COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK – LESSONS FROM THE FIELD











Cover photo:

Post-earthquake interventions in Petit Goâve, Haiti. A project of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (© Patricia Gorin).

Small pictures from top to bottom:

Resilience through reduced health and climatic risks in the Lower Lempa, Usulutan, El Salvador. (© Florian Kopp). A project of Swiss Red Cross Post-earthquake interventions in Petit Goâve, Haiti. A project of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (© Patricia Gorin). Community-based disaster risk reduction, Cambodia. A project of Caritas Switzerland (© Jana Junghardt)

Foreword

The Swiss NGO DRR Platform

Resilience has been a key focus of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform since 2013. The findings from this publication show that numerous obstacles prevent the concept of resilience from translating into better development and humanitarian programming on the ground. Starting with the difficulty by the members of the Platform, and field staff to understand what resilience actually meant.

The "community resilience framework – lessons from the field" is an attempt to understand what resilience is and how to assess it for the members of the Platform and DRR practitioners at field level. It aims at professionals who are grappling with what resilience actually means, and how to get key stakeholders to develop a shared vision of both the risks that exist in their particular context, and what to do about them; both now, and in the longer term.

The Swiss NGO DRR Platform will continue to support the resilience roadmap process to better assess resilience of men and women most vulnerable at field level, as it is rolled out in contexts prone to natural, climate, economic and/ or geo-political shocks. Our members – humanitarian and development Swiss NGOs – will draw from this approach to re-think their programming through a risk lens.

Vision

The Swiss NGO DRR Platform is a network of Swissbased non-governmental organisations (NGOs) dedicated to increasing the resilience of women, men and children, communities and governments to all aspects of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA).

Its main goal is to help people and organisations prepare for and adapt to climatic trends and shocks, to more effectively mitigate risks and to enhance risk prevention in the humanitarian and development sectors. The Platform operates through specialist advisory services, by enabling and supporting policy debate and by capturing and sharing knowledge and experiences relating to DRR and CCA of Swiss NGOs and their partners

Objectives

Enhance the quality of DRR and CCA services of member NGOs through a mutual exchange of information.

Contribute to shaping Swiss DRR and CCA policy by capitalising on Swiss NGO experiences.

Position Swiss DRR and CCA expertise in international co-operation by establishing and enhancing partnerships.

This publication highlights the range of expertise and commitment for promoting resilience through DRR and CCA measures among Platform members and outlines some of their ongoing and planned work.

¹The Swiss NGO DRR Platform is a network of 14 members: Swiss Red Cross, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Caritas Switzerland, Bread for All, HEKS, Medair, Tearfund Switzerland, Terres des Hommes, solidar suisse, ProAct Network, Global Risk Forum Davos, World Vision, Christoffel Blindenmission and Save the Children. This network is dedicated to increase the resilience of women and men, communities and governments to all aspects of Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change.

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Acronyms

ACC (Adaptation to Climate Change	LIEA	Hyoro Framework for Action
ACC	Adaptation to Chimate Change	IIIA	Tryogo Francework for Action
AFL	Action at the Frontline	HFA2	Post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Hyogo
CC	Climate Change		Framework for Action 2)
CSO	Civil Society Organization	NTIC	New Technologies of Information and Communication
COP	Community of practitioners	SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
DFID	Department for International Development	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approach
EWS	Early Warning Systems	UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
F2F	Face-to-Face	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
GSE	Gender and Social Equity	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
GNDR	Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster	VFL	Views from the Frontline
	Reduction	WCDRR	World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

Introduction

While the international development community is negotiating important frameworks and agreements (e.g. the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the new United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the post 2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)), communities at risk continue to face multiple shocks and stresses. The extent to which they are able to withstand, cope and react to these shocks and stresses, to manage change and even thrive under pressure, defines their resilience and will be crucial for their development in the decades to come.

In order to understand what makes a community resilient and how individual, collective and contextual factors affect resilience building, the Swiss NGO DRR Platform has developed a resilience framework and a methodology aimed at assessing resilience at the community level. Its main purpose is to capture factors among community members in different stress contexts (fragility and emergency, climate change impacts, sudden hazards)², assuming that key characteristics that contribute to resilience building can be identified. These characteristics shall serve as guidance for future NGOprogramming in the field, but also provide inputs to the upcoming policy frameworks and advocate for the importance of local action. The publication at hand takes up the given momentum, as over 150 nations are gathering in Sendai, Japan, from 14th to 18th of March 2015 for the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR). It reveals the main findings from case studies about resilience assessments that were carried out in five countries through workshops: El Salvador, Bolivia, Haiti, Palestine, and Cambodia. It capitalizes on local knowledge and experience and provides important insights on how those most at risk build resilience, but also how they struggle to overcome the barriers that are imposed on them by their natural, socio-political and economic environments.

This report is addressed to all DRR and Adaptation to Climate Change (ACC) practitioners and their partners including the platform members. The purposes of this publication from communities, field staff to policy makers level are the following:

Communities: To provide structured participatory discussion for a better understanding of the key factors of resilience. **Platform members and local partners (field facilitators, project managers etc.):** To provide an efficient analysis with common structures.

Swiss actors: To provide a common and better understanding of the concept of resilience among Swiss institutions active in the broad field of DRR.

Other CSOs networks dealing with DRR and resilience (Global Network for Disaster Reduction (GNDR), Partnership for resilience, etc.): Link it with existing resilience frameworks³, contribute and complement other similar work on the same topic.

Policy makers: Fill the current gaps and help to better understand what measures are needed for the most in need.

²To understand what resilience means for communities, it is important to reflect how disasters and ACC are faced in different contexts & stresses. ³Resilience framework from other institutions (IFRC, Partners for Resilience, DFID, etc.)

Objectives of this report

With this publication we:

- Provide input from the grassroots' level to the resilience framework developed by the Swiss NGO DRR Platform as well as to the international discourse on resilience.
- Understand and define key characteristics for community resilience by testing the Platform's resilience framework (to be the main objective).
- Guide Swiss NGOs and its partners in the field with the developed methodology to serve as a rapid and efficient analysis tool for more resilience-oriented project planning and implementation.
- Eventually dovetail the findings with the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR)'s publications, helping to share our expertise with a wider public.
- Provide understanding and inputs of key elements from local perspective for the implementation and monitoring of post 2015-frameworks.

To familiarize the audience with the chosen approach, an introduction to the resilience framework and its application through the Swiss NGO DRR Platform's framework is provided below. We explain how we frame resilience at the community level and outline the idea of the resilience assessment.

The second part then introduces the findings and highlights the key results of the resilience assessment among community stakeholders in five countries, based on six case studies, yielding interesting insights into the needs and capacities of people dealing with multiple risks.

