



PARTICIPATORY RESILIENCE REFLECTION AND LEARNING: AN EXPERIENCE FROM NEPAL

Resilience is playing an increasing role in development programming aimed at strengthening the capacity of vulnerable communities to better absorb, adapt, and transform in the face of multiple shocks and stressors. For Lutheran World Relief (LWR), processes of reflection and learning are key components of the project cycle, and are pivotal to ensure sustainable development impacts. These processes are also important mechanisms to engage multiple stakeholders in resilience building, and to ensure that development interventions respond to the changing needs and priorities of local communities.

This document presents a participatory approach to resilience reflection and learning that was piloted by LWR and its local partner organizations. The approach was tested as part of a mid-term reflection meeting of the Nepal-India Trans-boundary Flood Resilience (TBR) project, implemented by LWR and DanChurchAid (Box 1).

The objective of the pilot was to test a new process to deepen the integration of resilience concepts in the analysis of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data, strengthening the implementation of resilience initiatives in the field.

The Nepal experience provides development practitioners with a sample resilience reflection process for learning purposes. This document is not meant to provide guidelines for replicating the approach. Instead, it highlights the strengths and limitations found during field testing, which can serve as an input in the planning of resilience reflection sessions.

The lessons learned from the Nepal pilot were used by LWR to inform the design of an improved approach that can be used to overlay resilience impact and M&E data analysis. The document can be accessed at lwr.org/resilience.



Lutheran World Relief
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

Box 1. TBR Project Objectives

The goal of the TBR project is to contribute to improving the quality of life of communities in the Gandak/Narayani and Koshi river basins by strengthening their resilience to the impact of flooding. With an implementation period of one year and a half, the project focuses on two main objectives.

The first one seeks to strengthen the ability of targeted communities to cope with (i.e. prepare for and withstand) the effects of flooding. This will be achieved by establishing a trans-boundary community-based Early Warning System (EWS), by strengthening institutional capacities, safety nets and mitigation measures, and by fostering advocacy. The second objective seeks to increase the adaptive capacity of targeted communities, contributing to their ability to change and adapt to the impact of floods (and potentially, of other stressors) in the medium and long term. This will be achieved by strengthening the local access to diversified livelihood sources and financial services, among other activities that are detailed in this document.



OVERVIEW OF THE TBR PROJECT
APPROACH TO RESILIENCE

Key Resilience Questions: Nepal/India Trans-Boundary Flood Resilience Project*	
Resilience Where?	River-basin trans-boundary communities in the Gandak/ Narayani and Koshi river basins of Nepal and India.
Resilience to What?	Impacts of flooding on river basin communities during a monsoon
Resilience for Whom?	16 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in Nepal and 37 villages in India ¹ . Project outcomes are targeted at the community, the household, and the community organization levels.
Resilience for What?	Facilitate the achievement of a better quality of life through increased resilience to the impacts of flooding.
Resilience building with Whom?	Nepal: SAHAMATI working in Narayani/ Gandak river basin, Koshi Victim Society (KVS) in Koshi river basin, Lutheran World Federation through DanChurchAid. India: Grameen Development Services (GDS) in Gandak/ Narayani river basin, Integrated Development Foundation (IDF) in Koshi river basin. Yale University (Yale Himalaya Initiative, YHI).
How?	Improving the ability of river basin communities to prepare for, cope with and adapt to the impacts of flooding, by strengthening livelihood capitals and resilience attributes.

*Further information about the project can be found at lwr.org/asia/nepal

¹ A Village Development Committee (VDC) is the lower administrative and autonomous institution of the Nepali Government (under the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development). Each VDC is further divided into nine wards. In the TBR project, the average VDC includes nine small villages.

TBR’S MID-TERM REFLECTION MEETING

The pilot was conducted as part of the mid-term reflection meeting of the TBR project, which took place in Kathmandu, Nepal, from January 22nd to the 24th, 2016. The meeting was attended by TBR’s implementing partners, LWR staff from Nepal and India, and members of LWR’s Technical Support and Program Quality Unit.

The first day of the meeting consisted of an overview of the project’s progress provided by the four implementing partners in Nepal and India, and it was facilitated by LWR’s TBR Project Manager. In anticipation to the meeting, project partners were provided with an electronic template in order to ensure a consistent format for the presentations and facilitate cross-country analysis. The presentations focused on targets and progress data, and were based on M&E progress reports. The proposed template consisted of eight sections: (a) key achievements in the reporting period, (b) target vs. achievements table, (c) issues and challenges faced, (d) major concerns from communities, (e) way ahead/ future priorities, (f) synergies with other partners, (g) ideas for utilizing the results of the assessments conducted in the project, and (h) financial/budget review.

The information shared on the project’s progress was an important preamble for the next two days of the meeting, which focused on the **participatory resilience reflection and learning process** described in this document. The detailed meeting agenda is available in Annex 1, and the preparatory steps for the participatory reflection and learning process are summarized in Annex 2.

PARTICIPATORY RESILIENCE REFLECTION MEETING:
PROCESS, METHODS AND LESSONS LEARNED

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The participatory resilience reflection process piloted in Nepal consisted of six interrelated and complementary stages (Figure 1), implemented over the course of two days.

