



Report from the workshop

# “The Road to **RESILIENCE**

## *Converging Actors, Integrating Approaches”*

*The RESILIENCE workshop on the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Poverty Reduction was held on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Brussels Info Place (BIP).*

*It was organized within the framework of RESILIENCE, a EuropeAid-funded project implemented by a consortium formed by CARE Nederland, Groupe URD and the University of Wageningen.*

### **CARE Nederland**

*CARE Nederland is a Dutch non-governmental organization established in 1993 and operating in the fields of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Aid. Since 2009 CARE Nederland has divided its work into two programme teams, the Disaster Risk Reduction Team and the Peacebuilding team. As a member organization of CARE International, CARE NL cooperates with country offices and local partners to carry out its programmes. Its mission is to strengthen the resilience of poor communities prone to disasters, including violent conflict, by addressing immediate needs and contributing to sustainable solutions to underlying causes of vulnerability.*

### **Groupe URD**

*Groupe URD is a research, evaluation and training institute. The association has been providing expertise on humanitarian action and post-crisis reconstruction since 1997. Groupe URD aims to improve practices and consequently improve the situation of crisis-affected people. It works on themes which are specific to each operational sector - nutrition, water and sanitation, protection, urbanism, etc. – as well as on cross-cutting issues – aid quality, the environment, disaster risk reduction or LRRD. Our work is aimed at humanitarian operators, donors, international and national institutions, United Nations agencies and NGOs.*

### **Wageningen University – Disaster Studies Group**

*Disaster Studies offers education, research and policy advice on the issues of conflict and natural disasters, the relations between these crises and processes of development, and the dynamics of aid interventions during and after disaster and conflict. It contributes with qualitative research to multi-disciplinary approaches. Disaster Studies combines academic teaching and research with a desire to enhance policy discussions and local and international responses to disaster and conflict. Research is interactive in nature and builds on dialogue with policy-makers and people in the field.*

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*We wish to thank all the participants of the RESILIENCE workshop for their smart and relevant interventions throughout the day<sup>1</sup>. This workshop report is based on their lively presentations, group discussions and debates of the day<sup>2</sup>.*

*We would like to express special thanks to the 4 panelists who agreed to present their work and views on resilience and helped creating a constructive working atmosphere for the group talks to take place in the best conditions: Marcus Oxley from the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR), Frances Seballos from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) of the University of Sussex, Etienne Coyette from the Directorate General Development of the European Commission (DG DEVCO) and Thea Hilhorst from the Disaster Studies Group of Wageningen University.*

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<sup>1</sup> The list of participants can be found in the Annexes, p. 14

<sup>2</sup> Special mention is made where (few) additional information was integrated to this report to ease its comprehension

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>CC</b>	Climate Change
<b>CCA</b>	Climate Change Adaptation
<b>CSDRM</b>	Climate Smart Disaster Risk Management
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>DG DEVCO</b>	Directorate General for Development and Cooperation
<b>DG ECHO</b>	Directorate General of the European Community Humanitarian Office
<b>DRM</b>	Disaster Risk Management
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GNDR</b>	Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction
<b>Groupe URD</b>	Groupe Urgence-Réhabilitation-Développement
<b>IDS</b>	Institute of Development Studies
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>MFF</b>	Multiannual Financial Framework
<b>MRP</b>	Mega Rice Project
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organization
<b>PR</b>	Poverty Reduction
<b>SCR</b>	Strengthening Climate Resilience
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNISDR</b>	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
<b>WUR</b>	Wageningen University

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concept of “resilience” as understood in the context of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Poverty Reduction (PR) is becoming increasingly popular in policy debates and aid programs. The RESILIENCE Workshop that was held on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011, was the occasion for some of the key EU stakeholders of resilience to gather their views and share their experiences on the evolution of the concept, its implications both for policies and in the fields, and to identify the way forward. The main outcomes of the workshop are:

- ✓ **The concept of “resilience” makes sense to all stakeholders, from local communities to operators and donors** because it reflects the complexity of the multi-risk environment local communities live in instead of artificially discriminating between interrelated risks and adaptation opportunities [See section 2.2. The logic behind integrating DRR, CCA and PR, p.6].
- ✓ **Adopting the resilience concept is the first step towards de-compartmentalizing DRR, CCA and PR** because resilience is the common denominator under which the three realms can meet, develop a common language and share their experiences without losing their original meaning and intrinsic strength [See section 2.3. Thai or Chinese cuisine?, p.7].
- ✓ **There is a pressing need to operationalize resilience.** Once the concept is clearly defined, it has to be translated into resilience criteria and indicators that can be adapted to different contexts, in each community [See section 2.4. Operationalizing resilience, p.8].
- ✓ **The resilience of local communities can be achieved only if all local stakeholders are given both the opportunity and the capacities to participate.** Communities evolve in both a multi-risk and a multi-stakeholder environment. Taking the private sector on board and building the capacities of local authorities creates the enabling environment that is necessary to achieve resilience. [See section 3. Building resilience with the participation of all stakeholders, p.9]
- ✓ **Knowledge is one of the fundamental factors that help building resilience.** We talk about both technical and socio-economic knowledge, at global, regional, national and local levels, flowing bottom-up, top-down and within levels. Computing and sharing information, within and between organization, is one of the biggest challenges that can be met thanks to key information relays and platforms [See section 4. Building resilience on knowledge, p.10].
- ✓ **DRR and CCA have to be fully integrated into humanitarian and development policies**, in opposition to the current mono-sectoral approach. [See section 5.1. How the DRR/CCA system works, p.12]
- ✓ **Policies, programs and projects have to be resilient themselves:** we need built-in preparedness, adaptation capacities, flexibility and knowledge-building to have a long-lasting impact on the resilience of communities [See section 5.2. From projects to policy recommendations, p.12].
- ✓ **Adopting the resilience concept would help to tackle the underlying causes of disasters** by putting emphasis on prevention and preparedness rather than on response and by linking relief, rehabilitation and development. [See section 5.2. From projects to policy recommendations, p.12].
- ✓ **More work is needed on the interaction of resilience and conflict** [See section 6. Bringing the “C-word” into the equation?, p.13].