In the third part we focus on the validation of the framework, with its strengths and limitations, the lessons learnt, the conclusion and the next steps, and also how the Swiss NGO DRR Platform can contribute to the resilience agenda. Ongoing online and face-to-face discussions over the past months have revealed key aspects, which in our opinion point in the direction of a highly state-focused framework. With this publication, we would like to underline the need to shift the focus to the community level and stress the importance of taking note of local capacities and community involvement for DRR and resilience building.

Part I: Resilience framework in theory and practice

This first part presents the different theoretical components of the resilience framework and then shows how it was applied in practice in the field through different case studies based on a ten steps methodology, which is briefly explained below.

Anticipating and understanding the nature and size of possible manmade and natural adverse events and situations implies to consciously integrate uncertainty in development processes and planning. Strengthening people's capacities to withstand those stresses and shocks and continuing to manage change is an important precondition of human development. Against this background, resilience became an important dimension in the fields of DRR and ACC, but increasingly also in conflict and transformation. There is a shift in the international discussion from vulnerability/risk (reduce negative factors) to resilience (strengthen positive factors). Its potential of becoming a bridging concept in different fields of practice dealing with multiple risks is huge: Resilience is a systemic approach and allows addressing the interactions of different systems at different scales, embedding for example a community in its environment and relating it to the different factors that shape its scope for action. The shocks and stresses that a community faces can come from outside but also from within. They can be of social, political or economic nature or stem from natural risks. Social and political environment describes the state, legislations, cultural norms and regulations; the economic environment includes market conditions and economic development and the natural environment includes the resource base and availability as well as the strains it puts on the community in focus.

While there exist manifold definitions of resilience (e.g. UNISDR, SREX/IPCC and DFID), they all come down to certain fundamental elements that are needed for resilience: absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities. The Swiss NGO DRR Platform has developed its own definition for its framework, which addresses these three capacities in a community context, taking into account different scales.

WHAT IS A RESILIENT COMMUNITY?

"A resilient community is a social entity that is able to absorb and recover from shocks, to adapt to and manage change and to transform itself in a way that its social cohesion is maintained and the basic needs of its members are met without compromising their long-term prospects." (Swiss NGO DRR Platform working definition, 2013)

A. Resilience framework in theory

The "resilient community" definition is based on the resilience framework developed by the Swiss NGO DRR Platform. The resilience framework is presented in details below, made of three interconnected elements. It is shaped by three resilience dimensions, namely absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities; by five building blocks such as infrastructure to capture communities' assets, which are then embedded in complex local social & political, economic and natural environment factors that can challenge but also enable local developments, processes and structures of a community. These three elements enables us to better understand how resilient a community is and where the gaps are.

To fully understand the whole frame, it is essential to recognise these three capacities as linked with their respective building blocks and external environment factors. The resilience framework of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform has been developed in an attempt to incorporate ideas of complex systems (i.e. made of interconnected social and ecological components) and emphasises the functioning of these components as a whole. The focus is therefore on the relationships and inter-dependence between these system components, not on the functioning of individual components in isolation.



Figure 1: The resilience framework of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform

Each community will make specific choices to reduce their risks according to capacities they have built, and characteristics they have acquired so far combined with external environment factors (social, political, economic, natural), which very much depend on national context such as the level of poverty or the access to goods and services.

1. Three resilience dimensions

The first element of the resilience framework is made by three resilience dimensions, namely absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities. These dimensions are the key to understand how a community is organized, and what strategies (if any) they have in place to manage risks. We consider resilience as a specific set of capacities that enables communities to anticipate the impact from a hazard, to withstand, absorb, and recover from shocks and stresses and to reorganise and transform accordingly. In absence of these capacities, communities are less robust, flexible and diverse and thus suffer greater losses and damages.

• Absorptive capacity: Absorption of a shock or stress and coping with its effects is often the first aspect of resilience that comes to mind. It describes the ability to bounce back quickly and not sustain fundamental harm or damage. Absorptive strategies can be an important resilience building process, e.g. when relying on a strong social network, stocking food or financial reserves or investing in a robust, flood resistant house. Absorptive capacities are based on characteristics such as robustness, resourcefulness and redundancy. Absorptive capacities alone may fail however in the light of long-term changes and increased uncertainty, they need to be complemented by adaptive and transformative capacities to sustain functions or even thrive in anticipation and reaction to changes.

• Adaptive capacity: Adaptive capacity refers to various "adjustments that people [or communities] undergo in order to continue functioning without major qualitative changes in function or structural identity" (IDS 2012). These rather incremental adjustments are long-term oriented, can happen at various scales and often occur both in reaction to known and in anticipation of uncertain risks. Adaptation happens less often to a specific stressor than to a combination of many, interlinked risks of shifts and shocks. Adaptive capacities enable a community to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities – that is "to bounce forward". This requires flexibility, ingenuity and resourcefulness.

• **Transformative capacity:** Transformative capacity is most probably the most complex dimension of resilience since it involves fundamental changes that affect core structures, identities and processes within the community or system. Transformation becomes necessary if predefined coping strategies or incremental adjustments are no longer sufficient. Transformative capacity describes the ability to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic or social structures make the current system untenable (IDS 2012). This shift can be deliberate but also

imposed by social & political, economic or environmental constraints. Transformative capacities require a combination of self-organization and robustness that fosters change. In distinction to adaptation, transformative capacities enable a system or community to fundamentally change and shift without long-term negative consequences.



Figure 2: The three elements of resilience - absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities (Swiss NGO DRR Platform)

In order to flexibly absorb, adapt and transform in anticipation and response to shocks and stresses, a combination of all three capacities is needed. These capacities are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, in our framework, we assume that depending on the context and its pressures, communities rely on different combinations of capacities. These resilience capacities are to a large extent shaped by the assets the community can rely on.

2. Five building blocks of community resilience

The second element of the resilience framework is made by five building blocks which depict the main assets and characteristics a community has. These building blocks directly define the resilience capacities of a community, which represent the inner structure of the resilience framework.

Through a previous work done by the Platform (Caritas with the Working Group: Swiss Red Cross and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation) in 2013, the five building blocks for community resilience were defined. It is oriented towards the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach⁴ (SLA) which represents more the household level, and has been modified to also represent the community level accordingly. The resilience framework (with the three elements) was presented during the Platform's face-to-face (F2F)

⁴Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID Approach Paper: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_ data/file/186874/defining-disaster-resilience-approach-paper.pdf

Workshop in 2013, during which participants tried to vest these five building blocks with qualities that are needed to make e.g. institutions and processes or knowledge & learning work towards resilience. It is not based on a scientifically and empirically justified process, but rather on a transparent and participatory approach, based on the knowledge and experience of the platform members.