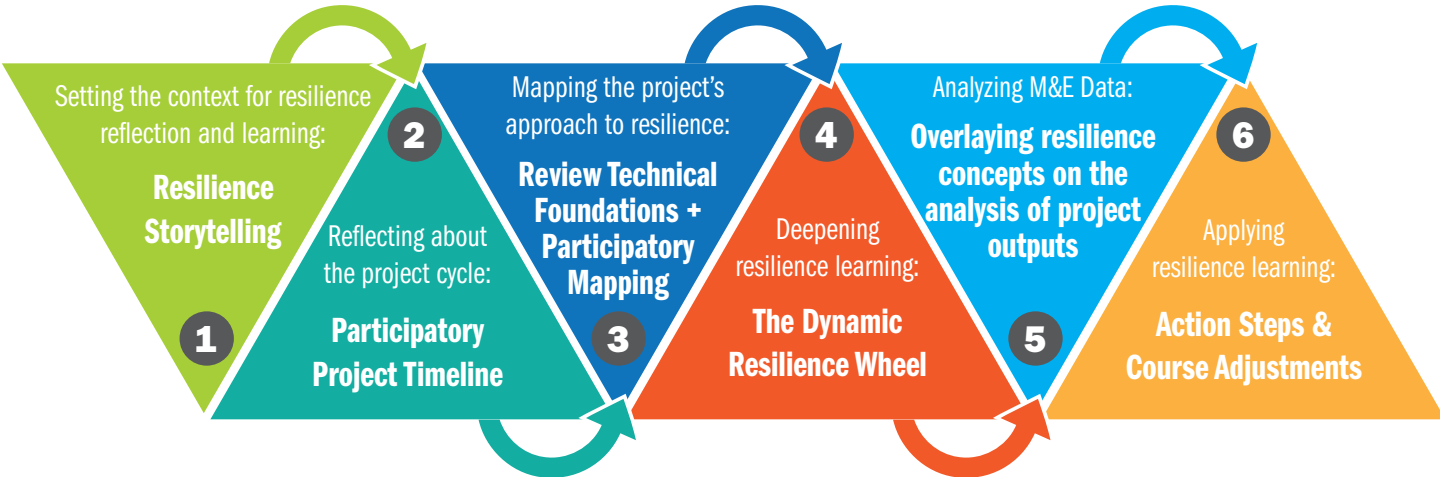


Figure 1. Stages of the Participatory Reflection and Learning Process: Nepal

METHODS AND LESSONS LEARNED

1. SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR REFLECTION AND LEARNING: RESILIENCE STORYTELLING



Pictures 1 and 2. Participants working on resilience storytelling

The first stage of the process established the basis for the resilience reflection and learning that would take place during the workshop. It focused on strengthening the resilience technical capacity of participants by inviting them to reflect on, document and share their personal experiences as resilience practitioners, based on the TBR project's implementation.

Purpose: Set the basis for the event's resilience discussion

The first stage of the process established the basis for the resilience reflection and learning that would take place during the workshop. It focused on strengthening the resilience technical capacity of participants by inviting them to reflect on, document and share their personal experiences as resilience practitioners, based on the TBR project's implementation.

Method: Participatory Storytelling

- The session's facilitator read a short story (1 page) that illustrated the role of resilience in development practice.
- Each participant received a hard copy of the story and was asked to identify (individually) the words from the story they associate with "resilience."
- Participants were organized in working groups, according to the organization that they represented. Each working group was asked to compile a list of 10 key resilience-related words from the story provided.
- A representative of each working group read the list in plenary. The lists were then collected by the facilitator and swapped between the different working groups.
- Each working group was asked to write a short story about the meaning of resilience in development practice. Participants were asked to follow 3 "rules:"

- (1) The story had to be based on their experience with the implementation of the TBR project in Nepal/India;
- (2) The story had to integrate the list of 10 key words identified by a different working group; and

- (3) The story had to be concise, maximum one page in length.

- A representative of each working group was asked to read their story in plenary.
- Participants were invited to share their reflections about the exercise.

The stories prepared by the working groups during this exercise are available in Annex 3.

Key Lessons Learned

- Storytelling was an effective method for "setting the stage" for the rest of the process. It was a useful "ice-breaking" activity, helping participants to relate the concept of resilience with concrete/practical experiences from the TBR project implementation, and to get comfortable with the use of technical terms in the context of the meeting.
- Participants found that storytelling is a method easy to replicate at the community level, and that could be useful for qualitative data reporting purposes.
- This activity took more time than was initially planned. In order to facilitate and expedite the working groups' activity, it would be useful to provide participants — in anticipation to the event — a handout with guidelines and short examples of 'storytelling,' and ensure that they are familiar with the method to be used during this exercise. It would also be useful to ask them to pre-select a specific project experience that illustrates resilience building in development practice to use it during the exercise.
- If storytelling will be used for the analysis of progress data, it would be important for the Program Manager to extract and document key qualitative information emerging from the exercise and link it back to the analysis in subsequent stages of the process.

2. REFLECTING ABOUT THE PROJECT CYCLE: PARTICIPATORY TIMELINE



Picture 3 and 4. Participants preparing the participatory timeline

Purpose: Identify the shocks/stressors that have influenced the project cycle, the main achievements, challenges and responses by implementing organizations, to contextualize the project's progress and help inform future steps

The second step of the process consisted of preparing a participatory overview of the project's timeline, from the stage of project design to the mid-term reflection meeting. The activity aimed at identifying the key factors that have influenced and shaped the project from the perspective of implementing organizations, so those factors could be used to contextualize the analysis of progress data, and as an input to inform the next steps.

