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Resilience in the face of food insecurity and food crises:
Bringing the experiences of women's organizations to the development and humanitarian table

Final Technical Report

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Abstract

The advocacy of some women's organizations and NGOs has been effective in drawing attention to the need for gender perspectives to inform all aspects of resilience-building and disaster risk reduction. However, gender is still poorly understood by mainstream actors and far from an integral element of resilience policy and practice. While some research has examined the gender dimensions of vulnerability to shocks and crises, the perspectives of women's organizations and their strategies to build resilience are virtually absent from the development sector's current thinking on food security and resilience.

This research initiative aimed to address this gap and contribute to the body of knowledge on resilience from a gender and women's rights perspective. To do so, Oxfam Canada conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 women's organizations across three continents and organized an expert Learning Forum on women's rights and resilience.

The main findings of the research are as follows:

- Women's organizations tend to define resilience in terms of capacity and agency, and use a different typology of risks than most resilience frameworks. They identify gender discrimination and women's lack of decision making power as risks to community food security, emphasize the critical importance of risks that originate at the household level, and focus on gender-specific risks that do not figure prominently in the resilience literature.

- Women's organizations view collective organizing as the foundation of resilience and an essential rampart against shocks. They tend to address gender inequality as a structural barrier to resilience rather than simply a compounding factor of vulnerability, and view their flexible, responsive, and holistic approach to programming as an effective way to build resilience that sets them apart from other development and humanitarian actors.

What emerged clearly from the research is that resilience is about more than technical fixes; ultimately it requires social transformation in the broadest sense. The vulnerabilities people experience are linked to structures of oppression and discrimination, and investments in resilience will not 'trickle down' to women if they do not address deep-rooted gender inequality and the disproportionate burden placed on women's shoulders. A transformative approach to building resilience implies moving beyond the status quo and tackling the systemic forms of discrimination that put women at risk in the first place.

Research problem

Many donors, civil society organizations, and research institutions such as IDRC have examined questions of food security and resilience, and lessons are well documented. While there has been some research on the gender dimensions of vulnerability to shocks and crises, the perspectives of women's organizations and their strategies to effectively link relief, rehabilitation and development are virtually absent from the development sector's current thinking on food security and resilience.[1] Even as aid organizations promote resilience building as a key strategy, gender discrimination continues to result in women being less well-served by emergency response efforts and development projects. As well, these efforts are much less effective than they might be because women's expertise is not capitalized upon,

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[1] See the Annotated Bibliography that Oxfam Canada produced.

and because gender discrimination is understood as a compounding factor of vulnerability, not a key driver of inequality, poverty and risk.

This research sought to address this gap and contribute to the body of knowledge on resilience from a gender and women's rights perspective. Initially, Oxfam Canada had intended to document and analyse how women's organizations link their development and humanitarian relief initiatives. However, Oxfam Canada was able to identify very few women's organizations working in the area of food security with significant humanitarian response experience and expertise. Therefore, the research ended up focusing on how women's organizations define resilience, identify risk, and implement resilience building strategies, rather than specifically exploring how they link relief, rehabilitation and development.

Objectives

The objectives of the research project were initially articulated as follows:

1. Honour and rigorously capture local practitioner knowledge on strategies to build resilience from a gender perspective in the context of food insecurity and food crisis.

2. Ensure practitioner knowledge and strategies on resilience from a gender perspective inform development policy and practice.

The first objective was met and, to some extent, surpassed.

Initially Oxfam Canada had planned to document the experience of two or three women's organizations from different regions, and to supplement their perspectives with a thorough literature review in order to produce a reflection paper. When Oxfam Canada reached out to the global Oxfam confederation's network of staff, partners and allies to identify appropriate organizations to interview, the response was overwhelming. Oxfam staff from across Africa, Asia and the Americas expressed great interest in the research project, and offered to assist Oxfam Canada in identifying and interviewing women's organizations. In the end, a total of 21 women's organizations, groups and networks were interviewed and their experiences were rigorously documented according to a set of guidelines established by Oxfam Canada. Having such a wide range of perspectives from across three continents help provide greater depth to the research, and helped make the final reflection paper a more robust and thorough piece of documentation and analysis of local practitioner knowledge.

However, one aspect of the first objective was not met. Oxfam Canada had hoped to document the experiences of women's organizations providing relief and recovery in emergency response settings. Despite significant efforts, Oxfam Canada was only able to identify and interview a couple of women's organizations with significant humanitarian response experience who could speak to their strategies for effectively linking relief, rehabilitation, and development. The lack of sufficient data made it impossible for Oxfam Canada to draw meaningful conclusions and make specific recommendations pertaining to the humanitarian sector in the final report.

The second objective was equally met, although the research dissemination strategy is still ongoing and the full impact on development policy and practice is yet to be assessed.

The Learning Forum Oxfam organized in September 2013 was very successful, bringing together 27 people – leaders of women's organizations, development and humanitarian practitioners, resilience experts and academics from Central America, Africa, North America and Europe. Having four representatives of women's organizations participate in the Forum was a great opportunity to have them share their perspectives and analyses firsthand with other participants. Furthermore, Oxfam Canada had already completed all of the semi-structured interviews with women's organizations by the

time the Learning Forum was held, and was therefore able to share the results with participants. The Learning Forum ended up being an opportunity for Oxfam Canada to receive feedback on its preliminary research findings, to gather additional analysis from participants through a very participatory process, and to share initial recommendation in terms of policy and practice.

From the outset Oxfam Canada had planned to share research findings with three Canadian networks in order to inform resilience policy and practice: the Canadian Food Security Policy Group (FSPG), the Canadian Coalition for Climate and Development (C4D) and the Policy Action Group on Emergency Response (PAGER). Thanks to interest generated during the Learning Forum, several other organizations and networks also contacted Oxfam Canada to learn more about the research findings. In total, Oxfam Canada was able to disseminate the research findings and recommendations in over a dozen events and meetings, reaching a wider range of practitioners and policy makers than initially expected. Furthermore, the research project generated a great deal of interest within the Oxfam confederation, and there is ongoing work to ensure that the key findings and recommendations inform the development of Oxfam's upcoming resilience policy and program guidelines.

Methodology

The research was designed to rigorously capture the knowledge and strategies used by women's organizations to build resilience in the context of food insecurity, food crises and emergencies. The methodology and activities used sought to facilitate dialogue and exchange between women's organizations, Oxfam partners and staff, and Canadian civil society organizations to critically reflect on food security initiatives and humanitarian response models and their potential to strengthen resilience from a gender perspective. Oxfam Canada used a participatory process to capture the experiences, perspectives and reflections of these organizations themselves in an attempt to develop knowledge and help translate the concept of resilience into practical strategies.

Research questions

As noted, the perspectives of women's organizations are conspicuously absent from the literature and policy discussions on how to build resilience. Based on its longstanding experience working in partnership with grassroots women's organizations in the Global South, Oxfam's assumption was that women's organizations may have distinct views on what it takes to build resilience, and therefore may have developed innovative strategies to effectively link long term development, disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation.

In light of this assumption, the following three questions guided the research process:

* How do women's organizations understand and approach the issue of resilience?
* What do women's organizations identify as the most critical risks that threaten the food security, livelihoods and overall well-being of women and their communities?
* How do women's organizations contribute to building resilience and what can be learned from their ways of working?

Phase 1: Literature review

The project began with an extensive review of the literature available on the intersection between women's rights and resilience in the context of food security and livelihoods. The purpose was to highlight some of the main trends and gaps in the literature, with a specific focus on identifying research and analysis carried out by and with grassroots women's organizations in the Global South. Oxfam produced an Annotated Bibliography which helped put the research findings in perspective and helped supplement the data gathered during the interviews with women's organizations in order to produce the final research report.

Phase 2: Semi-structured interviews

The center piece of the research process was a series of semi-structured interviews with leaders of women's organizations, groups and networks in the Global South.

Oxfam Canada went about identifying women's organizations who could provide perspectives on responding to shocks and stresses in the food system, and building resilience from a women's rights perspective. It was able to tap into the global Oxfam confederation's network of staff, partners and allies to identify appropriate organizations to interview. The priority was to identify women's organizations working in the area of food security, with some degree of experience responding to humanitarian crises and providing emergency response. Oxfam Canada also sought to identify women's organizations that were well-established and had experience running programs at the regional or national level, as opposed to exclusively local-level programs.

That being said, given its longstanding experience working with women's organizations in the Global South, Oxfam Canada was well aware that the underfunding of women's organizations is a significant barrier to their full involvement in food security and emergency response initiatives – both in terms of scale and scope. The food security sector continues to be largely dominated by male-run organizations, and to this day very few women's organizations receive funding to engage in 'emergency response' as defined by the international community. For these reasons, Oxfam Canada chose to be flexible in its approach to selecting organizations to interview. Only a handful of the organizations interviewed had significant humanitarian response experience, and several (especially in the Sahel) were small organizations with very limited resources and program scope.