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Presentation of the RESILIENCE project

The RESILIENCE project was born from the firm conviction that Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Poverty Reduction (PR) have to be looked at as the three sides of the same triangle. These three realms indeed seek the same goal: **building the resilience of local communities in the face of present and future disasters**. We observed that sending different teams to the field, each working separately either on DRR, on CCA or on PR projects, without linking with each other is both a) very **confusing for local communities** who live in multi-risk environments and are simultaneously impacted by interrelated shocks, and b) **little efficient for organizations** who multiply efforts by working in the same area, towards the same goal, but with different conceptual backgrounds, approaches and sources of funding. The concept of resilience quickly imposed itself as the umbrella under which DRR, CCA and PR would meet to achieve their shared and common objective.

However, as firm as our conviction might have been, it had to be validated by in-depth bibliographic and field research: does the concept of resilience make sense at local levels? Does it make sense to DRR, CCA and development practitioners? In parallel to this, a lot of **conceptualization** work had to be done: does resilience mean the same thing in different contexts? At different levels? Can we define a common language to be spoken by all stakeholders and at different levels? Finally, the concept of resilience had to be **operationalized**, i.e. turned into workable objectives and indicators: how can the concept of resilience be concretely integrated into projects, programs and policies?

In order to reflect the diversity of contexts and actors that work on resilience, the RESILIENCE project partners implemented **extensive field research** in three contrasted areas faced with different types of hazards and having various ways of dealing with them: a semi-arid area affected by drought in Southern Ethiopia, tropical lowland prone to floods in Bolivia, and peatlands prone to peat fires in Kalimantan, Indonesia. In each of these areas, we organized local and national level **multi-stakeholder workshops** to understand the role played by different stakeholders – from communities to governmental authorities and the private sector – in building resilience.

## 1.2. The RESILIENCE EU Stakeholder Workshop

The RESILIENCE EU stakeholder workshop that was held in Brussels on Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup> 2011 was one of the key steps of the RESILIENCE project. It gathered 30 different stakeholders<sup>3</sup> with various backgrounds and experiences in dealing with disasters and building the resilience of local communities: representatives from international NGOs, from the Red Cross network, from European NGO networks, from the European Commission (DG ECHO and DEVCO) and from research institutes.

The workshop aimed at: a) **confronting our views and findings** from the field with the experiences of European practitioners, researchers, donors and policy-makers; b) **creating synergies** between stakeholders to bring the reflection on resilience to a higher level; c) finding ways to **overcome the challenges** facing the better integration of DRR, CCA and PR, and the inclusion of resilience in programs and policies.

Following an introduction by François Grünewald (Groupe URD) and a panel discussion where Marcus Oxley (GNDR), Fran Seballos (IDS), Etienne Coyette (DG DEVCO) and Thea Hilhorst (Wageningen University) gave insights on resilience, workshop participants were split into 3 working groups discussing 5 topics: de-compartmentalization of DRR, CCA and PR; resilience and knowledge; involvement of the private sector in building resilience; resilience and the capacities of local authorities; and finally, resilience policy-making.

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<sup>3</sup> The list of participants can be found in the Annexes, Section 8.1

## 2. CONCEPTUALIZING RESILIENCE

### 2.1. Defining resilience

The concept of “resilience” as understood in the context of DRR and CCA linked with development is relatively new<sup>4</sup>. The first time it was explicitly mentioned was in a 1998 UN report following the South Sudanese crisis<sup>5</sup>, and it took a few years before it was adopted by humanitarian and development actors. Even in 2007, when the RESILIENCE project was first designed, resilience was still not popular. Today, the word resilience is being used all over the place: reaching the heart of aid policies, put at the basis of the strategies of NGOs, set as the focus of the work of think-tanks and lobbies.

In order to have a common, workable definition of “resilience”, we chose to keep the one given by the UNISDR: “*the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.*”<sup>6</sup>

However, there was a general consensus on the need to make sense out of this definition: how does resilience capture the three realms of DRR, CCA and PR? Shall we simply merge the three concepts into “resilience”? How do we turn the concept into pragmatic objectives and indicators of resilience?

### 2.2. The logic behind integrating DRR, CCA and PR

The general picture in disaster losses is getting worse<sup>7</sup>: in last July, hence even before the Bangkok floods, it was estimated that **the total disaster losses for the formal economy in 2011 would amount to USD 265 billion**<sup>8</sup>. This is over twice the amount of the annual Official Development Assistance<sup>9</sup> and does not even take into account the losses in the informal economy. **2011 was therefore the second most expensive disaster year after 2005**, and although you can argue that the 2011 disaster statistics are twisted by the huge losses in Japan<sup>10</sup>, one of the world’s largest economies, the figures match the general trend of continuously increasing disaster losses. 90% of the people affected by disasters are poor and live in poor countries. Furthermore, 90% of disasters are induced by climatic events – windstorms, floods, hurricanes, droughts... which we know will get more severe and happen more frequently in the near future as a consequence of global Climate Change. It therefore comes as no surprise to state that **poverty, disasters and climate are interrelated issues**. How are they linked exactly?<sup>11</sup>