The elaboration of the timeline focused on participants' reflections about (a) the shocks/stressors that had affected/influenced the project, (b) the main achievements, (c) the main challenges, and (d) the actions taken by implementing organizations in response to those challenges.

Method: Participatory Project Timeline

- The exercise was conducted on a poster placed on the meeting room's wall. It illustrated the four main stages of the project's cycle (design, planning, implementation and evaluation), as well as the months from the project's design to its scheduled completion. The poster also marked key project milestones (e.g. project's inception meeting, kick-off meeting, mid-term reflection meeting) to help situate participants in the timeline (details about the preparation of the timeline are available in Annex 2).
- Participants were asked to think about the project's cycle, from its design until the mid-term reflection meeting, and (individually) identify the following:

- 2-3 shocks/stressors that have affected the project's implementation (using pink post-its and black thunder shaped paper).
- 2-3 project achievements (using blue post-its).
- 2-3 project challenges (using yellow post-its).
- 2-3 responses implemented/changes made to address those challenges (using orange post-its).
- Participants were then asked to place the post-its with their ideas on the poster that was placed on the wall, locating the post-its under the appropriate month of the project timeline.
- Participants were then asked to review the ideas posted by their peers and place a red sticker on the "key idea" or the "most important take away" from the exercise.

The highest number of ideas identified corresponded to the shocks and stressors that have affected the project's implementation (pink post-its in Picture 5). Among them, participants identified the 2015 Nepal earthquake, political unrest and strikes, the Nepal/India border blockade, fuel scarcity and drought conditions.

The highest number of red stickers (marking 'key ideas/key take-aways') corresponded to the responses implemented by implementing organizations in response to the shocks/stressors and the challenges identified (e.g. strategies to cope with the effects of political unrest on the activities planned in the communities, strategies to cope with the effects of the fuel crisis on transportation, more regular check-in calls with project partners, postponing some activities).



Picture 5. TBR's Participatory Project Timeline

Key Lessons Learned

- By integrating the views of implementing organizations from Nepal and India, the participatory timeline provided an opportunity to map and visualize collectively the multiple shocks/stressors, achievements and challenges that had shaped the project's implementation. These factors provide insight into the broader context of implementation (from the perspective of the project's implementers), and can be used in the analysis of mid-term progress data.
- The activity increased participants' awareness about the complex context in which the project is taking place, and about the importance of adaptive management to respond to the impacts of shocks and stressors throughout the project cycle.

- While the identification of these challenges and adaptive responses was valuable, they were not effectively linked to subsequent stages of the reflection meeting to inform the way forward.

This evidenced that the methodology requires a stronger link between the shocks and stressors identified, the actions taken in response to them and their implications for the project. The analysis should also include the implications of the shocks/ stressors on intended project outcomes, and on beneficiaries' situations. The results of that analysis needs to be documented and displayed in the meeting room, so it can be referred to in subsequent stages of the process and used to inform the project's next steps.
- The large number of post-its placed on the poster made it difficult to link the ideas with specific project milestones and months, as well as to visualize clearly 'clusters' of similar ideas. The exercise requires a poster large enough to facilitate the visualization and analysis of results (or alternatively, if space doesn't allow that, fewer post-its per participant).

3. MAPPING THE PROJECT'S APPROACH TO RESILIENCE: RESILIENCE CAPACITIES, LIVELIHOOD CAPITALS, RESILIENCE ATTRIBUTES



Picture 6. Participants during the mapping exercise

Purpose: Solidifying technical foundations for resilience analysis

The third stage of the process consisted in reviewing the key technical concepts related to resilience in order to strengthen the analysis of the project's progress data from a resilience perspective. It involved the implementation of two complementary methods, explained below.

Both methods were designed to ensure that participants were familiar with the technical concepts, were able to provide practical examples of those concepts based on TBR project experience and were able to use the terms effectively in the analysis of progress data to describe resilience impact.

Method A: Review of Technical Resilience Concepts

- LWR's Technical Advisor for Resilience presented the working definitions of resilience, resilience capacities, livelihood capitals and resilience attributes (Figure 2).
- To deepen the understanding of these concepts and their application in development practice, participants were asked to provide practical examples based on their experience with the TBR project.

Method B: Participatory Resilience Mapping

In order to set the context for the analysis of progress data from a resilience lens, this activity consisted of mapping the project's approach to resilience, building on the technical concepts presented before.

Participants were asked to identify key factors related to five resilience questions: resilience where?; resilience to what?; resilience of whom?; resilience for what?; and resilience how? (listed below). Participants were organized in working groups (per implementing organization) and asked to answer the questions drawing on project data.

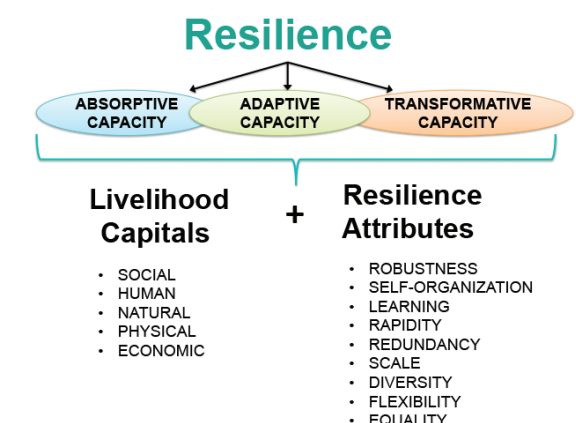


Figure 2. Overview of Resilience Concepts

After responding to each of the questions using the post-its provided by the facilitator, working group representatives placed their ideas on a "project map" located on the meeting room's wall (Picture 7). Details about the preparation of the "project map" are available in Annex 2.

