



GLOBAL RESILIENCE LEARNING EVENT



OXFAM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Resilience and resilient development are emerging concepts in the development and humanitarian fields. In recent years, Oxfam, too, has been exploring how to make more effective linkages between short-term emergency responses and longer-term development programming. There has been an acknowledgement that the key drivers of risks and vulnerabilities faced by poor communities can be categorized as three sets of contextual challenges, namely, 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 for them to thrive in the circumstances they find themselves in.

During the past three years, in collaboration with several partners, Oxfam has been implementing two major multi-country resilience building initiatives in Africa, Central America, and the Pacific. Both programs have applied different, yet complementary, ways of building the resilience of impoverished segments of the population where they are working. Each has had strong monitoring, evaluative, and learning mechanisms built into the program in order to assess changes and sustainability in community resilience. While each had a different model or approach, both projects happen to be conceived *before* the Resilient Development Framework was adopted by Oxfam. In this way, neither conforms exactly to the framework, however, the underlying principles are similar, and it has been possible to map respective project activities against the Framework to assess gaps and complementarities.

With the purpose of exchanging knowledge and lessons learned from these resilience building initiatives, a joint learning event was organized where teams from all project countries shared their experiences, achievements, and best practices in community resilience building. The relevance and utility of Oxfam's emerging Resilient Development Framework was also discussed. The interactive learning event examined various

Three main learning from the 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 participation/involvement.
3. Women are a key vector of resilience building

important aspects of resilience building from the perspective of two projects, including the basic building blocks, social change processes, gender, key resilience capacities, policy and influencing, and monitoring frameworks.

There are similarities in conclusions based on these experiences. Among other things: Ensuring sustainable change requires a long-term perspective or investment; community ownership in the change processes is essential; a systems approach is necessary to deal with the multi-dimensional nature of challenges faced by communities; gender sensitive programming is central to building household and community resilience; and diversifying or spreading risks is key to reducing the vulnerability of communities facing threats from climate change.

WHY DOES RESILIENCE MATTER?

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 impacts. Resilience can be understood as the attribute of a system, however small (household) or large (community, a coastal region, sub-Saharan Africa, e.g.) and also as an intermediate step on growth pathways. Yes, farmers in drought prone areas would probably prefer to be resilient to shocks, but the true desirable state is to be a thriving member of the community.

Programs designed to increase the resilience of households, villages, communities, and regions rely on the combination of complementary approaches, methodologies, and strategies. These should be—to cite a few used by both CA-MEL and R4—focused on resolving gender inequalities, access to financial services, improved natural resource management, peer pressure, access to better inputs and techniques, and capacity building for local and national organizations. As a rights-based organization, Oxfam strives to work on a continuum that spans from local program delivery through partners to the national level to influence the policies that can support resilience building. Examples of resilience building include investments in smallholder farming, gender equality, natural resource management, social protection mechanisms, and community level engagement through decentralization.

Consequently, measuring the efficacy and impact of such programs is also complex and requires a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to understand the positive changes, sometimes the negative ones, and most often clarify questions left unanswered.

Globally, however, key actors of international development and humanitarian assistance agree on the opportunity that the concept offers to create transformative, long-lasting change. The concept of resilience, as recognized in the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals), has been embraced by the UN (United Nations) in its Sendai Framework, by world renowned donors such as the Rockefeller Foundation and through the UN system with active involvement from FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United nations), WFP (World food programme) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme).

I. INTRODUCTION

The Margaret A. Cargill foundation is a strategic partner of Oxfam and 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) in Ethiopia and Senegal for two years, and \$4.6 million for the CA-MEL Project exploring resilience pathways in El Salvador, Guatemala, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Each program and its team have a different yet congruent approach to building resilient communities. They use different methodologies and approaches but measure the progress and changes in similar resilience capacities. The two grants offered by the MAC Foundation created a unique opportunity for the long-term development and humanitarian teams to confront, share, and question together the pathways to building resilient communities vulnerable to natural disasters.

1. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

- a. **R4:** 36,690 participants (29,127 from Ethiopia and 7,563 from Senegal)
- b. **CA-MEL:** 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.

2. MAIN COMPONENTS, SECTORS OR AREAS OF WORK:

- a. **R4:** combination of four risk management strategies proposed to smallholder farmers:
 - Risk Reduction through national resource management and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) asset building;
 - Prudent Risk Taking by increasing access to affordable credit
 - Risk Reserves: access to adapted savings products
 - Risk Transfer: via weather-index assurance
- b. **CA-MEL:** Increase awareness and capacities for disaster risk reduction and response; access to resilient livelihoods and social services; increasing



Figure #1: The four Rs.

collaboration between communities, NGOs, and governmental actors and other developmental stakeholders; emergency response

3. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:

a. **R4:** 2009 - ongoing.

b. **CA-MEL:** 2014-2017

- i. Thirty-two participants gathered in Boston, Massachusetts, November 15-18, 2016, for a “Global Resilience Learning Event.” Among them were R4 and CA-MEL staff, from Oxfam and partner organizations from six countries, guests from the Oxfam confederation, and key partners, such as the World Food Programme. Participants shared evaluation findings, questions, and learned from each other. This report summarizes the key lessons from the meeting. The purpose of this publication is to share the lessons with organizations and practitioners beyond the Oxfam confederation and to build awareness and understanding of resilience programming and measurements.

