

Meeting report Horn of Africa learning exchange on food systems resilience

19 Nov 2020 – Zoom

In the morning of Thursday 19 November the Netherlands Food Partnership and Wageningen CDI organized a 3,5-hour online learning event on food systems resilience in the Horn of Africa, aligned with the learning agenda of the FNS-REPRO programme - implemented by FAO and Wageningen CDI. The meeting was co-organized with CARE, Cordaid and ZOA, whose country teams in Somaliland, South Sudan and Sudan hosted break-out sessions. Based on practical cases the event examined the concept of food systems resilience from a local programming perspective to come to an understanding of what it can add to current programming in protracted crisis situations.

Introduction

The world is not on track to end hunger, rather, since 2014 hunger is growing globally. Countering this trend requires looking at those situations where long-term crisis has become the norm – protracted crisis situations. Here, humanitarian aid has been implemented for a long time, often in a context of insecurity, weak governance and livelihoods systems that are less sustainable under pressure of climate change. Apart from humanitarian aid, approaches like disaster risk reduction and later resilience building have been part of interventions aiming to help communities suffering from food insecurity in these settings. But so far, these have not been enough to structurally solve this problem.

As the concept of food systems has become more popular and is increasingly adopted (though still insufficiently operationalized), governments and international organizations are now wondering if creating resilience at the level of food systems has been a missing piece of the puzzle. Perhaps more structural gains can be made if food systems as a whole can be supported to keep delivering food security outcomes in the face of all kinds of shocks. Perhaps this view can bring a more development-oriented view to these areas facing repeated humanitarian crisis. The concept of food systems aligns with something that has already been known for a long time by people living and working in these settings: focusing on singular issues like only increasing food production will not structurally solve problems. The environment, governance and a multiplicity of cross-sectoral issues like conflict or inequalities need to be taken into account.

This meeting was organized to use the collective intelligence and experience of participants to identify what the idea of food systems resilience can add to what is currently being done. Can it help solve some of the challenges local programmes are currently dealing with? And are there ways in which current programmes can be improved on to work to that level of food systems resilience - where a food system keeps delivering food and nutrition security to communities despite shocks and stresses?

The FNS REPRO programme and food systems resilience

REPRO springs from the UNSC Resolution 2417 on hunger and conflict, addressing the nexus between food security and peace. The resolution condemns conflict-induced hunger as a strategy of war, but also calls upon the international community to engage in new and innovative ways in protracted crisis settings to address food and nutrition security issues. Therefore REPRO works to promote the resilience of food systems in protracted crises contexts in Sudan (North and East Darfur), South Sudan (Aweil, Bor, Renk, Torit, Wau, Yambio) and Somaliland (Sool and Sanaag).

In each of these countries a value chain of strategic importance is selected. For Sudan this is Gum Arabic, for South Sudan the seed sector, for Somaliland it is fodder.

Sudan	South Sudan	Somaliland
Diversifying livelihoods and increasing incomes , through improving technical, organizational and commercial capacity to produce and market gum arabic;	Addressing the constraints to accessibility, availability, affordability and quality of seeds of adapted varieties through an integrated seed system approach	Increasing fodder and feed productivity and reducing production costs, through capacity building, aggregation, increasing storage capacity and processing capacity, and achieving economies of scale;
Supporting landscape restoration and reduce degradation , thus building back the green belt in Darfur;	Improving seed quality assurance to build on farmer trust and stimulate demand for quality seed	Restoration of degraded rangelands and actions against desertification, such as Prosopis management and community tree planting;
Reducing conflict between crop and livestock producers , through rehabilitating livestock corridors and increasing fodder availability; and;	Strengthening formal and informal outlets and local markets for agricultural inputs through support to farmers' organizations and small entrepreneurs to effectively bridge the last mile delivery of improved agricultural inputs to smallholder farmers	Strengthening the capacity of agro-pastoral and pastoral producer organizations to effectively participate in the feed/fodder value chain,

<p>Increasing the share in the benefits of the gum arabic production for women and youth, such as through the support of existing and creation of new dedicated women and youth producer groups.</p>	<p>Developing institutional and organizational capacity to support the establishment of an integrated, sustainable, resilient and robust seed system</p>	<p>Promoting good agriculture practices to maximize crop yields and improve the nutrition quality of crop residues while diversifying food available for people.</p>
	<p>Providing opportunities for conservation of crop-biodiversity in order to enhance the resilience of the seed and crop system</p>	

In its engagement with these chains from a principled approach, it tries to address the nexus between humanitarian and development work. It aims to address driving factors characterizing protracted crises contexts like conflict and recurring natural disasters as well as economic shocks. By taking an area-based approach, it puts the dominant livelihood systems of target communities at the core and tries to strengthen these, building on their existing capacities and knowledge.

The value chains are approached from the perspective of a food systems approach, identifying how to best strengthen livelihoods in the face of structurally changing food systems elements. This food system approach takes into account driving factors influencing the food production chain (e.g. socio-economic, environmental, demographic, political-economic) and how these dynamics produce food system outcomes, particularly food and nutrition security, but also environmental sustainability and economic development as a result of food system dynamics and interaction.

