



## INCREASING RESILIENCE

Theoretical Guidance Document  
for CARE International

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# 1. Introduction

**The CARE 2020 Program Strategy sets out a vision for how CARE will fight inequality to overcome the injustice of poverty. The strategy prioritises three approaches: increasing resilience, strengthening gender equality and women’s voice, and promoting inclusive governance. This focus is based on CARE’s experience that the underlying causes of poverty and social injustice include gender inequality, poor governance, and vulnerability to shocks and stresses that arise from factors such as climate change, environmental degradation and conflict.**

Increasing resilience is central to how CARE works. It applies to all four priority outcome areas in the strategy: effective humanitarian response; the right to sexual, reproductive and maternal health and a life free from violence; food and nutrition security and resilience to climate change; and women’s access to and control of economic resources.

This document provides CARE and partner staff with some theoretical direction for integrating resilience into their work. The three main areas of discussion are:

- The importance of increasing resilience for CARE.
- Key elements for increasing resilience for CARE.
- The integration of increasing resilience across the 2020 Program Strategy.

In 2017, we will develop a more practice-oriented guidance document that includes models and innovations for scaling up resilience across the organisation and applying it across the programming cycle.

*“Increasing resilience is central to how CARE works.”*



## 2. The importance of increasing resilience for CARE

Poverty is created and sustained through unequal power relations and the resulting unjust distribution of resources and opportunities, often with a damaging and disproportionate effect on women and girls. More people live in harm's way today than 50 years ago, and high-risk human activities have increased the chances of a hazard event turning into a major disaster.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the world is becoming a more turbulent place, with a more extreme and unpredictable changing climate, more frequent natural hazards both large and small, and increased violent conflict affecting more and more people.<sup>2</sup> Both sudden shocks and slow onset changes and stresses further erode the livelihoods of people living in poverty, undoing development gains made in the past.

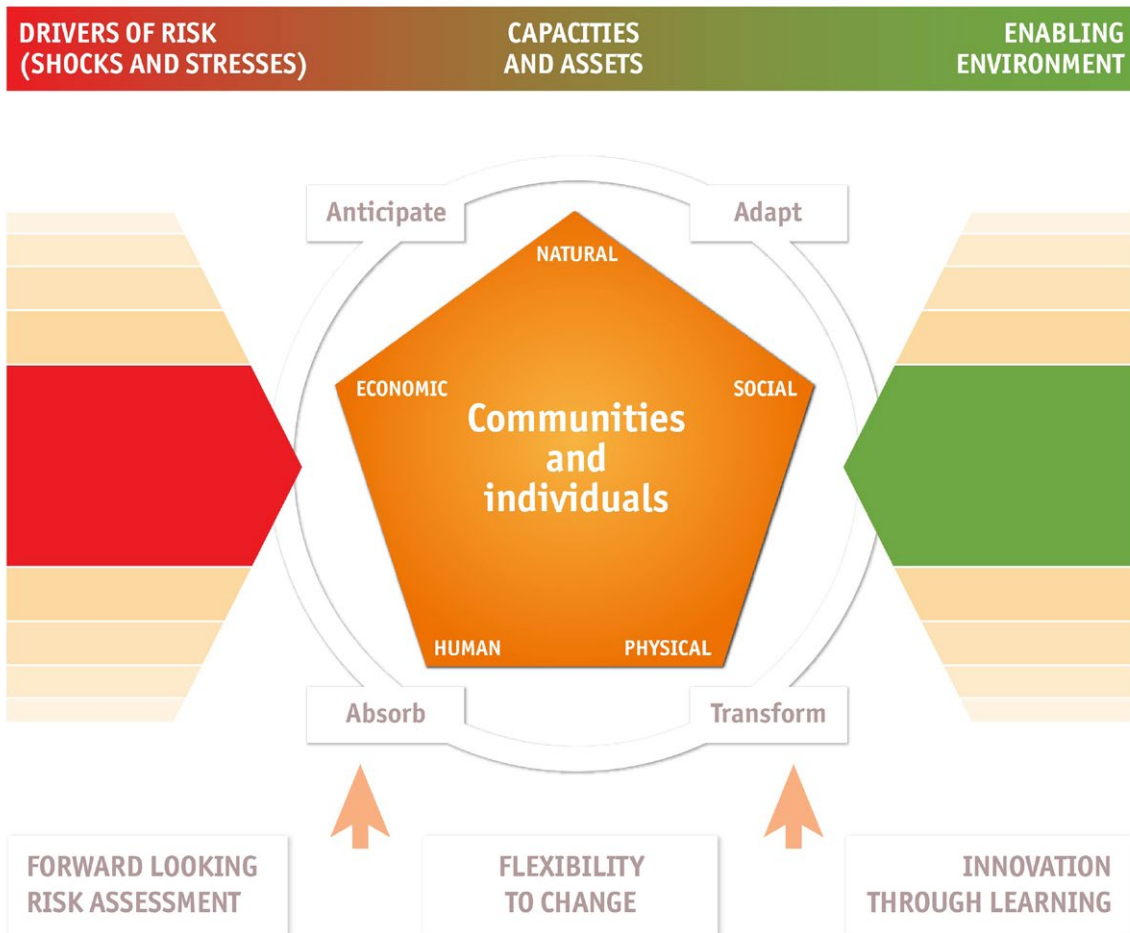
To overcome this, CARE aims to strengthen poor people's capacities to deal with shocks and stresses, manage risks, and transform their lives in response to new hazards and opportunities. Simultaneously, CARE seeks to address the underlying causes of vulnerability of different groups of people, and improve the social, economic and ecological systems and structures that support them. Building resilience goes beyond the ability to recover from shocks and includes addressing the context that makes people vulnerable. That is central to increasing resilience.