The **Objectives** of the learning event were:

- i. 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
- ii. 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)
- iii. To identify innovative and practical ways for strengthening project stakeholders’ role in promoting both the knowledge and practice of resilience.

The concept of resilience is now widely recognized globally with major agreements and conventions highlighting its importance. The Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change reaffirm international commitments to reduce the impacts of disasters and build the resilience of the most exposed communities. These agreements lay out a global agenda for the next 15 years to build resilience at different scales and with multiple stakeholders. This has given rise to an international momentum to look at DRR and humanitarian approaches differently. Oxfam’s contribution to the global resilience debate is based on both R4 and CA-MEL’s operational experience and evaluation findings.

II. DESCRIPTION OF SESSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

SESSION 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Learning Event is the result of 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 both practical experiences of implementation of two different programmatic approaches, as well as to reflect on Oxfam's Resilient Development Framework. Sessions were focused on the design of respective program models, best practices, challenges, and achievements, MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning), gender, management of resilience programs, and the importance of policy and influencing in resilience programming. This report highlights key conversations and conclusions emerging from the two projects. 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.



Picture #1: Some of the enthusiastic participants of the workshop. 30 colleagues from all project countries and HQ attended the learning event in Boston.

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SESSION 2 – CA-MEL VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

El Salvador, Guatemala, 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 trips 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 has had a long tradition of DRR programming and direct engagement with communities. Here, CA-MEL included a mix of program interventions that helped enhance food security and rural livelihoods, while strengthening preparedness and risk reduction at community level. Innovative techniques were introduced in eco-farming, irrigation, rainwater harvesting, water and sanitation improvement, crop/seed diversification, and community savings. Linkages were also strengthened between community organizations and the civil protection departments, ministries of agriculture and other functionaries at municipal level. Also, women's leadership promotion has been central at all stages of project implementation, with preliminary monitoring results showing significant increase 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 & 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. See brief video description of the program [HERE](#).

In **Guatemala** (16,974 direct & indirect participants), CA-MEL has also strengthened traditional livelihoods, supported income diversification, improved agricultural production, promoted health, and improved water supply/sanitation. Innovative, women-centered approaches to enterprise development have resulted in rapid achievements in terms of income generation and progress towards gender equity. See brief video description of the program [HERE](#).



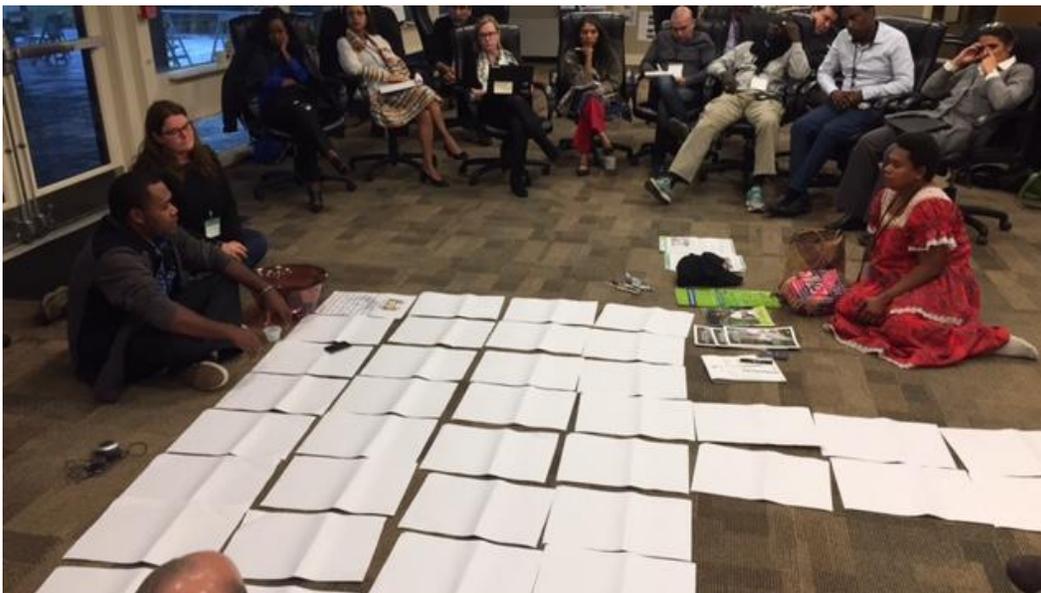
Picture #2: Central America Team presenting the CA-MEL program in El Salvador and Guatemala. Global learning event: November 17, 2016, Boston, Massachusetts. Credit: Haroon Khan, Oxfam America