In order to understand and capture community resilience, it is useful to take a look at its building blocks, which is what constitutes a community. Assessing and analysing these building blocks, which have been adapted from the pentagon of the SLA, helps to understand the strengths, weaknesses and gaps within a community, and related to the context in which the community is embedded, supports in creating the linkages of understanding how community resilience is shaped. These building blocks are strongly linked to one another and they are qualitative.

The building blocks are depicted below:

Values & Attitudes	
Knowledge & Learning	Institutions & Processes
Assets & Ressources	Infrastructure

Figure 3: Community Building Blocks

- Assets & resources: Which assets and resources are at disposal for the community and its members? How can they be mobilized and how are they distributed? Under the broad term of resources, we understand all capitals at disposal for a community. Important aspects to understand are particularly who has access to these and how is access in different risk situations shaped and reorganized.
- Infrastructure: What is the quantity and quality of infrastructure? Which critical infrastructure is in place and

how does it protect the community or put it at risk? It corresponds to the physical capital, it encompasses a broader sense of infrastructure. Its quality and quantity, the structure of ownership and maintenance are crucial for understanding community resilience.

- Institutions & processes: What is the institutional landscape in a community, which organizations shape decisionmaking, how are processes managed? It corresponds to the human, social and political capital of a community and significant existing groups, organizations and governance mechanisms and their importance in crisis and non-crisis time. Their structure, formation and inclusiveness give important clues about resilience.
- Knowledge & learning: How is knowledge generated, stored and passed on in the community? Who are the key carriers of knowledge? It corresponds to the human capital, the way knowledge is generated, stored and passed as well as the density of knowledge in a community, its diversity and rootedness in the community that influences how people are willing and able to deal and learn from change.
- Values & attitudes: Which values and attitudes guide the community members? It corresponds to a combination of social and human capital. This is the overarching building block, addressing beliefs, identity in the community, which guide structures, processes and behaviour of community members.

3. External environment factors: Social, political, economic and natural

The third element of the resilience framework are the external environment factors, such as social, political, economic and natural environments. These environments are the outer structures of the diverse components of the resilience framework. They are underlying factors which influence the building blocks and as a result the capacities of a community. The factors that make up these environments are important because they have a direct impact

Figure 4: DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheet⁴

Trends	Shocks	Seasonality
 Population trends 	 Human health shocks 	• Of prices
 Resource trends (including conflict) 	 Natural shocks 	 Of production
 National / international economic trends 	 Economic shocks 	 Of health
 Trends in governance (including politics) 	 Conflict 	 Of employment opportunities
 Technological trends 	 Crop / livestock health shocks 	

⁵DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance sheets

http://www.ennonline.net/dfidsustainableliving

upon people's asset status and the options that are open to them in pursuit of beneficial livelihood outcomes. The key attribute of these factors is that they are not susceptible to control by local people themselves, at least in the short and medium term.

The term "resilience" has been used more extensively in relation to natural disasters than to conflict and fragility areas. Work by International Alert indicates that the broader factors that enhance climate resilience are the same as those that enhance conflict resilience – including effective governance, equity and strong social contracts. A comprehensive approach to resilience across natural and conflict-related areas requires a focus on strengthening institutions at national, regional and local levels incorporating political, security, humanitarian and development considerations. This requires bringing together diverse disciplines, interests and groups.

To understand the role of external factors in shaping a community it is important to identify and analyse the different characteristics of assets within a community. The interlinkages of inner and outer structures shape the way that absorptive, adaptive and transfor mative capacities can grow in different hazard situations.

B. Resilience framework in practice

1. Case studies to test the resilience framework

We have used the above described resilience framework (with its three dimensions, five building blocks and external environments factors) to better understand the communities' view of resilience. For this purpose we have conducted six case-studies in five countries (cf. Table 1 below). The selection of countries and regions was both conceptual and practical. In oder to test the resilience framework, and to identify common and distinct resilience characteristics in different situations we have intentionally selected three different contexts: fragility and conflict, climate change impacts, sudden hazards. Shocks can destroy assets directly (in the case of floods, cyclones, civil conflict, etc.). They can also force people to abandon their home areas and dispose of assets (such as land) prematurely as part of coping strategies. It is therefore important to identify indirect means by which the negative effects of these vulnerability context/environments can be minimised including building greater resilience and improving overall livelihood security. We believe that the countries in which we conducted the workshops represent well the different contexts and thus can help us to frame resilience based on communities' perspective. In order to get more details on a specific case study, please refer to their respective analysis in the annexes on the Platform website6.

⁶For more details on the case studies findings, please refer to the Annexes of the Platform website www.drrplatform.org/resources

Table 1: Risk context of case studies where the resilience framework was applied

Country	Risk Context	Institution for case study applica- tion	Number of participants
Bolivia	High Climate Change impacts	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	19 participants (10 women and 9 men)
Haiti mountainous area	Sudden hazards	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	26 participants (9 women and 17 men)
Haiti coastal area	Sudden hazards	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	12 participants (2 women and 10 men)
Palestine	Fragility and conflict	Caritas	13 participants (6 women and 7 men)
Cambodia	Sudden hazards	Caritas	35 participants (22 women and 13 men)
El Salvador	Fragility and conflict	Swiss Red Cross	28 participants (19 women and 9 men)

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Figure 5: Timeline - Haiti mountainous area

Different types of conflict can have profound adverse effects on the livelihoods of the poor: i) in the Palestine case study, the community lives in an area of civil conflict and suffers from lawlessness, violence and physical damage, which increases pressure on their assets; ii) in the Haiti mountainous area case study, conflicts over access to resources (water and land) are of increasing importance as populations expand and resource use intensifies. If unaddressed, such conflicts may further marginalise already poor groups. Not all the trends listed in figure 4 are negative or cause vulnerability. For example, economic indicators can move in favourable directions, diseases can be eradicated and new technologies may be very valuable to poor people.

2. Methods for assessing resilience

A methodology of ten steps was developed to assess resilience and was implemented through workshops in the five countries with the six communities. The findings serve to fill in the three elements of the resilience framework and to better define it. In a nutshell, the main steps of the methodology are presented below⁷.

The key to assess what resilience means in different risk contexts for different people were the interviews and group



Figure 6: Risk matrix - Haiti costal area

discussions through workshops with community members conducted in five countries across the globe. Field facilitators were selected in each country to conduct the workshop with the help of a field staff team⁸. Given some time and resource constraints, we relied on components of existing methods and compiled them in a manner allowing us to gather the information in less than one day and analyse it then further⁹.

Participatory methods were utilized throughout the process, and feedback loops between field facilitator, and his/ her team were built in. Basis of the workshop was in most cases a community meeting, in Palestine, smaller group discussions were conducted due to religious/cultural aspects and time constraints of the population. For the selection of the community's members, the criteria was to ensure that all the social groups are represented as much as possible (men, women, disabled, elderly, youth, etc.). The facilitator's role was to act as a bridge builder among different groups within one community.