**“Climate Change is the longest-scale Early Warning”**<sup>12</sup>: Climate Change is increasing and will keep on increasing both the frequency and the magnitude of weather-related hazards. **Reducing the risks of disasters therefore means preparing for both the current and future patterns of disasters**, otherwise the efforts made today will be rendered null in a few years. A DRR project implemented by the Red Cross in Indonesia illustrates this point quite well: in order to help the community cope with frequent floods, water tanks were built to withstand the surplus water. However, they were designed based only on the past levels of water, notwithstanding the fact that water levels kept rising up. The tanks were used for two years, after which they were rendered useless because the water was too high. Integrating future risk into DRR projects is therefore absolutely necessary if we

<sup>4</sup> This is the view of François Grünewald (Groupe URD), expressed during the first plenary discussion of the workshop

<sup>5</sup> *The Sudan: Program Design Consultancy, Operation Lifeline Sudan*, 1998, downloadable at <http://sudanarchive.net/cgi-bin/pagesso?e=01off---v---100125--1-0-SectionLevel-0-0-1-1&a=d&cl=Cl3.3.1.1&d=Dn1d217>

<sup>6</sup> UNISDR, 2007. See their work on DRR-related terminology: <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

<sup>7</sup> This paragraph is based on Marcus Oxley’s presentation during the panel discussion

<sup>8</sup> Estimation by MunichRe: [http://www.munichre.com/en/media\\_relations/press\\_releases/2011/2011\\_07\\_12\\_press\\_release.aspx](http://www.munichre.com/en/media_relations/press_releases/2011/2011_07_12_press_release.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> The global ODA for 2010 amounts to about USD 140 billion (OECD)

<sup>10</sup> Point raised by Pascal Babin during the group discussions

<sup>11</sup> The next few points came out several times during the workshop. They were further developed in the working group on de-compartmentalization and met a general consensus that made the case for the integration of DRR, CCA and PR

<sup>12</sup> Fleur Monasso, during the Yellow group discussion on de-compartmentalization; she also kindly presented her group’s findings to the other participants in the plenary, and provided the illustration on Indonesian water tanks

want our efforts to have lasting impacts. Unfortunately, although we know quite well what the global climate could look like in the future, the impacts of Climate Change at local levels remain blurry. **Reducing risks for today and tomorrow by adapting to a changing climate therefore means preparing for and integrating uncertainty into DRR and CCA strategies.**

**Saving lives and livelihoods:** PR is a long-term objective. However, natural disasters can happen anytime – and, in the future, will happen more frequently –, in any context, and have the power to abolish all development efforts made so far. Very nice, successful projects resulting from years of efforts can fall apart within seconds because of a disastrous event. **Integrating DRR and CCA into PR projects therefore seems essential to “protect” the gains from development.**

**Developing to enhance people’s capacities:** building resilience helps protecting development gains, and this also goes the other way around: poverty reduction contributes to lowering people’s and communities’ vulnerability, to building their resilience and to enhancing their adaptive capacities.

**Developing with the changing climate<sup>13</sup>:** when talking about Climate Change, we tend to focus only on its dramatic consequences – natural hazards. However, **Climate Change also manifests itself through changing rain and temperature patterns, which are less spectacular but have drastic consequences on people’s livelihoods** because it directly impacts the environment on which they rely on an everyday basis. As a consequence, efforts to improve the livelihoods of local communities need to take into account the changes in their direct environment, including those induced by Climate Change: CCA has to be integrated into PR efforts.

**Living in a changing, multi-risk environment:** NGOs implementing DRR and CCA projects tend to think that they have the same priority in mind as the communities they work with: reducing the risks of present and future disasters. However, communities have different sets of priorities as they live in a “multi-risk environment”. They face all kinds of interlinked risks and changes: environmental but also socio-economic, related to education, health or migrations. They therefore look at their environment in a holistic manner, and discriminating between the impacts of Climate Change, natural hazards or other risk factors does not necessarily make sense to them. On the contrary, **integrating these various risk factors to build the resilience of communities makes more sense at local levels.**

### 2.3. Thai or Chinese cuisine?

Although the concept of “resilience” makes sense as it integrates DRR, CCA and PR and allows to see the different factors of risk in a holistic way, have to be careful when introducing new vocabulary<sup>14</sup>. We need to make sure that **the concept of resilience embodies the change we want to see in projects and policies**, and that **we truly make sense out of the concept** so that it does not become an “empty” fashionable buzzword that simply replaces DRR, CCA and PR while its true meaning does not percolate into policies, down to the local level. We want to avoid **talking across purposes** and come out with a sort of “soup of resilience”, while what we want is a “balanced menu with clear-cut ingredients well integrated for better digestion”<sup>15</sup>. By integration, what do we mean exactly? Do we mean a “Thai cuisine” type of integration, where all the different ingredients are still clearly discernable, or do we mean a “Chinese cuisine” type, where all the ingredients are put together to contribute to one overall taste, without being able to discern one ingredient from the other afterwards<sup>16</sup>?