The concept of resilience is already well established in certain areas of CARE's work, such as climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. However, it is also relevant in every field of CARE's work. A focus on increasing resilience for poor people enables CARE to better integrate its approach across all sectors, including CARE's key outcome areas of humanitarian action, sexual and reproductive health, food and nutrition security, and women's economic empowerment. In the face of escalating shocks, stresses and an uncertain future, increasing the resilience of communities and individuals goes hand in hand with gender equality and inclusive governance as the pathway out of poverty and to life with dignity.

*“CARE seeks to address the underlying causes of vulnerability of different groups of people, and improve the social, economic and ecological systems and structures that support them.”*

<sup>1</sup> See CRED. 2015. *The Human cost of natural disasters. A global perspective.* [file:///Users/aarjandixit/Downloads/The\\_Human\\_Cost\\_of\\_Natural\\_Disasters\\_CRED.pdf](file:///Users/aarjandixit/Downloads/The_Human_Cost_of_Natural_Disasters_CRED.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See Munich Re. 2015. *Loss events worldwide 1980-2014.* [http://www.preventionweb.net/files/44281\\_19802014paketworldusde4zu3.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/44281_19802014paketworldusde4zu3.pdf)



### CARE’s approach to increasing resilience

Increasing resilience is not an outcome that can be achieved within a specific time frame, but an ongoing process. CARE’s approach to increasing resilience, developed through a consultative process<sup>3</sup> and based on past CARE work, can be summarised as follows: **If the capacities and assets to deal with various shocks, stresses and uncertainty are built and supported and if drivers of risk are reduced and if these actions are supported by an enabling environment, then resilience is increased.** Change needs to take place and be sustained in all three areas to achieve this impact.



### Resilience is central to how CARE works. The diagram above illustrates the elements of good resilience programming:

- The aim of the increasing resilience approach is to harness the relationship between capacities, drivers of risk, and the enabling environment.
- Underpinning the resilience approach are risk analysis, flexibility, and innovation. These distinguish it from CARE’s other established programming areas.
- People use their capacities and assets to interact with their human and natural environment to better protect and promote people’s rights and safeguard the environment.

<sup>3</sup> Two papers were commissioned to review the state of resilience work within CARE and externally. Contents informed discussions at a workshop in London in April 2016, with participants from 6 CARE members and 12 regional and country programmes. This analysis is based on the outputs of the workshop as well as feedback subsequently received from participants and others.





## 3. Key elements for increasing resilience for CARE

*“If the capacities and assets to deal with various shocks, stresses and uncertainty are built and supported and if drivers of risk are reduced and if these actions are supported by an enabling environment, then resilience is increased.”*

### Increased capacities and assets to deal with shocks, stresses and uncertainty

The following capacities help people to cope better with shocks, stresses and uncertainty:

- *Anticipate risks*: foresee and therefore reduce the impact of hazards that are likely to occur and be ready for unexpected events through prevention, preparedness and planning.
- *Absorb shocks*: accommodate the immediate impact shock and stress have on their lives, wellbeing and livelihoods, by making changes in their usual practices and behaviours using available skills and resources, and by managing adverse conditions.
- *Adapt to evolving conditions*: adjust their behaviours, practices, lifestyles and livelihood strategies in response to changed circumstances and conditions under multiple, complex and at times changing risks.
- *Transform*: influence the enabling environment and drivers of risks to create individual and systemic changes on behaviours, local governance and decision-making structures, market economics, and policies and legislation.

These are known respectively as anticipatory, absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities (‘the 3As and T for resilience’) and can apply at the level of the individual, household, institution and wider social systems.<sup>4</sup>

In CARE’s increasing resilience approach, we define the scope of transformational capacity as the ability to influence the wider context, in advocating and fostering an enabling environment and reducing the drivers of risk. Risks are constantly changing, and as they increase in number and complexity, incremental adjustments to people’s lives and wellbeing are no longer sufficient to achieve resilience. Resilience thinking and programming strive to transform the dynamic relationship between people living in poverty and the environment that generates shocks and stresses. It seeks to confront the factors in the environment that drive risk and to transform risks into opportunities.

These underlying conditions tend to be systemic in nature, and are not easily controlled or changed by individuals or single households. They require collective action and engagement between power holders, leaders, and decision makers. This involves working at the community level, as well as at the national or international level. As a contributor to and catalyst for change, CARE plays an important role in this transformational space, working together with multiple partners and stakeholders.

This capacity for transformation, as well as governance and gender, is a cross-cutting objective in all CARE’s programme approaches.

<sup>4</sup> Some research organisations and bilateral donors, such as DFID and USAID, recognise this framing around resilience as a set of capacities. See for example ODI’s 3As and T Framework for BRACED.