Working groups were asked to identify the following:

RESILIENCE WHERE?

- 2-3 key stakeholders that operate in the context of implementation (based at the local, regional and/or national levels)
- 2-3 livelihood capitals available in the project area.
- 2-3 livelihood capitals that are lacking in the project area.
- 2-3 resilience attributes available in the project area.
- 2-3 resilience attributes that are lacking in the project area.

RESILIENCE TO WHAT?

- 2-3 shocks/stressors that affect the context of implementation.
- 2-3 impacts of those shocks/stressors on beneficiary communities.

RESILIENCE OF WHOM?

- The beneficiary communities/villages in the Gandak/ Narayani and Koshi river basins of Nepal and India.

RESILIENCE FOR WHAT?

- The project's goal.

RESILIENCE HOW?

- 2-3 key livelihood capitals that the project is addressing.
- 2-3 key resilience attributes that the project is addressing.

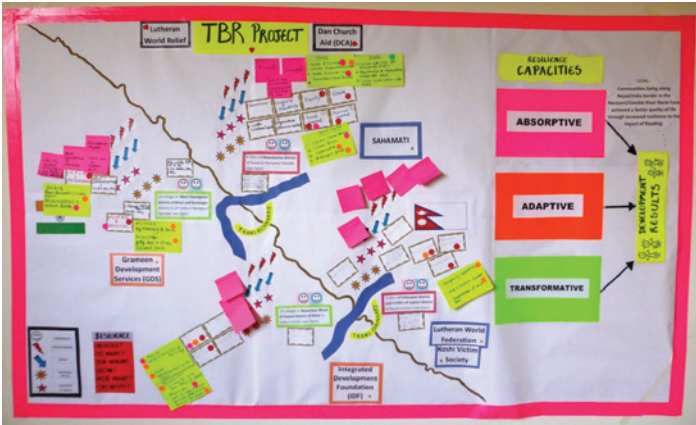
- The resilience capacities (absorptive, adaptive and/or transformative) that those livelihood capitals/attributes are helping to strengthen.

Key Lessons Learned

- The review of technical resilience concepts is useful to ensure that participants are “on the same page” in terms of the working definitions used in the project, and have a solid foundation to analyze progress data from a resilience lens.
- The review of technical terms took longer than initially expected, because participants had different levels of familiarity with the terms. This was due to staff turnover in the implementing organizations, and linked to that, inconsistent participation in the project’s meetings (few of the participants at the mid-term reflection meeting were present at both the inception and the kick-off meetings, where the project’s conceptual foundations were defined).
- A way to mitigate this is to put further emphasis on the meeting’s preparatory stage. This involves circulating resources, assigning preparatory “homework” and having online interactions/dialogue before the face-to-face event, to ensure that participants have the technical/ conceptual basis required for the analysis of progress data during the workshop.
- The mapping activity was useful to develop a holistic “snapshot” of TBR’s approach to resilience building in Nepal and India, building on technical/conceptual resilience foundations. It was a useful approach to link technical concepts with development practice.
- However, the activity lacked a solid link between the factors identified by participants and the project evidence/ progress data. Most of the ideas expressed during the exercise were anecdotal, as opposed to project data/ evidence of impact. This could be addressed as follows:

The questions “resilience where?, to what?, of whom? and for what?” refer to the characteristics of the context of implementation previous to the project’s implementation. Therefore, participant’s responses to these questions should come directly from the information included in the project proposal and in the project’s baseline/vulnerability assessment.

The question “resilience how?” refers to progress made towards resilience by the project, in other words, to measurable change towards resilience. Participants’ responses to those questions should be based on



Picture 7. TBR Project Resilience Map

evidence reflected in the mid-term progress report. They should indicate how is the project contributing to key livelihood capitals, resilience attributes and resilience capacities, and include indicator data (i.e. which livelihood capital/resilience attribute is being addressed, how, and what evidence supports that).

Examples:

- (a) *Resilience Attribute (from the project proposal):*

The project contributes to the resilience attribute of “rapidity” by coordinating meetings between the Barrage Control room, the District Emergency Operation Center and the Citizen Forums to reduce lag time in the transmission of early warning information.

Evidence of impact (from the mid-term progress report): 1-hour reduction in lag time over the baseline on upstream and downstream transmission of early warning to target communities.

Resilience Capacity: Absorptive capacity
- (b) *Livelihood Capital (from the project proposal):* The project contributes to “physical capital” by providing early warning tools and equipment to EWS Task Forces.

Evidence of impact (from the mid-term progress report): 4 EW Task Forces procured EW tools and equipment from the project.

Resilience Capacity: Absorptive capacity



Pictures 8 and 9. Participants working with the DReW

Purpose: Deepening resilience learning

The fourth stage of the process consisted of applying the Dynamic Resilience Wheel (DReW) as a tool to deepen resilience learning and reflection. The DReW provides a dynamic and holistic visualization of key components of resilience thinking. It fosters a new way of understanding and reflecting on the resilience approach of development projects.

The activity focused on using the DReW to solidify the participant’s understanding of technical resilience concepts, and of the way in which different components of resilience thinking interact together, paving the way for the in-depth analysis planned for subsequent stages of the process.

