



GLOBAL RESILIENCE LEARNING EVENT



OXFAM

COVER: Participants in the November 2016 Global Resilience Learning Event pose for a group photo.
Haroon Khan / Oxfam America

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Resilience and resilient development are emerging concepts in the development and humanitarian fields. Development and humanitarian organizations categorize the key drivers of risks and vulnerabilities faced by poor communities as three sets of contextual challenges: a social justice challenge, a humanitarian challenge, and an adaptive challenge. Sustained and integrated program interventions are necessary not only to help communities overcome these challenges but to help them thrive in the circumstances they find themselves in.

In recent years, Oxfam, too, has been exploring how to make more-effective linkages between short-term emergency responses and longer-term development programming. During the past three years, thanks to a grant from the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies and in collaboration with several partners, Oxfam has implemented two major multi-country resilience-building initiatives in Africa, Central America, and the Pacific: the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative (the R4 Initiative) and the Central America–Melanesia Resilience Building Program (the CA-MEL Program).

Both programs engage different yet complementary ways of building the resilience of impoverished segments of the population where they are working. Each has incorporated strong monitoring, evaluative, and learning mechanisms in order to assess changes and sustainability in community resilience.

Both the R4 Initiative and the CA-MEL Program were designed before the Oxfam framework and guidance for resilient development “The future is a choice” was adopted by Oxfam, and neither conforms exactly to the framework; however, the underlying principles are similar, and it is possible to map respective project activities against the framework to assess gaps and complementarities.

To exchange knowledge and lessons learned from the R4 and CA-MEL resilience-building initiatives, Oxfam organized the Global Resilience Learning

Three main findings from the learning event:

1. Time is critical. It takes much longer to build resilience than we actually care to admit.
2. There is zero resilience building without the full community’s participation and involvement.
3. Women are fundamental to resilience building.

Event, a four-day gathering of teams from the project countries to share their experiences, achievements, and best practices in community resilience building, and to examine resilience building from various perspectives, including the basic building blocks, social change processes, gender issues, key resilience capacities (Absorptive, adaptive and transformative), policy and influencing aspects, and monitoring frameworks. The relevance and utility of Oxfam's emerging Framework and Guidance for Resilient Development was also discussed.

The Global Resilience Learning Event, held November 15–18, 2016, in Boston, highlighted several findings shared by the two projects and the countries where they were undertaken: (1) ensuring sustainable change requires a long-term perspective or investment, (2) community ownership in the change processes is essential, (3) a systems approach is necessary to deal with the multidimensional nature of challenges faced by communities, (4) gender-sensitive programming is central to building household and community resilience, and (5) diversifying or spreading risks is key to reducing the vulnerability of communities facing threats from climate change.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Margaret A. Cargill Foundation, one of Oxfam's strategic partners, has been supporting our work since 2009. In 2015, the Cargill Foundation granted Oxfam America \$5 million to support the expansion of the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative (R4 Initiative) in Ethiopia and Senegal for two years, and \$4.6 million for the Central America–Melanesia Resilience Building Program (the CA-MEL Program) to explore resilience pathways in El Salvador, Guatemala, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. The two programs have different yet congruent approaches to building resilient communities; they use different methodologies but measure the progress and changes in similar resilience capacities. Thus, the two grants created a unique opportunity for Oxfam's development and humanitarian teams to compare and share these two pathways to building resilient communities vulnerable to natural disasters, as undertaken in the November 2016 Global Resilience Learning Event and described in this report. This section provides a brief comparison of the structure and approach of the two programs and their implementation, and then describes the Learning Event and its objectives.

The concept of resilience has become central to Oxfam's strategic plan. The shocks, stresses, and uncertainties faced by vulnerable communities are becoming increasingly complex, intense, and recurrent. Vulnerable communities, with the support of other change actors and duty bearers, need a systemic approach that allows them to use different levers simultaneously to produce the desired outcomes.

Programs designed to increase the resilience of households, villages, communities, and regions rely on a combination of complementary approaches, methodologies, and strategies. These approaches, methodologies and strategies should be focused on (1) resolving gender inequalities, (2) ensuring access to financial services, (3) improving natural resource management, (4) developing active citizenship, (5) creating access to better inputs and techniques, and (5) building capacity for local and national organizations. As a rights-based organization, Oxfam works on a continuum that spans local program delivery to partners at the national level through influencing the policies that can support resilience building. Examples of resilience building include investing in smallholder farming, building gender equality, managing natural resources, creating social protection mechanisms, and developing community-level engagement through decentralization.

Given all these components, measuring the efficacy and impact of such programs is complex and requires a combination of qualitative and quantitative

methodologies to understand the positive and sometimes negative changes, and most often to clarify questions left unanswered.

Comparison of the R4 Initiative and CA-MEL Program

	R4	CA - MEL
Number of participants	36,690 direct participants (29,127 from Ethiopia and 7,563 from Senegal).	43,751 direct and indirect participants (El Salvador, Guatemala, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu). An additional 41,455 were supported via the emergency response component of the project.
Main components	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CA-MEL <i>Risk reduction</i> through national resource management and disaster risk reduction (DRR) asset building 2. Prudent risk taking by increasing access to affordable credit 3. Risk reserves created with access to adapted savings products 4. Risk transfer via weather-index assurance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase awareness and capacities for disaster risk reduction and response 2. Increase access to resilient livelihoods and social services 3. Increase collaboration between communities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and governmental actors and other developmental stakeholders 4. Create an emergency response
Implementation period	The R4 initiative began in 2009 and it is ongoing.	CA-MEL ran from 2014 to 2017.

The Boston Global Resilience Learning Event

Thirty-two participants gathered in Boston November 15–18, 2016, for the Global Resilience Learning Event. Participants included R4 and CA-MEL staff, Oxfam and partner organizations from six countries, guests from the Oxfam confederation, and key partners, such as the World Food Program. Participants shared evaluation findings and questions, and learned from each.

The objectives of the Learning Event were threefold:

1. To further develop a shared, concrete, and practical understanding of resilience, based on Oxfam’s resilience framework and collective experience from humanitarian and development perspectives.
2. To strengthen the capacity of country teams in monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) for measuring changes in resilience at various levels (individual, household, community, and national).
3. To identify innovative and practical ways for strengthening project stakeholders’ role in promoting both the knowledge and practice of resilience.

II. GLOBAL RESILIENCE LEARNING EVENT: SESSIONS AND LESSONS

The Global Resilience Learning Event was a collaborative effort between the CA-MEL and R4 projects to share and distill respective experiences in community resilience building. Each project has substantial internal learning components built into its program, including annual reflections, assessments, research, and evaluations. Key findings of these processes have been periodically shared between the two projects, and resources were reserved for a one-time, face-to-face exchange between key staff members from all project countries after they completed their two-year program implementation.

The Learning Event served as a platform to share practical experiences of implementation of two different programmatic approaches, as well as to reflect on Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development. Sessions were focused on the design of program models; best practices, challenges, and achievements; monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL); gender; management of resilience programs; and the importance of policy and influence in resilience programming. This report highlights the key conversations and the conclusions that emerged. It is anticipated that the lessons from CA-MEL and R4 will improve the focus, design, and management of future resilience programs among Oxfam confederation members and actors sector-wide.



Roughly 30 colleagues from all project countries and headquarters attended the Global Resilience Learning Event held in Boston in November 2016. *Haroon Khan / Oxfam America*

There were 15 sessions during the three days of the retreat. Some of them, like the first one, were organizational. Others were very similar. In the next section, we focus on the ones considered more relevant to share.