⁷For more details on the steps of the methodology, please refer to the Annexes on the Platform website: www.drrplatform.org/resources ⁸The facilitator's team is made of four persons: 1) facilitator, 2) a note taker on flip charts, 3) a translator (if necessary), 4) DRR/CC expert note taker ⁹This section only gives a brief overview of the methodology used. For the methodological guidance, please check www.drrplatform.org/resources

To get a better idea of the risk context over time, a timeline (see figure 5) was elaborated to identify with the community the main natural, physical, human, political, financial and social hazards, conflicts, events, pressures, shocks, etc. and the main impacts, looking back as far in time as the participants were able to recall.

As a second step, a risk prioritization using a risk matrix¹⁰(see figure 6) was conducted, assigning to each threat intensities and frequencies helping to understand the pressures from socio-political, economic and natural environments on the communities.

As a third step, through a local risk profiling¹¹, identifying actions to reduce the impact of these risks, and identifying barriers preventing the impact being reduced, the role of the community's building blocks for risk reduction and resilience building was assessed as well as the pressures from natural, socio-political and economic environments. The survey concluded with a rapid needs assessment¹² (made of three main questions), being the identification of existing and missing key elements which increase resilience.

The analysis of the findings was done by field facilitators and their team, bringing together practical expertise and conceptual knowledge. In the following section, the case studies will be introduced and the main findings summarised.

¹⁰Global Risk Forum adapted concept from the German Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK): http://www.bbk.bund.de/ SharedDocs/Downloads/BBK/DE/Publikationen/Wissenschaftsforum/ Bd8_Methode-Risikoanalyse-BS.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

¹¹This step is taken from GNDR's methodology: http://www.globalnet-work-dr.org/frontline.html

¹²Source: Communities Advancing Resilience Toolkit (CART): The CART integrated system – Sample Questions for Key Informant Interviews and Community Conversations http://www.oumedicine.com/docs/ad-psychiatry-workfiles/cart_online-final_042012.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Part II: Main findings related to the resilience framework on: external environment factors, existing five building blocks and the three resilience dimensions

This second part summarises the main findings related to the three elements of the resilience framework, which is illustrated by examples of the case studies. It presents some common coping strategies and common barriers to resilience that were identified by communities. For each section, the main findings are provided.

1. Socio-political, economic and natural environment factors: promoting a holistic multi-risk approach

Based on the communities' perspectives on resilience some trends regarding external environmental factors could be identified from the findings in the case studies:

COMMON ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS:

 risks linked to the general economic situation (e.g. no/limited market access) was identified by all six communities in all three contexts (fragility and conflict, climate change impacts, sudden hazards). The impacts of these threats are diverse, but most often trigger migration (seasonal or longterm); Resilience strategies in similar contexts are more alike than those of different contexts. Economic threats rank the highest among all mentioned, closely followed by natural hazards, and often amplified by conflict. When communities are hit by a disaster of any kind, the impact is disastrous if it affects their livelihood base, mostly farming. Most interviewed communities make their living from agriculture and are thus particularly susceptible to weather and climate related changes and shocks. An exception to this is the case of the Hebron community in Palestine, where people feel that their biggest threat comes from the Israeli forces, creating political and economic pressures with high impact also on the availability of natural resources such as water.

- droughts, pests and diseases were identified by five communities as major risks;
- floods were identified by four communities as an important risk.

All impact the livelihoods of communities with often important losses and damages. Droughts, pests and diseases, as well as floods can create important health problems, too.

• People in the case study communities are all holistic risk managers.

• For natural disaster risks, the frequent small scale disaster events (extensive risks) were commonly perceived as most relevant.

Common / main findings

• With more stress and higher risks, communities have better resilience coping capacities, as long as these stresses and risks depend on external environment factors that communities can influence.

2. Community building blocks and their contribution to resilience: defining coping strategies

For a clearer picture of the assets at hand and the gaps that the communities are facing, their coping strategies and barriers to overcome the threats were linked to the community building blocks. The five most relevant coping strategies for different hazards were depicted by the facilitators of the assessment and can now be compared across the different case studies.

Defining coping strategies: similarities across case studies

The graphic below shows the most reported actions/measures mentioned by communities¹³ to counter the threats that they face. What is striking to see is that despite the very different settings, the strategies people rely on are overlapping considerably. When analysing the strategies, it becomes evident that communities rely on a combination of building blocks and capacities to cope with threats and disasters. For ease of comparison, similar answers were grouped together under overarching terms. Below we discuss the most important coping strategies.

¹³There is no prioritization but only how many time out of six communities, a certain action was mentioned.

"Community mobilisation" is the most common group of actions to prepare for and respond to any threat. In general, it is expected that local level risk knowledge tends to focus on local capacities such as these. But at the same time, the capacities of each community to answer the same risk is diverse, and often require and/or receive external financial and technical support.

Community mobilisation

Community mobilisation can range from mutual financial and social support among neighbours and relatives in the villages, after a disaster has struck, accelerating repair and cleaning up to get back to normal faster, that is to "bounce back". This is the case in Cambodia, where most people relied primarily on their families and neighbours to get back on their feet by planting rice and repairing the destroyed roads after a severe flood has hit them.

In other communities, e.g. in El Salvador, partly with the initial support of NGOs and governmental agencies, communities have an elaborate and effective preparedness structure and can mobilize manpower and resources swiftly right before and after a disaster. Further, they are mainstreaming the preparedness to the risk of a flood or earthquake into many activities and development decisions, for example related to health and health infrastructure, critical infrastructure and housing.



Figure 7: Most reported coping strategies by participants

El Salvador case study - The lower Lempa basin

The tri-national Lempa river basin covers a total area of 17.790km² of which ElSalvador covers 5.251 km², Honduras 2.457 km² and Guatemala 10.082 km² (56%). The maximum rise of the basin is 2.805 meters above sea level in the mountains of Honduras. The length of the main channel is 422 km, of which 360.2 km run within Salvadoran territory. The Angel community, is located in the lower



Picture 1: Community resilience workshop, November 2014

part of the basin, in the region of Usulután, municipality of Jiquilisco. It is a rural area, in which most people make their livelihood from farming or animal husbandry. People living in this area were relocated from three different locations to El Angel



after the devastating earthquake of 2001 and since then, have experienced multiple earthquakes and floods. Since 2010, the Swiss Red Cross together with the Red Cross El Salvador implements a DRR-project with a health component in this conflict-stricken and disaster-prone area.