## CARE's work to build capacities to increase resilience

Pastoral households in Ethiopia have increased capacities to deal with drought, such as the El Nino drought in 2015, with the CARE USAID-funded Pastoral Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion (PRIME) project:

- **Anticipatory** – By having locality-specific weather forecasts and meteorological information available to them about the upcoming rainy season, including the severity, timing and drought impact of El Nino, pastoral communities were able to sell their livestock for better prices before the drought became too severe. They could also protect and strengthen their livestock by taking part in preventive vaccination programmes leading up to the drought.
- **Absorptive** – People with surplus food and animal feed were able to better absorb the shock of the drought without having to sell off assets and go into debt. Accumulating savings through Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) helped community members to have access to funds to meet immediate needs during the crisis, as they continued to earn income.
- **Adaptive** – Through analysis of historical and predicted climate risks and vulnerabilities, pastoral communities have recognised that seasons are getting drier and that their water supplies are at risk. Community members have identified different adaptation measures that can help them cope with the changing climate better, such as rehabilitating water ponds for livestock, changing livestock breeds, and growing different crops that are more suited to shorter rain seasons.
- **Transformative** – Approaches such as Gender-sensitive Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (GCVCA) and Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) bring together community members with government ministries (e.g., agriculture, water, disaster management, etc.), meteorological agencies, local development bodies and other stakeholders to collectively develop a better understanding of climate risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities. These processes enable community members to be actively involved in decisions that impact on their resilience, provide a forum to raise their issues, hold other stakeholders accountable for actions and decisions, and work together with agencies that often do not engage directly with the communities they are meant to support.

The assets that people have access to and can control determine the existence of these capacities described above.

Assets include:

- Human potential (e.g., skills, knowledge, education, health, family size, individual motivation).
- Social capital (e.g., extended family, community cohesion, voice and political influence)<sup>5</sup>.
- Economic resources (e.g., market access, savings, insurance mechanisms, livestock, productive assets).
- Physical capital (e.g., tools, premises, infrastructure, productive land).
- Natural resources (e.g., forests, common pastures, water, soils, and environmental resources).

A resource can fall into different asset classes depending on the circumstances. For example, access to water can be considered to be a social asset, an economic asset, a physical capital or a natural resource.

The sustainable livelihoods approach refers to this categorisation as 'capitals'. The resilience approach goes one step further by assessing how the different assets contribute to the 3As. The more people can command these capacities, the better they can respond to adversity

and improve their wellbeing. The same does not necessarily apply to assets. Increasing a single asset may have the perverse effect of reducing resilience. For example, increasing livestock numbers may be a source of wealth and status that acts as an insurance against shock events, and so contributes to absorptive capacity. However, it also increases susceptibility to the impacts of drought due to a rapid depletion of pasture resources, thereby reducing adaptive capacity.

Resilient individuals and communities have control over a wide range of assets, including 'hard' resources and 'soft' skills, to give them the capacities to deal with change. That change may be the result of sudden onset events or disruptions (shocks); continuous pressure on livelihoods (stresses); or unpredictable and volatile situations (uncertainty). They are also better able to take full advantage of any opportunities that change may bring. This highlights that the potential for resilience is deeply rooted in power and gender dynamics; different groups face different opportunities and constraints when building their resilience. Increasing the resilience of the natural resource base is often an essential prerequisite for building community resilience, especially when individuals and communities are dependent on natural resources.

<sup>5</sup> This is also classified as (a) *Bonding Social Capital* – relationships with those in the same community; (b) *Bridging Social Capital* – horizontal relationships with those in other communities; and (c) *Linking Social Capital* – vertical relationships with people in higher positions.

## Reduced drivers of risk

Individuals, communities, states, regions and institutions face continuous exposure to risks and uncertainties. They can arise from different sources, such as climate change, natural hazards, economic fluctuations, political factors, or violent conflict. These drivers of risk can operate at any scale; in the household (e.g. domestic violence), in the community (e.g. living in an exposed, unsafe environment), and on a global scale (e.g. market crash for a cash crop commodity). In complex contexts, the number of drivers may be significant and the impacts superimposed on each other.

CARE commonly encounters the following drivers of risk:

- Climate change
- Poor governance and institutions
- Lack of control over resources
- Limited access to basic services
- Environmental degradation
- Conflict
- Market failure
- Social norms and barriers



Risk results from a combination of three factors: the shock or stress itself (e.g., a big storm, a rapid price rise, a long drought, an unseasonal flood); people's exposure to it (e.g. where they live); and how vulnerable they are to it (e.g., what products they depend on, or how much water they need for their livestock). Consequently, there are three approaches to reduce the drivers of risk:

- **Reducing the likelihood of shocks arising in the first place, or limiting their severity.** This includes action and advocacy at a level beyond the community. On an international scale, an example is the coordinated actions by nations to reduce carbon emissions to limit climate change or the brokerage of peace talks between warring factions through third party mediation. At a national level, examples are governments trying to control price fluctuations by using buffer stocks or tariffs, or attempt to regulate and minimise commodity speculation. Examples of local level issues include activities such as reforesting degraded landscapes or engaging in watershed protection.
- **Addressing the conditions that make people more exposed to shocks and stresses.** These conditions are more likely to be located in the community sphere of influence (e.g., voluntary relocation, or building earthquake resistant housing), although external action will usually also be required (e.g. making alternative livelihood opportunities available).
- **Exacerbation of existing risk and creation of new risk.** By increasing capacities and assets in ways that do not exacerbate or drive new risks, vulnerability may be reduced (e.g., new economic activities that do not result in deforestation, harmful land use, change or social divisions, setting up early warning and weather forecast information, and adopting more tolerant crop varieties and livestock breeds).