In total, Oxfam Canada conducted interviews with 21 women's organizations and networks across ten countries: Peru, Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, South Africa, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Niger and Sri Lanka. All organizations interviewed were autonomous women-run organizations, with the exception of two women's commissions within larger rural networks[2]. Approximately half of the organizations work exclusively with rural women, while the others work in both rural and urban settings. A description of each of the 21 organizations interviewed is the final research report.

Oxfam Canada developed a detailed Interview Guide and Consent Form to be used when interviewing the leaders of these organizations), which was then translated into Spanish, French and Portuguese. All interviews were conducted by Oxfam staff, either in person or via Skype, and then coded to facilitate analysis, highlight cross-cutting themes, and identify trends.

As part of the research process, Oxfam Canada also completed a two week field visit to Niger and Burkina Faso to meet with women's organizations, humanitarian agencies and food security actors to get a range of perspectives on resilience in the Sahel region.

Phase 3: Learning Forum

Oxfam Canada held a Learning Forum on Women's Rights and Resilience in Ottawa on September 24-25, 2013 (see report). The Forum brought together women's organizations, development and humanitarian practitioners, resilience experts and academics from Central America, Africa, North America and Europe to:

• Discuss current approaches to resilience and analyze them from a women's rights perspective;
• Identify ways in which international agencies, NGOs and donors can support better resilience programming from a gender perspective; and

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[2] Secretaría de la Mujer de la Asociación de Comunidades para el Desarrollo de Chalatenango (El Salvador) and the Collège des femmes de la Plateforme Paysanne du Niger.

- Develop recommendations and identify influencing strategies to strengthen collaborations with women's organizations and integrate a gender perceptive into resilience building policy and practice.

In total, 27 people attended the Forum, including representatives from four women's organizations (three of which had been interviewed as part of the research process) and staff from four Oxfam affiliates. The complete list of participants can be found in the Learning Forum report.

The Forum was intended as a space where participants could both think critically about current knowledge and practice, as well as develop practical recommendations they could then integrate into their organizations' existing work. The Forum was also designed as an opportunity for Oxfam Canada to receive feedback on its preliminary research findings, and to gather additional analysis, lessons learned and recommendations from participants.

Limitations of research methodology

This research initiative was modest in scale and several methodological limitations must be noted. Firstly, the literature on resilience is extremely vast and only a small portion of it was reviewed for the purpose of this project. Furthermore, the data collection process was limited by the following factors:

- Oxfam Canada identified organizations to be interviewed amongst the Oxfam confederation's global network of partners and allies. While this network is indeed large, it by no means captures the full diversity of women's organizations across the Global South.
- Most organizations interviewed were from Latin America (10 organizations) and Africa (9 organizations, including 7 from the Sahel). Despite efforts to contact more women's organizations from Asia, time and resource constraints resulted in having only one interview with an Asian women's organization (from Sri Lanka). It should be noted however that many more women's organizations were interviewed than initially planned.
- The initial research methodology did not include interviews with mixed organizations working in the field of resilience and food security. In hindsight this was a shortcoming of the research design. Oxfam Canada ultimately did conduct a few such interviews, but the lack of sufficient comparative data limited its capacity to draw broader conclusions about the different or unique perspectives and ways of working of women's organizations.

Despite the methodological limitations of the research, Oxfam Canada was able to honor and rigorously capture the knowledge and experience of women's organizations from the Global South whose voices are too rarely heard within mainstream development and humanitarian circles.

Project activities

Below is a point by point overview of all the activities conducted during the course of the project:

- **April-May 2013:** Conducted in depth review of literature on the intersection between women's rights and resilience in the context of food security and livelihoods
- **May-June 2013:** Liaised with Oxfam staff and partners across three continents to identify appropriate women's organizations to interview
- **May 2013:** Designed data collection tools, including Interview Guide and Consent Form
- **June 2013:** Presented the research project to FSPG and C4D network members, and solicited feedback on the research design and recommendations of women's organizations to interview

- **June 8-22, 2013:** Carried out field visit in Burkina Faso and Niger to conduct interviews with women's organizations, in addition to representatives of humanitarian agencies and a range of food security actors
- **June-September 2013:** Carried out semi-structured interviews with 21 women's organizations
- **July-August 2013:** Designed objectives and methodology for the Learning Forum
- **August-September 2013:** Logistical preparations for Learning Forum
- **September 24-25, 2013:** Learning Forum on Women's Rights and Resilience held in Ottawa
- **September 2013:** Presented preliminary research findings to the DFATD Strategic Analysis and Planning Unit
- **October 8, 2013:** Presented preliminary research findings at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Social Sciences
- **October 15, 2013:** Presented preliminary research findings at FSPG's monthly meeting
- **October 16, 2013:** Organized an internal learning event for Oxfam Canada staff to share and discuss preliminary research findings, and implications for Oxfam Canada's programs and wider involvement in the Oxfam confederation's resilience policy and program work
- **October 29, 2013:** Presented preliminary research findings at the *Canadian Humanitarian Conference* held in Ottawa, during a panel on "New Paradigms, Old Challenges: Emerging Humanitarian Debates"
- **November 2013:** Drafted report from Learning Forum (in English and Spanish) and disseminated widely
- **November 2013:** Coded and analyzed transcripts from interviews with women's organizations
- **November 2013:** Produced annotated bibliography
- **January 22, 2014:** Presented research findings during at the *Policy Forum on Resilience and Climate Change* held in Ottawa
- **February 21, 2014:** Presented research findings at the *Learning Event on Integrating Care in Development Practice*, hosted by Action Aid in London, UK
- **March 17, 2014:** Presented research findings during a 1-hour webinar hosted by the Canadian Coalition for Climate and Development
- **May 22, 2014:** Presented research findings at an event organized for the staff at WUSC, Farm Radio International and the MATCH International Women's Fund
- **June 2014:** Did additional desk research to complete preliminary analysis of research findings
- **June-July, 2014:** Drafted final research report: *Resilience in the face of food insecurity: A reflection paper on the experiences of women's organizations*

Project outputs

The main outputs of the project are as follows:

- A Learning Forum on Women's Rights and Resilience hosted by Oxfam Canada in September 2013 in Ottawa, and attended by 27 participants from Europe, North America, Africa and Latin America.

- The report from the Learning Forum on Women's Rights and Resilience, which was produced in November 2013 and widely disseminated in English and Spanish.

- The final research report, entitled *Resilience in the face of food insecurity: A reflection paper on the experiences of women's organizations*. The report itself is finalized and is in the process of being translated into French and Spanish. It will be formally published and launched in September 2014 as part of Oxfam International's discussion paper series written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues. As such, the paper will be distributed very widely and be posted on Oxfam's Policy & Practice website.

- A case study on the research will be included in the forthcoming *BRIDGE Cutting Edge Pack on Gender and Food Security* (to be published by the Institute for Development Studies in late 2014).

- Oxfam Canada has plans to submit an article discussing the findings of the research to the *Gender and Development* for its forthcoming issue on resilience.

During the initial phase of the project, Oxfam Canada reached out to several Canadian coalitions (including FSPG, C4D, and PAGER) to provide them information about the research and ask them to recommend women's organizations that could be interviewed and experts that could be invited to the Learning Forum. This initial outreach, in addition to the Learning Forum itself, created a 'buzz' around the research project that far exceeded Oxfam Canada's initial expectations. Oxfam Canada was able to effectively seize this opportunity to widely disseminate preliminary findings and recommendations among practitioners and policy makers working in both the development and humanitarian spheres. To illustrate this point, Oxfam Canada was able to give eight presentations (including at three conferences, and one webinar) even before the research report was published.

A learning that Oxfam Canada drew from this experience is the importance of being nimble in order to seize influencing and dissemination opportunities as they arise. Regular communication with stakeholders (including Canadian policy makers and practitioners, as well as key groups within the Oxfam confederation) from the very outset of the project helped generate interest for the research. Instead of waiting to finalize the research report, Oxfam Canada produced a number of dissemination materials (email updates, power point presentations, webinars, and a brief on preliminary findings) to ensure it was able to capitalize on the interest the project generated.

Project outcomes

One of the main objectives of the project was to honour and rigorously capture the knowledge and experiences of women's organizations from the Global South whose voices are too rarely heard within mainstream development and humanitarian circles. This objective was certainly achieved. Oxfam Canada was able to interview and document the analyses and experiences of 21 women's organizations (significantly more than initially planned), many of which had never before been consulted by aid agencies working on resilience frameworks, disaster preparedness strategies, and humanitarian response and recovery initiatives. By widely disseminating the research findings, Oxfam Canada was able to draw attention to the unique analyses and perspectives of women's organizations among mainstream policy and practitioner circles working on resilience, and to encourage partnerships and collaborations.

The Learning Forum was a successful opportunity to make North-South and South-South linkages. Representatives from women's organizations from the Global South who attended the Forum stated that it had been an invaluable opportunity to exchange with resilience experts and representatives of international NGOs. Several specifically stated that the experience had been very validating, as it was one of the first times their experiences and analyses has been the subject of such consideration and fruitful dialogue. They also spoke of the value of being able to exchange with women's organizations from other countries, share experiences, and identify the commonalities between some of their strategies and struggles.