SESSION 2: CA-MEL VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

El Salvador, Guatemala, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu rank high on the climate and natural disaster risk index and face similar threats from cyclones/hurricanes, floods, droughts, tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. However, institutional arrangements, government and community preparedness, and response capacities differ in each place. The purpose of the virtual field trips¹ at the Learning Event was to highlight respective approaches, experiences, and lessons learned through implementation of the projects. The common purpose across all project countries was to reduce vulnerability of at-risk communities while increasing their absorptive and adaptive capacities.

Central America

Central America has had a long tradition of disaster risk reduction (DRR) programming and direct engagement with communities. In El Salvador and Guatemala, CA-MEL included a mix of program interventions that helped enhance food security and rural livelihoods, while strengthening preparedness and risk reduction at the community level. Innovative techniques were introduced in eco-farming, irrigation, rainwater harvesting, water and sanitation improvement, crop and seed diversification, and community savings. Linkages

¹ The team defined virtual field trip is a theatrical representation of a specific project situation that could serve as starting point to exchange knowledge about the projects.

were also strengthened between community organizations and the civil protection departments, ministries of agriculture, and other functionaries at the municipal level. Also, promoting women's leadership has been central at all stages of project implementation, with preliminary monitoring results showing significant increases in the self-esteem and confidence of women in their own potential and ability to contribute to the household economy.

In **El Salvador** (8,845 direct and indirect participants), the project is characterized by a high level of achievement in livelihoods and food security, particularly in climate-smart agriculture, savings and loans groups, and women's empowerment. Interventions in water supply, sanitation, and hygiene have also been implemented. Surveys and ongoing monitoring show that the combination of these activities has improved the well-being of communities, their ability to withstand shocks, and their overall preparedness. Women feel empowered and are reshaping the social status quo. A brief video description of the program is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpNkYZPT6ZI&feature=youtu.be>.

In **Guatemala** (16,974 direct and indirect participants), CA-MEL has also strengthened traditional livelihoods, supported income diversification, improved agricultural production, promoted health, and improved water supply and sanitation. Innovative, women-centered approaches to enterprise development have resulted in rapid achievements in terms of income generation and progress toward gender equity. A brief video description of the program is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKb4XYuRiBI&feature=youtu.be>.



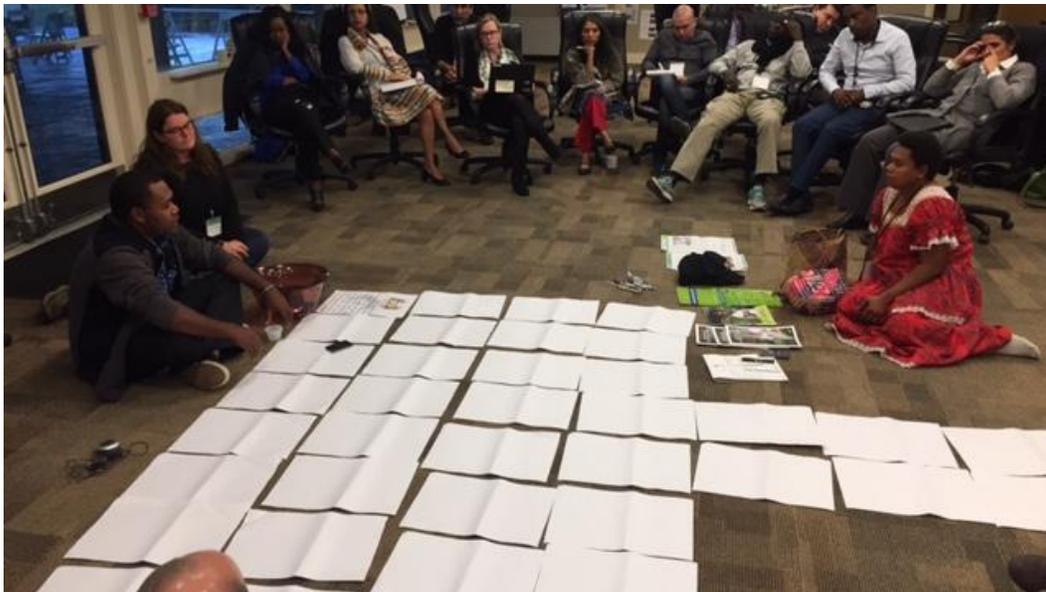
The CA-MEL Program Central America team presents its work in El Salvador and Guatemala at the Global Resilience Learning Event in Boston. *Haroon Khan / Oxfam America*

Melanesia

CA-MEL interventions in Melanesia have also focused on the community level and on building stronger links with government nationally and regionally. At the national and regional level, for example, the Vanuatu Climate Action Network, a civil society organization supported by CA-MEL that has strong links to rural communities, was nominated to the national United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) task force as a co-chair, enabling representation of voices from the ground. And at the community level, CA-MEL has been increasing the awareness of women, men, and youth about the causes and impacts of natural hazards, promoting leadership and social standing of women and youth, and supporting livelihoods mainly related to resilient farming practices, market linkages, and community savings.

In the **Solomon Islands** (1,248 direct and indirect participants), governance structures and procedures have been improved, disaster planning at household and community levels has been implemented, agricultural practices have been improved, and women's savings groups have been introduced. Women and youth now also have a greater awareness of their rights to be involved in decision-making.

In **Vanuatu** (16,974 direct and indirect participants), the project has increased the capacity to reduce risks and has shifted mindsets regarding risk reduction. Women are taking a greater role in risk reduction planning and implementation. In comparison with the other countries, Vanuatu has seen much greater engagement with provincial and national government, including policy and practice influence through two national networks coordinated by Oxfam. A brief video description of the program is available at <https://vimeo.com/217790665>.



The CA-MEL Program Melanesia team presents its work in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu at the Global Resilience Learning Event in Boston. *Haroon Khan / Oxfam America*

Key lessons shared during the virtual field trip

Several lessons related to program design, content, and management emerged from the CA-MEL experience in these countries:

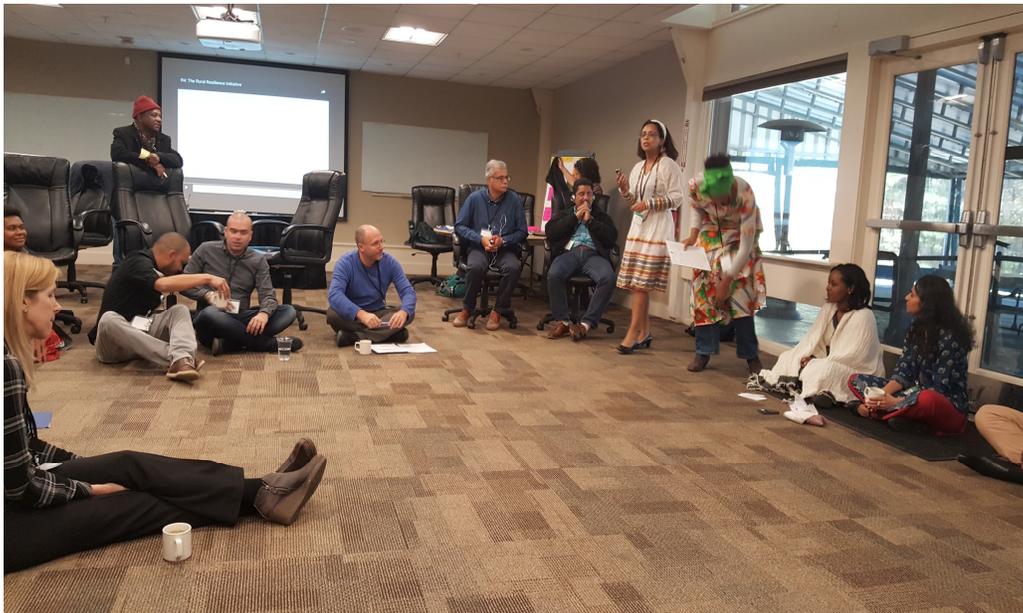
- A participatory analysis of the context, community capacities, and vulnerabilities is essential as a starting point for any resilience program. This analysis must be regularly refreshed during the program.
- The program design should feature an explicit focus on gender. Care has to be exercised to manage the implications of disturbing the gender status quo.
- Participatory tools such as community notice boards or the Spider Web tool developed in Melanesia should be employed to assess community perceptions of resilience.
- Effective social mobilization of community structures is essential to instill a sense of collective ownership of project interventions, as well as to effectively connect with government institutions.
- Economic empowerment of women results in emancipation and increased resilience. Thus, in terms of human capital, self-esteem of women may be as important as knowledge and skills for building resilience.
- Inclusive leadership and involvement of women is the foundation for building community resilience.
- Livelihood diversification contributes to resilience, but it must be accompanied by other disaster risk reduction and mitigation activities. These activities might include, for example, conservation of soil and water, construction of banks and dams, and use of drought-resistant seeds.
- Sufficient time, capacity, and resources must be dedicated for periodic self-reflection and learning from others.

SESSION 3: R4 VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

Oxfam America and the World Food Program (WFP) launched the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative to enable vulnerable rural households to increase their food and income security in the face of increasing climate risks. R4 builds on the initial success of the Horn of Africa Risk Transfer for Adaptation (HARITA) initiative, pioneered in Ethiopia by Oxfam America, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), and Swiss Re in 2008. Through the project's unique insurance-for-assets (IFA) model, the poorest farmers have the option to pay their insurance premiums by contributing their labor on long-term risk reduction activities identified through community-based participatory planning (CBPP). R4 builds the resilience of communities exposed to increasingly severe and frequent climate shocks

through its four comprehensive risk management strategies: improved resource management through community asset creation (risk reduction), insurance (risk transfer), livelihoods diversification and microcredit (prudent risk taking), and savings (risk reserves).

The virtual field trip was an opportunity to share with the CA-MEL Plural teams the main impacts of the program. R4 is currently implemented in four countries (Ethiopia, Senegal, Malawi, and Zambia) and reaches around 30,000 households.²



The R4 team shares its virtual field trip at the Global Resilience Learning Event in Boston. *Julio Espinoza / Oxfam America*

Results of R4

Thanks to the implementation of R4, communities have a greater understanding of risks and vulnerabilities, and changes in stresses and uncertainties are being regularly monitored. Insurance companies now understand there is a market potential for insurance for smallholder farmers and have produced products tailored for that economic sector. Participants are also more willing to invest in productive inputs, diversify their income sources, and live in conditions more adapted to the negative effects of climate change. Recent evaluations prove the success of the project for participants in keeping better food security levels than nonparticipants, especially during shocks. There is also clear evidence of program participants exercising fewer negative coping strategies than nonparticipants and being able to at least maintain their level of wealth during drought periods.

² This estimate represents 180,000 people, assuming an average of six people per household.



R4's virtual field trip is discussed at the Global Resilience Learning Event in Boston in November 2016. *Haroon Khan / Oxfam America*

Key lessons shared during the virtual trip of R4

Several lessons related to program design, content, and management emerged from the R4 experience in these countries, including the importance of the following:

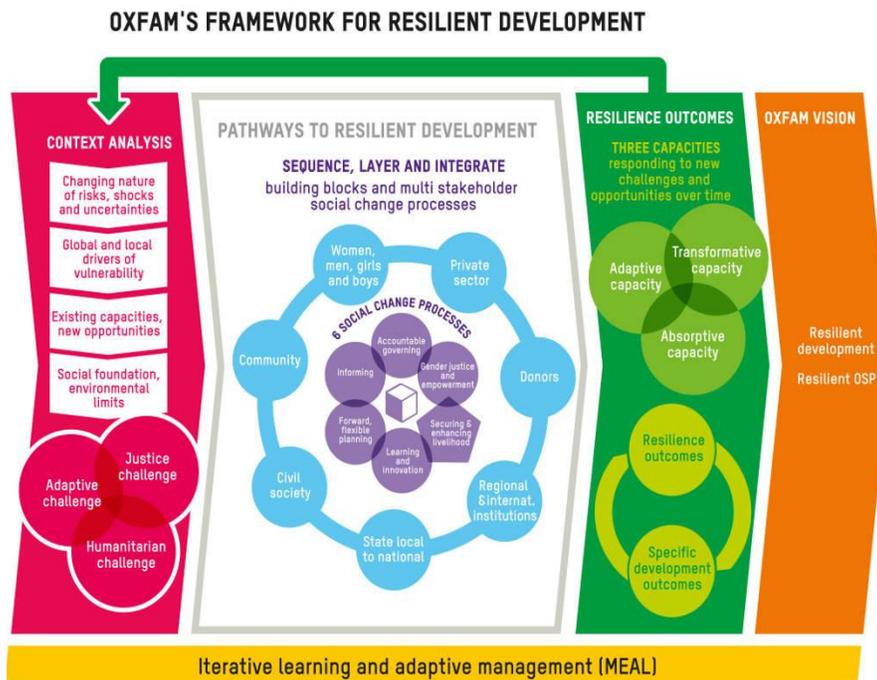
- Gaining communities' trust and working with local partners to achieve positive results in time (e.g., the strategic partnership of Oxfam, the WFP, and implementing partners).
- Learning from previous experiences when scaling up.
- Building good and strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to assess the results. A strong M&E system allows you to see if the strategies are working and to consider the best adjustments, as needed.
- Before expanding the program, consolidating the results obtained, instead of focusing on the number of farmers reached.
- Applying good monitoring to take advantage of unexpected positive changes in the context and to manage the risks of negative ones.
- Measuring women's empowerment to determine whether the program is impacting short- and long-term needs of women.
- Including a local women's organization as a partner or ally of the initiative to help with women's economic empowerment.
- Building on government infrastructure to ensure sustainability and to provide a basis for scaling-up—it is more cost-effective.

SESSION 5: UNPACKING THE OXFAM FRAMEWORK FOR RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

Oxfam’s Framework for Resilient Development

Oxfam’s resilience framework (available at <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/the-future-is-a-choice-the-oxfam-framework-and-guidance-for-resilient-developme-604990>) was developed following an extensive review and consultation with staff working in humanitarian and long-term development programs. This framework takes a rights-based approach to risk, advocates a long-term systems strategy, and promotes a gender-justice perspective in all programming. The framework identifies three key challenges impoverished communities face: *humanitarian*, *social justice*, and *adaptive*. The framework describes how these challenges can be addressed through building the three resilience capacities: *absorptive*, *adaptive*, and *transformative*. The framework proposes that a pathway to building these capacities requires sequencing and integrating traditional building blocks and various multi-stakeholder social change processes. By doing so, the assumption is that we are investing in sustainable and resilient *development* processes. The framework makes a distinction between *building resilience* and *resilient development*. Oxfam’s framework is advocating the latter—in other words, supporting mechanisms or development processes that are robust and sustainable, instead of processes that are lighter, disperse, and focused more on the symptoms than in the structural problems fueling risk.