All these approaches can contribute to increasing resilience by reducing the drivers of risk. The power of people to influence the drivers of risk, even those apparently within their sphere of control, is unequally distributed. The generic term 'people', even when disaggregated as women and men, masks the capacities and vulnerabilities of different populations, such as migrant women, sex workers or landless households. Often those most exposed to risk are those with the least power to influence it, making companion approaches of gender equality and inclusive governance central to building resilience.



## Enabling environments

The ability of people to progress out of risk into safety and increased wellbeing is determined by the extent in which the surrounding social and natural environments allow them to thrive. The natural environment (land, water, natural ecosystems, climate) not only generates some of the risks people face but also serves as a natural barrier against shocks and stresses and provides people with opportunities to build resilience. The social environment, including societal norms, power relations, institutional and legal frameworks, markets, and cultural practices, mediates the way people interact with their physical environment.

Systems and structures that commonly affect resilience include:

- The changing ecology of a watershed
- Systems of land ownership and allocation
- Government relations with investors in resource extraction
- The nature of participation of communities in local planning
- Social norms and barriers that affect access to and control of resources
- Established behaviours and belief systems that influence decision-making
- National implementation of international agreements such as Sendai, Paris Agreement, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

*“The enabling environment and drivers of risk are often the two ends of a continuum as some factors can simultaneously be sources of risk or opportunity”*

The enabling environment and drivers of risk are often the two ends of a continuum as some factors can simultaneously be sources of risk or opportunity, and act differently at different times. Enabling systems and structures assist people to achieve resilience, while the drivers of risk pose continual challenges to that resilience. Ways of supporting the enabling environment are:

- **Interventions in the natural environment in a manner that seeks to meet human requirements for natural resources, while sustaining the composition, structure and function of the ecosystems concerned.** This may involve direct physical interventions such as planting mangroves to protect the coastline

or planting shrubs and trees to stabilise slopes. Indirect interventions like creating sustainable sources of income for people facing increased risks from using natural resources can also be used..

- **Interventions in the social environment to mobilise necessary resources, increase commitment and take action to build resilience.** Examples of activities that help build an enabling environment could include promoting a national climate change adaptation policy, granting women access to land rights and supporting women in decision-making (this will contribute to strengthening their assets), or enforcing action against illegal logging (likely to be a driver of risk). Interventions may also involve enabling people to move off the land or diversify their livelihoods to increase alternative sources of income (changing their relationship with their environment).

## Forward-looking risk analysis, flexibility to change, and innovation through learning

Increasing resilience goes beyond a return to stability after a shock and addresses the context that initially made people poor, and seeks to alter those underlying conditions as a means of improving resilience. For example, instead of replanting coconut trees after a hurricane, increasing resilience entails exploring the planting of alternative crops, such as coffee or cocoa, to help generate additional livelihood resources for the people initially solely dependent on coconut trees. Often, the time to act on drivers of risk is in periods of reduced risk, when the urgency of a response does not drive decision-making and the allocation of resources. CARE’s resilience approach, therefore, applies not only in response to shocks and stresses but as a permanent element of programmatic thinking.

Conducting a forward-looking **risk analysis**<sup>6</sup> to help inform decision making is a fundamental element of the application of a resilience-building lens in CARE’s work. Risk, in its most holistic sense, is the key concept and differentiating factor in resilience building programme design. There is no one correct approach to risk breakdown for analysis. This can be done by the source of risk (e.g., climate risks, market risks); or by area impacted (e.g., operational risk, reputational risk, financial risk, health risk); or by sectoral classification (e.g., environmental risk, economic risk, political risk). The aim of the analysis is to ensure that all risks that could potentially impact the communities and people involved are addressed during the design and implementation of our programmes.

<sup>6</sup>An overview of appropriate tools and methods for increasing resilience, including undertaking risk analysis, will be developed in 2017.

Risk analysis for resilience has several key features:

- It is conducted in a **participatory, inclusive way** so that the analysis is owned and shared by the people who will be affected by it, and understood in the context of people's aspirations and capacities.
- **It supplements local, indigenous forms of knowledge around risks with scientific knowledge.** In a changing world, the past is not always a reliable guide to the future, and science is not precise. Traditional knowledge, collective memory and science-based analysis can complement each other in understanding phenomena such as a climate change.
- It combines analysis **of short-term and immediate risks with long-term risks**, anticipating the impact of future changes that can be mitigated by taking action now.
- It explores **the different risk perspectives** among and within communities that may cause tensions between groups of people and require different responses.

Risks are not static, and the relationship between people and the drivers of the risks affecting them are always changing. As CARE shifts from short-term projects to long-term programmes, it is more likely to face changing contexts and risk landscapes within the lifetime

of a single programme. This calls for **flexibility of response** with a readiness to change direction with the evolving risk profile. This flexibility in response to changing conditions is a critical part of being able to design context-specific and tailored solutions to increase resilience. Often, iterative risk analysis over the course of a programme will help identify gaps in capacities, a better understanding of vulnerabilities over time, as well as identifying which groups benefit, or not, from development. Programme design should allow for this flexibility, for example by building in a revolving fund instrument in budgets, by not locking programmes into overly rigid outputs and indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Similarly, integrating resilience requires CARE to **innovate** in the face of new knowledge and learning about emerging risks. In fact, innovation is an important process for increasing resilience capacities as it can determine the ability and willingness to take on new risks, take advantage of opportunities, learn from mistakes and implement changes. This includes the use and deployment of new and appropriate forms of technology as necessary, as well as the development of deliberate learning strategies aimed at incorporating new experiences into practice to help create transformative capacities.