The project also provided Oxfam Canada a valuable opportunity to make linkages with humanitarian practitioners and engage in discussions on women's rights approaches to relief and recovery. For example, the *Canadian Humanitarian Conference* was an opportunity to network with humanitarian actors who, by and large, have little experience conducting gender analyses and working in partnership with women's organizations. Having access to humanitarian policy circles contributed to broadening

their perspectives on the gender dimensions of risk and resilience, and on practical strategies for working in partnership with local civil society actors, in particular grassroots women's organizations.

Finally, the research was conducted at a time when the global Oxfam confederation was developing its global policy and program frameworks on resilience. By engaging key staff to participate in the research process (from the interviews, to the Learning Forum, to the dissemination of research findings) Oxfam Canada was able to ensure that the key conclusions and recommendations would inform the global Oxfam policy process. The full impact remains to be seen, but there are clear indications that some of the main recommendations have already begun to inform Oxfam's global work on resilience.

In addition to documenting and increasing awareness about the experiences and ways of working of women's organizations among mainstream actors working on resilience, Oxfam Canada wanted to ensure that the research would be valuable to women's organizations themselves. Once the final report is published in September, Oxfam Canada will be deliberate about sharing it with the organizations that agreed to be interviewed, in addition to regional and global networks of women's organizations.

Overall assessment and recommendations

The project was very successful overall, and greatly exceeded Oxfam Canada's initial expectations in terms of both the scope of the research and the interest it would generate among policy makers and practitioners. The fact that Oxfam Canada was invited to share preliminary research findings and formulate recommendations very early on in the research process is certainly a sign that the research was responding to a gap in the body of knowledge on resilience from a gender perspective.

It proved to be very helpful to involve both the FSPG and C4D from the very start of the project. This gave Oxfam Canada a platform to discuss research findings, receive suggestions and feedback, and disseminate findings and recommendations. By speaking about the experiences of grassroots women's organizations in mainstream development and humanitarian circles, Oxfam Canada was able to draw attention to the specific issues women face and to the fact that gender inequality undermines many resilience-building initiatives. While many of the research findings and recommendations are not new to organizations working in the field of women's rights, framing them within broader policy debates on resilience was able to attract mainstream attention to critical gender equality issues that too often get overlooked by development and humanitarian actors.

Given the interest that the project generated – within the Oxfam confederation and Canadian policy and practitioner circles – Oxfam Canada invested much more staff time in the project than initially planned, both to expand the scope of the data collection and disseminate findings. This extra investment in time and resources is a testament to how relevant and useful Oxfam Canada considered the project to be.

Annex 1: Annotated bibliography

A wide range of literature is available on the intersection between women's rights and resilience in the context of food security and livelihoods. A significant portion of the articles broach the problematic approach taken by governments and NGOs in disaster risk reduction (DRR), relief response and livelihoods programming, which is based on assumptions about traditional gender roles and devalues women's potential. Such an approach treats gender issues as mere add-ons to programming rather than as essential components, and fails to take into consideration the key role played by existing women's groups in supporting and rebuilding their communities.

Other themes that are commonly brought up include : a) the ways through which women leaders of grassroots organizations use their operations to simultaneously sustain food security and livelihoods within their communities, and build their own leadership and management capacities, b) the importance of networking among women's grassroots organizations to help build solidarity and facilitate peer learning, and c) the commonly noted tendency of women's grassroots groups to expand their work from focusing on short-term disaster response to building sustainable livelihoods activities, demonstrating the groups' recognition of the need for a long-term approach in the emergency-development continuum.

While much of the literature presents case studies of approaches taken by women's grassroots organizations to sustain their households and communities, as noted by several articles, there is still a lack of extensive research into the perspectives of women on their own definition of resilience. In particular, the decision-making processes taken by women's groups to identify the most urgent needs for their communities and devise the best solutions to issues of poverty faced by their communities have not been investigated in a thorough manner.

1. From exclusion and victimization to women as leaders and change-makers

Asaki, Becca, and Shannon Hayes. "Leaders, Not Clients: Grassroots Women's Groups Transforming Social Protection." *Gender & Development* **19, no. 2 (2011): 241-253.**

Through the use of case studies that present strategies being led by grassroots women's community-based groups, this article argues that a new social protection framework needs to be created in the development field to recognise and build on grassroots women's own initiatives. This would recast women from 'beneficiaries' or 'victims' to active agents of change and formal partners with government and development agencies. It would additionally prioritize the informal mechanisms taken by women to mitigate risks that are rarely taken into serious consideration by policymakers in developing countries, despite their effectiveness. As with other reports, a formal relationship between governments and development agencies and grassroots women's groups is recommended to strengthen women's leadership and capacity to make effective changes in their communities.

Cupples, Julie. "Gender and Hurricane Mitch: Reconstructing Subjectivities after Disaster." *Disasters* **31, no. 2 (2007): 155-175.**

This article examines problems that beset gender and disaster literature, which are similar to issues faced by the Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) paradigms. Key among them is their tendency to homogenize and essentialize women as victims of their culture and surroundings, rather than as capable agents of their own. Examining the post-Hurricane Mitch context, the author argues that gendered risk analysis and programs carried out by aid agencies and NGOs in the relief and recovery phases reinforce this view, assuming women to be victims of emergencies and concentrating on their reproductive needs, rather than taking into consideration the untapped potential of women to contribute to relief efforts.

Horton, Lynn. "After the Earthquake: Gender Inequality and Transformation in Post-Disaster Haiti." *Gender & Development* **20, no. 2 (2012): 295-308.**

This article argues that issues of gender inequality that were perceived to have come up in post-earthquake Haiti in 2010 are reflections of enduring systematic gender discrimination in the country, which were merely magnified in the context of the disaster. In a similar vein to other articles, the author criticizes the gender frameworks that governments and NGOs have incorporated into their disaster relief responses, as they often conceptualize women in limited, essentialized terms as victims and/or mothers. The multitude of roles and capacities taken on by women is also shown to be neglected. Through interviews conducted with Haitian women's groups, it is revealed that the vast majority of foreign funding in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake was channelled to large, international NGOs, which led to the marginalization and under-utilization of the extensive culturally- and socially-embedded experience and expertise of smaller and locally-based Haitian women's organizations.

The Huairou Commission. "Women's Views from the Frontline." Summary Report, The Huairou Commission, 2012.

This report adds to the criticism of information gaps between national programs and grassroots women's organizations, in which women's groups are excluded from the design and implementation of emergency preparedness and response programs and policies. The authors bring up an additional problematic dimension in the exclusion of women, in which information- and power-holders in risk reduction define effectiveness differently from leaders of grassroots women's groups who face insecurity and vulnerability in their daily lives as members of affected communities. This lack of a shared perspective and definition marginalizes women and prevents women from claiming their own, meaningful contributions to the DRR.

The Huairou Commission. *What Communities Want: Putting Community Resilience Priorities on the Agenda for 2015.* **New York: The Huairou Commission, 2013.**

This research piece was conducted by the Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience. It builds from the voices of community leaders in order to shape the new policy frameworks on disaster risk reduction and sustainable development that will materialize in 2015. For the study, twelve organizations surveyed 603 community leaders living and working in poor, disaster-prone urban and rural communities in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. They were asked to identify elements they thought weakened their resilience. Three factors were identified as crucial to building community resilience: informed and organized collective action, a body of knowledge and practices on climate change reduction strategies particularly with regard to livelihoods, and partnerships with the government in order to increase participation and accountability. Based on the findings, recommendations are provided for policy-makers and organizations to effectively advance programs and measures that make their resilience-building strategies a priority. For instance, the authors recommend investing in community-led transfers to improve resilience practices, to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships, to incentivize community organizing and technical knowledge for building resilience, and to acknowledge grassroots women's organizations as key stakeholders in planning, implementing and monitoring resilience programs.

2. From "add-on" to gender analysis and participatory approaches in disaster response

Delaney, Patricia L., and Elizabeth Shrader. "Gender and Post-Disaster Reconstruction: The Case of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras and Nicaragua." Unpublished report, The World Bank, 2000.

This World Bank report further adds onto existing criticism in the disaster literature concerning the failure of governments and development agencies to take into consideration gender-differentiated

impacts of disasters. It raises the concept of the "tyranny of the urgent" to explain the neglect of gender issues, in which recovery and relief projects are implemented in a top-down manner due to the perceived urgency of the need to immediately respond to impacts of the disaster, while gender concerns and participatory approaches are seen as secondary issues and are thus neglected.