Method: Dynamic Resilience Wheel (DReW)

- LWR’s Technical Advisor for Resilience presented the DReW and explained how it can be used to address “key resilience questions” (i.e. resilience where?, to what?, for whom?, for what? and how?)
- Working collectively, and based on a “snapshot” of the wheel that was drawn on a flip chart, participants used the DReW to respond to the key resilience questions for the TBR project.
- In working groups, participants examined the interactions between the layers of the wheel by using one project output as an example. Each group was asked to identify which livelihood capitals, resilience attributes and resilience capacities are being addressed by the project through Output 1.1 (selected as an example to illustrate the methodology).
- Groups presented the results of their analysis in plenary.

Key Lessons Learned

- The DReW proved to be a useful tool to visualize key resilience components and their interactions, to deepen the participants’ understanding of technical terms and concepts, and to stimulate new thinking about the project’s resilience approach. The exercise helped to strengthen the technical capacity on resilience of project partners and their ability to apply technical terms to project practice.
- The stages leading up to the use of the wheel were key to facilitating the use of the tool by project participants. By the time the DReW was introduced, participants had applied the technical concepts and had developed the confidence to “play” with the wheel, and to experiment with different “combinations” of resilience components. This enriched the type of the reflections and knowledge exchange that took place during the exercise.
- Because the tool integrates numerous components and potential combinations between them, it could be perceived as being too complex or too conceptual. The experience in Nepal showed the importance of “grounding” the tool by linking it to specific project activities and progress data. This could be done by using the wheel to reflect about practical cases and project-based examples, and to reflect about the contribution of specific project outputs to resilience capacities.
- The time that was dedicated to this session was insufficient for an in-depth exploration of the resilience questions based on project data. A more in-depth methodology (e.g. involving numerous project outputs, as well as actual rather than intended outputs) would be required to integrate the project’s progress data more meaningfully.

5. ANALYZING M&E DATA FROM A RESILIENCE LENS



Pictures 10 and 11. Participants analyzing progress data

Purpose: Overlaying resilience and M&E data

The fifth stage of the process consisted of overlaying the resilience concepts on the analysis of TBR's project outputs/evidence of progress. It was aimed at strengthening the linkages between resilience thinking and the analysis of actual M&E data, based on the progress reports that were presented by project partners during Day 1 of the meeting.

Method: Resilience and M&E Template

LWR's Technical Advisor for M&E presented a sample template that could be used to analyze project outputs from a resilience perspective (Figure 3), and provided an example on how to fill it out. The exercise aimed at fostering reflection about the project's progress towards resilience by comparing the targeted results of the project (referred to as "assumptions")² with the actual impact achieved (referred to as "evidence"), based on the monitoring data collected thus far by project partners.

Project Outputs	Target Group		Livelihood Capital		Resilience Attribute		Resilience Capacity	
OUTPUT 1.1	A	E	A	E	A	E	A	E

Assumptions

Evidence

Figure 3. Sample Template to Overlay Resilience Concepts and M&E Data

Using output 1.1 as an example, and based on M&E data (on the progress report presented during the first day of the meeting), working groups were asked to fill out a table (based on Figure 3) identifying the following:

- TARGET GROUP COLUMN:**
 The intended target group of the output's implementation ("assumption")
 The actual target group of the output's implementation ("evidence")
 - LIVELIHOOD CAPITAL COLUMN:**
 The intended livelihood capital that the output sought to address ("assumption")
 The actual livelihood capital that the output has addressed ("evidence")
 - RESILIENCE ATTRIBUTE COLUMN:**
 The intended resilience attribute that the output sought to address ("assumption")
 The actual resilience attribute that the output has addressed ("evidence")
 - RESILIENCE CAPACITY COLUMN:**
 The intended resilience capacity that the output sought to address ("assumption")
 The actual resilience capacity that the output has addressed ("evidence")
- The four working groups presented their tables and posted them on the wall, which allowed participants to visualize, compare and discuss how each of the implementing partners was addressing livelihood capitals, attributes and capacities for output 1.1.

Key Lessons Learned

- The exercise was effective for communicating the potential value of the M&E data and the importance of using it for resilience analysis, and establishing a clear link between that analysis and the progress data presented during the first day of the reflection meeting.
- The exercise was also useful to inform LWR's learning process on the overlay of resilience and M&E data.
- However, the template used was not effective for identifying new information that could be used to inform course adjustment and learning. Filling out the template was too time consuming (participants only had time to work on output 1.1), and the data included in the table was not clearly linked to the mid-term progress report.

- The idea of including the "assumptions" column (Figure 3) was to test what project partners "thought/perceived," and then see if there was evidence to validate those perceptions. Participants made an educated guess as to what capital or attribute to assign to each output. The process was challenging because that mapping exercise had not been conducted during the project's planning stage.

Furthermore, if participants had been asked to adhere more tightly to the report data, new and possible more in-depth information could have been identified. The exercise demonstrated that a more rigorous approach to document and analyze M&E data from a resilience lens is required, from the initial stages of project cycle.