Figure 2: Oxfam’s Framework for Resilient Development

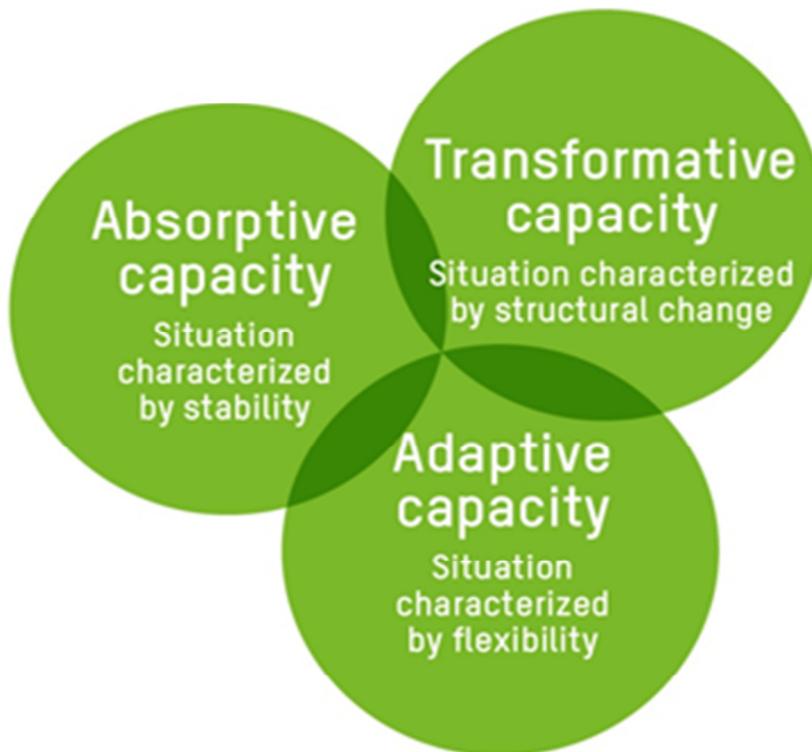


The resilience framework and CA-MEL/R4

Both CA-MEL and R4 were designed and launched before the Oxfam Framework for Resilient Development was finalized. Hence, it has been applied retrospectively by each project as a lens through which to assess program design, focus, and priorities. The Global Resilience Learning Event was an opportunity for a reality check on the utility of the framework and its application as guidance for resilience programming. Both project teams looked at which resilience capacities were being built by their programs, examined development pathways, and considered how the framework helped in shaping, analyzing, and designing more impactful programs. The Learning Event was also an opportunity to ask what is missing or incomplete in the framework.

In principle, both projects have been working on all three resilience capacities, although, in the case of CA-MEL, two to three years is generally considered too short to be able to judge full impact. An actual disaster situation will reveal whether, and to what extent, these capacities have been maintained and are likely to be sustainable beyond the life of CA-MEL and R4. Evidence indicates, nevertheless, that absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities are growing through both projects.

Figure 3: The three resilience capacities



Absorptive capacity is the capacity to take intentional protective action and to cope with known shocks and stresses. It is needed as shocks and stresses will continue to happen, for example, as a consequence of extreme weather events caused by climate change, protracted conflict, and disasters.

Adaptive capacity is the capacity to make intentional incremental adjustments in anticipation of—or in response to—change, in ways that create more flexibility in the future. It is necessary because change is ongoing and uncertain, and because intentional transformation takes time and sustained engagement.

Transformative capacity is the capacity to make intentional change to stop or reduce the causes of risk, vulnerability, poverty, and inequality, and to ensure the more equitable sharing of risk so that it is not unfairly borne by people living in poverty or suffering from discrimination or marginalization.

Examples of changes in **absorptive capacity** via CA-MEL, for example, include changes in agricultural practices such as using native seeds, substituting chemical fertilizers with organic inputs, better managing scarce water resources, diversifying fruit and vegetable production, improving financial saving practices, and improving community organization and collaboration. Similarly, R4 views many DRR activities as enhancing absorptive capacity. Thus, R4 activities included ensuring food security during a crisis, avoiding negative coping strategies, accessing social safety nets, increasing access to savings, and increasing community and household disaster preparedness practices. All are good measures for building absorptive capacities.

Adaptive capacities in both projects have improved through increased awareness of the impacts of climate change, diversification of livelihoods through small enterprise development, increased investment in resources and capacities through access to savings and credit for adaptation, cultivation of more climate resilient crops, and deepening³ and protecting water resources.

Communities have also increased their **transformative capacities** in many ways, as indicated, for example, by women having increased access and control over financial and material resources, gaining more self-esteem and confidence to express their opinions, and having more say in decision-making at the household and community level. In Central America, agroecology⁴ is growing and valued by smallholder farmers who recognize that this model has more long-term benefits for income, health, and safety than the agrochemical model. And in Melanesia, people's awareness of their rights and their engagement with government has transformed community preparedness and response measures

³ "Deepening" refers to hand-dug wells and ponds.

⁴ We define "agroecology" as an ecological approach to agriculture that views agricultural areas as ecosystems and is concerned with the ecological impact of agricultural practices.

and the government's own governance capacity. The success of R4 in Ethiopia in integrating the R4 model in the government's safety net program is a significant achievement with major transformative implications.

Both R4 and CA-MEL projects have recognized that certain activities, such as savings and credit, will address more than one type of capacity. Indeed, access to insurance (seen in R4) is thought to build all three capacities. Moreover, absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities are complementary and can mutually reinforce one another; one is not more important than the other, nor does one have to precede the other. However, a robust and sustainable resilience initiative should include efforts to build all three resilience capacities.

In addition to examining building resilience capacities, participants of the Learning Event also examined the **building blocks** and **social change processes** leading to pathways for development. As advocated by Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development, these blocks and processes can be sequenced, layered, and integrated as mechanisms to ensure efficient pathways towards sustainable development. A reflection on the pathways is a way to examine the efficiencies of project intervention structures, and to identify any gaps or opportunities to improve programming, partnerships, or other strategies.

Reality check on Oxfam's framework

Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development offers a guide or compass (even when applied retrospectively) to analyze the design and management of impactful resilience projects. It offers project teams a common vocabulary to understand what we mean by resilient development and how we can achieve it. Consequently, the framework has also enabled us to compare, contrast, and learn from diverse programs such as CA-MEL and R4.

