

Resilience, integrated development and family planning: building long-term solutions

Roger-Mark De Souza

Director of Population, Environmental Security, and Resilience, Wilson Center, Washington, DC, USA.

Correspondence: Roger-Mark.DeSouza@wilsoncenter.org

Abstract: *For the many individuals and communities experiencing natural disasters and environmental degradation, building resilience means becoming more proficient at anticipating, preventing, recovering, and rebuilding following negative shocks and stresses. Development practitioners have been working to build this proficiency in vulnerable communities around the world for several decades. This article first examines the meaning of resilience as a component of responding to disasters and some of the key components of building resilience. It then summarises approaches to resilience developed by the Rockefeller and Packard Foundations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, USAID and DFID, which show how family planning services can contribute to resilience. Next, it gives some examples of how family planning has been integrated into some current environment and development programmes. Finally, it describes how these integrated programmes have succeeded in helping communities to diversify livelihoods, bolster community engagement and resilience, build new governance structures, and position women as agents of change. © 2014 Reproductive Health Matters*

Keywords: resilience, adaptability, transformation, environmental shocks and stresses, development, family planning services

The concept of resilience has been used in many fields, e.g. in psychology (individual resilience, particularly among children in times of trauma), engineering (structural resilience of bridges for example), security (i.e. ways to manage and plan for political and economic disruptions or outbreaks of conflict), and ecology (the fortitude of natural systems to rebound when disruptions inhibit their functioning).¹

Today, we are witnessing an expanding interest in the concept of resilience and its application from the international development and climate change communities.^{1–5} The Rockefeller Foundation, for example, is interested in systems-related ways of building resilience:

“Given that building resilience is an interdisciplinary, cross-initiative objective at the Foundation, we continue to push our thinking on how “resilience thinking” can be put into practice to improve people’s well-being. This often requires a systems perspective. Crises and shocks present at varied levels of scale and duration and often have inter-linking economic, environmental, political, and social dimensions. Resilience building as the Foun-

dation describes it – increasing the capacity of an individual, community or institution to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of acute crises and chronic stresses – is an activity that requires a multifaceted, interdisciplinary strategy and a systems view to grasp the interconnected and cross-sectoral nature of particularly “wicked” problems like chronic poverty and global warming.” (p.2)¹

In a similar vein, in a 2012 report on managing the risks of extreme events and disasters, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines resilience as:

“the ability of a system and its component parts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from the effects of a hazardous event in a timely and efficient manner.” (p.3)⁶

But what does resilience mean, in practical terms, and what can be done to cultivate it? This article: 1) examines the meaning of resilience as a component of responding to and overcoming disasters and stresses; 2) gives examples of how development programmes are supporting countries and communities to plan for disasters, adapt

to the consequences and transform their policies and programmes; 3) discusses some key resilience principles; 4) gives examples of how family planning has been integrated into environment and development programmes successfully in support of resilience; and 5) describes how these programmes have succeeded in diversifying livelihoods, bolstering community engagement and resilience, building new governance structures, and positioning women as agents of change.

What resilience means

Programmes based on the concept of resilience aim to address environmental shocks, e.g. from flooding, tornadoes and earthquakes, and support rebuilding work following such shocks. They require short- and longer-term inputs of finance, planning, materials and resources, and a wide range of expertise, and are likely to involve both local and national government and whole communities. The extent of exposure to risk and the extent of the vulnerability of affected populations and geographical areas are key determinants of the impact experienced when a disaster hits.⁶

The complexity of the transformation efforts required following a disaster is one of the reasons why programmatic plans for building resilience need to be evidence-based and specific to both the extent and type of risk and the populations likely to experience them. Post-disaster recovery and reconstruction provide an opportunity for reducing disaster risk and improving adaptive capacity. However, the IPCC says that an emphasis on rapidly rebuilding houses, reconstructing infrastructure, and rehabilitating livelihoods often leads to recovering in ways that recreate or even increase existing vulnerabilities, when in fact what they call transformative longer-term planning and policy changes for enhancing resilience and sustainable development are what is required.⁶

Donors and other organizations are increasingly using a resilience framework for funding humanitarian and development programmes. Indeed, as Misha Hussain has noted:

*“The term [resilience] has assumed such political and financial clout, whether you’re working in family planning or disaster management, it seems as if every funding proposal, every program, every result has to be seen to be contributing to resilience.”*⁷

Such donors include the UK Department for International Development (DFID), World Bank, United

Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, World Food Programme, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the former AusAID.³ This is not just a reflection of donor whims – increasingly resilience is being treated as a development approach that encourages long-term planning of all kinds.

For example, in a November 2011 report, DFID describes disaster resilience as “a new and vital component of humanitarian and development work”, in response to the fact that in 2010 alone, natural disasters affected more than 200 million people, killing nearly 270,000 and causing US \$110 billion in damages. Then 2011 saw the first famine of the 21st century in parts of the Horn of Africa and multiple earthquakes, tsunamis and other natural disasters across the world. Given a World Bank prediction that the frequency and intensity of disasters will continue to increase over the coming decades, DFID developed a UK humanitarian policy, entitled *Saving lives, preventing suffering and building resilience*, which:

*“...includes commitments to embed resilience-building in all DFID country programmes by 2015, integrate resilience into our work on climate change and conflict prevention, and improve the coherence of our development and humanitarian work.”*⁸

Key resilience principles

A number of key resilience principles have emerged to inform the building of resilience. These principles include focusing on social justice and equity; encouraging adaptive and continual learning; building effective governance mechanisms and institutions; making interventions specific to the local context; promoting local and national ownership; and fostering strategic and long-term engagement with key stakeholders, including community members and leaders.^{1,3,8–10}

In addition, there are three operating principles that, in my estimation, are strongly associated with building resilience but are not always observed in other approaches. The first is what I call the inter-relatedness of systems. This principle recognizes that there are different types of threats: “shocks” – which are sudden events, such as disease outbreaks, floods, landslides, droughts, or outbreaks of violence that affect the vulnerability of the system and its components, and “stresses” – which are longer-term

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1090247>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1090247>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)