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CA-MEL interventions in **Melanesia** have also been focused on the community level and building stronger links with government. At a national and regional level, for example, the Vanuatu Climate Action Network, a civil society network, supported by CA-MEL, with strong links to rural communities, was nominated to the national UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) taskforce as co-chair enabling representation of voices from the ground. And at community level, on the other hand, CA-MEL has been increasing 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 & indirect participants), governance structures and procedures have been improved, there is good disaster planning at household and community level, 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 & 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 level government, including policy and practice influence through two national networks coordinated by Oxfam. See brief video description of the program [HERE](#).



Picture #3: Melanesia Team presenting the CA-MEL program in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Global learning event: November 17, 2016, Boston, Massachusetts. Credit: Haroon Khan, Oxfam America

Key lessons shared during the virtual field trip

There have been several of lessons related to program design, content, management, and learning that have 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 must be regularly refreshed during the program.
- There should be an explicit focus on gender in program design. Care has to be exercised to manage 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 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 as well. For example: conservation of soil and water, construction of banks and dams, use of drought resistant seeds, among others.
- Sufficient time, capacity, and resources must be dedicated for periodic self-reflection and learning from others.

SESSION 3 – R4 VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

Oxfam America (OA) and the World Food Programme (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 OA, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), and Swiss Re since 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 team of CA-MEL, the main impacts of the program. R4 is currently implemented in four countries (Ethiopia, Senegal, Malawi, and Zambia) and reaches around 30,000 households¹



Picture #4: R4's virtual field trip— Global learning event: November 17, 2016, Boston, Massachusetts. Credit: Julio Espinoza, Oxfam America.

¹ 180,000 people if we use the average of 6 people per household.

4 COMPONENTS, 4 COUNTRIES, 30,000 PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS (180,000 PEOPLE)

1. Risk reduction

Main strategies:

- a. To pay for insurance members participating in community DRR activities;
- b. Participating in DRR activities for vouchers;
- c. A vulnerability assessment to assess the needs;
- d. Adaption for women who can engage in activities such as preparing compost and micro gardening

2. Prudent risk taking

Main strategies:

- a. Access to cereal banks, access to credit from cooperatives and MFOs (Microfinance Organizations);
- b. Organization of participants in cooperatives of saving and credit;
- c. Promotion of income generating activities;xs
- d. Access to climate information to make investment decisions

3. Risk reserve

Main strategies:

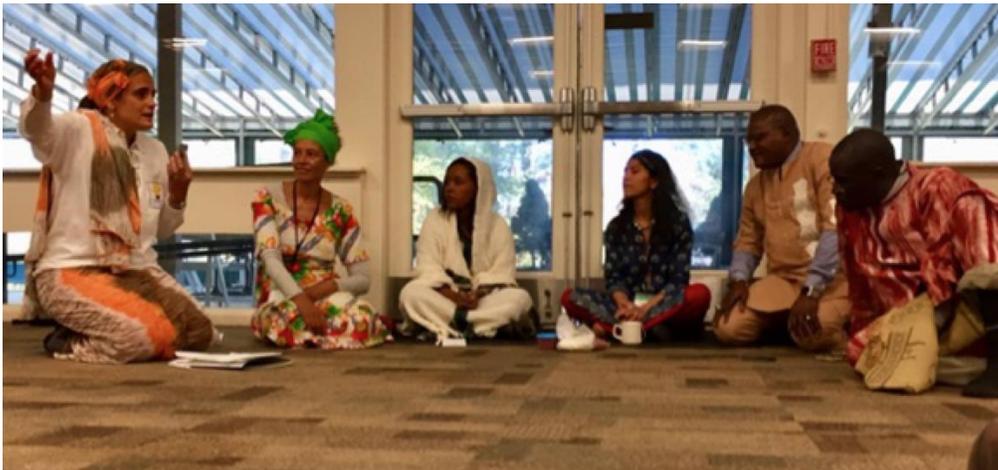
- a. Participants, especially women, organize savings groups that gather every couple of weeks or every month. At the beginning, they elect their board, assign roles and start saving. They also assign a pool money from their regular savings into social funds (e.g., to use in emergencies);
- b. Penalty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

4. Risk transfer

- a. 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.
- b. Working with the ministry of agriculture (Ethiopia):
 - Scaling up micro-insurance program

- Program as part of new safety net
- Government designed insurance company

Thanks to the implementation of these four components, there is a greater understanding of risks and vulnerabilities among communities, 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 non-participants, especially during shocks. There is also clear evidence of program participants exercising fewer negative coping strategies than non-participants and being able to at least maintain their level of wealth during drought periods.