If we choose to go with “Thai cuisine”, which seems to be the most appropriate option, integrating the three realms shall not mean merging them into one common concept and forget about DRR, CCA

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<sup>13</sup> This point is particularly well explained by Terry Cannon (Director of SCR) during an intervention at the Global Platform for DRR : <http://vimeo.com/25181367>

<sup>14</sup> This point was one of the main outcome of the group discussion on de-compartmentalization

<sup>15</sup> Metaphor developed by Mags Bird (VOICE) in the plenary

<sup>16</sup> Metaphor posed by François Grünwald (Groupe URD) in the plenary. The following elements on what is meant by “integration” were developed by the working group on de-compartmentalization

and PR. These concepts still make sense by themselves and each has its own specificities. We should therefore rather talk about **de-compartmentalization** of the three realms: projects, programs and policies should not be only about one issue or the other, but each issue should feature clearly and be articulated with the others. Doing “Climate Smart DRR”<sup>17</sup> is based on de-compartmentalization: it means that the landscape of risks – comprising both present and future risks; taking into account environmental, socio-economic, health risks etc – is assessed, and that based on this risk assessment, measures are taken to prepare for, live through, recover from and bounce back after the occurrence of hazards. This implies that **DRR and CCA become true components of livelihoods strategies, and that they are integrated into development schemes** and projects. De-compartmentalizing means articulating the three realms better, speaking a common language, sharing experiences and knowledge in order to learn from each other and cooperate to build resilient communities.

Moreover, de-compartmentalizing allows for more flexibility in the use of concepts. As a matter of fact, **for communication purposes we have to adapt our vocabulary to the different levels of operation**. Talking about CCA strategies at the household level does not always make sense, whereas livelihoods and resilience do resonate<sup>18</sup>. On the contrary, at national levels it is difficult to talk about livelihoods because they depend a lot on the context, while global CCA strategies can be adopted at national and even international levels. Disaggregating concepts sometimes helps being understood at different levels: even though in the action, realms have to be better integrated, using each concept separately can be useful for communication and clarification matters.

## 2.4. Operationalizing resilience

Participants repeatedly expressed their fear that resilience becomes a convenient buzzword behind which blurry policies and programs could be implemented. Although it is good news that the concept of resilience is getting broader to incorporate more disciplines and sectors, we need to make sure it does not become so vague that it cannot be measured. In order to avoid this, we need to break up the resilience concept into **criteria**<sup>19</sup> – what do we refer to when assessing the resilience of communities? – and break up each of these criterion into **indicators** – how do we measure progresses made in fulfilling each criterion?

At the same time, we need to have a holistic concept at the core of a uniting policy framework, but we also need to be rigorous about this concept by rendering it measurable: resilience should be used both as a policy uniting framework and scientifically.

Although everyone agreed we need a common, global definition of resilience, there was also a consensus on the fact that **it can and should be operationalized differently depending on the context** to which it applies: a resilient community is a community that is able to prepare for, adapt to and live through shocks while preserving its basic assets, but what makes communities resilient differs from place to place, “from Eskimos to Amazonians”<sup>20</sup>. Resilience in Indonesia is different from resilience in Ethiopia; a resilient pastoralist household is different from a resilient fishermen community. Based on a common understanding of the concept of resilience, its meaning has to be redefined for each community at local levels and translated into concrete, specific indicators for each community.

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<sup>17</sup> See the Climate Smart Disaster Risk Management (CSDRM) Approach, developed by Strengthening Climate Resilience (SCR), at <http://www.csdrm.org>

<sup>18</sup> This was also one of the findings of the RESILIENCE project itself, and is coherent with the fact that communities live in a multi-risk environment and are more at ease with a holistic concept such as resilience, rather than with the separate realms of DRR, CCA and PR

<sup>19</sup> This was suggested mainly by Thea Hilhorst (Wageningen University) in the plenary. We would here like to mention 3 brilliant works made on the characteristics of resilience: John Twiggs’ *Characteristics of a Disaster-resilient Community*, 2009; SCR’s Discussion Paper #1, *The Resilience Renaissance? Unpacking of resilience for tackling climate change and disasters*, 2010; ACCRA’s *Local Adaptive Capacity Framework*, on-going

<sup>20</sup> Metaphor from the working groups, reported by Brian Ingle (Plan UK) in the plenary discussion

## 3. BUILDING RESILIENCE WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS

### 3.1. The challenging participation of the private sector

When the RESILIENCE project was first designed, one of the objectives was to see how the different stakeholders each understand DRR, CCA and PR, how this impacts their actions towards these three realms, and how they interact, or not, to build resilience. We had first come up with a triangle of stakeholders<sup>21</sup>: local communities, civil society, and governmental agencies. In the field, we quickly realized that **the private sector played a major role in shaping both the environment and how other actors adapt** to changes, respond to crises and develop. The stakeholder triangle became a stakeholder diamond, with local communities, civil society actors (local and international), governmental agencies (local and national) and the private sector.

The concept of “private sector”<sup>22</sup> is quite vague as it comprises large multinational companies as well as local entrepreneurs or farmers who are often considered as community members rather than representatives of “the private sector”. Even local cooperatives that engage in trade of community goods are part of the private sector. **Private actors are fully integrated in the livelihoods chain**, as either **enablers of development** – e.g. local market opportunities with fair prices allowing for the diversification of income sources – or **disablers of development** – e.g. activities that degrade the environment or powerful middlemen that twist the market for their own interest.

**Interactions between the private sector and NGOs** can be difficult: on the one hand, NGOs can refuse to deal with the private sector for **ethical** reasons; on the other hand, private actors can be reluctant to work with NGOs because of the negative look they can shed on their activities. However, the private sector is a key actor in the livelihoods chain, and even in projects themselves as its contribution is needed for the procurement of goods and services. When working with the private sector, there is a danger for NGOs to negatively impact resilience by skewing local economies if large procurements go through one enterprise while forgetting other private producers. On the other hand, **private actors can facilitate the response to crises** – e.g. providing continuous access to livestock marketing during droughts in the pastoral areas of Southern Ethiopia – but might need incentives so that their interest goes along communities’ interest.