For the El Salvador case study, the community reported that the recent fragile and conflict context exerts a constant pressure on their everyday life which keeps them in a difficult and complex situation, preventing them to resort to adaptation and transformative measures as they did before. Their actions are therefore limited and they count very much on community mobilisation which proves high absorptive capacities.

Community mobilisation also speaks for a strong social fabric (social capital) that is the will and ability to stick together, to work as a team and have mutual support as



a guiding principle. The sense of belonging is very strong too in many communities. Therefore, the importance of this strategy to overcome threats points towards the building block of **values**

and attitudes as well as **institutions and processes**, both formalized and informal ones.

Sensitization and preparedness measures

Four communities out of six consider sensitisation and preparedness measures crucial in preparing their community for upcoming risks. In order for such measures to be effective, people need to rely on **values and attitudes** that consider disasters as manageable and not as an act of god or evil whose impact one cannot influence. Further, a good **knowledge** base and the willingness to learn to change behaviours ranks high, too. Traditional knowledge is also an essential factor, which is often the most important one for remote and poor communities, where the New Technologies of Information and Communication



Haiti mountainous case study – Preservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity

The Program "Preservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity - PVB", funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and

implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation since 2003, aims at contributing to the development of a participatory and sustainable management of protected areas in Haiti, which combines preservation of natural resources and socio-economic needs of local communities. The strategy is based on the empowerment of local stakeholders (local elected officials, community-based organization) and accompanying statutory authorities (ANAP / Ministry of Environment) to the development of mechanisms for the construction of a form of sustainable management of the reserve.

For both communities interviewed in Haiti, sensitization and preparedness measures are reported as a key action to reduce the impact of natural hazards mainly (droughts, cyclones, flooding, etc): in the mountainous area, it is the most important action, and for the coastal area, it is the 2nd most important one. Access to information and media (NTIC) are not available. Often the elderly are key actors for storing knowledge and passing it on to younger generations. This traditional knowledge can be at risk due



to migration of the younger population in working age. The interviews revealed that media play an increasing role for the diffusion and accessibility of information whenever they are

available, while the most common information channel is by word-of-mouth and through local institutions such as churches and schools. Media is used particularly for Early Warning Systems (EWS), which is the case in the community in El Salvador (2nd most reported action), and some programmes of sensitization made by the government in some countries (for example Cambodia) through radio, mobile phones, TV or internet.

is lacking in the mountainous area, where no EWS is in place. The communities rely mainly on the capitalisation of their own knowledge, learning and observations, combined with the learning from activities of on-going projects in the area. In the coastal area, despite a better positioning closer to bigger cities, access to information remains very poor too, with no real EWS in place. In parallel of soft preparedness measures, some structural mitigation measures have been put in place in the same area, with dry stone walls. It helps to reduce erosion and landslides due to deforestation and degraded land, but they face problems regarding maintenance.



Picture 2: Haiti mountainous area, structural mitigation measures, June 2014

Hard risk reduction measures – structural mitigation

Values & Attitudes	
Knowledge & Learning	Institutions & Processes
Assets & Ressources	Infrastructure

An equally high proportion (mentioned by four out of six communities) considers hard risk reduction measures such as dikes, small dams, dry stone walls, livestock shelters, etc. as a

cornerstone of resilience. While these structures rank high in the perception of the population, most of them are not in their hands with regard to construction, maintenance and upgrading. So while the access to infrastructure such as hard risk reduction measures is key, this cannot always be achieved by community members. If small-scale infrastructure is meant, then the financial assets and resources a community can rely on as well as their social cohesion to maintain the structures jointly and properly, come into play. Moreover, good structural measures should always be accompanied by sensitization and preparedness measures (soft mitigation measures), to ensure their long-term maintenance and efficiency. Too often, because of poor governance, external actors come into place (institutions and socio-political context), deciding on the quantity and quality of such structures, but hardly make sure that the know-how (knowledge and learning) for their maintenance is guaranteed.

Soil conservation measures



Soil conservation measures (mentioned by four out of six communities) are particularly relevant in hilly terrain, which is affected by flooding or drought. In comparison with grey infrastructure, soil

conservation is a no-regrets strategy as it can fulfil multiple purposes – reduce erosion and thus improve soil fertility, slope stabilization etc. These measures often cost less money, and are easier to implement. Implementing these requires the appropriate knowledge and skills – a diversity of traditional and scientific **knowledge** – as well as the **natural and financial resource**.



Common risk factors: Haiti rural mountainous and sub-urban coastal area

Figure 8: Risks comparison between the Haiti rural mountainous and the coastal sub-urban areas

In a multi-stressor environment, a given shock may have different impacts on households, even in the same community. Even though a hazard can be the same for two communities in the same country, the intensity and frequency vary and impact communities differently. Consequently, some communities will be more exposed and vulnerable than others. Moreover, the capacities and measures a community will have to answer to it will also be different.

Sub-urban coastal area	Rural mountainous area
Key issues: High insecurity and criminality, and high	Key issues: Access to food, market, health, and education
political unrest.	 No concrete roads
 Concrete roads 	 Remote rural area
 Many vehicles 	 Very few vehicles (owned by the farmers)
 Close market access 	 Long walking distance to the market to sell products
• High impacts of droughts and famine because there is	 Risks increase (commodity losses or injuries)
less rain than in the mountainous area.	• High erosion and landslides because of the steep slopes
Few land management problems	and deforested, degraded land.
	Few problems of insecurity and criminality, low impact
	of political unrest



	 Combination of different strategies is the key to resist external shocks: soft and
	hard measures as well as preparedness and prevention measures.
	 Positive side effects of measures: community participation, increased social
Common /	cohesion, capacity building, good organizational structures and processes.
main findings	 The more limited resources there are, the more they are restricted to punctual,
	immediate and local measures.
	 Measures refer to the most valuable building blocks, related to most relevant
	livelihoods assets.

Setting resilience barriers: missing elements of values and attitudes building block



Figure 10: Most reported obstacles within six communities

There are two barriers to resilience building that are particularly relevant in all or most communities interviewed: Lack of financial and technical means and poor governance. Again, the points mentioned by the communities were summarised and grouped.

Lack of financial and technical means

Financial means, technical equipment and support such as agricultural machines and applicable advice, are perceived as the biggest barriers by community members to resilience, so a clear link to the building block **assets and resources** and **knowledge and learning** can be established. If one considers that the third mentioned barrier, "lack of infrastructure" is closely linked to financial means and technical knowledge, this aspect becomes even more crucial and gives a strong insight in the existing gaps regarding public and private **infrastructure**. Financial means are lacking both for adequate mitigation e.g. raising structures in flood-prone areas, improving irrigation systems where water resources are scarce and for adaptation and recovery. People thus need longer to "bounce back" and to bridge difficult times during and after a disaster without embracing non-sustainable strategies such as lower food intake or selling remaining assets.