Picture #5: R4's Virtual field trip, Global learning event: November 17, 2016, Boston, Massachusetts.
Credit: Haroon Khan, Oxfam America

Key lessons shared during the virtual trip of R4:

- It is important to gain communities' trust and to work with local partners to achieve positive results in time (e.g., the strategic partnership of Oxfam, the WFP, and implementing partners).
- It is important to learn from previous experiences when scaling up.
- Build good and strong M&E system to assess the results. This allows you to see if the strategies are working and to consider the best adjustments, as needed.
- Before expanding the program, it is better to consolidate the results obtained, instead of focusing on the number of farmers reached.

- Good monitoring allows you to take advantage of unexpected positive changes in the context and to manage the risks of negative ones.
- Measuring women’s empowerment helps you determine whether the program is impacting short- and long-term needs of women.
- The work on women’s economic empowerment could benefit from including a local women’s organization as a partner or ally of the initiative.
- It makes more sense—and it is more cost-effective—to build on government infrastructure to ensure sustainability and to provide a basis for scaling-up.

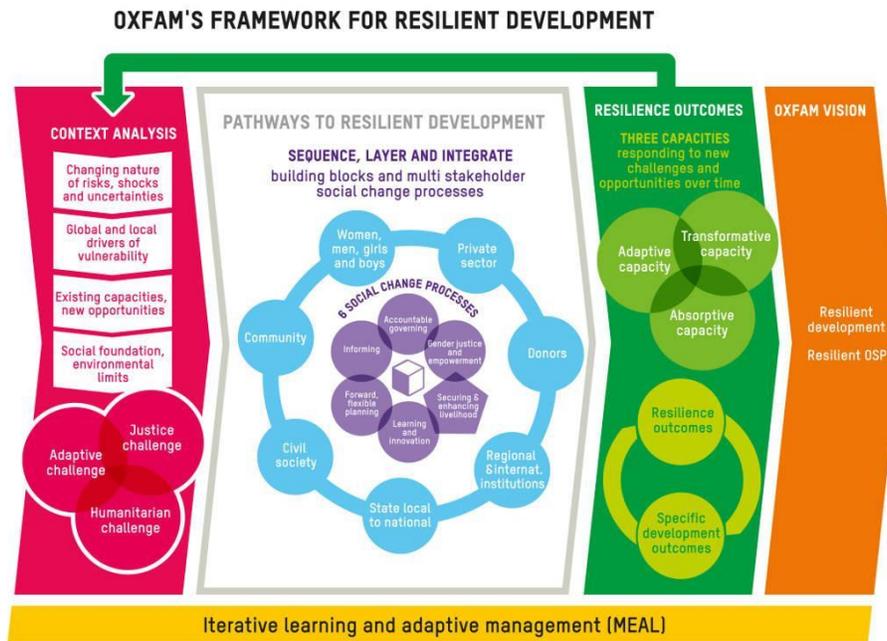
Program: Video: Rural Resilience Initiative:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UEZ7qaTW_M

SESSION 5 – UNPACKING THE OXFAM FRAMEWORK FOR RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

Oxfam’s Framework for Resilient Development

Oxfam’s Resilience Framework was developed following an extensive review and consultation with staff working in humanitarian and long-term development programs. It takes on a rights-based approach to risk, advocates a long-term systems approach, and promotes a gender-justice perspective in all programing. The framework identifies three key challenges impoverished communities face: *humanitarian challenge*, *social justice challenge* and an *adaptive challenge*. The framework describes how these challenges can be addressed through building the three resilience capacities, i.e., *absorptive*, *adaptive*, and *transformative*. It is proposed 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. There is 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:



The Resilience Framework and CA-MEL/R4

Both CA-MEL and R4 were designed and launched before the Oxfam Resilience Framework was finalized. Hence, it has been applied retrospectively by each project as a lens through which to assess program design, focus and priorities. The 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 how the framework helped in shaping, analyzing, and designing more impactful programs. This 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 or not, 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.

Examples of changes in *absorptive capacity* via CA-MEL, for example, include changes in agricultural practices, such as the use of native seeds, substituting chemical fertilizers with organic inputs, better management of 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, 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 by deepening² 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 by having more say in decision-making at the household and community level. In Central America, agroecology³ 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 one. And in Melanesia, people's awareness of their rights and their engagement with government has transformed community preparedness and response measures 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.