How can we then get the private sector to cooperate in building resilience? We first need to have a **holistic approach** in dealing with the private sector and understand the key challenges and opportunities they represent in the livelihoods chain: private actors are part of a system, they are impacted by civil society and governmental actions and, in return, impact the outcomes of projects and programs. Our message on resilience and the way we deal with private actors have to be adapted to the type of private actors we are dealing with and to their interests, “from Eskimos to Amazonians”, but also from local to regional, cross-border and national levels. In particular, we need to differentiate between **the role of private actors in urban contexts** – major actors in construction, service delivery, food supply – and in rural contexts – role in the livelihoods chain and access to markets. The “**entry points**” for a cooperation of NGOs with private actors in building resilience can be **concrete messages** such as market continuity or sustainable access to supplies.

### 3.2. Resilience and the Capacities of local authorities

**Local authorities are the first relays of governments at local levels**<sup>23</sup>. They are the key interface between communities and the State, and have a crucial role as the **implementing agencies** of

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<sup>21</sup> Explanation given by François Grünewald (Groupe URD) in the plenary

<sup>22</sup> The following elements on how to deal with the private sector mainly come from the working group on the involvement of the private sector in building resilience, whose key findings were kindly presented by Brian Ingle (Plan UK) in the plenary

<sup>23</sup> The following elements on the capacities of local authorities mainly come from the group discussion on resilience and the capacities of local authorities, whose key findings were kindly presented in the plenary by Brian Ingle (Plan UK)

national policies. They organize the provision of services and regulate the interactions between citizens, CSOs, NGOs and the private sector. They additionally create an **enabling environment** for communities to build resilience. Finally, they have an **advocacy** role in relaying local needs to higher governmental agencies, up to the national policy-making level.

This is the ideal picture. In practice, they often have **low financial, material and human resources**, which translates into difficulties in understanding and implementing national policies. When doing **capacity-building**, NGOs sometimes tend to forget local authorities – but is it even their role to build the capacities of local state actors? When governments fail in providing basic services, NGOs prefer to provide services themselves rather than to enable local authorities to work better for communities. On the other hand, when they do try to build the capacities of local authorities and train their staff, they often face high turnover – due to scarcity of budgets and lack of visibility – that almost renders their work useless.

How can NGOs then work with local authorities? We first need to be clear on the extent to which they can support them while staying politically neutral. Secondly, even though local authorities might lack resources to fully do their work, they should not be bypassed by NGOs. On the contrary, they should be consulted and **included in projects and programs** design, implementation and evaluation. Building the resilience of communities also means building the resilience of all the actors that enable communities to build resilience, which starts with including them in resilience-building projects and programs.

#### 4. BUILDING RESILIENCE ON KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is one of the fundamentals that can help building resilience<sup>24</sup>. It has to flow multiple ways, from the field to the higher decision-making levels, back, and loop through all the partners of resilience.

The first level of information we need is directly from local communities: knowing their environment, the hazards they face, and how they deal with them. A lot of information has always circulated **between communities** and this has been the main dissemination channel for innovations at local levels. This kind of knowledge-sharing is easy to encourage, for example through participatory video-making<sup>25</sup>.

Both NGOs working in the field and local authorities need to be **evidence-based** and get information “directly at the source”, i.e. from local communities even **prior to conceptualizing projects**. However, getting information requires funds and in general costs for baselines and/or a diagnostics are covered by the organization’s own internal funds. To donors, projects are needs-driven and needs are supposed to be well-known even before an organization decides to implement a project in an area. In the end, few organizations can afford to spend money on pre-conception research and projects are designed without solid information. One better solution would be that organizations first pay for the baseline research, conceive their projects based on its findings, and **get the baseline reimbursed by donors** if their proposal is accepted<sup>26</sup> – for projects above 300.000€ for example. Another solution would be to **include the baseline of the next project into the evaluation of the current one**. This would add value to evaluations and impact assessments – which are often not used per se by organizations – while providing valuable information for the next project. It is a proactive way of **computing and using lessons learned** and not starting from scratch with each new project.

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<sup>24</sup> The following elements are mainly drawn from the working group on resilience and knowledge, whose main findings were kindly presented by Fleur Monasso (Red Cross) in the plenary

<sup>25</sup> Example given by Fleur Monasso from the Red Cross. Participatory video-making is when community members become film directors for a few days, film their everyday life and show how they deal with shocks to neighboring communities, how they innovated to cope with disasters. This contributes to spreading innovations, adaptation and coping strategies between communities.

<sup>26</sup> This idea was put forward by Jeroen Warner in the working group on resilience and knowledge

Finally, gathering information means **retaining human resources** within organizations<sup>27</sup>: local community members and workers are a gold-mine for both knowledge and network building.

**“The price of good resilience is eternal monitoring and very solid feed-back and adaptation”<sup>28</sup>**: Information is also needed for **monitoring** during the implementation of projects so that they can be timely reoriented whenever something goes wrong – because some elements were not taken into account when the project was designed, or because a crisis strikes. **Projects have to be resilient themselves and allow for flexibility** because it is not possible to plan everything ahead – especially when original information is lacking. It is in the own interest of donors that organizations know more and innovate to build resilience: the more we know at each project phase, the better projects respond to actual needs and the better donors can justify funding good, needs-driven projects with taxpayers’ money.

In parallel, operating organizations have to communicate to communities the results and outcomes of their projects<sup>29</sup>, and what can be the ways forward. It is the role of local organizations and authorities to do advocacy and relay the information they get from the field to strategy units within their own organizations, so that it flows up to the national and, ultimately, to international decision-making levels.

Bottom-up flows are good but not sufficient: **information also has to circulate top-down**<sup>30</sup>. The EC for example should develop and disseminate a communication on its policy regarding resilience and DRR: how projects are funded and coordinated. It is important for organizations to understand the funding system and policy so that they know which delegation/program to approach. Two communications on DRR were made by the EC in 2009<sup>31</sup>, they have to be updated, revised and disseminated widely.