*“Programme design should allow for this flexibility, for example by building in a revolving fund instrument in budgets, by not locking programmes into overly rigid outputs and indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes.”*



## 4. The integration of increasing resilience across the 2020 Program Strategy

A resilience approach has implications for all the roles that the 2020 Program Strategy defines for CARE.

Building resilience against shocks and stresses is intrinsically linked to **humanitarian action**. The more resilient people and the systems that support them are, the lesser the humanitarian response needed from external actors in times of crisis, as people are better able to deal with disasters and emergencies. A resilience framing in humanitarian action ensures that CARE's interventions serve to mitigate future risk, and also highlights the role for CARE outside and beyond times of immediate crisis, working to reduce the drivers of risk.

The empowerment of people to deal with shocks and stresses is essential for **promoting lasting change** and requires **innovative solutions** based on an understanding of current and future risks. Increasing resilience requires CARE to integrate risk management better in its programme design and implementation to ensure that disasters and crises do not undo positive change. While risk analysis is sometimes included in project designs and proposals to funders, risk mitigation strategies also need to be developed and resourced in all cases, to actively manage and plan for risks.

Building resilience requires addressing the drivers of risk that have their origins outside communities or their local area, commonly by actions to influence policy through advocacy, engaging with stakeholders and demonstrating success. Thus, in addition to replicating and learning from initiatives that build resilience within a project or programme area, a resilience approach also contributes to **multiplying impact** by addressing the very drivers of risk that affect people living in poverty and marginalisation elsewhere, as well as by working to create changes through policy advocacy.

### **Synergy between increasing resilience and governance and gender approaches**

Increasing resilience operates in synergy with its companion approaches of gender equality and inclusive governance within the CARE strategy. Each of the elements of CARE's approach – gender, governance, and resilience – has developed its own framework and language based on its intellectual origins and evolution. They embody concepts that are familiar and useful to practitioners and experts in those fields. Without wishing to gloss over the important details and nuances embedded in these different frameworks, they appear to follow a similar logic.



The frameworks seem to have in common three elements: empowerment, environment, and interaction.

APPROACH	EMPOWERMENT expressed as	ENVIRONMENT expressed as	INTERACTION expressed as
RESILIENCE	Building capacities and assets	Enabling environment	Reducing drivers of risk
GENDER	Building agency	Transforming structures	Changing relations
GOVERNANCE	Empowered citizens	Accountable and effective authorities	Space for negotiation

This commonality suggests a sound basis for coherence between resilience and the other approaches.

### Gender equality and women’s voice

In any given context men and women, and boys and girls are not equally vulnerable. Unequal access and control of assets and resources between women and men, compounded by social and cultural norms, limits the ability of those most vulnerable to risk to make informed choices that could help increase their resilience. Because of the disproportionate impact of discrimination based on gender, CARE pays specific attention to strategies that empower women and girls, and that fight gender injustice as a contribution to building women’s resilience and that of their families and beyond. This includes work on shifting the perspectives of men and boys. Women’s empowerment and greater gender equality can thus be seen as catalysts for increased resilience outcomes, and a resilience approach can, in turn, enhance an understanding of gender dynamics and support gender-transformative initiatives.

Pointers for maximising the coherence between resilience and gender equality approaches include:

- Integrate gender analysis in vulnerability and capacity assessments, addressing different levels of vulnerability, capacity, impact and resilience among boys, girls, men and women in various social groups.
- Develop programme strategies design and implementation, on differentiated risk analysis for women, men, boys and girls.
- Promote women’s voice in resilience-building interventions, focusing on marginalised women.
- Work on individual and collective agency, and on empowerment, power dynamics and relations between groups and power holders, and the broader structure and enabling environment, through the lens of vulnerability to risks and shocks.

### Gender equality and resilience – example

An unequal balance of power in the home, community and within authorities limits women’s ability to make decisions to increase resilience. Women generally have less decision-making power within the home and the community compared to men. Government departments that make critical decisions related to resilience tend to be also male dominated. Women from ethnic minority communities in Laos for example, are particularly disadvantaged because they are the least able to participate in community decision making due in part to illiteracy and cultural traditions. As a result, many are less likely to have access to knowledge about climate change impacts and resilient livelihood options to increase their resilience. CARE conducts long-term programmes to empower ethnic minority women and to transform their lives by understanding the root causes of vulnerability from gender inequality around the division of labour, decision-making power and access to resources, by engaging with men and boys, and finally by working with government partners to increase resilience.

*“CARE pays specific attention to strategies that empower women and girls, and that fight gender injustice as a contribution to building women’s resilience and that of their families and beyond.”*



### Inclusive governance

The lack of inclusive governance is a key factor driving vulnerability. Governance strategies that support citizens to actively engage with power holders ultimately lead to investments, services, and supportive policies that correspond with their needs and contribute to building their resilience – and can also prevent actions and decisions that exacerbate the drivers of risk. Conversely, unresponsive non-transparent and unaccountable governance at best leaves people to fend for themselves in the face of increasingly complex risks, or at worst adds new risks and makes people even more vulnerable. Thus, key issues in inclusive governance, such as rights, institutions, and accountability, for example, are also part of CARE’s approach to increasing resilience.