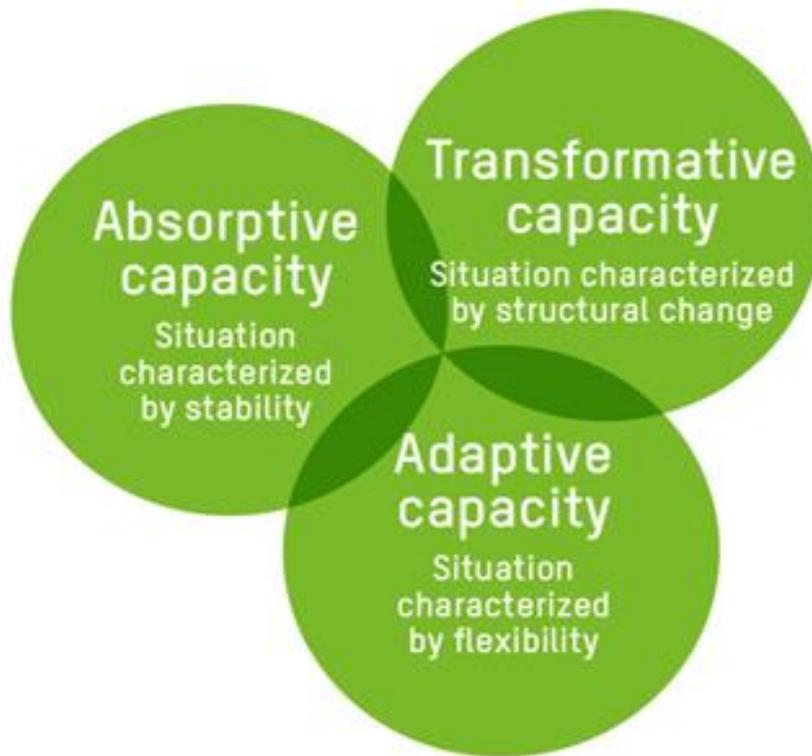
Both projects have recognized that certain activities, such as savings and credit, will address more than one type of capacity. Indeed, access to insurance (R4) is thought to build all three capacities. Moreover, absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities are complementary and can mutually reinforce one another. One is not more important than the other, nor does one have to precede the other. However, for any robust and sustainable resilience initiative, it is recommended that it includes efforts to build all three.

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, these can be sequenced, layered, and integrated as mechanisms to ensure efficient pathways. 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.

2 Deepening hand - dug wells and ponds

3 Agroecology: An ecological approach to agriculture that views agricultural areas as ecosystems and is concerned with the ecological impact of agricultural practices

Figure #3: Three Resilience Capacities



Absorptive capacity is the capacity to take intentional protective action and to cope with known shocks and stress. It is needed as shocks and stress will continue to happen, for example, due to 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 it is not unfairly borne by people living in poverty or suffering from discrimination or marginalization.

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 that. By doing so, it has also enabled us to compare, contrast, and learn between diverse programs such as CA-MEL and R4.

Given that it is still a relatively new concept or approach within Oxfam that has yet to be fully socialized to country staff and partner organizations, there are a number of questions and challenges remaining to be resolved. 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 are summarized briefly in the table below:

Positive Aspects of the Resilience Framework
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It 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. Helps inform the Theory of Change. 2. Helps to focus strategy by providing a set of possible tactics to consider, such as: linking humanitarian and development approaches, importance of social change processes, linking short-term to long-term, applying a systems perspective, strategic involvement of multiple stakeholders, focus on gender, realistic consideration of the timeframe needed for sustainable resilient development. 3. Encouraging a holistic perspective: Resilience building must take place at multiple levels: individual, household, community, regional and national. Where possible there should be linkages between these. 4. Feedback and learning mechanisms within project monitoring systems are essential to ensure viability and regeneration of best practices. 5. Monitoring systems must 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 this 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 there are different interpretations of the Framework among Oxfam staff around the world. 4. Any tensions between country development frameworks and the Oxfam Resilience Framework 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 discussion on Resilience Framework

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 which are extremely relevant for the people we work with;
- The Framework support 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.

What challenges we found

- Despite recognizing its potential, the Framework is perceived to be complicated;
- Creating space for different and concurrent interpretations may help improve it.