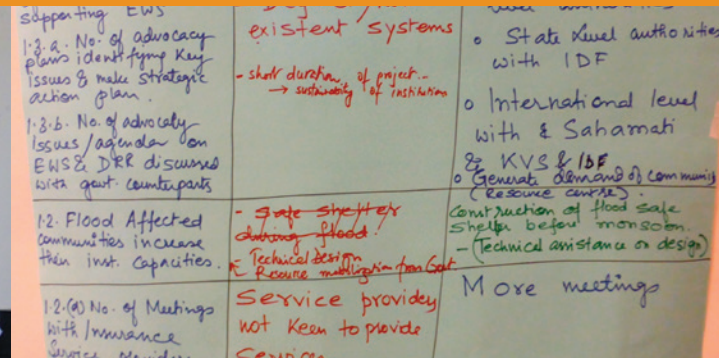
Picture 12. Participants presenting the results of the analysis

² From an M&E technical perspective, "assumptions" and "targeted" or intended results are distinct terms. However, for the illustrative purposes of this exercise, they are used interchangeably.

6. APPLYING RESILIENCE LEARNING: ACTION STEPS & COURSE ADJUSTMENTS



Picture 13. TBR Program Manager



Picture 14. Result of Working Group session

Purpose: Using the lessons learned to inform next steps

The sixth and last stage of the process consisted of applying the resilience lessons that emerged through the reflection meeting to inform the project's next steps and course adjustments. This session was focused on how to apply the mid-term learning to strengthen the remaining period of project implementation.

Method: Output, Challenges and Action Steps

- This session was led by the TBR Program Manager. Organized in working groups, participants were asked to identify (1) project outputs, (2) challenges faced for each of them, and (3) concrete action steps to overcome them.
- Working groups presented their findings in plenary, sharing strategies and identifying areas for collaboration.

Key Lessons Learned

- The discussions that took place during this stage facilitated the identification of areas of exchange/collaboration between Nepal and India project partners, as well as to ascertain steps needed to strengthen trans-boundary resilience in the project area.
- Participants discussed project monitoring and reporting aspects, agreeing on the importance of improving/clarifying reporting templates.
- This last stage could have been more clearly linked/better articulated with the resilience-focused discussions and lessons identified through the workshop. In particular, the definition of next steps was not clearly articulated with the lessons that emerged during the timeline exercise (stage 2: impact of shocks/stressors on the project cycle, challenges and responses), or with the analysis of progress considering resilience components (stages 3-5).



Picture 15. Project partners discussing next steps

FINAL REFLECTIONS

- Processes of reflection and learning are integral components of resilience initiatives. These processes can strengthen the project's monitoring strategy and inform the course adjustments needed to ensure resilience impact.
- The pilot conducted in Nepal provided important lessons on how to structure and implement participatory resilience reflection sessions, particularly on some of the methods that can be used to support them. It also demonstrated that some of the methods tested could be useful in different stages of the project cycle (e.g. as part of the project design and planning), not only as part of mid-term reflection meetings.
- The Dynamic Resilience Wheel (DRw) can be a valuable tool to support resilience reflection and learning processes. Accompanied by participatory methods, the wheel can help development practitioners to visualize and reinforce their understanding of technical concepts, and of the interactions that take place between different components of resilience building initiatives.
- The experience demonstrated the importance of ensuring an engaging, participatory methodology for presenting and discussing progress reports. Presentation formats for resilience initiatives could be focused on "resilience learning questions" combined with activity/indicators. This would allow practitioners to focus their mid-term discussion on the linkages between M&E data and resilience impact on priority "learning areas." Examples of resilience reflection questions include:
 - Are we addressing all the livelihood capitals/attributes? Do we need to?
 - Are there any gaps (e.g. evidence) that need to be addressed by the project? If yes, what actions/changes need to take place?
 - How can we use resilience learning to inform decision-making going forward in the project cycle?
- The challenges faced when trying to map the project's progress data from a resilience perspective (considering livelihood capitals and attributes), evidenced weaknesses in the project's initial design, as well as the importance of ensuring a tighter, more intentional link between the project's conceptual framework, activities and indicators.

- Qualitative data on resilience building (such as resilience storytelling) is key to capturing lessons learned and strengthening progress reports from a resilience perspective. Further efforts should be made to ensure that, in addition to technical capacity on resilience, field staff is also trained on the use of participatory methods.
- The process outlined in this document was implemented over the course of three days, during which the team tested different methods and activities to determine which could be most useful to overlay resilience and M&E data. This process, however, may be too time and resource intensive to replicate in regular resilience reflection meetings.

Building on the lessons that emerged from this experience, LWR has prepared a separate document that provides practitioners with a set of suggested guidelines to conduct resilience reflection meetings. The guidelines are presented in a modular format, allowing practitioners to identify the key steps and activities that are necessary for overlaying resilience and M&E, depending on the objectives, time and budget available for the meeting.

The suggested guidelines are available at lwr.org/resilience.

The pilot conducted in Nepal was a valuable learning experience that has helped to inform LWR's broader process of reflection and learning at the intersection of resilience and M&E. The lessons that emerged from the pilot will be used to inform the planning of future reflection meetings, as well as to integrate different participatory methods in the analysis of progress data. At the time of publication of this document, the TBR project team was actively incorporating these improvements into the final evaluation planning.

The lessons from the pilot will also help to refine the strategy and the methods used to integrate resilience in project planning and design in other developing regions. This approach will continue to be improved as the agency's experience with resilience implementation evolves.