Given that the resilience framework is still a relatively new concept or approach within Oxfam that has yet to be fully introduced to country staff and partner organizations, a number of questions and challenges remain. In the spirit of making a positive contribution to the improvement and wider understanding of the framework, CA-MEL and R4 teams examined various advantages and remaining tensions or unanswered questions about the framework. These positives and tensions/questions as well as a summary of the discussions are presented briefly in the tables below:

Positive aspects of the Oxfam Framework for Resilient Development
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The resilience framework serves as a compass to analyze the context and program design. It forces us to think about poverty, social justice, exploitation of resources, and how our project interventions will help address these issues. It helps inform the theory of change.2. The resilience framework helps to focus strategy by providing a set of possible tactics to consider, such as linking humanitarian and development approaches, acknowledging the importance of social change processes, linking short-term to long-term objectives, applying a systems perspective, ensuring strategic involvement of multiple stakeholders, focusing on gender, and having a realistic consideration of the time frame needed for sustainable resilient development.3. The resilience framework encourages a holistic perspective. Resilience building must take place at multiple levels: individual, household, community, regional, and national. Where possible, linkages should be made between these levels.4. The Feedback and learning mechanisms featured in the framework for project monitoring systems are essential to ensure viability and regeneration of best practices and to include community perceptions about their own resilience.
Tensions or unanswered questions
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The framework is broad and complex: How much of it can be incorporated into a time-bound, resource-constrained NGO project?2. Will the framework be an advantage or a disadvantage in explaining our program approach to donors?3. Capacity constraints: It is challenging to ensure adequate management, operational, and MEL capacity among staff and partners to apply the framework effectively. Already, we see different interpretations of the framework among Oxfam staff around the world.4. Tensions between country development frameworks and the Oxfam Framework for Resilient Development have to be resolved.5. How do we know we have built sufficient and sustainable resilience capacity? What is good enough? And what combination of capacities and resilience pathways is the right mix for a given context?

Summary of the discussion on the Oxfam Framework for Resilient Development

How does the framework support our programs?

- The framework helps us find things that are missing in our design and analysis, things we should better focus on; it supports the view of more ample processes and the consideration of stakeholders outside of our own activities.
- It helps our analysis go beyond climate-related shocks to include aspects of social justice, gender equality, poverty, and resource exploitation—concerns that are extremely relevant to the people we work with.
- The framework supports linkages between humanitarian and development work by providing common ground to reduce the vulnerability of participants and their risk to disaster.
- This broad framework, which is not sectoral specific, facilitates its alignment to our institutional vision and makes it adaptable to our context.

Challenges we found:

- Despite recognition of its potential, the framework is perceived to be complicated.
- Creating space for different and concurrent interpretations may improve it.

Unsolved question:

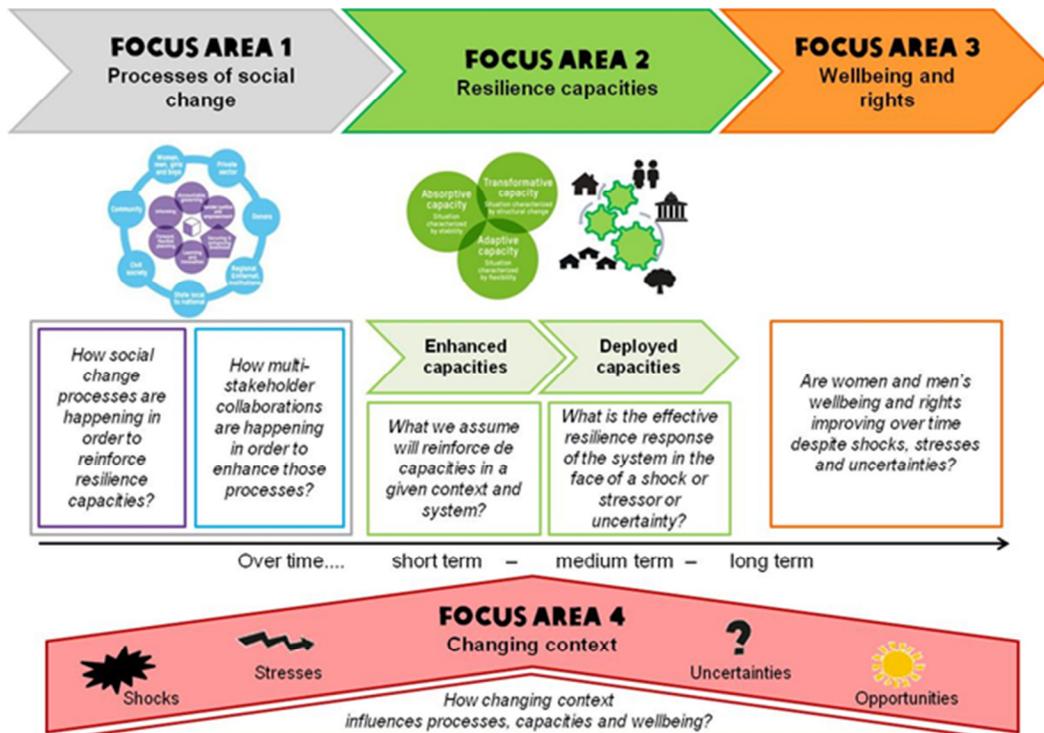
- The framework helps Oxfam have a common understanding about resilience, but how do we effectively translate and communicate it to partners, communities, and donors?

SESSIONS 7 AND 9: MEL IN RESILIENCE

Oxfam, as a rights-based organization, defines resilience as “the ability of women and men to realize their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses, and uncertainty.” The Oxfam Framework for Resilient Development proposes a broad theory of change on how our programming can contribute to create or reinforce this ability that will ultimately result in “resilient development outcomes.”

The diagram in Figure 4 is part of Oxfam’s resilience framework in the form of change logic, and it identifies four focus areas of measurement for resilience.

Figure 4: Change logic in Oxfam’s resilience framework



MEL’s 10 guiding principles

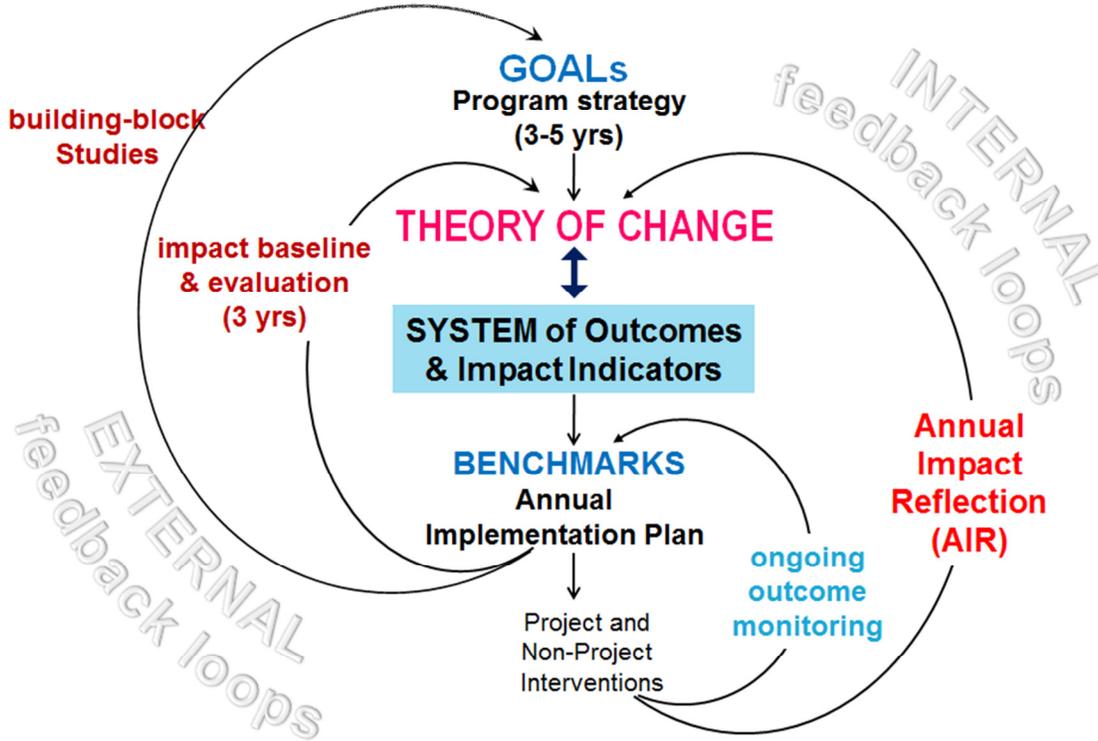
Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) for resilience provides evidence on the scope of change and includes multi-stakeholder learning processes to discover the pathway towards resilient development. It allows us to assess the outcomes achieved and to gather the knowledge necessary to adjust our interventions, if needed. CA-MEL and R4’s MEL systems used the **10 guiding**

principles⁵ as a general guideline to help MEL staff and program teams define and implement MEAL plans that are best suited for resilient development programming. The 10 principles taken into account are described in the following table:

10 guiding principles for MEL in resilience	
1.	Use a theory of change to support systems thinking and to make your assumptions explicit.
2.	Place learning at the center of your MEAL system.
3.	Allow and plan for flexibility.
4.	Track and understand processes of change, not just program outcomes.
5.	Assess resilience capacities at multiple levels and explore connections between them.
6.	Account for timely and frequent data collection sensitive to resilience dynamics.
7.	Collect and make sense of different types of data.
8.	Ensure that your MEAL system is gender sensitive.
9.	Include perspectives of local stakeholders using participatory methods in MEAL.
10.	Ensure accountability mechanisms to multiple stakeholders to build trust and foster adaptive programming

⁵ Some of these 10 principles are common to any complex development process and are not exclusive to resilience. Some principles are already MEAL minimum requirements and are included as Oxfam program standards, but we emphasize them here because they are critical for resilience. Finally, there are a few MEAL principles that are specific to resilience.

Figure 5: Basic components of a program MEL framework



Key learning from the MEL systems implementation

Five key learnings emerged from the MEL systems implementation: (1) the MEL framework of resilience projects has to be very dynamic and adaptive to rapid changes, (2) the model has to be responsive to context, and an exit/scale-up strategy has to be clearly designed at the outset, (3) partner organizations have a wealth of knowledge about MEL, especially at the local level, (4) MEL systems implemented in long-term programs provide unique answers to long-standing questions about resilience, and (5) research is a fundamental complement to MEL. These points are described further in this section.

1. The MEL framework of resilience projects has to be very dynamic and adaptive to rapid changes. The priorities and needs of information in the logic model and MEL system vary according to many factors: the phase of the project cycle, the priorities of the main stakeholders (donors, government actors, primary change agents, partner organizations, and international partners, among others), the level of maturation of the components, events in the internal (i.e., organizational changes, budgets) and external contexts (e.g., disasters, shocks, conflicts, political upheaval, volatility of food prices, and donor priorities).

Systematically reviewing and adjusting strategic tools of the project related to planning and MEL ensures adaptation to the context. For example, the metrics

used to measure the impact of R4 had to be adapted throughout the life of the project. When R4 started in 2008, the MEL system was not designed to measure food security, women's economic empowerment, coping strategies, or the adoption of the program on behalf of the government. The system centered on measuring outputs and performance, for example, the number of people participating in each component and the level of implementation of the operational plan.

Since the revision of the MEL framework in 2015, several new areas of change and measurement tools have been added to the theory of change, the MEL plan, and the logic framework. Two new areas of change at the outcome level were made explicit: (1) ensuring sustainability through the adoption of R4 on behalf of the government and international actors, like WFP, and (2) making sure that women's economic empowerment is at the forefront of our work. Metrics like the Food Consumption Score have been introduced to provide a more rigorous measure of food security. IFPRI's Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index was added to measure women's social and economic empowerment in agriculture. The Coping Strategy Index was added to measure the ability and capacity of people to cope with shocks and uncertainty. Future projects needing to measure resilience outcomes can benefit from these metrics.

2. The model has to be responsive to context, and an exit/scale-up strategy has to be clearly designed at the outset. R4's model is clear: it involves a set of integrated tools: insurance, credit, savings, and disaster risk reduction. CA-MEL did not develop a similar approach, assuming that it would be better to be more adaptive when a project is first implemented in a region and more structured once the strategies of the project have been tested, as in the case of R4.

It could be useful in future projects to have clear strategies and operational plans at inception to share information about common methodologies (like the Participatory Capacity & Vulnerability Assessment⁶ implemented by both projects) and to draft scale-up and exit strategies at the project design phase.

Communities view resilience holistically. However, programs often come with prepackaged interventions. Sufficient flexibility should be built in to allow communities to prioritize. Similarly, community perspectives on their own well-being and resilience must be taken into account along with qualitative and quantitative indicators established by the project.

⁶ Oxfam's participatory capacity and vulnerability analysis (PCVA) tool is a risk analysis process designed to help staff and partner organizations engage with communities in contexts where natural disasters are significant drivers of poverty and suffering. PCVA has its roots in two proven social development methodologies: the capacity and vulnerability analysis (CVA) and participatory action plan (PLA). See <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/participatory-capacity-and-vulnerability-analysis-a-practitioners-guide-232411>.

3. Partner organizations have a wealth of knowledge about MEL, especially at the local level. Most partner organizations have vast experience conducting MEL processes at the local level, especially testing digital technology for MEL processes, like data collection. Oxfam teams can benefit from their partner skills and may want to inquire at the beginning of a project what expertise can the partner organization contribute to the success of the project. This opportunity could be further explored in the future to capitalize on the potential for improving program design. For instance, the CA-MEL team in Central America used [KoBoToolbox](http://www.kobotoolbox.org/) (see <http://www.kobotoolbox.org/>), a suite of tools for field data collection for use in challenging environments, for collecting MEL data. The team learned to use this tool from partner organization, [FUNDESA](#),⁷ the Guatemalan Development Foundation, at a very low cost.

With the help of partner organizations, the project teams introduced tools that allowed participants to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own progress. One tool, called the Spider Web, allows people in the community to define their development priorities and then monitor progress. Implementation of such tools at the community level is fundamental to increase the visibility of community priorities and to see whether they align with the priorities of the project intervention.

4. MEL systems implemented in long-term programs provide unique answers to long-standing questions about resilience. In Ethiopia, participants of R4 who started participating in 2009 were better off in all progress indicators than the cohort that joined the program in 2012 and 2013. The team of R4 could only run this analysis because they had been collecting data for a considerable period of time. This type of long-term data collection is normal for academic institutions, but it's not usually the case for projects implemented by international development actors, especially in the instance of projects linked to resilience development.

Having long-term data sets (nine years) allowed the team to check for longer-term trends and run comparisons to address the question of “how long does it take to build resilience.” Although resilience development is a permanent process, the team has rigorous evidence to state that building resilience might take longer than previously thought. We do see spikes in indicators like asset ownership from one year to the next, but in general, people entering the project earlier are better off than people entering the project later on.

5. Research is a fundamental complement to MEL. It is vital to include external research for the areas of work that the MEL system is not going to be able to assess but that are important to understand for the project. Some of the

⁷ FUNDESA is a Guatemalan nonprofit private entity comprising business professionals in their personal capacities, independent of sector, cluster, and/or political interests. It was founded in 1984 as a channel for the private sector to create and implement projects that could aid in the country's sustainable economic and social development. See <http://www.fundesa.org.gt/en/>.

research topics mentioned during the Global Resilience Learning Event included timeframe of resilience development; drivers of vulnerability; drivers of risks; gender analysis (particularly, women's well-being and time spent in care work); climate change; and traditional knowledge.