Unsolved Question

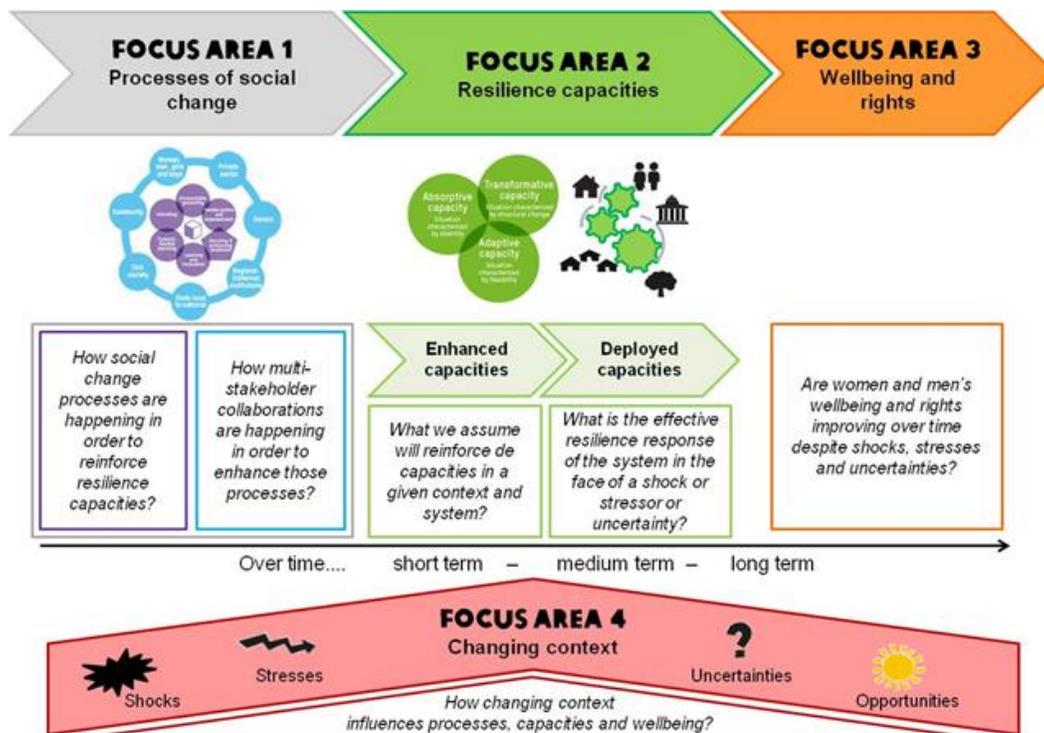
- The Framework helps Oxfam have a common understanding about resilience, but how do we effectively translate and communicate it to partners, communities, and donors?

SESSION 7 & 9 – MEL IN RESILIENCE AND BUILDING THE BODY OF EVIDENCE

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 below is part of the Oxfam’s Resilience Framework in the form of change logic and identifies four focus areas of measurement for resilience.

Figure #4, Change logic in the Oxfam’s Resilience Framework.



1. Ten guiding principles

MEAL for resilience provides evidence on the track 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 principles**⁴ as a general guideline to help

⁴ Some of the principles are common to any complex development process and not exclusive to resilience. Some are already MEAL minimum requirements and included as Oxfam program

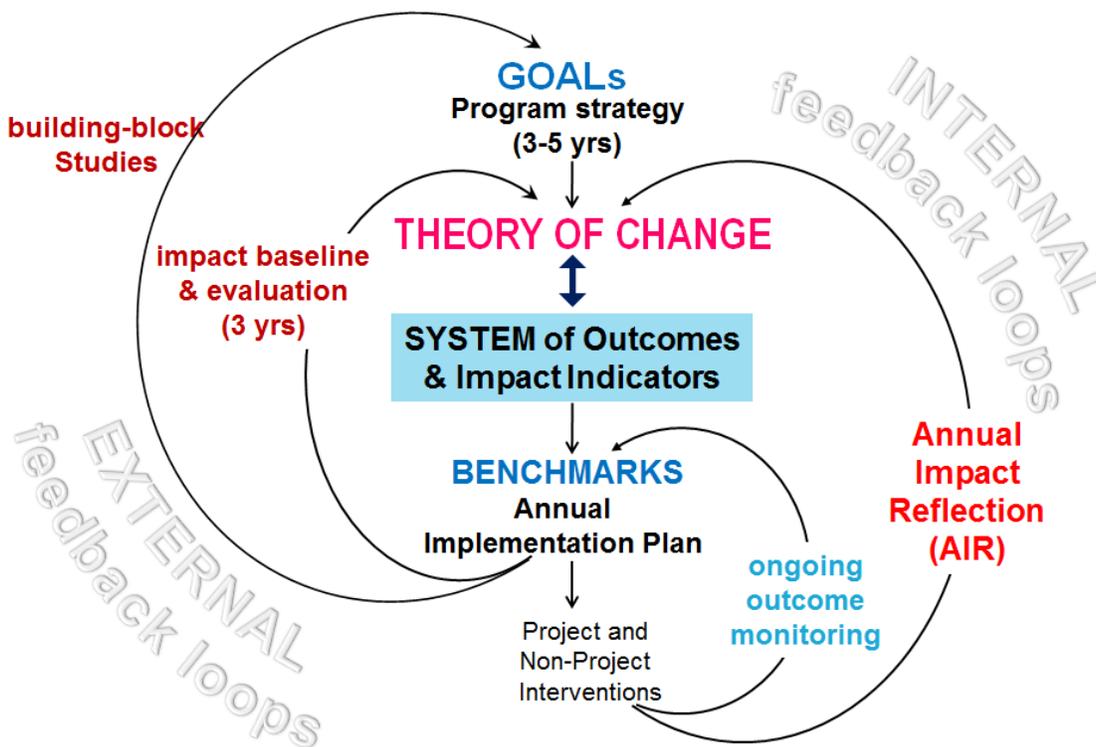
MEAL staff and program teams define and implement MEAL plans that are best suited for resilient development programming. The 10 principles taken into account are:

10 Guiding Principles for MEL in Resilience

1. Use a Theory of Change to support systems thinking and making explicit your Assumptions.
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

standards, but we emphasize them here because they are critical for resilience. Finally, there are a few that are specific for resilience.

Figure #5: **Basic Components Program MEL Framework**



KEY LEARNING FROM THE MEL SYSTEMS IMPLEMENTATION:

A. THE MEL FRAMEWORK OF RESILIENCE PROJECTS HAS TO BE VERY DYNAMIC AND ADAPTIVE TO THE 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 (disasters, shocks, conflicts, political upheaval, volatility of food prices, donor priorities).

Systematically reviewing and adjusting strategic tools of the project related to planning and MEL ensures adaptation to the context. 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 was centered on

measuring outputs and performance: e.g., 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: Ensuring sustainability through the adoption of R4 on behalf of the government and international actors, like WFP and 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. 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. You can find information about some of these metrics in the box below.

Metric	Area of measurement
Food Consumption Score	Food security
Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index	Women’s empowerment in Agriculture
Coping Strategy Index	Coping capacity

B. MODELING. THE MODEL HAS TO BE RESPONSIVE TO YOUR 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 Assessment⁵ implemented by both projects) and to draft scale-up and exit strategies at the project design phase.

⁵ Oxfam’s participatory capacity and vulnerability analysis (PCVA) tool is a risk analysis process designed to help staff and partner organisations 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). <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/participatory-capacity-and-vulnerability-analysis-a-practitioners-guide-232411>

Communities view resilience holistically. However, programs often come with pre-packaged 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.

C. 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 have a lot to 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](#)⁶ for collecting MEL data. The team learned to use this tool from the 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, 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.

D. 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 of the 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 case of projects linked to resilience development.

Having long-term data sets (9 years old) allowed the team to check for longer-term trends and run comparisons to address the question of “how long does it

⁶ KoBoToolbox is a suite of tools for field data collection for use in challenging environments.

⁷ FUNDESA, The Guatemalan Development Foundation, is a non-profit private entity, comprised by 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.

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 before, are better off than people entering the project later on.

E. RESEARCH IS A FUNDAMENTAL COMPLEMENT TO MEL

It is vital to include external research for the areas of work that your MEL system is not going to be able to assess, but that are important to understand for the work of the project. Some of the research topics mentioned during the Learning Event included: timeframe of resilience development; drivers of vulnerability, drivers of risks; and 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 achievement and challenges pertaining to gender inequalities in their work in resilience.

In many conversations that took place during the meeting, 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 a 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 and 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, for when women thrive, communities thrive.

In this session, all 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 the partner was tasked with proposing a new selection process for delegates attending COP22 (The twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties). As a result, 50 percent of delegates chosen were women. There are still many challenges. The biggest ones include women’s access to land and secured land tenure, to address the redefinition of roles by adapting the

methodologies that benefited women, to men: Saving for Change groups for men, 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 tools designed by Oxfam, in particular the Transformative Women’s Leadership Roadmap, 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.

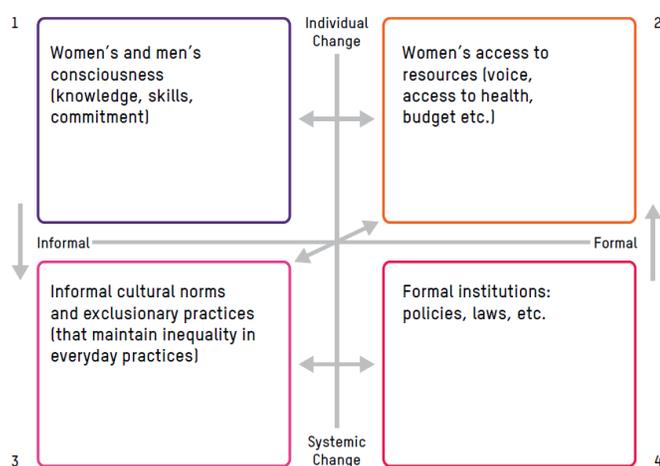


Figure #6: Oxfam’s Transformative Women’s Leadership Roadmap: a TOC to bring long lasting change to gender dynamics. For Oxfam, change happens at individual and systemic levels, in informal and formal

HOW TO IMPLEMENT TLWR STRATEGY?