Prepared by Angelica V. Ospina, Ph.D., with input from LWR's Program Quality and Technical Support Unit and International Program staff. 2016

ANNEX 1:

TBR REFLECTION WORKSHOP: NEPAL'S MEETING AGENDA

KATHMANDU, NEPAL. JANUARY 22ND – 24TH, 2016

Day 1 – Overview of Project Progress		
Time	Session	Key Speaker/Facilitator
9:00 - 9:15	Welcome and Objectives	Country Director
9:15 - 9:30	Introduction of participants	
Technical Sessions: Progress Presentation from Project Partners		
9:30 - 10:00	SAHAMATI	Project partners, based on presentation template circulated beforehand
10:00 - 10:30	GDS	
10:30 - 11:00	IDF	
11:00 -11:30	KVS/LWF	
12:00 - 12:30	Working group discussions to identify areas of synergy and collaboration	All
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch break	
Consultants’ presentation/ Inundation Mapping		
1:30 -2:00	Sharing and dissemination of results from Inundation mapping	Consultants
2:00 - 2:30	Working group discussion on incorporating the learning/ results from the Inundation mapping into project activities	All
Working Group Presentations		
2:30 - 3:00	Sharing of group work	Group presentation-Nepal
3:00 - 3:30	Tea/ Coffee Break	
3:30 - 4:00	Sharing of group work	Group presentation-India
4:00 - 4:30	Review of Day 1	Program Manager
4:30 - 4:45	Closing remarks by LWR Senior Director	LWR Senior Director, Asia and the Middle East

Day 2 – Participatory Resilience Reflection and Learning		
Time	Session	Key Speaker/Facilitator
9:00 - 9:30	Recap Day 1	Program Manager
Resilience Foundations		
9:30 - 10:00	Resilience Storytelling	Resilience Technical Advisor
10:00 - 11:00	Participatory Storytelling Exercise- Group Work	All
11:00 - 11:15	Break	
11:15 - 12:00	Participatory Project Timeline	All
12:00 - 1:00	Overview of Resilience Technical Concepts and Examples	Resilience Technical Advisor
1:00 - 2:00	Lunch break	
Applying concepts into Practice: Resilience in the TBR Project		
2:00 - 4:00	Resilience Mapping Exercise: resilience where, to what, for whom, for what, how?	Resilience Technical Advisor/All
4:00 - 4:15	Break	
Introducing a new tool for reflection and learning: DReW		
4:15 - 5:00	Bringing the concepts together: The Dynamic Resilience Wheel (DReW)	Resilience Technical Advisor
5:00 - 5:30	Wrap up Day 2	M&E Regional Manager

Day 3 – Participatory Resilience Reflection and Learning		
Time	Session	Key Speaker/Facilitator
9:00 - 9:30	Recap Day 2	M&E Regional Manager
9:30 - 10:00	DReW: Key Resilience Questions	Resilience Technical Advisor
10:00 - 10:30	Overlaying resilience concepts in the analysis of Project outputs: Template and Examples	M&E Technical Advisor
10:30 - 11:15	Group Work	All
11:15 - 11:30	Break	
11:30 - 1:00	Presentations and discussion	All
1:00 - 2:00	Lunch break	
Applying learning to next steps/moving forward		
2:00 - 4:00	Identification of course adjustments	Group Work
4:00 - 4:15	Break	
4:15 - 5:00	Agreement of Next Steps	Program Manager
5:00 - 5:30	Final reflections and wrap-up	All

ANNEX 2:

TBR REFLECTION AND LEARNING MEETING: PREPARATORY STEPS

- Discussion/agreement on the meeting’s agenda (including time allocation for each session, facilitator(s), and methods to be used).
- Distribution of templates to guide the presentations about project progress (Day 1 of the meeting).
- Preparation of support materials for the sessions of Day 2 and 3:

(a) Resilience Storytelling:

- A short story (max 1 page) about what resilience means in development practice (see Annex 3 for examples).
- Handout about storytelling (definition, guidelines, examples).

(b) Project Timeline:

- A roll of flip-chart paper (2/3 pages, poster-size).
- Draw a horizontal line marking each month since the project’s start date.
- Identify the different stages of the project cycle: design, planning, implementation and finalization.
- Using icons, drawings or figures, mark the following milestones on the timeline:
 - Project’s start and end date
 - Key meetings that have taken place (e.g. planning, kick off)
 - Mid-term reflection meeting
- Prepare cut-outs with a different color paper (e.g. black thunder-shapes) to mark the “shocks and stressors.”
- Different color papers and tape, or sticky notes for participants to post their ideas on the timeline.

(c) Resilience Project Map:

- Using flip chart paper, prepare a mural illustrating the different components of the resilience initiative.
- Draw the main characteristics of the physical setting where the project is being implemented (e.g. a river basin, a border between two countries, a mountain).
- Identify in the map the names of the organizations that are implementing the project.
- Using icons, drawings or figures, identify in each location of the project’s implementation: shocks and stressors, livelihood capitals, resilience attributes.
- Identify in the mural the 3 resilience capacities and the project’s goal.
- Have available different colors of paper and tape or sticky notes for participants to post their ideas on the timeline.

ANNEX 3:

TRANS-BOUNDARY RESILIENCE STORYTELLING

“Together We are Stronger”

By: Koshi Victims Society (Nepal)

“Jawahar Chaudhary is a 38-year-old man who lives in Odrha VDC of Saptari District. The main vulnerability of this area is frequent flooding that damages agricultural land, which is the principal livelihood of the community. Jawahar is the chairperson of the DMC, and a member of the cross-border citizen forum. He is also part of the early warning task force. He communicates between Nepal and India.