Pointers for maximising the coherence between resilience and governance approaches include:

- Strengthen civil society and citizens’ collective voice, and increase influence on policies that impact resilience (such as on disaster management legislation, National Adaptation Plans) and drivers of risk (such as deforestation or discriminatory property rights).
- Improve responsiveness of power holders to those demands and address policy-based drivers of risk at national and international levels (such as trade deals or climate emissions targets).
- Facilitate channels for people to hold governments to account for the delivery of services and the support needed for people to become resilient (helping communities to participate in local planning processes or community scorecard initiatives).
- Hold governments, in the global North as well as South, accountable to international agreements on climate change and disaster risk reduction (such as the Paris Agreement 2016 and Sendai 2015), and agreements to uphold humanitarian space, such as truces to allow safe delivery of humanitarian aid.
- Enable action, as appropriate in different contexts, to address public or private sector actions that are drivers of risk or shocks, such as violent conflict, environmental destruction, or alienation of common property resources.

### Governance and resilience – example

Increasing the resilience of vulnerable communities in the face of drought often requires increasing their voice and space for negotiation with power holders. Vulnerable communities are often underrepresented in decision-making structures, leading to limited access to basic services, which in turn has an impact on their capacities to cope with successive shock and ongoing stresses. CARE’s Adaptation Learning Program (ALP) works with communities in Northern Ghana to increase the ability of vulnerable households to adapt to climate change through promoting community-based adaptation (CBA) approaches. This is primarily done through the creation of concrete but flexible Community Adaptation Actions Plans (CAAPs). Communities identify appropriate adaptation actions that respond to local climate impacts and specific needs and capacities through such CAAPs. The priorities emerging from CAAP processes have been integrated into the development plans for Garu Tempane and East Mamprusi districts in Ghana. Government officials were involved in facilitating the participatory analysis process with communities in their districts, which enabled them to better understand the climate change issues facing women and men in their constituencies. Community leaders presented CAAPs to the District Assemblies in a public forum, making them accountable for considering them in the district plans. In addition to promoting climate resilient planning in these two districts, this has led to the revision of the national planning guidelines for all districts to include climate change issues, and the relationships and communication between communities and their local government service providers have improved.

## What does increasing resilience imply for CARE's outcome areas?

The CARE 2020 Program Strategy defines four outcome areas: humanitarian assistance; sexual, reproductive health and rights and a life free from violence; food and nutrition security and resilience to climate change; and women's economic empowerment.

Applying a resilience approach in each of these areas should include:

### Humanitarian assistance

- **Understanding the underlying drivers of risk and stresses that exacerbate humanitarian disasters**

While humanitarian response is often spurred by identifiable events that trigger a disaster, it is important to identify and analyse the underlying factors that make people vulnerable, such as climate change, market conditions or social dynamics. This ensures that humanitarian action seeks to address, or at the very least does not exacerbate those stresses. For example, in conflict settings involving recurrent movement of people, an analysis of the displacement pattern could help to identify the origin of displacement. This could help focus attention on those areas and limit the impact on the communities of consecutive and massive displacements.

- **Investment in disaster prevention, preparedness, and climate change adaptation**

Disasters and crises cannot be entirely prevented, but there is ample evidence that resilience building reduces the human impact of a crisis and the financial cost of humanitarian response. Investments in early warning mechanisms can help communities and institutions anticipate and absorb impacts from potential shocks. Timely information about an imminent hazard such as a cyclone, drought or a tsunami could help communities take informed decisions to mitigate impacts on their lives and livelihoods.

*“From day one of a humanitarian response, it is important to start working towards not only saving lives but also saving livelihoods, building back better and safer.”*

- **Acting both before and after disaster strikes**

From day one of a humanitarian response, it is important to start working towards not only saving lives but also saving livelihoods, building back better and safer. A linear, phased approach to relief, recovery and development have not managed to prevent recurrent emergencies in regions of chronic vulnerability or in making sustained improvements in protracted emergencies. An approach that focuses on increasing the resilience of communities and

households through a more integrated approach that simultaneously and coherently addresses short, medium and long-term needs can enhance the impact and cost-effectiveness of humanitarian and development assistance.

- **Avoiding secondary disasters**

A risk assessment can reveal how the effect of a disaster on people's assets and capacities could lead to secondary disasters (e.g. a cholera epidemic following a flood). This will help a more holistic preparedness planning and investment to avert potential humanitarian crisis.

- **Ensuring viability of the local economy**

An external disaster response inevitably entails a degree of distortion of the local economy, affecting the demand for labour, premises and some goods and services, while increasing the supply of money and certain commodities. Humanitarian action should strive to ensure that this disruption is localised and temporary and that the longer-term effect on the local economy is positive (or at least not negative). For example, providing households with imported food aid may ensure their consumption for a short period, but it can devastate markets and create more vulnerable people (e.g. farmers and vendors who depend on markets for their livelihoods). Providing cash assistance can ensure the continuation of markets, ensure that producers and sellers maintain incomes from markets, and can potentially increase the rate of recovery of the overall economy in an affected area.

- **Assessing environmental impact**

Not only do some disasters affect the natural environment, but so too can the humanitarian response itself, for example by leading to local deforestation for fuelwood. Humanitarian action must ensure that it does not have an adverse impact on local ecosystems, at the expense of the longer-term resilience of people who depend on them for their livelihoods. Humanitarian action is an opportunity to assist people to be better adapted to their changing environment and avoid the risks of maladaptation to a changing climate.

- **Bridging the gap between humanitarian action and sustainable development**

Resilience provides a conceptual link and an opportunity for both sectors to work together. For example, the integration of social safety nets to help people cope with shocks and severe food insecurity with tools to help them climb out of poverty.