When economic opportunities are lacking, often the socio-political and economic **context** plays a key role, failing to provide the needed jobs or as in the case of Palestine, actively preventing people from

work across the Israeli border. Lack of financial means is also linked to migration: Due to economic or physical insecurity (Cambodia, Palestine, Bolivia and Haiti), people consider migrating for work. In agrarian societies such as Cambodia, migrating in the lean season to the nearest city is a traditional coping strategy. What has changed since people feel that they are more strongly affected by (natural) hazards than before is that migration to nearby Thailand increased and temporary migration was replaced by quasi-permanent migration. Communities benefit strongly from the remittances, which contribute to repairing houses, temples and roads, but according to interviewees, the social fabric risks to crumble. Further, returning migrants may bring in diseases, addictions or abusive behavior, but also knowledge, new ideas and innovations. In Palestine, leaving the area is a last resort mechanism, which is linked to high physical insecurity and few options to return to their home area. In Bolivia, communities have been affected by external migration processes of younger generations, thus leaving in the region mainly elderly people. Recently, many people have returned from the cities where they have acquired other values in relation to religion, level of education, etc. Return of migrants is generally given by the economic, social and cultural value of land, and because there are no more income opportunities in the place where the person migrated to.

As 'technical means' the knowledge and capacity to undergo changes such as agricultural adaptation, raising house and sanitation fundaments etc., can also be understood. The lack of good technical professionals, is a barrier closely linked to the building block **knowledge and learning**.

Poor governance

Five communities out of six have identified "poor governance" as a main obstacle to be more resilient, with the exception of Bolivia and to some extent El Salvador. This comprises lack of public support in preparing for or recovering from a disaster (**socio-political context** and **institutions** and **processes**), corruption and low provision of infrastructure. This is an important issue and often difficult to overcome. One of the strategies to overcome this obstacle and to compensate this gap is communities' mobilisation, which is already the most recurrent action undertaken against increasing risks and threats in all six communities. Moreover, promoting good local governance, introducing participatory and democratic decision making processes are also good strategies that some communities try to develop, such as in Bolivia. In Bolivia the indigenous authorities are strong and enhance trust and social capital in the region, they are well organized with community committees in place and have a good communication with authorities (local government and municipalities) which ensure an inclusive and participatory process. In case of disasters, the local community authorities mobilize to generate support from other actors, in consultation with all community members.

Lack of infrastructure

Values & Attitudes	
Knowledge & Learning	Institutions & Processes
Assets & Ressources	Infrastructure

The level of infrastructure varies considerably among the six communities. Except for Haiti, all communities have access to electricity and rather reliable road networks, which facilitate the access

to markets, work, health and school infrastructure and improves people's mobility. However, the maintenance (**knowhow**) of infrastructure is often an issue for sustainability.

The communities of Bolivia, Cambodia and Haiti do not have access to running water (only pumps) and have only limited basic sanitation in place. Being in a remote area, their level of infrastructure is low (very few roads in poor condition, lack of schools and health centres), including few, poorly maintained tanks for water storage and very few shelters for livestock. Except for personal houses, most of the community buildings and infrastructure were financed by external stakeholders, mainly non-governmental.

For the community in Palestine, infrastructure is available in theory, but it is owned and maintained by the occupying power. So instead of a lack of infrastructure, in this case of a fragile and conflict prone context, it is rather the lack of access to the existing infrastructure that is an issue. Moreover, its maintenance is poor. Electricity is available, but sometimes cut.

For the community in Cambodia, most of the current infrastructure, such as roads (both mud and all weather roads) and water infrastructure (hand pumps and village wells)

Values & Attitudes	
Knowledge & Learning	Institutions & Processes
Assets & Ressources	Infrastructure

have been upgraded and repaired through project activities from external donors, but they are also affected by the recurring floods (since they were not constructed risk proof). Some of the roads are

even claimed to contribute to water logging, increasing the duration of floodwaters staying on the fields and in the villages. Further flood-related infrastructure is lacking or poorly maintained, such as a broken floodgate or old dams.

In most of the countries included in this assessment, conflicts, civil war or violence have played or continue to

play a role in the way that communities prepare for and react to threats. Trust in officials is low and the scars of hassle with **public authorities** or the military leaves people wary and not relying on the government as coming to their help. In Cambodia for example, the Khmer Rouge have left people in working age above forty-five traumatized or even physically injured. Further, the area of Bantheay Meanchey is still heavily mined and parts of the natural resources cannot be tapped due to this. People in the village make the government responsible for this as it limits their access to **assets and resources**. In case of emergencies, communities thus rely on themselves (see: community mobilisation) or on external support from aid agencies and civil society.

 The most important barriers identified by the communities are very m related to the external environment factors of the national context (socio-political and economic context) Missing elements of values and attitudes building block as communities influence these barriers.

3. Defining community resilience: absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities

Resilience (R) in the above graphic (figure 11) summarises the combination of the diverse capacities of the communities in the six case studies. In the center of the triangle, all capacities are equally represented within a community and resilience is comparatively high. The further the circle is placed away from a (capacity) corner, the weaker the community's respective capacity is. It is important to note that each capacity does not exclude the others, on the contrary, it is precisely the combination of several capacities which strengthens resilience. The measurement scale to place the "R" of resilience in the triangle is qualitative as it is based on the perceptions and understanding of the three capacities by the facilitator and his/her team. There is no resilience ranking here, but rather an attempt to illustrate where resilience stands within the triangle of transformative, absorptive and adaptive capacities of communities. The understanding and interpretation from one team to another among the six case studies is somehow different and therefore subjective, it provides nevertheless a general overview of the different capacities of these six communities and therefore represents a picture of their gaps to increase their resilience.

The absorptive capacities are used mostly by the communities in El Salvador and Palestine. This capacity shows that these communities perceive that they are able to "bounce back" and have the ability to anticipate some risks, which allows them to ensure persistence of their livelihoods. It is also based on community solidarity and mobilisation, but often limited because of poverty and increasing frequency and intensity of risks.

not





Figure 11: Resilience dimensions of communities – results of the six case studies

Palestine case study – Tel Rumeida community in Hebron Tel Rumeida is located in the city of Hebron, within the part that is controlled by the Israel military. Hebron is the largest city in the West Bank with 170 000 inhabitants. It is divided in two areas, H1, which is under Palestinian Authority, where 140 000 Palestinians are living. H2 is under Israeli military control and home to 30 000 Palestinians and 500 settlers, who are living in four settlements within the city area. Due to the particular situation, the main threats affecting the population are man-made and



Picture 3: a standard Hebron street under Israeli occupancy, November 2014

relate to the Israeli occupancy. People have access to land, nutrition and water, but it is controlled by the Israeli forces¹⁴.

