

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE IN SOMALIA

by the RESILIENCE WORKING GROUP

The Resilience Working Group is hosted by the Somalia NGO Consortium and comprises a range of local NGOs, international NGOs, UN and donor members. We have, over several months of consultations, developed the following principles on building Resilience in Somalia. These principles cut across the 'Humanitarian – Development' spectrum and underpin our belief that in a complex, conflict-affected environment, such as Somalia, foreign assistance is either helping build people's capacity to cope with and adapt to shocks and stress - or not.

Further, we believe political and social stability are fundamental for building resilience, as they influence the risk people are willing to take in terms of investing in the long term. Financing of Resilience programming should be matched by social and legal investments in addressing inequalities, including marginalization of minority clans and women.

With this in mind, the Resilience Working Group asserts the following key principles to make Resilience building more likely.

SOMALIA NGO CONSORTIUM

Theme 1
Long term, context specific, non-sectoral planning and funding

Long term funding – Funding should ideally be for 5 years or more in each targeted location. This would avoid short term interventions per community based on limited analysis and without sufficient time to address key local governance factors. It would also reduce agency staff turnover from unpredictable funding, lowering recruitment & training costs and crucially keeping staff long enough to develop deep contextual knowledge. Context specific programming – Programmes undertaken with external actor involvements (NGOs, UN, donors) should be based on local community defined problems, solutions and participation rather than pre-defined sectors and generic programming across a region.

Adaptive management – Changes to programmatic capabilities happen over time, often due to increases in community & government participation and agency staff capacity to facilitate higher impact programmes. As opportunities for these higher impact outputs are identified, funding structures need to allow activities and M&E to adapt accordingly, for example, through annual activity, budget and log frame revisions. Further, flexible "Crisis Modifiers" should be integrated in programmes to allow for rapid adjustments to major shocks as they occur and to protect long term gains.

Deeper analysis – Enough time for initial community-driven assessment, and subsequent periodic reviews of activities, is needed to unlock context-specific solutions. Funding and implementation planning must allocate time for iteration, analysis and performing the changes that might result. Examples could include, initial understanding of hazards, vulnerabilities & capacities in order to support mitigation measures, followed by subsequent adjustments to programme activities as better opportunities for responses become known through ongoing community interaction.

Theme 2
Strengthening local ability to self-organize and act inclusively

Governance and multi-stakeholder processes – The resilience of communities in the horn is tied closely to their ability to self-organize, react and manage the effects of shocks as they occur. Resilience activities should therefore promote strengthening of representative decision making institutions in communities as defined by the diverse individuals that make up those communities. Inclusive governance can happen in a wide-range of organized groups and at different levels. For example, traditional elders, formal government institutions, women's groups and Natural Resource Management committees can each play a unique role in representing diverse parts of the community to minimize marginalization, manage risk, and respond to shocks and stresses. Therefore a major component of resilience efforts should build upon existing formal and informal governance structures and promote their function as inclusive decision making bodies.

Theme 3
Resilience programmes must utilize a diverse set of approaches

Private Sector, Markets and Social Connectedness – Examination of the scale of aid programmes in Somalia often comes with the realization that aid makes up a relatively small part of how communities cope with shocks and stresses. More influential are resource flows through functioning markets and the social connections which make them work[1]. Assessing and analysing the role of markets and resource flows in recurrent crisis hit areas and investing in improving their

1 Facing Famine – Somali experiences in the famine of 2011, Daniel Maxwell; Nisar Majid; Guhad Adan; Khalif Abdirahman and Jeeyon Janet Kim, Oct 2015, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University

functioning and accessibility for the most vulnerable can be an important part of achieving impacts at scale. This may include promoting vulnerable households to diversify work within less-climate-affected market activities or aiding established traders (such as a veterinary supplier) to provide education on valuable products to communities.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness – In line with the Sendai Framework[3], Disaster Risk Reduction and building preparedness should be core parts of effective resilience programming. DRR is concerned with reducing risk before shocks occur or stresses overcome people's ability to cope. Better Preparedness helps people to respond in a way that limits impact when shocks occur. Together, they equate to a wide range of context specific activities focussed on particular hazards.

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA)[3] – Supporting Sustainable development will take different forms in different situations. However a Sustainable Livelihoods approach should be used when deciding and shaping which activities to prioritise. The changes necessary to sustainably manage community risks may take longer to occur than short term humanitarian programmes allow, but all programming should tangibly contribute to the long term. This will help ensure that people's capacities, vulnerabilities and how they cope with hazards are assessed across a range of domains (e.g. Human, Social, Environmental, Physical and Financial Capitals), and make less likely a 'one size fits all' solution.

Social Protection – Even during periods of relative plenty a community is still likely to have individuals who are not able to be food secure without damaging their own or others future ability to cope[5]. This results in negative impacts both for the most vulnerable and the wider community. For example, the most vulnerable often do not have a voice to shape community agreements or are forced to violate agreements due to severe financial needs. Further, they may not have the resources to capitalize on opportunities created by many resilience activities.

2 Sustainable Livelihoods guidance sheets - 2, DFID
3 The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, UN, 2015
4 For example through crisis sales of livelihood assets or cutting down trees for charcoal

Policies and programmes targeted specifically at the vulnerable are therefore a key component to building resilience, encouraging the wider community to engage in resilience efforts while promoting access of vulnerable people to development opportunities. For example, social protection in the form of cash safety nets can be paired with income generating activities for the most vulnerable; the aim being to graduate households off of safety nets and enable them to fully take their part in moving their community forward.

Emergency Response – The advantages of the above resilience principles can be most visible when a major disaster does ultimately occur. A well rounded resilience programme should already have significant pre-established connections and mobilization with community actors, contextual knowledge, staff on the ground and "crises modifier" funding approved. These capabilities allow both the pre-organization of community and government responses, as well as immediate programme-led emergency support. As key personnel, resources and contacts are already in place, meaningful action is not held-up by external first-response logistics or contractual delays, leading to support within a matter of days instead of weeks or months. This early action affords the time required for larger government, private or humanitarian mechanisms to mobilize should a wider scale response be needed.

In summary, the Resilience Working Group would like to stress that "how" we approach Resilience in Somalia is as important to success as "what" activities we get involved in – being facilitators of Somali-led change rather than pushing an outside agenda. The above principles are based on several months of consultation and reflection with a wide range of actors. We hope they will spark discussion as well as guide practitioners, policy makers and funders in developing and supporting high quality resilience-building actions in Somalia.

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ACF International
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BRCiS Building Resilient Communities in Somalia
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CONCERN worldwide
COOPI Cooperazione Internazionale
DRC Danish Refugee Council
International Medical Corps
International Rescue Committee
NAPAD Nomadic Assistance for Peace and Development
NRC Norwegian Refugee Council
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