Enarson, Elaine, Alice Fothergill, and Lori Peek. "Gender and Disaster: Foundations and Directions." In *Handbook of Disaster Research***, edited by Havidan Rodriguez, Enrico L. Quarantelli, and Russell Dynes, 130-146. New York: Springer, 2007.**

The authors of this article argue that thus far, no theoretical lens has been formulated to frame disaster research in the context of gender. They recommend that a feminist political ecology perspective be incorporated into disaster research, which acknowledges and analyzes gender relations in specific environmental contexts with an emphasis on women's practical environmental knowledge. Such a perspective additionally examines impacts of climate change based on recognition of the fact that disaster risk is socially distributed in ways that reflect existing social divisions within a society, with women being particularly vulnerable due to socially constructed and limiting roles placed on them.

Similar to other scholars, the authors highlight how women are too often portrayed as powerless victims who need rescuing in a disaster in current disaster programs and scholarship, which disregards women's capacity, strength and resilience. Women may possess first-hand knowledge about environmental and population pressures, local political dynamics, and leadership structures in high-risk communities, which can be a valuable component of disaster response and recovery. Such gender bias and stereotypes have influenced every stage of post-disaster initiatives from the design and implementation to evaluation, relegating women to traditionally feminine roles. The authors cite as an example the results of a survey on women's roles in disaster management conducted in the Caribbean, which demonstrated how women were actively involved in the implementation of relief activities, but were severely underrepresented in the decision-making and planning procedures concerning emergency response and relief initiatives.

Gender and Disasters Network. "The Disaster Risk Reduction Process: A Gender Perspective. A Contribution to the 2009 ISDR Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction." Unpublished paper, UNISDR, 2009.

The Gender and Disasters Network (GDN) analyzes the gender perspective in DRR. Similar to many other literature pieces in the field, GDN criticizes NGOs' inconsistent incorporation of gender-based issues at the program or operational level, and the perceived view of gender as an add-on aspect, rather than an integral component in development and DRR. Men's roles and responsibilities in DRR and disaster management are highly recognized, whereas women's skills, capabilities and contributions to DRR remain invisible and women continue to be highlighted as vulnerable victims rather than as capable and equal actors.

Holmes, Rebecca, Nicola Jones, and Hannah Marsden. "Gender Vulnerabilities, Food Price Shocks and Social Protection Responses." Background Note, Overseas Development Institute, 2009.

This ODI background note argues that responses to food price crises at the international and national levels have not taken gender dynamics sufficiently into consideration. Similar to other arguments, the authors criticize the marginalization of gender considerations as 'add-ons' that are merely supplemented into broader disaster- and food-related policies and programs. Promoting women's voices and participation is strongly encouraged, particularly in light of the fact that women bear a disproportionate share of the burden of food price crises, both as producers and consumers.

Gender Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction. (2009). *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines*. **Geneva: UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN, 2009.**

This report published by the United Nations discusses existing guidelines and frameworks at the global and regional levels that attempt to incorporate gender in DRR. It claims that there has recently been a critical shift in DRR from a women-focused approach to a gender-focused approach, which is based on the premise that the roles and relationships of women and men in DRR should be analyzed within the overall gendered socioeconomic and cultural context of a given region. In addition to this shift, the strategic focus of disaster management is argued to have changed from a reactive disaster response to long-term proactive disaster risk and vulnerability reduction, where gender considerations and DRR are now recognized as necessary to achieving sustainable development. The advocacy of international and local NGOs and women's organizations, including the Gender Disaster Network (GDN) and GROOTS International, are stated to have been effective in increasing recognition of the need for gender perspectives in DRR at all levels. A challenge still exists in the full integration of gender-sensitive approaches in DRR, as gender is often poorly understood and seen as an add-on in DRR programs and policies by governmental authorities and NGOs.

While providing a more positive analysis of the current state of the DRR framework in comparison to other works, the report recognizes the challenge of altering the perception held by many parties that gender is an add-on component of DRR rather than an integral element of all policies and programs.

3. Transforming gender relations through disaster response

Clot, Nicole, and Jane Carter. "Disaster Risk Reduction: A Gender and Livelihood Perspective." *InfoResources Focus* **2/09 (2009): 1-16.**

This report examines livelihoods and gender issues in the context of disaster risk reduction (DRR), and stresses the need to develop gender-sensitive DDR policies and programs in which the capacity and needs of both sexes is acknowledged and integrated into all relief efforts. As well, the paper highlights the fact that disasters provide an opportunity to renegotiate traditional gender roles and overcome the vulnerabilities that women traditionally face, as was the case in post-Hurricane Mitch in Central America where the large proportion of male deaths and migration by men to search for work led to a significant increase in female-headed households. A breakdown in traditional gender roles ensued as a result: during the recovery period, women performed a triple role – of reproduction, community organization, and recovery work – that entailed traditionally male tasks such as clearing roads, and productive work in the informal sector through which they assumed the traditionally male role of providing for the family.

Salkeld, Annette. "The Value of Gender Analyses in Humanitarian Livelihoods Programming: A Case Study from Nias Island, Indonesia." *Gender & Development* **16, no. 1 (2008): 117-131.**

This paper discusses the importance of gender analysis in livelihoods initiatives by examining Oxfam's Aceh-Nias livelihoods programme in Indonesia. It notes that the program reinforced traditional gender norms by failing to explore alternative livelihood strategies with women that might lead to higher incomes, and instead encouraging the women's groups to invest their loans in low-income activities. This appears to reflect a trend in livelihoods programs in which the general assumption that women would devote their time and energy into domestic and low-income activities influences the types of projects implemented by external parties, leading to a reinforcement of gendered economic roles from which women fail to gain significant benefit. This indicates that, as mentioned in other literatures, governments and agencies in their livelihoods resilience programs still largely assume that the economic roles of women are primarily focused on low-income, subsistence activities.

4. Importance of women's solidarity and alliances for resilient communities

FAO, WOCAN, and The Huairou Commission. "Supporting Women Producers to Respond to the Challenges of Food Insecurity." Paper presented at the meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York, March 1-12, 2010.

Through interviews conducted with grassroots women's organizations, this report describes the obstacles that hinder women's groups from obtaining institutional support and resources, as well as the variety of coping mechanisms that they have developed in response to crises of food insecurity. Such approaches include collective farming, seed banks, and alternative income generation and ways of accessing markets. The importance of building solidarity and allying with other women's groups is demonstrated – the interview subjects describe their positive experiences with organizing and building solidarity groups, as well as their wish to communicate with and establish stronger relationships with other women's groups both in their region and abroad to learn what tools and strategies other women are using to combat food insecurity. The report recommends NGOs and governments to facilitate the collaboration and networks of women's groups to further advance their work.

Goldenberg, Dahlia. "Grassroots Women Organising for Resilient Communities around the World." *IDS Bulletin* 42, no. 5 (2011): 74-80.

This article presents the results of focus group discussions held with a number of women-led organizations around the world, in which women leaders reflect on the effects of the recent financial, food and climate crises on their communities and the coping mechanisms they have used in response. Their coping mechanisms and long-term self-help development work indicate that women have been devising their own solutions to issues of poverty that are not based on solutions brought by outsider, professional development institutions; they employ grassroots processes in place for decades to improve resilience to various shocks in their communities. Such activities include the institution of food banks in rural communities in Kenya and Ghana as a preventative measure for months of famine, in which surplus yields are placed into storage facilities for later use by contributing families and allocated to the neediest families in emergency situations. Many of the grassroots women's groups interviewed in this study pointed out peer learning opportunities to be a priority for their organizations, which suggests that governments and NGOs need to assist such groups in collaborating with one another to build grassroots alliances and networks.

GROOTS International and The Huairou Commission. "En-gendering HFA – Grassroots Women's Strategies for Implementing the HFA." Report, GROOTS International and The Huairou Commission, 2009.

Through a number of case studies looking at risk analysis exercises conducted by women's grassroots groups working on DRR initiatives, risk mapping is reported to be a key tool through which women and their communities have identified the major vulnerabilities and capacities in their communities. Priorities that have been identified range from improving emergency response and early warning systems to improving livelihoods and basic services, especially health and sanitation services. In a similar vein to other reports in the field, partnerships among grassroots women's groups are highlighted as key tools to sustain networks and solidarity, and transfer knowledge and good practices. National and local governments are encouraged to facilitate active involvement of women's groups in decision-making processes that affect their communities.

5. From short-term disaster response to sustainable livelihoods: Evolution of women's grassroots work

Community Disaster Community Resilience Fund (CDRF). "Indian Grassroots Women Build Disaster Resilience through Community-Led Planning, Mapping, Institution Building and Risk Reduction Initiatives." Summary Report from the Workshop on the CDRF Pilot, Bhubaneswar, India, June 3-5, 2009.

This note highlights the Community Disaster Community Resilience Fund (CDRF), an Indian initiative that directly funds communities to address their own resilience priorities through community-based, women-led initiatives. The CDRF encourages grassroots women's groups to shift from short-term disaster preparedness and recovery practices towards building long-term resilience, through the creation of community institutions for management of funds for resilience and DRR. Examples of such community-designed initiatives include projects to improve preparedness and emergency response measures of multi-hazard prone communities, increase water and food security in drought- and flood-prone areas, and strengthen women's livelihoods in vulnerable regions.