SESSION 8: GENDER IN RESILIENCE

The group engaged in an exercise to identify achievements and challenges pertaining to gender inequalities in their work in resilience. In addition, in many conversations that took place during the learning event, women's roles and their potential to contribute to achieving resilience goals were mentioned time and again, reflecting how much of a cross-cutting issue gender has become. Beyond the matter of equality, it has also become an efficient implementation pathway. Understanding the constraints women face to become fully participating economic and social actors and the adverse social norms that hold them in sex-specific roles and functions can be achieved using gender analysis, as well a power mapping.

The full participation of the communities has been highlighted as a key strategy to address those inequalities, with a special focus on involving men, changing the discourse on masculinity, and also acknowledging that some men in the community may be as distressed and vulnerable as women. Communities (and research literature) understand that addressing gender inequalities is not just a moral imperative, but it also makes economic sense: when women thrive, communities thrive.

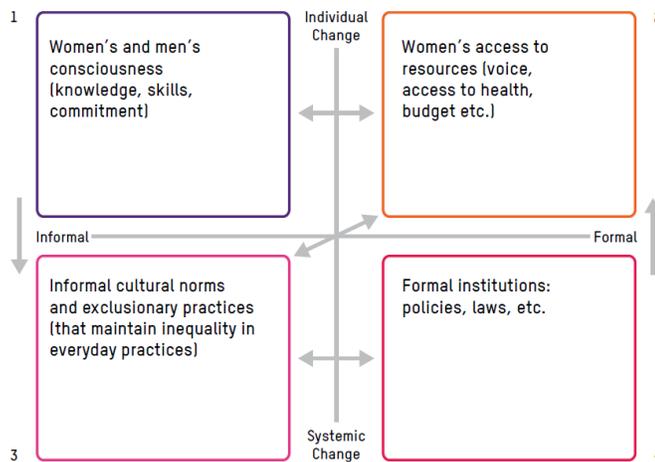
In this session, the above topics were addressed in a dynamic review of Oxfam's biggest achievements:

- In Ethiopia, women involved in R4 understand the complex program better than men and gain more benefit from loans taken.
- In Vanuatu, our partner was tasked with proposing a new selection process for delegates attending COP22 (the Paris Climate Conference, officially known as the 22nd Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP22). As a result, 50 percent of delegates chosen were women.

Yet many challenges remain; the biggest challenges include gaining women's access to land and secured land tenure, addressing the redefinition of roles by adapting methodologies that benefited women to men, creating Saving for Change groups for men, and responding to the perception that men are threatened by women's increasing representation and power. However, all teams recognized that women's access and control over productive resources remains problematic. Uniformly, participants challenged biases and assumptions about gender equality, but tempered those challenges by setting realistic goals.

Finally, the Transformative Women’s Leadership Road Map (TWLR), a tool designed by Oxfam, was recognized as an important contribution to better understanding how change happens and how individuals, households, communities, and partners can work together effect transformative and long-lasting change (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Oxfam’s Transformative Women’s Leadership Road Map



Note: This road map is a theory of change to bring-long lasting change to gender dynamics. For Oxfam, change happens at individual and systemic levels, in informal and formal spaces.

The four pillars of TLWR outline how to implement its strategy:

1. Build sustainability of women’s rights organization, networks, and platforms.
2. Build individual knowledge and transformative leadership practices for collective impact.
3. Support collaborations to influence social norms and informal decision-making processes, policies, and implementation.
4. Support collaborations to influence formal institutional decision-making processes, policies, and their implementation.

SESSION 10: POLICY AND INFLUENCING TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITIES

Influencing, campaigning, and lobbying are all part of Oxfam’s core operating strategies. As we take systemic approaches to solve complex, global issues, we need to find ways to anchor long-term change. Building alliances and finding partners within public and private institutions has become an essential part of Oxfam’s programming.

Influencing and advocacy are typically done to implement change—with or without Oxfam’s visibility. In some cases, we have been able to publicize human rights violations without being named in the press to protect our teams working on the ground.

Campaigning involves Oxfam using its name to ask the public to take a specific action. Oxfam’s Behind the Brands campaign, for example, involved the general public and targeted specific consumer brands.

Finally, Oxfam uses lobbying when we want a legislature to pass a law or a private sector actor to change policies (for instance, those involving supply-chain issues).

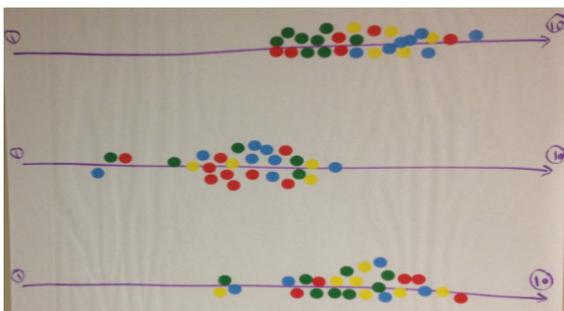
Evidence shows that both the R4 and CA-MEL programs have reached critical success with the vulnerable communities they work with, respectively, to influence and effect significant changes at the national level. For instance, R4 in Ethiopia has worked hand in hand with the government to integrate the program into the national safety net program, called the PSNP. Another example is the work partners have done in Vanuatu to create VCAN, the Vanuatu Climate Action Network. CA-MEL has been focusing on empowering civil society to change policies on disaster risk reduction and climate change to be more focused on prevention and sustainability, instead of on humanitarian response.

Through this work, all the teams concluded that a participatory approach is necessary to achieve their resilience goals, a finding supported by evidence.

EVALUATION ON OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The participants evaluated the event in three areas: content, methodology, and pertinence. Figure 7, shows the results.

Figure 7: Global Resilience Learning Event evaluation



Note: In this photo of the chart used at the Global Resilience Learning Event, 1 (left side) was the worst score, and 10 (right side) was the highest. The three lines represent, from the top to the bottom: Content, methodology and pertinence of the event.

III. CONCLUSION

TACKLING SYSTEMIC, COMPLEX ISSUES REQUIRES COMPLEX, MULTI-APPROACH SOLUTIONS

Building resilient communities or resilient systems requires us to examine the complex inter dynamics of social, economic, environmental, and political systems. A deep understanding of the systems and how they behave in their respective contexts is necessary for designing interventions that can bring about the long-term change we seek.

Traditional models of development encourage us to break down and focus on individual, manageable parts of a system. But by doing so we lack clarity on how everything is linked, and on how different systems influence one another. Considering such interrelationships is both a challenge as well as an advantage for Oxfam's resilience programming approach. It is a challenge in that, if everything is linked, where does one draw the line in terms of program design? Development or humanitarian programs are limited by resources, time, objectives, and capacity, and they cannot account for all external factors that could have either negative or positive effects on target communities, or even specific project interventions.

For example, CA-MEL supported rural livelihoods in Central America where the project was largely uncontrollably affected by ground-changing local and national political developments, gang violence, and the export-oriented agro economy that is having a devastating impact on the local population and environment from excessive pesticide use and heavy extraction of groundwater. In the case of R4, the program has been implemented in a closing political space⁸ in Ethiopia, where people are also having problems realizing—or even talking about—their rights, with recurrent droughts and social instability. In Senegal, the social setting is different, in the sense that the society generally accepts polygamy.

