need to think beyond activities and begin by considering the key processes that underpin resilient outcomes. Project designs need to clearly show the pathway for identifying and assessing the logic, sequencing, and integration of the right combinations of activities and actors, in addition to a clear understanding of the processes that will lead to change.
- *Adaptive and flexible programming approaches are essential to deal with potential trade-offs and mitigate the risks of future maladaptation.* Such approaches are essential to manage the potential trade-offs of addressing short- and long-term resilience capacities, maintain the relevance and appropriateness of project activities, and to ensure that communities are not 'locked in' to one pathway that may become obsolete in the future.
- *Addressing climate variability is more important than providing long-term climate information.* Long-term climate information does not need to be an essential element of building resilience. Projects should make sure that people are able to make choices based on short-term weather information while planning over the longer term.
- *Building resilience requires equality – projects must move beyond participation of the most vulnerable towards addressing the root causes of exclusion.* Future projects and programmes should tackle the root causes of social exclusion and reflect realistic timeframes to achieve change from the start.
- *Building resilience is not enough – change also needs to be sustainable and transformational.* Adaptive, anticipatory, and absorptive capacity can be built in ways that are or are not transformational. This depends on whether they affect social and political structural changes, are catalytic, impacting at scale, and sustainable. Programmes need to combine community-based projects with national and regional engagements to effectively influence policy and decision making.

Read the full report for more: *Routes to Resilience: Insights from BRACED Final Year* (Villanueva et al., 2017).

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## Endnote

1. Definitions of resilience and understanding of the capacities necessary to build resilience are broadly agreed upon by agencies involved in BRACED and the Bond Resilience Learning Group, and have been captured in various documents: Interagency Resilience Learning Group (2017) and BRACED (2017).

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