Jawahar participated in mock drills and simulation exercises with other DMC members. During the training, he learned how to prepare for flooding. He also saw that the cooperatives in his community were being strengthened, and because of that, he noticed that his neighbors were starting to diversify their livelihoods. The community had also received assistance to strengthen the cooperatives, and in return, the cooperatives helped the community members diversify their livelihoods.

Before 2015, frequent flooding in Jawahar’s community destroyed much of the agricultural land the community relied on. The Triyuga River near Jawahar’s house would flood and destroy embankments that were used to protect the agricultural land and to protect their houses. This would often destroy up to 30 bighar of community agricultural land that was dedicated to paddy crops. The floods occurred often during the harvest time. But in 2015, things changed.

Because of the training that Jawahar and his neighbors had received, they were ready for the flood. They had sirens that they used to warn the neighbors as soon the flood started to destroy the embankment. Jawahar and his neighbors heard the siren and came together to repair the embankment by using bamboo and sandbags. The embankment was saved, and so were 20 bigha of the community’s agricultural land. The community’s diversified livelihoods also helped them increase their economic resources, and allowed them more flexibility when recovering. Their efforts increased their security in face of the floods, and helped them to cope and recover.”

“From Vulnerability to Resilience: The Story of Shivpur Village”

By: Grameen Development Services (GDS) (India)

“Shivpur village is located in a remote corner of the Kushinagar District of Uttar Pradesh (India) in the Narayani/ Gandak River basin, approximately 15 kilometers from the Nepal–India border. The village is highly prone to flooding by the Gandak River during the monsoons.

The villagers are destined to cope with the shocks of flash floods, often multiple times during a single monsoon season. As a consequence, their vulnerability to stressors like loss of agricultural crops, lack of livelihood opportunities, poor quality infrastructural facilities, and poor hygiene and sanitation facilities, is very high. Grameen Development Services (GDS), decided to take up this village for the implementation of the Trans-Boundary Flood Resilience (TBR) Project. GDS’s interventions in Shivpur began in June 2015. As the first step, the project team, through a highly intensive process, mobilized and facilitated the villagers to form a Village Disaster Management Committee (VDMC).

Thereafter, a series of activities were undertaken to build technical and institutional capacities of the VDMC. Through the VDMC, the project is now helping the villagers to build technology intensive systems for flood early warning; and for building resilience in agriculture through the introduction of climate smart technologies such as (climatic) stress tolerant varieties of paddy, the key Kharif season crop, crop sowing technologies that help farmers reduce crop duration, and through diversifying the overall cropping strategy that emphasizes intensifying agriculture during the flood safe summer season. The package of agricultural technologies being propagated in the village is expected to assist the farmers making their cropping pattern more flexible, and therefore, more resilient.

The project has facilitated the villagers in establishing a community-based mechanism for receiving timely (early) warning on floods, wherein the early warning information, generated in Nepal, is accessed through a trans-boundary, community-to-community information channel.

The villagers are quite optimistic that the project would help them build a strong resilience to floods.”

“A Story of Change Towards Resilience in Susta Village”

By: SAHAMATI (Nepal)

“I first went to Susta in May 2014. When I came back in December 2015, I was amazed by the differences that I noticed since my last visit. Susta village is a small hamlet, surrounded by the Indian border on three sides, and the Narayani River on the other. There are 250 households, with a population of around 1,430 inhabitants. The community is heterogeneous in terms of caste and religion, and is highly vulnerable to long-term stressors such as rising temperature, floods and riverside erosion. Their impacts are manifested on recurrent flooding, increased snakebites and the encroachment of wild animals.

The community is trying to adjust to change by adopting various means such as developing networks like Citizen Forums, DMC and agricultural groups. They are basically reliant on sugarcane cultivation, whose price often fluctuates. According to field observation and interviews conducted with Laila Khatun, Community Leader, they have been diversifying with vegetable farming and bananas. The earnings from the sales are used to support coping strategies: they keep dry food (e.g. beaten rice), get and disseminate early warning information, and use that information for preparedness and coping. They have been taking early warning advice from the Devghat hydrometric station, as well as agro-technical support from agricultural technicians. Now, a year and a half after my first visit, communities are much better prepared to cope with the stressors that they face, and build a resilient future.”

“Information Sharing and Trust: A Lesson for Resilience”

By: Integrated Development Foundation (IDF) (India)

“In August 2014, heavy rains caused a landslide in the Sunkoshi River in Nepal, blocking the river flow and forming an artificial lake. This situation became a “shock” for vulnerable communities situated downstream in India (Bihar). At the time, the media reported that the Nepal Government would blow up the blockade, creating a severe flash flood for downstream communities. The DMC in the downstream community (Bihar, India) responded by contacting their counterparts in Nepal and the local Water Resources Department (WRD), who informed them that they were keeping a close watch on the developments. They also agreed to provide them with regular updates should there be any impending danger of flooding.

This experience left important lessons about resilience building in cross-border communities. By using diversified sources of information, community members were in a better position to make informed decisions, and to cope with the impact of unpredictable shocks such as flooding. The experience created a high level of trust among villagers in the Early Warning System (EWS) that had been set up at the community level, and in the information shared by the local Water Resources Department. It is anticipated that, if a similar situation arises in the future, the community would be in a better position to prepare and respond by relying on the information provided by system and avoiding hasty evacuation actions based on rumors.”



Lutheran World Relief
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

800.597.5972 | lwr.org