Climate Change is most of the time addressed in very **technical terms** which are difficult to grasp for most non-scientific stakeholders – from policy makers to communities. NGOs and CSOs which understand both scientific research and the views of communities could be facilitators that bring scientific results into communities and translate them into intelligible facts and principles for local people. Scientific knowledge also has to percolate through policy-makers in order to strengthen development strategies with the knowledge of what the climate might look like 5, 10 or 50 years from now.

**“Soft” research** on DRR, CCA and development, such as the RESILIENCE project or SCR, are also very important. The different initiatives have to cooperate and share their findings so that each does not “reinvent the wheel” again<sup>32</sup>. The world is getting smaller, a lot of knowledge already exists, we need to know where to look for it and how to access it. Disseminating the findings of such initiatives to the different levels, from policy-makers to operators on the field is a challenge that can be achieved through communication and trainings.

**Capitalizing on your own knowledge** is one of the greatest challenges we are facing: there is a lot of information within organizations, withheld at different levels – field officers, strategy units, decision-making level – but also within each pillar – DRR unit, CCA unit, livelihoods unit etc. De-compartmentalizing knowledge within organizations is a key issue and a pressing demand by organizations themselves because they know it is a key towards integrating resilience into their strategy and towards operationalizing it. Achieving internal de-compartmentalization means building communities of practice, experience-sharing or dissemination networks and holding regular workshops across units and levels of operation.

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<sup>27</sup> This point was raised by Pascal Babin (IRAM) in the working group on resilience and knowledge

<sup>28</sup> Brian Ingle (Plan International UK) in the working group on the capacities of local authorities

<sup>29</sup> Point raised by Jeroen Jurriens (ICCO Kerk in Actie) in the working group on resilience and knowledge

<sup>30</sup> Point raised by Andrew Mitchell (ACF) in the working group on resilience policies

<sup>31</sup> Information brought by Sandro Cerrato (DG ECHO) in the working group on resilience policies

<sup>32</sup> Mentioned by Fran Seballos (IDS) in the panel discussion

## 5. FROM CONCEPTS TO POLICIES

### 5.1. How the DRR/CCA system works

DRR and CCA policies already exist at international, regional and national levels<sup>33</sup>. The international community developed legal, binding or non-binding frameworks: the Hyogo Framework for Action for DRR, and the Kyoto Protocol with the work in progress under the UNFCCC for CCA. Over time, the global framework is turned into national DRR and CCA policies and legislations, which in theory reach the local level. In practice however they mostly fail reaching this level and local people do not see changes happening. Why? Because **top-down strategies fail** to take into account realities on the ground, and are therefore little pertinent. It was actually observed<sup>34</sup> that in areas where progress is made at local levels, genuine partnerships are in place between local authorities, affected communities and the local civil society network. Having a global or even a national policy framework or strategy on DRR or CCA or poverty alleviation is not enough for things to change at the local level: **local governance and bottom-up policies** are the *sine qua non* condition for progress to be made.

Moreover, what our system does is **responding to symptoms** (CC, environmental degradation, poverty, disasters) and developing a policy framework to address these symptoms. We are indeed getting better at emergency response but **we fail at addressing the underlying causes** and building the resilience of communities.

The system structurally differentiates between DRR, CCA and PR: the HFA and the UNFCCC are two separate frameworks that work in little interaction. Climate Change is currently getting a lot of attention on the international arena and **CCA is capturing a large share of the ODA money**<sup>35</sup> through Climate Funding. However, we emphasized above that implementing **mono-sectoral projects has little meaning and impact** at local levels. NGOs are however obliged to comply with policy trends in order to get access to funding – to the expense of project pertinence. Progress has already been made on this issue at national levels, as in the Pacific region for instance where several countries have taken steps to merge their national CCA and DRR strategic plans<sup>36</sup>. Donors should also tend towards integrating Climate Funding into development and DRR programs instead of funding stand-alone CCA<sup>37</sup>.

### 5.2. From projects to policy recommendations

Building resilience takes time<sup>38</sup> – because it is linked with development, because it relies on trust and knowledge – and is actually never over: shocks and threats are evolving constantly, so is the environment in which communities live. The **long-term objective is however limited by short-term funding patterns**. Increasing the length of projects is crucial, but not that easy to achieve. As a matter of fact, **donors are bound by their own financial frameworks** – e.g. 7 years Multiannual Financial Framework for the EU. Engaging in long term projects is also delicate because donors need visibility on actions they fund, which is difficult to ensure with long-term projects.

Building flexibility into projects can be achieved through agreements between operators and donors: **agreement on the expected achievements** of projects, rather than on processes; **agreement on contingency plans** that can be triggered in case of crisis or emergency (“switch system”<sup>39</sup>). Flexibility also means being able to take risks and to **innovate**. The problem is that donors are risk-averse:

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<sup>33</sup> This description of the DRR and CCA system(s) is based on Marcus Oxley’s (GNDR) presentation

<sup>34</sup> See *Views from the Frontline* 2011

<sup>35</sup> See the commitment to provide USD 100 billion per year by 2020 for Climate Funding through the “Green Climate Fund”

<sup>36</sup> This is particularly true for Small Island States such as Tonga, the Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Niue, Tuvalu, Fiji and the Federated States of Micronesia: <http://www.sopac.org/index.php/media-releases/1-latest-news/318-opening-address-3rd-session-of-the-pacific-platform-for-disaster-risk-management>. This particular point was brought to participants’ attention by Etienne Coyette (DG ECHO) in the panel discussion

<sup>37</sup> Point raised in the working group on de-compartmentalization

<sup>38</sup> The following arguments are mainly drawn from the working group on resilience policies

<sup>39</sup> Proposition by François Grünewald (Groupe URD): built-in contingency plans that can be activated immediately if a crisis strikes, with administrative details left to be dealt with later on

they do not want to fund uncertainty because they are accountable for how they spend taxpayers' money. However, thanks to effective learning, even failure does not equal to zero: failure is a lesson learned which is precious information to build the next projects. If donors' policy does not evolve, the only solution for organizations would be increasing their share of private funding and pay innovations with their own resources.