Other literature pieces that examine the expansion of women's groups' activities from short-term relief projects to sustainable resilience-building projects indicate that the CDRF's shift in priorities for grassroots groups is reflective of a growing trend in the disaster field, in which the need to build upon temporary disaster preparedness and recovery activities to build long-term livelihoods and food security resilience to disasters is recognized to be essential.

GROOTS International. "Recipes for Resilience: Latin American Grassroots Women's Practices for Building Resilient Communities." Report from The Role and Power of Grassroots and Indigenous Women's Groups in Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop, Antigua, Guatemala, March 12-14, 2008.

Similar to Immink's study of women's groups in Peru who used their community food security projects as entry points to further their advocacy and development initiatives, this workshop report by GROOTS International discusses how women's groups in Latin America have scaled up their community development efforts to build sustainable livelihoods, after initially forming their groups to work on emergency response and relief projects. Such work by women's groups demonstrates the capacity of grassroots groups to scale up their efforts and organize large-scale community initiatives in response to long-term vulnerabilities, rather than remaining informal or temporary groups, as governments and development agencies often perceive them to be. The report also broaches the importance of regional networking platforms among women's groups to sustain linkages and peer learning.

Gupta, Suranjana and Irene S. Leung. "Turning Good Practice into Institutional Mechanisms: Investing in Grassroots Women's Leadership to Scale Up Local Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action - An In-Depth Study for the HFA Mid-Term Review." Report, The Huairou Commission and GROOTS International, 2013.

By examining grassroots activities carried out by women to implement the HFA at the community-level, the authors make two key points. First, the activities of grassroots women's groups in relief and recovery processes are often invisible and excluded at the international level despite their track records of success and praise for their work in other spheres. Second, grassroots women are shown to have long-term agendas even if their entry points into development or relief assistance are short-term projects such as recovery and reconstruction programs, and they are committed to empowering themselves in order to reduce their vulnerabilities to everyday risks as well as large-scale disasters. The report additionally provides a definition of resilience from the grassroots perspective, which is seen as the capacity (including skills, knowledge, resources, practices and networks) of a community to organize itself to reduce the impact of disasters by protecting lives, livelihoods, homes, assets, basic services, and

infrastructure. Grassroots women's groups' transition from carrying out short-term projects to sustainable activities to maintain community resilience is a trend that has been noted in other reports, suggesting that it is a process that should be supported and promoted by governments and donors.

Immink, Maarten D.C.. People's Community Kitchens in Peru: Women's Activism Pro Urban Food Security. *Ecology of Food and Nutrition* **40, no. 6 (2001): 699-705.**

This study examines food security activism and programs initiated by women in urban Peru. In response to economic shocks of rising food prices and unemployment, women organised and established kitchen groups to prepare daily meals for the group's members and their families, often encouraged by parish priests and community workers. In addition to allowing the participating women to acquire leadership, management, and organizational skills, the projects that the women led in designing and implementing created a further positive by-product in that they further motivated the women to extend their activism to other crucial non-food issues. This indicates that once given the tools to collectively mobilize around a given issue affecting their community, women's groups are highly capable of developing greater awareness of other social and political issues and motivation to pursue other advocacy and development activities. Encouragement and mobilization by external parties is crucial in motivating women to branch out and pursue more extensive grassroots projects.

6. Key approaches and lessons from grassroots women's organizations in mitigating disasters and promoting development

Aguilar, Lorena. *Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change***. Gland, Switzerland: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2009.**

This training manual developed by the IUCN and UNDP includes a number of case studies on participatory approaches that grassroots women's groups have made use of to address effects of climate change in their communities. Throughout all case studies, women are seen acting as active and collaborative agents of change to mobilize community members and devise creative solutions to agricultural issues and food insecurity. Such a participatory approach has allowed community members to take ownership over the design and implementation of initiatives, ensuring that they are always context-appropriate and feasible for the community. The cases suggest that the participatory approach is one that is commonly used by women's groups at the grassroots level and has been proven to be effective, and one that should be supported and promoted by governments and development agencies.

Gawaya, Rose. "Investing in Women Farmers to Eliminate Food Insecurity in Southern Africa: Policy-Related Research from Mozambique." *Gender and Development* **16, no. 1 (2008): 147-159.**

This paper draws on a study on agriculture in Mozambique, to investigate the food shortage situation facing women smallholder farmers and the extent to which policymakers are responding to the issue. The author primarily gathers information through interviews conducted with grassroots farmers' organizations, NGOs, as well as representatives of the national government. The report describes how in response to the failure of national and regional governments to adequately represent their interests, women have formed women-led economic groups throughout the region, which have been a channel to access credit, equipment, and land.

In analyzing the economic status of women, the paper notes that women's role in the markets is mostly at the micro-level, as compared to men who partake in more profitable ventures. There is a need for governments and NGOs to promote macro-level involvement for women, by helping to strengthen the skills, confidence, and knowledge of women's groups, so that they are able to further their interests by engaging in policy processes and develop the capacity and knowledge to participate in the macro-level

market, in addition to enhancing their economic potential and influence by integrating them into regional and national forums on agriculture and food security.

Fordham, Maureen and Suranjana Gupta. (2011). *Leading Resilient Development: Grassroots Women's Priorities, Practices and Innovations.* **Brooklyn, NY: GROOTS International, 2011.**

GROOTS International presents a variety of case studies, in which grassroots women's organizations working in disaster-stricken communities have demonstrated their leadership in securing resources to address their communities' development concerns. In doing so, they are simultaneously improving their everyday living conditions, and empowering themselves to be leaders and drivers of development processes that will help overcome the factors that contribute to women's vulnerabilities in their communities. The report notes that the current disconnect between disasters and development frameworks are built on assumptions about social breakdown and crisis following disasters that are presumed to need externally imposed methods of command and control to restore order and livelihoods. These frequently overlook pre-existing grassroots social networks that are often led by and include women and are working at the community-level to carry out relief efforts.

Ibnouf, Fatma Osman. "The Role of Women in Providing and Improving Household Food Security in Sudan: Implications for Reducing Hunger and Malnutrition." *Journal of International Women's Studies* **10, no. 4 (2009): 144-167.**

By looking at the crucial role that women play in rural Sudan in improving their household food security, Ibnouf argues that the key role of women in such a context can greatly be enhanced through the adoption of supportive national and local development policy. Rural Sudanese women are shown to be innovators in developing new ways to secure food supplies for their family, for example developing a new food source from watermelon widely grown in most rural areas by making porridge from dried watermelon seed, and utilizing home gardens to produce increasing dietary diversity of food items for their families. This suggests that women hold extensive untapped potential in creating food secure households; strengthening such women's capacity through developing local grassroots organizations can provide them with more links to the formal government institutions, and hence better access to resources and services.

Vukojević, Mia. "Critical Analysis of Central America Women's Rights Organizations: Humanitarian Response Approach." Report, Oxfam Canada, 2013.

This analytical report developed for Oxfam Canada examines Central American women's organizations' approach to emergencies, which the author argues is distinctly different from that of the mainstream humanitarian system, but shares similar components with approaches utilized by women's organizations in other parts of the world. A key feature of such an approach is its recognition of the intersectionality of humanitarian and development work, in contrast to mainstream humanitarian organizations that view the two as separate pillars of work.

Another distinguishing feature of the approach is that they generally rely more on qualitative indicators as a way of measuring their work, compared to actors in the mainstream humanitarian field who often place greater emphasis on quantitative data to evaluate their projects. As a result, the work of women's organizations is less recognized and fails to receive sufficient resources from donors to respond to major emergencies. Seen as "women exclusively" organizations, such groups are often reduced to women specific programs, gender based violence work or to the role of advisors to "real humanitarian organizations" regarding women's needs, rather than as central community actors in their own right.

7. Needs in future research on women's groups in relation to disaster mitigation and response

Brody, Alison, Justina Demetriades, and Emily Esplen. "Gender and Climate Change: Mapping the Linkages. A Scoping Study on Knowledge and Gaps." Report, BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, 2008.

This report prepared for the DFID examines the ways through which climate change exacerbates existing gender inequalities, and discusses the importance of gender sensitivity for effective mitigation and adaptation responses. Through the use of case studies in Asia, Latin America, and Africa that demonstrate how women in rural communities are adapting their practices to secure their livelihoods in the face of changes in the frequency, intensity and duration of natural disasters, this piece emphasizes the importance of capturing local innovation and context-specific knowledge and experience through collection of sex-disaggregated data and qualitative data, as well as participatory research into women's coping strategies. The authors identify the lack of extensive participatory research conducted thus far on the women's own resilience priorities and strategies as a major research gap in the disaster field.

