



Summary of Existing Donor Activities Around Institutionalizing Resilience

A Working Document Prepared for:
"Sharing Donor Best Practices to Institutionalize Resilience"
Side-Event at IFPRI's 2020 Conference
12:30-14:00, May 15, 2014

Resilience is a new model of development that requires more flexible, adaptive mechanisms and thoughtful strategies. While there has been considerable rhetoric around the resilience agenda, one of the more noteworthy successes is simply that donors, in order to foster resilience programming, are embracing the concept of resilience and taking concrete efforts to change bureaucracies.¹ These institutional changes are very welcome, and should be expanded to ensure resilience does not become just another 'development fad' but actually transforms international assistance to be more effective.

This brief pulls from public documents and donor strategies to outline what steps donors have taken within their bureaucracies to institutionalize resilience. By examining practices across a wide breadth of donors, this brief hopes to illuminate best practices for institutionalizing resilience. Page 3 provides a timeline of donors' public commitments around institutionalizing and operationalizing resilience. Lastly, questions for further research and discussion are highlighted, including concerns about gaps between donor strategies and implementation in the field and the responsibilities of national governments to 'own' resilience.

Overarching Themes on Institutionalizing Resilience

Donor strategies and broader research highlighted several themes across donors. Best practices included:

- Joint assessments across sectors, agencies and even donors.
- Increased flexible funding and improved procurement processes.
- Commitments towards breaking the humanitarian-development divide.
- Effective communication from HQs/donor capitals to the field on resilience.
- Incentivizing personnel to embrace resilience in their work.

Concrete steps donors have taken to institutionalize Resilience

The chart on the following page highlights a variety of ways in which donors are institutionalizing resilience within their agencies. The list is not exhaustive, but attempts to capture specific actions donors have publicly taken or committed to that contribute to better resilience programs and activities. The OECD, while not a donor per se, has done extensive research on institutionalizing resilience and their overarching recommendations are included in the chart.

Current Donor Resilience Practices

	OECD	DFID	USAID	EU (DEVCO/ ECHO)	BMZ	Rockefeller
Embed resilience in program formulation		Yes	Yes		Yes ²	
Personnel or bureaucratic changes	Yes ³	Yes ⁴	Yes ⁵			
Budget line item for resilience in donor funding	No ⁶		No	Yes ⁷		
Promoting resilience in partner govts		Yes	Yes ⁸	Yes ⁹		Yes
Inception Phase		Yes				Yes
Multiyear Humanitarian Funding		Yes ¹⁰	Yes	Echo No		Yes ¹¹
Flexible Devpt' Funds for use in a crisis ¹²		Yes	Yes			
Partnerships		Yes	Yes ¹³			Yes
Coordinated Planning Cycles ¹⁴ including joint assessments	Yes	Yes ¹⁵	Yes			
Bridging Humanitarian & Dev Silos	Yes ¹⁶	Yes	Yes ¹⁷	Yes ¹⁸	Yes	Yes
Flexible Funding		Yes	Yes ¹⁹	Yes	Yes ²⁰	Yes
Improve monitoring/early warning		Yes	Yes ²¹	Yes		Yes

Definitions of Terms

Flexible Funding - Unprogrammed money set aside to be quickly accessed in response to unforeseen crises, with less focus on funding specific projects; a more general form of support for expenditure programs that encourage local and community-based programming and innovative solutions.

Crisis Modifier- The crisis modifier is a program component written into a cooperative agreement targeting drought-prone areas. USAID has integrated this option into development programs to reduce the processing and approval for emergency funding, even before a disaster strikes.

Partnerships - Partnerships allow government agencies to leverage the combined skills, assets, technologies and resources of the public, private and nonprofit sectors, and work together to develop co-designed, co-managed projects that share the risks and responsibilities of development programming.

Inception Phase – A first phase of programming that aims to develop a set of research questions to be answered during the course of a program, with specific indicators and methodologies for ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that outputs are properly measured throughout the life of a program. Inception phases also allow for time to refine program designs and strategies to ensure a program is appropriately addressing complex problem sets.

Timeline for Institutionalizing Resilience

While donors have made impressive strides over the last three years, publicly committing to specific actions and strategies is an important step to ensure that resilience is institutionalized and donors can be held accountable to those commitments. The following chart provides links to major donors' strategies as well as public timetables for implementation of strategies or other public commitments. For example, DFID's approach of including resilience planning in all country strategies by 2015 and the EU's detailed timetable are positive steps towards ensuring public accountability and goals for institutionalizing resilience.

Donor	Strategy	Public Timetable for Implementation
DFID	DFID has a wealth of strategy documents, including: DFID: Building resilience and improving our responses to humanitarian emergencies through innovation and better use of evidence	By 2015, DFID has committed to embedding resilience in all of its country programs.
USAID	Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis: USAID Policy and Program Guidance (Dec 2012)	USAID's Policy Framework 2011-2015 calls for applying core operational principles across the entire portfolio. USAID has also committed to decrease the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance in the Sahel over the recently released RISE program. ²²
EU	Commission Staff Working Document: Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020	Detailed Timetable with deadlines extending until 2020. Specifics include: Implementation priority 1: EU support to the development and implementation of national and regional resilience approaches, capacities and Partnerships Priority Intervention 2: Innovation, learning and advocacy Implementation priority 3: Methodologies and tools to support resilience.