Regarding the **de-compartmentalization** of DRR, CCA and PR, and on the issue of sharing experiences, one solution that is informally pushed forward by DG ECHO is **consortia** gathering experts of each realm and allowing them to work together on the same projects and programs. This additionally presents the advantage of lightening the administrative burden for the donor who deals with a single big entity instead of several smaller ones. However, we do not know very well how consortia work – or do not work – and from the workshop participants' own experience, they seem difficult to manage. Experience-sharing, research and guidelines are therefore needed in this matter.

Concerning the designing of **bottom-up, evidence-based policies**, clear instructions on resilience need to be given to the EU delegations so that it is integrated into Country Strategic Papers. **NGO networks** such as VOICE and CONCORD are a great channel through which recommendations can flow up to the policy-level in this regard. These platforms have to be strengthened and their advocacy recommendations (“Agenda for Change”) given more space in the policy-making process. What's more, systematic **consultation** of organizations working in the field should be institutionalized into policy-making processes – while being careful and avoid falling into too much participation that makes decision-making impossible.

In order to **address the underlying causes of disasters**, and not only curing its symptoms, emphasis has to be put on prevention. **Preparedness** has to be done as soon as possible, even during emergencies, during the response phase. However, as for innovation, donors refuse to “take risks” and put money before the crisis unfolds, even though it would be much more efficient to invest beforehand to avoid crises. **Humanitarian and development sectors have to cooperate** on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD). **LRRD** still is a buzzword for donors and, as for resilience, clear guidelines, criteria and indicators are needed.

## 6. BRINGING THE “C-WORD” INTO THE EQUATION?

Throughout the workshop, we have talked about how to build the resilience of communities in front of disasters, climate and socio-economic changes. We have avoided mentioning the “C-word” that is so present in the contemporary world: “conflict”.

Why? We have felt that although conflict is an important issue, it is also very complex – to what extent are resource conflicts only triggered by Climate Change or environmental degradations? What role does participatory resource management have to play in conflict resolution? How do people become resilience to conflicts/thanks to conflicts? Although it makes sense to have a sort of “Climate Smart Conflict Management” approach, we were not sure we could find a concept that includes everything – DRR, CCA, PR and conflict – into a “resilience diamond”. Although recognizing conflict as a key element of underlying causes to vulnerabilities, we have chosen to keep conflict out of our discussion on the resilience of communities to (natural) disasters because it was felt that this complex dimension would add to much complexity and would not apply to most of the contexts we have been doing research in.

It was however strongly argued that **more work is needed to integrate conflict into the equation of DRR, CCA and PR**. Although the RESILIENCE project has chosen not to go down this path, we strongly support any initiative that would tackle this issue and we remain extremely interested in learning and contributing further about it.

## 7. CONCLUSION

We sincerely hope that the RESILIENCE workshop has contributed to making resilience a clearer and more workable concept. For the RESILIENCE project, we feel that the outcomes of this workshop have confirmed that setting “resilience of communities” at the heart of our objectives rather than looking at communities from the separate lenses of DRR, CCA and PR to reduce vulnerability and increase the capacities of communities to deal with their multi-risk environments.

This workshop will feed into the overall RESILIENCE project and help building the **three RESILIENCE tools** that will be published in the course of 2012:

- a) a **handbook** for policy-makers and for DRR/CCA students and young professionals on what resilience means and on how it can be integrated into projects, programs and policies, based on concrete observations and examples drawn from the field;
- b) a **dynamic tool** that will help practitioners shape their resilience-related project by asking a series of questions related to our criteria and indicators of resilience;
- c) a **series of short-films** targeting a wider audience to show how communities live with disasters and how stakeholders interact in the resilience building process.