Yonder, Ayse, Senkul Akcar, and Prema Gopalan. "Women's Participation in Disaster Relief and Recovery." *SEEDS* **22 (2005): 2-37.**

This report published by The Population Council criticizes conventional disaster response for not having been sufficiently adapted to take into account women's productive and reproductive activities. The author notes that far more information is needed to bring about a shift in disaster response and investment toward poor communities and the women struggling to reorganize daily life in them. To date few in-depth case studies have documented long-term development-oriented disaster responses organized by women's groups over an extended period, and thus little is currently known about practical ways of supporting and sustaining women's participation in relief and recovery responses.

The Southeast Asian and Latin American case studies included within the report serve to demonstrate how women's organizations from outside the devastated areas have reached out to and supported local women's groups in the aftermath of recent disasters, in order to enable local women to participate in relief processes and to build the capacities needed to sustain their efforts. The author brings up the contrast of such an approach from that of most large and often international NGOs, which provide direct assistance in the form of physical or financial resources rather than actively facilitating community participation with a long-term development perspective. In keeping with other reports in the field, peer learning exchanges among grassroots women's groups are brought up as a key capacity-building strategy, demonstrating that women can function at the grassroots level as technical assistants to one another with no significant external assistance.

8. The concept of resilience: Challenges and approaches in theory and practice

Barrett, Christopher and Mark Constas. "Resilience to Avoid and Escape Chronic Poverty: Theoretical Foundations and Measurement Principles." Paper presented at CARE USA's Roundtable on Resilience, Washington, December 11, 2012.

The authors note that resilience has become a buzzword. Three main reasons explain the popularity of the notion of resilience according to the authors: (1) pronounced risks, which refers to the increasing exposure to risk related to natural disasters, climate, food markets, macroeconomic shocks, political violence, etc.; (2) an opportunity to bridge the divide between humanitarian and development areas of work, which highlights the importance of aligning humanitarian and development objectives; and (3) emphasis on ecological/biophysical factors, which comprise the growing consensus that development work must be connected to pressing environmental concerns. Despite its popularity, there is little theoretical, methodological and empirical precision in the use of resilience. Therefore, the authors urge

researchers and policy-makers to advance theory, measurement, and empirical work in order to help best identify what resilience is and how it can be used to combat chronic poverty.

Béné, Christophe, Rachel Godfrey Wood, Andrew Newsham, and Mark Davies. "Resilience: New Utopia or New Tyranny? Reflection about the Potentials and Limits of the Concept of Resilience in Relation to Vulnerability Reduction Programmes." Institute of Development Studies Working Paper, Vol. 2012, No. 405 and Centre for Social Protection Working Paper No. 006, 2012.

A new analysis by researchers at the Institute of Development Studies tries to explore the advantages as well as the dangers of adopting resilience in vulnerability reduction programmes. The authors explore the increasingly used concept of resilience in the development and vulnerability reduction sectors such as social protection, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. In this context, the authors critically analyse the notion of resilience, including its origins, current usage, and advantages and limitations. Among the advantages is the concept's capacity to promote an integrated and systemic approach across sectors that would otherwise seem disconnected. Among the limitations of the concept, it fails to capture notions of power and agency, it is not always a positive value, and it cannot be equated to well-being. According to the authors, resilience can help the processes of poverty reduction and development, but it cannot be equated to a pro-poor poverty reduction strategy.

CARE Nederland, Group URD, and Wageningen University. *Reaching Resilience. Handbook 2.0 for Aid Practitioners and Policymakers in Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation, and Poverty Reduction*. Geneva: CARE International, 2013.

This handbook provides advice on the implementation of well-integrated strategies and programs to promote resilience at the local level. It develops an approach to resilience that consists in 8 key points, each of them developed in concrete action guidance. To better build resilience, practitioners, managers, and policy-makers should focus on: (1) exploring and analysing people's 'risk landscape'; (2) exploring institutions and the governance context; (3) analysis of power force field and relations between stakeholders; (4) fostering resilience by engaging with similarly minded stakeholders; (5) negotiating differences between actors about agendas, values and scale; (6) working across scales; (7) designing and insisting on iterative and flexible interventions; and (8) being aware of trade-offs. This piece aims not to provide a "one-size-fits-all approach", but rather to serve as guidance so that professionals and students in the Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation, and Poverty Reduction areas can contextualize the action tips.

Folkema, Josh, Maggie Ibrahim, and Emily Wilkinson. "World Vision's Resilience Programming: Adding Value for Development." ODI Working Paper, Overseas Development Institute, 2013.

Resilience is now at the heart of development thinking, climate change adaptation, and humanitarian policy. These and other high-impact events have led the international community to look for durable solutions that address the underlying drivers of risk, particularly for marginalised communities. This paper builds on lessons learned over a decade of development practice. It shows how the 2011-2012 famine in the Horn of Africa and 2012 crisis in the Sahel demonstrate the vulnerability of livelihoods in these regions, and also a stagnation of effective development programs. The authors frame the notion of resilience as a novel and alternative way of understanding and practicing development with the potential to solve some serious limitations faced by mainstream development strategies. Five policy and program approaches are identified as necessary in order to build resilience: recognition of complex interactions; appreciative inquiry; dynamism and flexibility; multi-sectoral approaches; and open systems approaches. The aforementioned factors are seen as key in order to address the underlying drivers of risk, promote the empowerment of marginalized communities, and create durable solutions that can reduce vulnerability to natural and anthropogenic shocks and stresses.

Hillier, Debbie and Gina E. Castillo. "No Accident: Resilience and the Inequality of Risk." Oxfam Briefing Paper 172, Oxfam International, 2013.

This paper argues that we need a new approach to major risks (such as climate change and food price volatility) and poverty reduction. Major external risks are externalized on poor people, and women face a devastating burden. A new focus on building resilience offers hope to allow poor people to thrive despite shocks, stresses, and uncertainty; however, resilience is not something that can be given to people, and it will only be possible to achieve if risk is equally distributed in society. According to this paper, a fair distribution and share of risk at the societal and global level necessitates a major change of paradigm in development work, which for too long has evaded to deal with the externalization risk. This piece concludes that achieving true resilience will ultimately require challenging the inequality that exposes poor people to far more risk than the rich.

9. Gender-sensitive approaches to resilience

Skinner, Emmeline. *BRIDGE Cutting Edge Pack on Gender and Climate Change.* Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

This resource points out that responses to climate change tend to be dry and mechanical, focusing on limited scientific and economic solutions rather than addressing human and gender aspects of climate change and disasters. It argues that in order to craft effective responses to climate change, we must focus on people and communities, paying especial attention to the challenges and opportunities that climate change offers in the crusade for gender equality. The report comprehensively explores the gendered aspects of climate change and concludes with recommendations for researchers, NGOs and donors as well as policymakers at national and international level.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Policy and Studies Branch. *OCHA Gender Toolkit*. New York: OCHA, 2012.

The chapter on Gender and Resilience provides some practical advice on how to ensure gender concerns are embedded in resilience-based actions. A resilience-based approach must be gender sensitive, providing assistance in a way that empowers households and communities to manage future shocks and uncertainty.

Annex 2: List of women's organizations interviewed

Casa da Mulher do Nordeste – Brazil

http://www.casadamulherdonordeste.org.br

Casa da mulher do nordeste (CMN) is a non-governmental feminist organization founded in 1980 to increase the economic and political autonomy of urban and rural women in the Northeast Region of Brazil, with a focus on the state of Pernambuco. CMN works to transform society by confronting inequalities of gender, race, class and ethnicity; by broadening women's political representation in positions of power; as well as by supporting women-led initiatives. CMN runs two programs – "Women, Work and Life" and "Women and Rural Life"– through which it offers educational training; provides economic, social and technical services; increases women's access to financial resources; and aids in women's political organizing. CMN maintains active partnerships with civil society organizations at state and national levels, with government bodies, and with international organizations.

Movimiento de Mulheres Camponesas (MMC) – Brazil

http://www.mmcbrasil.br/site/

The Movimiento de Mulheres Camponesas (Rural Women's Movement) is a grassroots membership-based organization that works on food sovereignty, food security and domestic violence. Its members are all peasant women who determine the organization's agenda and priorities. MMC focuses on violence against women, women's lack of access to financial support, women's lack of control over family food production, and the overuse of chemical pesticides. Through extensive discussions about the societal and political causes of women's vulnerability, the MMC challenges peasant women to identify their own structural barriers to financial autonomy in order to produce clear strategies to increase women's food security and independence.

Association Munyu des femmes de la Comoé (MUNYU) – Burkina Faso

http://www.munyu-burkina.org/

MUNYU was established in 1992, filling the void left by the Union des Femmes du Burkina, the first women's organization in Burkina Faso that was born during the revolution. MUNYU works to advance women's rights with a primary focus on women's social and economic rights, and on women's literacy and education. MUNYU supports 180 women's groups and has 10,000 members across three provinces, 95% of whom live in rural areas. In the area of food security, MUNYU supports women's cooperatives by providing them with the means to farm communal plots, access microcredit and benefit from their food transformation unit in Banfora. MUNYU mobilized its members to offer solidarity and emergency response during the Ivoirian refugee crisis of the early 2000s and during the 2009 floods in Ouagadougou.