Four pillars of TLWR:

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

UNCORRECTED PROOFS

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.

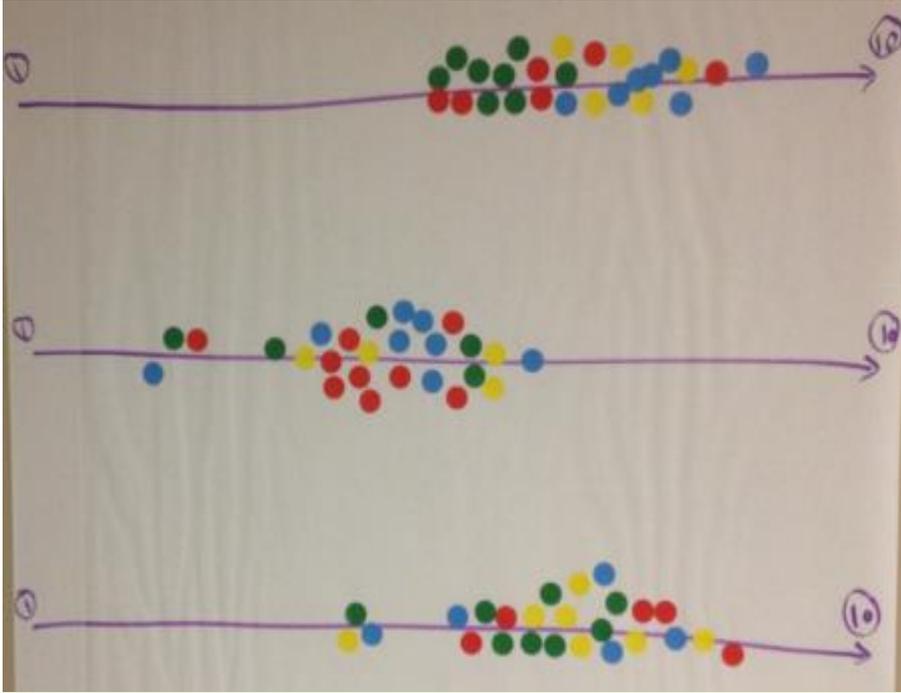
Finally, we use lobbying when we want to a legislature to pass a law or a private sector actor to change policies, for instance, those involving supply-chain issues.

Both programs have reached critical success using evidence from the work they perform with vulnerable communities 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 great example is the work partners have done in Vanuatu to create VCAN: the Vanuatu Climate Action Network. CA-MEL has been focusing, in particular, on empowering civil society to change policies on disaster risk reduction and climate change to be more focused on prevention and sustainability, instead of humanitarian response.

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

EVALUATION ON OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The participants evaluated the event in three areas: content, methodology and pertinence. 1 (left side) was the worst score, and 10 (right side) was the highest. You can see the results below:



III. CONCLUSION

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

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

Traditional models of development thinking 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 how different systems influence one another. This 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 cannot influence 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 space in Ethiopia, where the 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 there is a general acceptance of polygamy in that society.

The value of a resilience programming approach as advocated by Oxfam, on the other hand, is that it helps us understand the connections between project outcomes and wider processes of change. This 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 understand how those factors make people more vulnerable to disasters and, thus, to design and implement more appropriate interventions.

In a recent independent evaluation carried out in R4 Senegal, the evaluators recommended more fully integrating the program's various components. This was 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 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.

4.2 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 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 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, an ownership or commitment towards these priorities is developed. Note, however, the Spider Web is currently limited as tool for dialogue with committees, and not for wider stakeholder consultation, such as with government agencies, CSO networks, and other institutions with which Oxfam works. Other ways of building ownership or prioritizing needs is by employing participatory assessment methodologies, such as Participatory, Capacity, and Vulnerability Assessments (PCVAs). These enable the identification of local priorities and 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, participants, especially women, are able to get access to savings and credits. They also have

a space to have an open dialogue about the current events in their community and in the project. R4 has promoted Annual Impact Reflections, as well. During these annual events, stakeholders of the project at different levels gather to reflect about the implementation challenges and devise improvement actions for the following period.

4.3 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 exasperated 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. Thus, a sound gender and power analysis to obtain a good understanding of the context is paramount for designing effective program interventions.

4.3 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 (CCDCs) in Vanuatu has 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.

4.4 MONITORING AND LEARNING

Robust monitoring frameworks are necessary to assess resilience changes and impacts. Multiple quantitative and qualitative methods are necessary, but these should also include community perspectives on resilience changes, as well. Such frameworks are likely to be complex because of the multi-stakeholder and multi-dimensional nature of 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.

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