## 8. APPENDIXES

### 8.1. List of participants

Name	Organization	Contact
ANGUSHEVA Elica	DG ECHO	<a href="mailto:elica.angusheva@ext.ec.europa.eu">elica.angusheva@ext.ec.europa.eu</a>
BABIN Pascal	IRAM	<a href="mailto:p.babin@iram-fr.org">p.babin@iram-fr.org</a>
BENHAMOU Cecile	CARE International	<a href="mailto:benhamou@careinternational.org">benhamou@careinternational.org</a>
BILO Nienke	Wageningen University Disaster Studies	<a href="mailto:nienke.bilo@wur.nl">nienke.bilo@wur.nl</a>
BIRD Mags	VOICE	<a href="mailto:mags@ngovoice.org">mags@ngovoice.org</a>
BOKDAM Wouter	CARE Nederland	<a href="mailto:bokdam@carenederland.org">bokdam@carenederland.org</a>
CERRATO Sandro	DG ECHO	<a href="mailto:sandro.cerrato@ec.europa.eu">sandro.cerrato@ec.europa.eu</a>
COYETTE Etienne	DG DEVCO	<a href="mailto:etienne.coyette@ec.europa.eu">etienne.coyette@ec.europa.eu</a>
CROWLEY Kate	CAFOD	<a href="mailto:kcrowley@cafod.org.uk">kcrowley@cafod.org.uk</a>
DALITZ Anne	Johanniter Auslandhilfe / International Assistance	<a href="mailto:anne.dalitz@johanniter.de">anne.dalitz@johanniter.de</a>
DIER Sabine	CARE Deutschland - Luxembourg	<a href="mailto:dier@care.de">dier@care.de</a>
GALLO Flaminia	Red Cross EU Office	<a href="mailto:flaminia.gallo@redcross-eu.net">flaminia.gallo@redcross-eu.net</a>
GAYDAZHIEVA Stanislava	Cabinet of Commissioner Georgieva	<a href="mailto:stanislava.gaydazhieva@ext.ec.europa.eu">stanislava.gaydazhieva@ext.ec.europa.eu</a>
GRÜNEWALD François	Groupe URD	<a href="mailto:fgrunewald@urd.org">fgrunewald@urd.org</a>
HILHORST Thea	Wageningen University Disaster Studies	<a href="mailto:thea.hilhorst@wur.nl">thea.hilhorst@wur.nl</a>
INGLE Brian	Plan International UK	<a href="mailto:brian.ingle@plan-international.org">brian.ingle@plan-international.org</a>
JURRIENS Jeroen	ICCO Kerk in Actie	<a href="mailto:jeroen.jurriens@icco.nl">jeroen.jurriens@icco.nl</a>
KROTTMAYER Martin	Red Cross EU Office	<a href="mailto:martin.krottmayer@redcross-eu.net">martin.krottmayer@redcross-eu.net</a>
LOOF Margot	Cordaid	<a href="mailto:margot.loof@cordaid.nl">margot.loof@cordaid.nl</a>
DE MILLIANO Cecile	NOHA / ICOG	<a href="mailto:c.w.j.de.milliano@rug.nl">c.w.j.de.milliano@rug.nl</a>
MITCHELL Andrew	Action Contre la Faim	<a href="mailto:drr-cca@actioncontrelafaim.org">drr-cca@actioncontrelafaim.org</a>
MONASSO Fleur	Red Cross / Red Crescent Climate Centre	<a href="mailto:monasso@climatecentre.org">monasso@climatecentre.org</a>
NUZZI Mara	Red Cross EU Office	<a href="mailto:mara.nuzzi@redcross-eu.net">mara.nuzzi@redcross-eu.net</a>
OTZELBERGER Agnes	CARE International	<a href="mailto:aotzelberger@careclimatechange.org">aotzelberger@careclimatechange.org</a>
OXLEY Marcus	Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction	<a href="mailto:marcus.oxley@globalnetwork-dr.org">marcus.oxley@globalnetwork-dr.org</a>
RANFELT Mette	DG ECHO	<a href="mailto:mette.ranfelt@ext.ec.europa.eu">mette.ranfelt@ext.ec.europa.eu</a>
SCHILDERSMAN Theo	Practical Action	<a href="mailto:theo.schilderman@practicalaction.org.uk">theo.schilderman@practicalaction.org.uk</a>
SCHILIRO Roberto	DG ECHO	<a href="mailto:roberto.schiliro@ec.europa.eu">roberto.schiliro@ec.europa.eu</a>
SCHNEIDER Eve	Groupe URD	<a href="mailto:assistcom@urd.org">assistcom@urd.org</a> / <a href="mailto:eve.schneider1@gmail.com">eve.schneider1@gmail.com</a>
SEBALLOS Fran	IDS	<a href="mailto:f.seballos@ids.ac.uk">f.seballos@ids.ac.uk</a>
SOKPOH Bonaventure	Groupe URD	<a href="mailto:bsokpoh@urd.org">bsokpoh@urd.org</a>
VAN DER STEEN Jolien	CARE Nederland	<a href="mailto:jvandersteen@carenederland.org">jvandersteen@carenederland.org</a>
WARNER Jeroen	Wageningen University Disaster Studies	<a href="mailto:jeroen.warner@wur.nl">jeroen.warner@wur.nl</a>

## 8.2. Recommended reading

- ***Climate Smart Disaster Risk Management (CSDRM) Approach, Strengthening Climate Resilience (SCR)***

The CSDRM approach is a practical, innovative set of questions and guidelines aimed at disaster risk managers. It integrates perspectives from a range of disciplines – including DRM, CCA, sustainable livelihoods, political economy, technological innovation systems and ecology.

To learn more about SCR's work and the CSDRM Approach: <http://www.csdrm.org>

- ***Views from the Frontline, Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR)***

*Views from the Frontline* is an ongoing research and learning program led by the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR). It has collected and shared the views from over 500 organisations and 20,000 people who work on local level disaster risk reduction in 69 countries.

To learn more about the GNDR and Views from the Frontline: <http://www.globalnetwork-dr.org/>

- ***Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA)***

ACCRA is a research and advocacy consortium working in Ethiopia, Uganda and Mozambique to better understand whether different approaches – Disaster Risk Reduction, Social Protection and Livelihoods approaches specifically – improve the adaptive capacity of communities. Its aim is to encourage actors to adopt approaches to development that enable people to build secure and productive livelihoods despite the challenges caused by the changing climate.

To learn more about ACCRA's work: <http://community.eldis.org/accra/>

- ***From Vulnerability to Resilience (V2R), Practical Action, 2011***

Practical Action works alongside communities to find practical solutions to the poverty they face. **V2R is a framework for analysis and action to reduce vulnerability and strengthen the resilience of individuals, households and communities.** The framework sets out the key factors that contribute to peoples' vulnerability and provides detailed explanations of the linkages between these factors as well as ideas for action to strengthen resilience.

To learn more about V2R: <http://practicalaction.org/media/view/9654>