The value of a resilience programming approach as advocated by Oxfam is that it helps us understand the connections between project outcomes and wider processes of change. Such an understanding does not mean that resilience-building programming will be able, in a limited amount of time, to resolve underlying structural inequalities or challenges. But it helps us to identify and

⁸ We define close political space as a context where the active participation of right holders in political decision making is limited by the holders of power.

understand how those factors make people more vulnerable to disasters, and thus it helps us to design and implement more appropriate interventions.

In a recent independent evaluation carried out in Senegal's R4 program, the evaluators recommended more fully integrating the program's various components to better leverage the respective strengths of each component in increasing resilience before, during, and after shocks. For example, the Saving for Change methodology, including savings and credit, bolstered household expenditure by helping households engage in revenue-generating activities such as small trade. Food for assets (FFA) is also essential to bolstering the food security of households through food assistance and the development of community assets that enhance crop production. Insurance also provides protection to households during periods of bad harvest, and it incentivizes households to increase their investments in agricultural production. The three interventions should continue to be provided as an integrated package to support participants in a holistic manner and strengthen the resilience of households.

OWNERSHIP OF ACTIONS BY COMMUNITY AND RELATED STAKEHOLDERS IS KEY

Durable change or the sustainability of project-initiated change is more viable if it is desired or if it is a priority of the community and systems themselves. Thus, while projects like CA-MEL and R4 introduce a package of services or interventions, these objectives must be aligned with local priorities. Identifying and addressing these priorities is a prerequisite for success. In other words, care has to be taken that any resilience or development goals are also "owned" by the project participants.

One of the methods used by the CA-MEL project in Melanesia, for example, is the application of the Spider Web, a participatory tool through which community members identify their own resilience priorities or domains. The project may not be able to address all resilience domains, but a dialogue is initiated on those domains to which CA-MEL can contribute. Following this conversation, community members approve project activities that do address their priorities; thus, commitment toward these priorities is developed. (Note, however, that Spider Web is currently limited as tool for dialogue with committees; it is not intended for wider stakeholder consultation, such as with government agencies, civil society organization [CSO] networks, and other institutions with which Oxfam work.) Other ways of building ownership or prioritizing needs is by employing participatory assessment methodologies, such as participatory, capacity, and vulnerability assessments (PCVAs). Such assessments enable the identification of local priorities and of appropriate actions needed to design and develop resilience and preparedness interventions that are suitable and responsive to community needs.

PCVAs are also implemented in R4. The main methodology to promote ownership in R4 is Saving for Change. Through Saving for Change groups, participants, especially women, are able to gain access to savings and credit. They also have a space to have an open dialogue about current events in their community and in the project. R4 has also promoted annual impact reflections. During these annual events, stakeholders at different levels of the project gather to reflect on implementation challenges and to devise improvement actions for the following period.

IMPORTANCE OF FOCUS ON GENDER FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Both CA-MEL and R4 have placed a special emphasis on promoting the participation and empowerment of women at household and community levels. This focus stems from the recognition that social roles and dynamics play a major role in determining the consequences of disasters and impacts of climate change. Gender-based inequality and social exclusion undermine the ability of women and girls to cope with, and recover from, disasters and climate events. Indeed, the challenges faced by women and girls are often exacerbated during times of crisis. And because women and girls do not live in isolation—men play an important role in shaping gender norms and values in any society—there is a need for resilience programming to address unequal power relations between men and women. For these reasons, a sound gender and power analysis to obtain a good understanding of the context is paramount for designing effective program interventions.

CONTINUUM OF PRACTICE IS DESIGNED TO MAKE FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES RESILIENT AND TO SET THEM ON A PATHWAY TO GROWTH

CA-MEL and R4 strive to empower communities, especially women, by imparting skills, knowledge, and self-confidence. They facilitate connections between people and relevant support institutions, such as local government, and enable an environment where these relationships have the opportunity to flourish.

Community savings initiatives in both projects, for example, have elevated the self-assurance and social standing of previously disempowered women. Not only have the financial savings they have accumulated given them the confidence of having more control over their own lives and personal choices, these women are now increasingly actively engaged in community decision-making alongside men. This is a truly transformative change.

The establishment and strengthening of community climate change and disaster committees (CCCDCs) in Vanuatu have made possible permanent linkages with the provincial and national disaster management offices (DMOs). As a result, more disaster-ready and resilient communities are seen to be emerging.

Developments such as these at the individual and community levels are setting the foundations for a continuum of resilient social and institutional change. Similarly, through opportunities afforded by these and other related activities, individuals and communities are diversifying their livelihoods portfolios, thereby reducing their dependency on a single form of livelihood.

MONITORING AND LEARNING

Robust monitoring frameworks are necessary to assess resilience changes and impacts. Multiple quantitative and qualitative methods are also required, but these analyses should also include community perspectives on resilience changes. Such frameworks are likely to be complex because of the multi-stakeholder and multidimensional nature of resilience programming. These frameworks have to be responsive and dynamic to changing contextual circumstances.

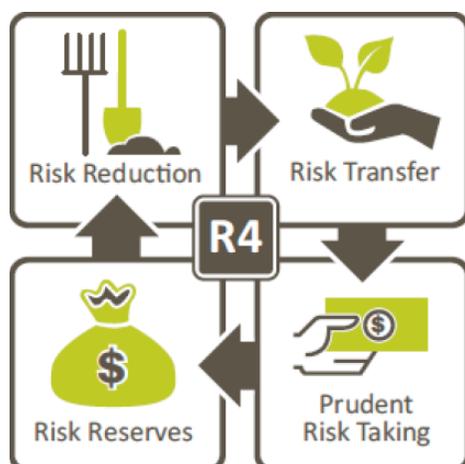
Good monitoring frameworks (accompanied by research efforts) should generate evidence of change and multi-stakeholder learning to enhance intervention strategies and to be accountable to different stakeholders of the project. Monitoring and learning frameworks must be adequately designed and resourced.

Appendix 1: Components of R4

The four components of the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative are described in this section and in a brief video available at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UEZ7qaTW_M.

Figure 1: The four risk management strategies of R4



R1: Risk reduction

- To pay for insurance, members participate in community DRR activities.
- Members participate in DRR activities for vouchers.
- The initiative performs a vulnerability assessment to assess needs.
- The initiative creates an adaption for women, who can engage in activities such as preparing compost and micro-gardening.

R2: Prudent risk taking

- The initiative includes access to cereal banks, and access to credit from cooperatives and microfinance organizations (MFOs).
- It organizes participants into cooperatives of savings and credit.
- R4 promotes income-generating activities.
- The initiative provides participants with access to climate information to make investment decisions.

R3: Risk reserve

- Participants, especially women, organize savings groups that gather every couple of weeks or every month. At the beginning, they elect their board, assign roles, and start saving. They also assign money from their regular savings into social funds (e.g., to use in emergencies).
- The participants enact penalty fees for latecomers and absences.
- Members can request a loan, for example, to start up a business. The decision is made by group.
- The program leads to better organization at the community level, especially for women in Saving for Change (SfC) groups.
- The SfC groups are also a space where women work in strengthening their social capital.

R4: Risk transfer

- The initiative features index-based insurance, based on rainfall deficits, for a specific risk: drought. Smallholder farmers pay the premium of the insurance by participating in community DRR activities. The pay-out of the insurance is based on rainfall amount.
- In Ethiopia, R4 works with the Ministry of Agriculture in three ways:
 - Scaling up the micro insurance program.
 - Making the program as component of a new safety net.
 - Creating a government-designed insurance company.



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