Since shocks and stresses can drive people into positions of such poverty and marginalisation that they are unable to recover (the poorest of the poor), social safety nets are critical for stabilising their conditions and form the first step to resilience building.



### Resilience and conflict - example

Conflict can be a significant source of shock and stress. Lacking or weak social and political institutions often cause conflicts over natural resources. Such conflicts can occur when resource scarcity and inequality interacts, such as uneven rainfall between places, illegal land occupation or forced land use changes, or water shortages causing human insecurity. Women, men and their communities need to have access to assets to be self-reliant and to develop capacities to withstand, deal with, and recuperate from such shocks and stresses while providing sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation. At the same time, the political and social environment needs to be addressed, with stronger legislation, enforcement and accountability, ensuring the voices of the most vulnerable are heard. Peacebuilding skills are often a critical component to reducing conflict-driven disasters. Building these capacities, reducing drivers of risk and strengthening an enabling political and social environment increases the 'peace dividend' and reduces the likelihood and intensity of current and future conflicts.

The traditional natural resource governance system of the Tarka Valley in Niger has been deteriorating during the last decades resulting in conflict and hardship for pastoralist and crop farmers in the valley. Facilitated by CARE and local CSOs, the local community is now participating in decision making, increasing ownership and restoring sustainable practices, with positive outcomes in their adaptive capacity. CARE's attempts to ensure pastoralists' rights over access to natural resources are taken into account locally when developing land use management plans have been critical to this success.

### Resilience and sexual reproductive health and rights – example

An unplanned pregnancy is in itself a 'shock' and can determine a girl's life chances – often limiting her ability to complete school and threatening her economic security. CARE works in a number of fragile contexts to build more resilient health systems to ensure that women, girls and families can determine if, when, and how many children to have, in both times of crisis and periods of relative stability. CARE's Supporting Access to Family Planning and Post

### Sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and a life free from violence

- **Recognising the link between reproductive rights and resilience**

A woman's social, economic, and physical status is inextricably linked to her ability to exercise her reproductive rights; unwanted pregnancies can reduce opportunities for girls to access education, expose women to health risks, lead to a cycle of malnutrition across generations for women and girls, strain a family's resources and constrain women's ability to invest in themselves and achieve economic empowerment. Lack of reproductive rights has impact on resilience.

- **Helping individuals and communities deal with health issues**

Catastrophic health events and other health shocks including unplanned pregnancy are major reasons for pushing people back into poverty. The risk from such health shocks for household wellbeing is significant. Increasing resilience includes capacities to anticipate, prevent, and prepare for such events.

- **Addressing gender-based violence**

Gender-based violence is a driver of risk both at times of crisis and during periods of relative stability. Preventing, protecting and responding to gender-based violence in all its forms is a critical component of building resilience.

- **Strengthening basic health systems**

Disaster, conflict, and economic shocks, as well as sudden disease epidemics such as Ebola, can overwhelm and sometimes devastate health systems, leaving communities without access to needed services. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable as this disrupts their access to contraceptive supplies and care during pregnancy and childbirth. Health services are also essential for sustaining nutrition standards in times of crisis.

Abortion Care Initiative (SAFPAC) supports governments in five crisis-affected countries to deliver high-quality services, facilitates community dialogue around social and gender norms, and links service providers with service users to build trust and mutual responsibility for health. Because access to reproductive health services is often disrupted in times of crisis, the initiative has focused on provision of long-acting methods as part of a comprehensive mix of methods, so there is less need to frequent a health facility. Women's resilience is being built through their capacities to anticipate and absorb risks arising from pregnancy.

## Food and nutrition security and resilience to climate change

- **Understanding climate change as a universal driver and multiplier of risk**

Climate variability and change have a significant impact on the food and nutrition security of millions of people as established patterns of food production, consumption and distribution are disrupted. In a world where climate change is now unavoidable, climate risk must be factored into any and all programmes that seek to address food and nutrition security. Dealing with climate change risks will also require the building and strengthening of capacities to deal with escalating change and uncertainties continuously.

- **Promoting small-scale food production practices that are resilient to multiple risks**

In addition to weather and non-weather related natural disasters, violent conflict and market fluctuations are also common shocks that have an impact on food production and consumption. These different drivers of risk are often superimposed (happening at the same time and place) and influence each other. For example, conflict is a direct threat to civilian populations, but it also disrupts the markets on which these populations' livelihoods depend. Building resilience entails developing capacities to respond to the multiple risks that affect food and nutrition security, often by promoting innovation, and by building on locally relevant technologies and knowledge.

- **Ensuring government support for climate-smart practices**

Changes in agricultural and natural resource management practices in response to increasing climate risks need to take place on a scale and at a pace that individual agencies cannot achieve alone. Building productive, equitable and sustainable food production systems and increasing the resilience of small-scale producers to climate change, also require supportive government policies and services to accelerate adoption of appropriate practices, recognising the crucial role of women in food production, and natural resource management. This includes extension and advisory services, such as meteorological services that can provide early warning and locality-specific weather forecasts to help people prepare for and respond to risks and to make 'no-regrets' decisions.

- **Building resilience of poor and vulnerable urban consumers**

In an urbanising world, food and nutrition security is increasingly a challenge for people who are not major producers of food themselves. For these populations, a holistic analysis of risk, including climate risk, is an important entry point for strategies to increase their resilience to shocks and stresses that influence their food and nutrition security.