Fédération des femmes rurales (FFR) – Burkina Faso

The Federation of Rural Women is a network made up of women from 14 different farming federations. It has 5,600 members from 28 out of the 45 provinces of Burkina Faso. The FFR focuses on increasing rural women's literacy, raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, improving women's health and strengthening women's leadership. The FFR aims to revive women's collective grain reserves as a resilience strategy against food insecurity, as well as to train women in new farming technologies, marketing and management.

Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) – Burkina Faso

http://www.wildaf-ao.org/

WILDAF Burkina Faso was established in 1998 as the national chapter of Women in Law and Development in Africa, a pan-African network of women's rights organizations formed in 1993 to sensitize women on their rights and to advance women's participation and influence at the local, national and international level. In Burkina Faso, WILDAF is a network of 25 member organizations, including associations of women lawyers, teachers, nurses and rural literacy groups. WILDAF Burkina Faso focuses on women's access to land and property rights; women's economic rights, particularly in terms of agricultural production and commercialization; and women's political rights. WILDAF also provides paralegal training to rural women, who then work to educate their communities about women's rights in relation to violence against women.

Asociación Melida Anaya Montes – El Salvador

The Association Melida Anaya Montes, also known as 'Las Melidas', is a feminist organization that promotes various forms of women's organization and leadership, offers training to increase women's political participation and empowerment, and mobilizes women to claim their rights at the local and national level. The organization supports productive projects in rural areas and also prioritizes the prevention of violence against women and the promotion of women's sexual and reproductive rights. Las Melidas offers disaster preparedness trainings for women at the community level so that they can play a leadership role and coordinate with local authorities when emergencies hit. Currently about 5,800 women are affiliated with the organization, 70% of which are in rural areas.

Instituto de Investigación, Capacitación y Desarrollo de la Mujer – El Salvador

http://imuelsalvador.org/

IMU (the Women's Research, Training and Development Institute) is a feminist organization that works to promote women's active citizenship and strengthen women's movement. Their work on women's economic rights and autonomy focuses on the care economy and its links to food security. IMU supports agro-ecological projects, and thanks to their network of organized women they were able to respond to some of the needs created by recent floods in El Salvador and work on preparedness for future events. Other areas of work are sexual and reproductive rights, and policy and advocacy work to advance women's rights.

Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres – El Salvador

http://www.mujeresmsm.org/

The Salvadorian Women's Movement is a feminist organization founded in February 1988. Its main objective is to promote the rights of women both in the country side and in urban areas. In its 25 years of existence, the MSM has implemented a variety of projects focused on strengthening the social fabric of communities, specifically fostering women's personal development and awareness of their rights. As one of its strategic objectives, MSM helps women and youth organize to improve food security and promote collective entrepreneurship. In its work, MSM takes an eco-feminist perspective and sensitizes the general public on the protection of natural resources and climate change adaptation.

Secretaría de la Mujer de la Asociación de Comunidades para el Desarrollo de Chalatenango (CCR) – El Salvador

The CCR has worked in the department of Chalatenango since 1989. It was founded by the first five communities that repopulated the department from the refugee camps in Honduras, and today it is made up of 110 communities in 22 municipalities. Together, these communities promote grassroots community organizing, education, leadership training, civil participation, and empowerment. The Women's Committee of the CCR runs specific projects on women's empowerment through food security and microfinance.

Women's Association of Tigray – Ethiopia

The Women's Association of Tigray is a large networked organization whose members include some 700,000 women in the Tigray regional state of Ethiopia. Established in 1991, WAT advances women's equality through the active and direct participation of women in economic empowerment and decision-making activities and advocates for equal space for women to participate in critical dialogue related to food security, health, and education at all levels of government. WAT plays a recognized role in developing agricultural technologies and delivering training workshops that increase the agricultural productivity of women for whom agriculture remains the main source of income.

Asociación de Mujeres Madre Tierra (AMMT) – Guatemala

AMMT is a women's association that works with peasant, rural and indigenous women in seven communities in the South Coast of Guatemala. AMMT mainly provides training in women's rights, education, and political leadership. In response to food insecurity, AMMT is encouraging families to plant basic grains in the summer that can be harvested before the rainy season, which reduces the risk of failed crops. AMMT also developed a successful cattle rearing program which has increased women's resilience to food shocks. AMMT aims to be as participatory as possible and believes that in order to build the self-esteem and leadership capacities of local women, as well as design relevant programming, women's views must be fully integrated into the organization's agenda-setting process.

SOYNICA – Nicaragua

http://www.soynica.org.ni/

SOYNICA's is a women's group that works on food sovereignty and food security, focusing on nutrition education for both rural and urban families. SOYNICA educates households on the importance of breastfeeding and the links between early childhood nutrition and brain development. SOYNICA promotes sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural practices and participates in agro-ecology promotion networks. Through SOYNICA's campaigning and lobbying work in support of the enactment of a legal framework for food sovereignty and food security, the organization was able to push for the passing of Nicaragua's 2009 Food Security and Food Sovereignty Act.

Association nigérienne pour le progrès et la défense des droits des femmes (ANPDDF) – Niger

ANPDDF (the Nigerien Association for the Advancement and the Defense of Women's Rights) was established in 2001 as a small volunteer-run women's rights organization. In response to recurring food crises, ANPDDF has increasingly focused on women's economic empowerment, running small-scale support programs with widows and female-headed households. ANPDDF also conducts advocacy initiatives in favor of women's political participation and to raise awareness about violence against women, forced marriages and wife repudiation. ANPDDF is a member of the CONGAFEN, and one of its only members to work specifically on women's food security.

Collège des femmes de la Plateforme Paysanne du Niger – Niger

The Women's Commission of the Plateforme Paysanne du Niger (PPN) was established in 2004 to increase women's representation, voice and decision making power within the PPN. Its priority is to increase rural women's financial independence by building links between women producers, improving communication between rural women's groups, and elevating the profile and visibility of women in farming. The Women's Commission also aims to change attitudes towards women's leadership within the PPN in order to meaningfully integrate gender equality and a focus on women farmers within the organization's work.

Coordination des ONG et associations féminines nigériennes (CONGAFEN) – Niger

http://congafen.org/

CONGAFEN is a network of 56 organizations and associations that work for the promotion and the defense of women and children's rights in Niger. It was established in 1995 to increase collaboration among women's organizations; to build the capacity of women's organizations and help them find funding to carry out their activities; and to serve as a channel of communication between women's organizations and the State to carry out advocacy work in favor of gender equality. CONGAFEN's five thematic areas of focus are health, education, environment and agriculture, economic empowerment and human rights.

Réseau des femmes pour la paix au Niger (REFEPA) – Niger

REFEPA (the Women's Network for Peace) is a small volunteer-run women's network that aims to promote women's participation in conflict prevention and peace building. It also advocates in favor of women's access to land and women's property and inheritance rights in relation to land. REFEPA supports small income generating activities to help women's cooperatives raise funds to purchase plots of land.

Federación de Mujeres de Ica – Peru

FEPROMUICA is a non-profit civil society organization founded in 1989 that contributes to the promotion, protection and realization of the rights of women in the Ica Region of Peru. Made up of 17 autonomous member organizations across the provinces of the region, FEPROMUICA empowers women to exercise their rights and enjoy equal participation in the building of a democratic society. FEPROMUICA engages with food security from multiple dimensions, including improving the working conditions of women workers in the agricultural industry, enforcing children's rights to food, and running a microcredit program that improves women's access to food and resources. After the 2007 earthquake that affected the Ica region, FEPROMUICA established a childcare centre, "La Casita de la Ternura", to provide support for working mothers by ensuring children are well fed and provided with educational and medical services.

GROOTS – Peru

GROOTS Peru is a national network of five grassroots women's organizations and a member of GROOTS International, a movement that links grassroots initiatives across poor rural and urban areas. As a national network, GROOTS Peru works to promote the political and civic participation of women to influence public policy at the local, national and regional levels; to become an influential voice in defining public policies on gender issues; and to increase the visibility of women's issues in Peru and globally. GROOTS Peru works on community resilience in four ways: by facilitating the sharing of effective leadership practices across communities and supporting community banks, by working on land

and housing rights and the reforestation of degraded urban and community gardens, by building networks and alliances between cities, and by supporting food sovereignty initiatives and women engaged in food production.

Women on Farms Project – South Africa

http://www.wfp.org.za/

Established in 2002, the Women on Farms Project is a members-based organization that is aimed at meeting the needs of women who live and work on commercial farms. WPF works on food security, safety, sovereignty and environmental sustainability. WPF's Cooperative Programme trains women on agro-ecological methods and improves women's food security by developing ways to grow vegetables efficiently on small plots of land. WPF also aims at ensuring the housing, tenure and land rights and security of farm dwellers, especially farmwomen, with the goal of contributing to the race, class and gender transformation of the South African countryside. WFP works from an explicitly feminist approach in order to create spaces in which women occupy positions of leadership and are able to define their own priorities in order to collectively strategize solutions and effect lasting structural changes.