In the case study of Palestine, the fragile and conflict context very



much limits access to external help, which means that they have less financial and technical means to develop adaptive or transformative capacities/measures compared to absorptive capacities, maintaining the minimum level of security and livelihood. The additional risks and pressures by the constant insecurity may let them focus on immediate relief (absorption) rather than planning ahead. They are however, constantly adjusting and adapting to the insecure situation, but so far this is a minority in the community, which is kept together by strong social ties. As their general situation is occupation, they developed their own measures and tools to reduce their risks at low costs. They rely a lot on community mobilisation which was the most commonly reported action during the workshop, showing high absorptive capacities such as storing food, precaution and not letting children out of the house. Preparedness measures they put in place for example in case of closures of checkpoints are that many houses have a small vegetable garden and people are storing food in bigger quantities at home.

The adaptive capacities are used mostly by the communities in Bolivia, Cambodia and Haiti coastal area, where the community mobilisation and organization is rather good. They succeeded to build measures to reduce the impacts of certain risks. Some of them rely more on external support from government or some projects' activities. The lack of financial and technical means is certainly a limiting factor to increase this capacity.

¹⁴Caritas Switzerland, together with its partner WCLAC (Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling), works in the area of Hebron since 2010, focusing on capacity building of women's organizations in a fragile context

Bolivia case study – The Corocoro community in the Central Altiplano

The Corocoro municipality is located in the Central Altiplano at an average altitude of 3959 masl, and a distance of 150 km from the capital city of La Paz. Road access to this area is bad, however. People gain their livelihoods mainly from potato and quinoa farming, pastures and mining and are organized in a quinoa producer association. Other earning opportunities are few and not reliable. The climatic conditions in this area are harsh and people are experiencing cold spells, droughts and hail, which jeopardize their livelihoods.¹⁵

In the **Bolivian case study**, various adjustments and changes took place, such as adopting new farming techniques, change in farming practices, diversifying livelihood bases, etc., in order to continue functioning without major qualitative changes in function or structural identity. Bolivian families hold traditional production knowledge related to native cultivars adapted to the region. They also hold knowledge about the conservation of native germplasm. Although production is based on subsistence family agriculture, seeds of native crops (varieties of sour potatoes) are maintained, thus enhancing their adaptive capacity. Families have traditionally managed different ecological niches

The transformative capacities that we see in the different case studies are very much linked to migration and resettlement, and are a response to large changes which overwhelmed the adaptive capacity of the communities and forced them to develop their transformation capacities. As the graphic on most reported actions shows in figure 7, migration is often the last action undertaken by communities, because it implies important consequences on their families and on the social cohesion of a community. Two different types of migration have been identified: labour migration, as a deliberate choice, and forced migration, as an answer to high violence and risk of dying. In the case of labour migration in Bolivia and Cambodia, these actions are based on economic incentives. This transformation capacity, is one strategy among others strategies that these communities have developed to reduce their risks and vulnerability. However, the long-term consequences are not yet known.

¹⁵Since June 2012, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation works in this area with their local partners PROINPA and PROSUCO, focusing on agricultural improvements and climate change adaptation.

(hillsides, plains and mountains). This enables them to ensure production of different crops and to take advantage of different micro-climates.



These adaptations can be individual or collective, and they can take place

at multi-level (intra-household, groups of individuals/households, community, etc). People do not adapt to one specific stressor, but rather to a broad combination of changes.



Picture 4: Community resilience workshop, November 2014

Cambodia case study – Svay La village in Bantheay Meanchey province

The province of Bantheay Meanchey is located in the north-western part of Cambodia, bordering Thailand. The population's main income-generating activity is paddy agriculture, complemented by subsistence fishery, animal husbandry and horticulture. The climate in this area is tropical with one rainy season (August – October) and one dry season (June – July), which have been shifting over the past years, causing a mix of heavy floods



Picture 5: Svay La village in Bantheay Meanchey province, November 2014

and droughts. In a normal year, two crops can be harvested. In the villages up to 50% of the population are migrating to larger cities and to Thailand to make a more reliable living than paddy agriculture. In June 2014, Caritas Switzer-



land embarked on a community-based DRR and water resource management project in cooperation with local NGOs RCEDO and SAEDO.

For the **Cambodian case study**, changes are not incremental any longer. Instead they are transformative, resulting in modifications in the community's primary structure, system and function. The seasonal migration is a key strategy to address the risks and uncertainties they face. However, it is not clear whether the way migration is happening strengthens transformative capacities, as it also weakens the social ties in the community and creates problems within families (drug abuse, violence, diseases). In this case, it is rather a forced process by changing environmental or socioeconomic conditions.

In the case of forced migration in Palestine and in El Salvador, which are fragile areas with conflicts, migration is the last remaining choice. These communities try to cope with the risks with mainly absorptive capacities and some adaptive capacities until there is no other choice but to migrate. In that case, transformative capacity is applied when absorptive and adaptive capacities fail as a last resort, which goes against the idea that transformation is a stage to complement when a certain level of absorptive and adaptive capacity has been reached, as they were unable to maintain their core functions. In such context, families' migration is an individual choice that is not shared with the community as it implies high risks and it is still not that recurrent. For El Salvador, the community already showed high transformative capacities after the earthquakes in 2001, when the community had to resettle in a new location, with a new organization and restart everything from scratch. However, today the community does not consider this as a solid transformation capacity, as the community feels overwhelmed by all the risks, especially violence and gangs.



Picture 6: Previous woodland left in pasture, Haiti June 2014

In the **Haiti case study**, long term migration takes regularly place in the mountainous communities as there are little economic opportunities there. Men are migrating and send remittances to their families. The migrants often stay



away for few years, and sometimes even do not return. Consequently, this has high impacts on the livelihood of the households, as women are often left behind on their own with six to eight children. This increases their vulnerability. Those who stay back home therefore often perceive this transformative change as a damage for themselves and their community.

The triangle of the resilience dimensions supposes that (yet to be fully investigated), as we move from absorptive capacity, to adaptive capacity and finally to transformative capacity, the transaction costs and risks to develop and apply certain measures, such as changes in livelihoods, policy changes etc., associated to these changes increase. The underlying idea is that 'the more you change the higher the transactional costs' (IDS 2012). The results of the analysis of the six case studies show that the transformation capacity that was mainly mentioned by the communities was migration, which requires certain costs and risks by the communities (loss of family structure, less labour in the fields, etc.).

Common / main findings

- Communities living in areas with high risks of disasters and high impacts of CC tend to perceive their adaptive and transformative capacities as key to resilience building (internal and external support: international, national and local stakeholders).
- Communities living in conflict and fragile context resort more on their absoptive capacities (mostly internal local support).
- A smooth transition to adaptation and transformation requires some level of stability and a certain level of resourcing.