- **Ensuring market access**

Both in times of shock and during periods of stability, access to markets is important for both producers and consumers of food. Ensuring access to markets on equitable terms for marginalised and vulnerable populations requires an understanding of and engagement with private sector actors along the value chain.

- **Helping adapt and diversify diets**

Securing healthy nutrition is difficult when sufficient quantities and qualities of nutritious foods are not available or accessible, either due to short-term disruption or long-term trends. A resilience approach must also consider influencing traditional consumption patterns and preferences where food and nutrition security is at risk. The role of women as custodians of household food and nutrition is critical.

From a transformational perspective, influencing the dietary habits and food preferences of the higher income classes globally will be an essential component of achieving food and nutrition security for all nine billion people who will inhabit the planet by mid-century.

### Food and nutrition security and resilience to climate change - example

Small-scale food production is of vital importance to the economy of many of the world's poorest countries. A combination of agricultural, environmental, social, economic and political constraints, however, leads to a world in which seven out of 10 hungry people are either small-scale producers or agricultural labourers. In particular, climate change has severe impacts on small-scale farmers and local food systems. CARE's Pathways to Empowerment programme aims to increase the productivity and empowerment of women farmers in more equitable agricultural systems at scale in six developing countries in Asia and Africa, thereby creating resilient and sustainable livelihoods. The programme achieves this by nurturing collectives and community groups, promoting intensified and sustainable agriculture, developing more inclusive and efficient markets and services, engaging men and boys in the process of change, and by focusing learning and evidence building.

## Women's economic empowerment

- **Increasing access to financial services and savings**

The capacity to absorb shocks and adapt to changes is supported by the ability to manage money, through the availability of savings, loans and insurance products tailored to the needs and circumstances of women.

- **Increasing control and ownership of assets**

Women and other people who lack ownership and control of assets, such as land or livestock are unable to make decisions about them when faced with risk, making them more vulnerable to any negative consequences. The influencing of legislation, traditional land tenure and practices that facilitate women's ownership of assets can increase their resilience, particularly when it allows women to be involved in more economically productive parts of the agricultural value chain.

- **Supporting decision-making on resilient livelihoods options**

Achieving resilient livelihoods in the face of changing risks may entail options that lie beyond women's traditional roles or freedom to take decisions. This can constrain their ability to consider pursuing these opportunities and limiting their options for responding to risk. Strategies for empowering women to take such decisions, including working with men to overcome barriers and preconceptions, are a critical component of resilience building.

- **Promoting dialogue between private sector and government, and civil society**

Addressing the direct and indirect drivers of risk to women's empowerment emanating from different sectors, such as pollution, ecosystem degradation, natural resource depletion, or unsafe working conditions, requires engagement and dialogue. Strengthening relations between sectors is both needed to promote long-term change, and can also yield benefits in times of crisis when urgent responses are required.

- **Ensuring that economic empowerment does not undermine other components of resilience**

Economic empowerment generally leads to greater resilience. While economic activities and opportunities for women can increase their financial assets to cope with shocks, they may result in adverse effects that combine to reduce overall resilience. For example, activities that lead to degradation of local ecosystems can leave them more exposed to natural hazards and shocks; while introducing crops that are adapted to climate change but increase women's workloads can reduce their capacities in other ways.

## Women's economic empowerment and resilience - example

In many countries, traditional gender norms give women and men different access to, and control over, resources and assets. In households that depend on agricultural based livelihoods, men typically have responsibility for 'big' household assets such as buffalos, boats and land, and women have responsibility for 'small' assets such as chickens or kitchen gardens. In many parts of the world, land is patrilineal, passed from generation to generation through the male line. While the majority of women can access and use land, men still have a larger say in what land is used for, reducing women's options. As a result, it is often challenging for women to access resources such as credit and other inputs that could increase their incomes, resilience capacity, and ability to make longer-term investments. CARE supports women to own their own business and/or control their own income, to have more control over their lives and develop skills that are useful for their empowerment and resilience. Examples of interventions that build resilience include setting up of Village Savings and Loans Associations; (financial) skills training; introducing new technologies; and support in accessing credits, markets, and government and private sector services.

*"Accumulating savings through Village Savings and Loans Associations helped community members to have access to funds to meet immediate needs during the crisis."*











## 5. Summary and conclusions

Resilience is about managing risk; dealing with shocks, stresses and uncertainties that influence people's abilities to improve their livelihoods and realise their rights. For CARE, resilience is an approach: a framework for analysis, planning and assessment of the impact that is valid in all contexts. This approach goes far beyond 'business-as-usual' in our areas of programming, and has certain hallmark elements:

- It is based on **forward-looking analysis** that looks beyond the present context and considers future risks and uncertainties to inform decision-making and planning.
- It contemplates and enables **flexible responses**, because the risks faced by people change, sometimes suddenly and dramatically, at other times gradually.
- It encourages **innovation**, as new risks and knowledge emerge in a changing context.

These guidelines have been developed on the basis of a review of CARE's existing work on resilience, assessment of the frameworks of other organisations and networks (in some of which CARE has been actively engaged), and in consultation with practitioners within CARE from all sectors, from members and Country Offices. CARE Nederland and PECCN would like to extend their gratitude to all who have helped in this process, and in particular CIUK in supporting the consultation workshop and providing input along the way.

We look forward to receiving your suggestions and feedback on this document. As we apply these ideas into practice, we envision developing more practice-oriented guidelines and tools to supplement this document. We will finalise these guidelines and tools for increasing resilience by 2017.

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