Maha Shakthi Federation (MSF) – Sri Lanka

Formed in 2008, the Maha Shakthi Federation is a large savings and credit federation located in the Kilinochchi District of Wanni, Sri Lanka. Based on a savings and credit model pioneered in India, MSF consists of women's groups of 16 to 20 members each and supports over 2,000 women through economic and social empowerment programs. MSF helps women collectively save money, access credit facilities and improve their economic situations. MSF works toward social change by supporting women's capacity building, increasing social interaction and cohesion, and creating a space for women to discuss key issues that affect women and their communities.

Annex 3: Interview Guide and Consent Form

Resilience in the face of food insecurity and food crises:
Bringing the experience of women's organizations to the humanitarian and development table

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Guidance for interviewers:
The purpose of this research is to generate ideas on how to improve resilience based on the experiences, strategies and analysis of women's organizations.

The overarching questions we are looking to explore are:

- *How do women's organizations understand risk and contribute to building resilience?*
- *Do women's organizations work on the emergency-development continuum in different ways than other actors?*
- *What can we learn from their strategies for addressing food insecurity and recurring food crises in their communities?*

This Guide is designed to interview leaders of women's organizations, women's networks, or women's groups within mixed organizations. It is divided into two parts:

A. *Introduction and ethics of information gathering: Before starting the interview we ask that you explain the purpose of the research, ask the woman if she agrees to participate and emphasize that all information she provides is confidential*
B. *Interview questions: these are the actual questions to ask and areas to probe*

Interviews can be done individually or in small groups.

Many of the women interviewed may never have heard the word "resilience" before, so there is no need to use the term specifically. Oxfam's official definition of resilience is "the ability of women, men, and children to realize their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses, and uncertainty". The research deals with resilience as it relates to food security. Again, there is no need to use the term "food security" specifically. For the purpose of the research, food security is defined very broadly as a situation in which people have the ability to feed themselves in dignity, implying that food is available, that people have the means to produce or access it, and that it adequately meets their dietary and cultural needs.

The focus of the interview is not so much what the organization does to improve food security, but how they do their work. We are trying to explore if they are unique and, if so, what makes their approaches unique, i.e. how they do things differently and what sets them apart from other NGOs and organizations that are not led by women or that don't focus on women's rights. What are the principles and priorities behind the activities they choose and how they carry them out?

Interviews are intended to be semi structured – you do not need to stick to the exact phrasing and order of questions. Feel free to adapt and rephrase questions as appropriate, and to include additional questions if need be. If an interesting topic or example comes up, take the time to explore it fully. After a response to a question, always ask why it's significant.

Please take detailed notes during the interview. Whenever possible, please record important quotes and personal examples that the women interviewed mention. These examples and stories will be invaluable in illustrating key points in the final research report but will not be attributed in a way that reveals the woman's identity. After the interview, please type up notes and quotes under each of the interview questions.

Profile of organization

Please see attached organizational profile form. Most of the information required (type of organization, mission, values, geographic and thematic scope of their work, size in staff, annual budget) should be available to you as you already work with this partner. Please make sure to review the profile and make use of the interview as an opportunity to fill in any gaps you may have to complete the profile.

For questions about this interview guide, or the overall research project, please contact Lauren Ravon (lauren.ravon@oxfam.ca).

A. Introduction to the research and ethics of information gathering

Begin by briefly explaining the purpose of the research project, which can be summarized as follows:

This interview will contribute to a research project that Oxfam is doing. The purpose of the research is to document how women's organizations respond to shocks in their communities and how that connects to their longer term work on food security work. Often women's organizations use strategies and ways of working that are different from those of other actors, but their experiences and recommendations for donors and organizations like Oxfam are not well understood. We hope that by collecting this information from women's organizations themselves in different countries, and by making our findings accessible in a report to be shared with many development actors, women's expertise in managing risks to ensure long-term food security will be better valued and incorporated in development projects.

Before beginning the interview you should notify the woman that her participation is voluntary and that she has a right to end the interview at any time. Please reassure the woman that her replies are confidential. Oxfam may use quotes and examples provided by her in the research report without using her name. If she hasn't signed the consent form in Annex A already in the days preceding the interview, please make sure you show it to her and she signs it now.

B. Interview questions

Ways of working

1. What issues does your organization work on? What are your main priorities? How do you determine your priorities? Who do you consult?

2. What does your organization do well? What part of your work are you most proud of?

3. What sets your organization apart? Are your ways of working different from those of other organizations (i.e. organizations that are not led by women or don't focus on women's rights)? How?

If they perceive their work / their approaches as unique, ask them to explain why and give examples.

4. Do you think that having women in positions of leadership change the nature of your work?

Again, ask them to explain why and give examples.

5. What work would you like to do more of but can't? If you aren't doing what you think would be most effective, why? What are the constraints you face?

6. How easily can you change your work and priorities based on changing circumstances? How has your work evolved over time? In recent years, what has caused your organization to change?

Try to get a sense of how flexible and responsive the organization is. Can they easily change focus and adapt their work based on the needs of the community? Are they able to rapidly adapt to an emergency situation? If yes, what makes them so flexible? If not, what keeps them from adapting quickly to changing needs and circumstances?

Risks and food security

7. What are the main risks that threaten people's ability to produce food or make enough income to ensure their families have enough to eat?

Explore how they define risk. How do they understand and address the intersection between vulnerability and risk? Do they differentiate between everyday risks and full blown disasters? . Probe to see if they consider different types of risks at different levels, for example: long-term issues (such as lack of employment and livelihood options, lack of assets…), household shocks (illness, widowhood, violence…) and emergencies. Try to see if their program activities consider risk and attempt to mitigate or manage it.

8. Do women face particular risks that are different from men? What are the main reasons that women may not have enough food for themselves?

Try to see whether they identify other risks that are not specifically related to food security. Explore whether they see gender relations as contributing to increased risk.

9. What does your organization do to address, mitigate or manage these risks? Do you consider such risks in your planning? Can you give some examples?

10. What can be done to make sure that communities (and women in particular) always have enough to eat, even in times of crisis or when things go wrong in their village? Do you have any examples of things that your organization has done?

Without necessarily using the word, the idea is really to explore what they think would help make people more "resilient" – i.e. able to withstand shocks, stresses and uncertainty.

Emergency response

11. Have there been crises or emergencies in recent years that have affected the communities in which you work?

Probe for natural disasters (storms, earthquakes…), climate change (droughts, floods, erratic weather) conflict, and other shocks (famine, food price increases)

12. Did your organization respond to these crises? How? Can you give an example? What worked well in your response and what was a challenge? How did you decide what types of activities to do?

Explore whether they changed their priorities and activities, or continued their regular work. Do they see the emergency response as separate from their usual work? Explore who in the organization responds to these crises: everyone, or specific "emergency" staff?

13. If there was a crisis and you didn't respond, why not?

14. What do you think best helps women withstand shocks/crises? Do you have any examples?

Themes that might come up: Being networked with other women, having networks of solidarity, access to assets, strategies to diversify sources of income, being trained in disaster risk reduction, having food reserves…

15. When a crisis occurs, who else responds? What do you think of their work and their approaches? How does this work affect you? Who have you worked with in times of crisis?

For example: other women's organizations, women's self-help groups, local authorities, humanitarian organizations… What do they perceive as their strengths and weaknesses of these different actors? If they've worked with humanitarian organizations, what did they think of the experience?

16. What have you learned from these crises and shocks? Have they changed the way you work?

Resilience

End the interview by asking whether they have ever heard of the concept of resilience. If so, how do they define it? What does it have to do with their work?

Other issues

If additional issues or examples came up during the interview, please include notes here.

Next steps

Make sure to ask whether they have any questions, and answer them as best you can. If you do not have the answer, please tell them you will follow-up with them at a later stage. You can then contact Lauren Ravon for further information.

Please let them know that we will be compiling information from different interviews and analyzing it over the coming months. A draft report with these findings will be shared with them in September. If they have comments or corrections, they can be incorporated at that stage

Oxfam Canada
Interview Consent Form

Oxfam Canada is carrying out this research to document how women's organizations respond to shocks in their communities and how that connects to their longer term work on food security work. We hope that this research will contribute to better understanding by development actors of the approaches and strategies that women's organizations can bring to resilience work.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you have the right to end the interview at any time. Your replies to interview questions are confidential. Oxfam may use quotes and examples provided by you in the research report without using your name. You will have the opportunity to ask questions during or after the interview and to provide comments and corrections before the research report becomes final.

PLEASE FILL IN THE FORM IF YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE

The purpose of the research and process has been explained to me   Yes [ ] No [ ]

I understand the aims of the research and I agree to be interviewed   Yes [ ] No [ ]

I am participating voluntarily   Yes [ ] No [ ]

_____

    Name of the organization

_____   _____

    Printed Name   Date

_____   _____

    Signature   Date