Areas for further research

Institutionalizing resilience into the humanitarian and development community requires a multifaceted approach. Other areas of research and concrete action are required to ensure a deep level of institutionalization is achieved. Topics for further discussion include:

1. **National Government Ownership of Resilience.** A major challenge highlighted in research and in expert interviews is that successful resilience activities and institutionalization lie not with donors but with partner countries. If partner countries are not prioritizing resilience, there is little hope for building broad resilience. Future research and efforts should be focused on replicating good national government strategies on resilience and sharing these lessons learned with partner governments that may be struggling with embracing resilience.
2. **Procurement Mechanisms.** Multi-year funding, Crisis Modifiers, Inception Phases and ‘flexible funding’ are all procurement mechanisms that have been identified as key to supporting better resilience programming. Donors highlight the need for expanding these procurement mechanisms, but to see if donors are actually matching rhetoric to reality, tracking the number of proposals and funding that go towards these beneficial mechanisms would be useful for holding donors accountable.
3. **Aid Personnel.** Understanding how to incentivize a resilience mindset into humanitarian and development personnel is a key need for effective institutionalization. One of the larger challenges facing donors is the ‘culture’ of aid personnel that care deeply about their specific area of expertise. Breaking down these ‘silos of excellence’ and incentivizing personnel to work systematically across sectors requires concerted efforts by donors, engaging human resource personnel.

For more information or to share any comments, please contact Ann Vaughan, Director of Policy and Advocacy at Mercy Corps, at avaughan@dc.mercycorps.org.

¹ Simone Levin and Irina Mosel, [Supporting resilience in difficult places](#), ODI, April 2014.

² OECD. [Risk and Resilience: From Good Idea to Good Practice: A scoping study for the Experts Group on Risk and Resilience](#) December 2013. From page 39: “An example of embedding resilience in programme formulation mechanisms comes from the GIZ Capacity Works manual for sustainable development. This manual incorporates general programme cycle management tools that examine type, likelihood and impact of different trends and risks as part of an initial strategy development phase. This analysis is followed up with an annual report that analyses risks, ranking them and proposing countermeasures.”

³ OECD’s Brief [“How should donors communicate about risk and resilience.”](#) notes on page 4: “Help program personnel, especially field staff, understand the technical approach to resilience, including joint risk analysis.”

⁴ DFID has made a specific commitment to embed resilience in all DFID country programmes by 2015, with a timetable and measurable milestones.

⁵ USAID’s JPC’s are an example of a temporary bureaucratic change. Additionally, conversations are ongoing to support personnel reforms.

⁶ OECD’s [“How should donors communicate about risk and resilience.”](#) Notes on page 3: “Implementing resilience may mean a shift in the priorities of each donor, and in how different sector programmes are designed and linked together. It might also mean reconsidering which funding instruments are best suited for the particular country context, a shift towards joint planning, and increasing programme flexibility to deal with evolving contexts. It does not mean a new resilience ‘pillar’ or a raft of new resilience programmes and funding mechanisms.”

⁷ [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises](#). Brussels, 3.10.2012 COM(2012) 586 final. Page 2.

⁸ USAID's [Policy and Program Guidance on Resilience](#) has strong language on the need to work with host country partners on resilience. For example, see page 13.

⁹ [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises](#). Brussels, 3.10.2012 COM(2012) 586 final. For example, see page 9: "Reduced vulnerability to shocks is only possible if it is embedded within partner countries' development policies."

¹⁰ See DFID's ["Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID Approach Paper"](#) November, 2011.

¹¹ Rockefeller Foundation's ["Rebound: Building a More Resilient World."](#) January, 2013.

¹² For example, USAID's Crisis Modifier, DFID's Internal Risk Finance or other CERF-like mechanisms.

¹³ USAID's [Policy and Program Guidance on Resilience](#) includes references to PPPs as well as including emphasis on partnerships with local and national stakeholders, including the development (and embedding) of resilience into national preparedness strategies.

¹⁴ In traditional development programs, donors, policy bodies, etc., have different planning cycles, complicating the design of joint approaches to build resilience. OECD and other donors have noted joint planning across different silos or sectors contributes to better resilience planning.

¹⁵ For example, DFID is incorporating conflict and security and climate change analysis into multi-hazard risk profiles.

¹⁶ OECD's [What are the right incentives for donors to support resilience?](#) notes that the problem of humanitarian and development silos is particularly pronounced among many donors, with "development colleagues believing that risk and resilience should be a purely humanitarian concern."

¹⁷ USAID Resilience Agenda [THE RESILIENCE AGENDA: HELPING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES EMERGE](#) See page 1.

¹⁸ Throughout the EU resilience strategy, it calls for active collaboration and dialogue across humanitarian and development silos.

¹⁹ For example, USAID provided flexible funding to Mercy Corps in the RAIN project in Ethiopia. See [Lessons for Effective Resilience Programs: A Case Study of the RAIN program in Ethiopia](#).

²⁰ BMZ's TDA fund is structured to support more flexibility

²¹ USAID Resilience Agenda [THE RESILIENCE AGENDA: HELPING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES EMERGE](#) See page 1.

²² USAID's website. See: [RISE: Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced](#)