Part III: Validation of the framework

This third part presents the strengths and the limitations of the framework, as well as the lessons learnt. It validates the resilience framework, and summarises the next steps for the coming year.

The resilience framework was reviewed and accepted by the members of the Platform during the F2F in 2013. In 2014, the methodology¹⁶ was developed and the testing of the framework was conducted in the five countries.

Values & Attitudes	
Knowledge & Learning	Institutions & Processes
Assets & Ressources	Infrastructure



ENVIRONMENTS

Reflections and feedback from facilitators and their team, as well as lessons learnt allow us to identify the following strengths and limitations of the framework:

Reflection on the resilience elements of the framework: The three elements of the resilience framework was useful for assessing resilience but will need some reworking based on the feedback from the field:

Community building blocks proved to be very useful to identify resilience gaps from within the community. Not all methods or tools allow to easily assess the different components of the resilience framework, such as the building blocks and the environments, consequently the link with the five building blocks and the communities was not always clear and straightforward.

Resilience dimensions are an abstract concept which requires time until it is understood. This may need further revision in order to make the framework applied more easily.

Transformative capacity: migration was the only example, not much was mentioned by communities about change in livelihoods, policy changes etc.

The measurement scale to place the "R" of resilience in the triangle with the three capacities is based on the perception of the faciliator and his/her team, which is subjective.

Ties between community resilience and the environment should be made even stronger than depicted in the framework, as in most cases, contextual factors influence strongly the local level.

¹⁶Accessible on the Platform website http://www.drrplatform.org

A reflection on the framework in general reveals that the different spatial levels of resilience are not very much dealt within this framework. The resilience framework was developed to be applied at community level at the first place, keeping in mind that communities are not necessarily homogeneous and within communities resilience levels of households and individuals may differ substantially. Despite the restricted number of cases studies, some good findings and trends regarding contextual influences, common and distinct resilience strategies could be identified. Concerning the gender and social equity (GSE) representation among the six communities, there was a good sample of men, women, disabled, elderly, youth, etc. In El Salvador, Bolivia and Cambodia, the women were in majority, while in Haiti and Palestine, they were in minority. The facilitator's role was to ensure that all different groups could express themselves freely and participate equally at the workshop. However, GSE is not enough covered. It would require a special GSE lens to look at community resilience, which was not systematically done through the actual framework and methodology.

The five building blocks are strongly linked to one another and the information it generates is qualitative. Communities and the facilitator therefore need to make their own judgements about whether or not certain aspects of resilience have been achieved. Some of these aspects will be more straightforward than others. For instance, it is easy to tell whether a community disaster preparedness or contingency plan exists (even if its quality is another matter). But it is much harder to decide whether there is an equitable distribution of wealth and livelihood assets in a community, or whether the access to common property resources that can support coping strategies during crises is adequate, equitable and gender balanced. The resilience framework cannot tell projects and communities how they should reach these judgements. They are matters for collective agreement between the stakeholders. The conclusions will be different in each case, according to context and expectations, and there will always be a fair amount of subjective judgement. But in every case the process for reaching decisions must be transparent and participatory.

Conclusion

Initially, the useful three interconnected elements of the resilience framework of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform demonstrated that it provides a good structure for the community discussion to assess resilience. The five building blocks confirmed to be key elements to well capture characteristics of a resilient community. Secondly, the resilience framework methodology helps Platform's members and the Community of Practitioners (COP) to better understand community resilience for project planning and implementation. Therefore a sound understanding of the resilience framework and field methodology by the field facilitators is key. Thirdly, the case studies application helped to adjust the methodology, thanks to the feedback from the facilitators and their team. Further application and peer review would be interesting. Fourthly, the resilience framework serves as a baseline to integrate and advocate for local action enhancing community resilience for post 2015 frameworks. Further collaboration with other COP and networks is important. Based on the above points which refer to the objectives of the publication, the resilience framework could be basically validated.

The findings of the case studies based on the communities' perspective on resilience underline that: Resilience is intrinsically linked to a robust and secure resource base as it allows to accommodate shocks and stresses more swiftly. For resilient livelihoods, communities need to identify their risks and prepare themselves to take mitigation measures accordingly. States are supposed to complement and support communities in this through poverty reduction strategies and the commitments they make in the frame of the HFA2. The poverty reduction strategies should implement measures and activities that yield benefits even in the absence of climate change (no-regrets measures).

Building local capacities to preparedness, risk mitigation and adaptation is a long-term investment. The case studies show that communities already implement some of these measures. Communities need to be able to combine the needed skills to absorb, adapt and transform in order to be more resilient. Social cohesion (illustrated e.g. through importance of community mobilisation and family support) is a key component for resilience as it helps buffering all kinds of personal and community-level shocks.

As the different case studies highlight, being able to absorb a shock, adapt to changes and implement transformation strategies are all needed capacities to be resilient to the various risk patterns that communities are exposed to. With the emergence of new risks, the increasing intensity and frequency of some risks, communities have to adapt constantly to changing processes and combine different strategies. The case studies revealed that strengthening only 'one side of the triangle' may fall short on the long run, which is an important finding for humanitarian and development practitioners.

HOW CAN THE SWISS NGO DRR PLATFORM CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESILIENCE AGENDA?

Links to HFA2 international processes in a nutshell, the case studies of communities confirmed:

- Need for local action, cooperation among all actors, including communities is key (HFA2 priority for action 2)
- Need to combine hard and soft measures, prevention and preparedness measures (HFA2 priority for action 4)
- Consideration of multi-risk approach, especially

for frequent small scale events (HFA2 priority for action 1)

- Understanding risks is key, which implies to understand key factors of resilience (HFA2 priority for action 1)
- Need to consider social, environment and political components to build resilience (HFA2 priority for action 4)

THE FIRST LESSON FOR US AS NGOs:

Do plan well and implement programs that are based on the needs of the population as well as climate-anddisaster-risk informed, based on available forecasts, trends and databases.

Communities we work with have good knowledge of their situation and what they need to improve is their

living conditions. What is often lacking is the technical support and the larger political and economic support. Our role then is to act as facilitator, to improve access to services and goods and raise the voice of the communities who remained unheard before that.

NEXT STEPS

The Swiss NGO DRR Platform aims to develop and apply further the resilience framework in the coming two years: further collaboration on resilience with GNDR using refined Platform resilience framework as a basis to develop rigorous indicators and monitoring system of community resilience.

• Better cover GSE aspects.

- Share the resilience framework among Platform members and other COP, for common understanding, mutual exchange on similar experience and common feedbacks.
- Advocate for and integrate community resilience into implementation and monitoring of post-2015 frameworks.

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