In contexts of protracted crises specifically, food systems are being affected by a number of recurring shocks and stressors, preventing the system from ensuring desired outcomes and resulting in high levels of food insecurity and hunger. As such the premise of REPRO is: by strengthening the resilience of food systems and absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities therein, the system should be able to maintain its basic functions facing recurring shocks and stressors, addressing and reducing food insecurity and hunger.

This perspective of food systems resilience implies an understanding that not all actors or activities in food systems are equally vulnerable. Defining priorities for where to address these vulnerabilities means searching for leverage points that improve the shock resistance of a food system as a whole, to deliver food security despite conflict, disaster or economic crisis. In the case of REPRO target food systems, the focus is on strengthening livelihood options in the gum Arabic, fodder and seed systems as being key production systems in the respective countries, enhancing production capacities of farmers and agro-pastoralists who are residing in protracted crises contexts in Sudan, South-Sudan and Somaliland.

To enable identification of critical leverage points in target food systems, Wageningen CDI developed an innovative methodology to assess food systems resilience from a local perspective: the Food System

Resilience Assessment (FoSRA). This diagnostic and planning tool maps food systems and FNS outcomes, draws causal food system processes, creates insight in dynamic food system behaviour and crucial resilience capacities to strengthen food systems. This innovative approach to resilience and food security analysis is tied to the programme's Learning Agenda (output 4 of REPRO). The Learning Agenda aims to capture good practices and critical information on food systems resilience, enabling adaptive and flexible programme management and implementation of REPRO by the establishment of learning mechanisms informing policy and practice.

Q&A on the REPRO programme approach

- *What are the type of questions that you are trying to answer in the learning agenda?*

REPRO has developed a set of learning questions (around 21) that test underlying assumptions in REPRO's Theory of Change and validate performance of the programme. These questions are all centred around the potential ability of designed interventions to increase the resilience of people. We use those questions to generate information and knowledge which is used to inform adaptive programme management. REPRO has a dot on the horizon to increase food system resilience, but also built in flexibility to address other questions on food system resilience that can be addressed within the communities of practice.

For example, in South Sudan, on seed system resilience, how to work with a different seed systems? What is the behaviour of seed systems? How to strengthen informal seed systems and the capacities that people have? So from very general questions to more specific technical questions on how food systems work.

- *How will the consultation mechanisms look like at country levels - i.e. Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia? How will you bring all stakeholders together and have consultations with relevant parties?*

This refers to the establishment of communities of practice in each country. The communities will be formed by relevant actors working in the domain of food and nutrition security, resilience. Like NGOs, UN, government, community groups, private sector. Through these communities, REPRO works together to co-create an understanding of food system resilience, generating critical information which enables the programme to learn together and inform policy and practice. The CoP will be facilitated by local learning agenda focal points, contracted by WUR-WCDI linked to universities based in each country. The CoPs form the vessels for learning and consultation in the target countries and will convene at least twice a year. These CoPs will research specific learning questions by undertaking learning journeys, feeding adaptive programming strategy and programming activities and are reflected upon during

annual learning and sensemaking events. A number of organisations and institutions based in each REPRO country have expressed interest to join and participate in REPRO CoPs.

Other vehicles for consultation and adaptive programme management are national programme steering committees. Yesterday REPRO had a national program steering committee meeting in South Sudan, bringing together senior officials representing FAO, the national government, the Dutch Embassy, WUR-WCDI and other relevant programme partners. The committees consult at a high level at country level, as well as the global level in the form of a global programme steering committee. So REPRO is not just an initiative thought over and out behind a desk. It has been created in consultation with a range of actors including NGOs, the private sector government and the knowledge and research institutions in those countries.

- *What methodology or approaches does the Programme use to identify available resilience capacities? Is there a specific assessment that is done in the beginning?*

The second component of our food system resilience assessment framework, the data collection toolkit, is composed of five data collection tools. The starting point is an identification of shocks and stresses, their occurrence over the last 10 years and key impacts on livelihoods of people being prioritized in a top 3. Secondly, identification of risk management strategies based on the most dominant shock or stresses that people face, identifying: how do people deal with these shocks? What kind of risk management strategies are in place to deal with these shocks? Thirdly, diving into a capacity and vulnerability analysis to better understand what kind of capacities people have to deal with shocks and stressors as was identified and how vulnerable they are facing the most dominant shock or stressor.

The fourth tool is a resilience capacity analysis. We ask people, how do you absorb a shock? How do you adapt to shocks and stresses that occur and how do you transform your livelihood? Or how is your livelihood transformed within this institutional environment. What are the existing capacities in place? Then for a second step, what is missing or what are capacity gaps? What do you think is required to become more resilient? We do this through undertaking focus group discussions in communities.

Then with key informant interviews as the fifth tool, we try to gain a better understanding of the data that we have generated through these focus group discussions. It is very important to understand existing resilience capacity at household and at community level because we know it is crucial to build on these existing capacities and strengthen them. But of course these capacities are limited. So we also look with different local actors and stakeholders to identify what is needed and what can be done to strengthen existing capacities or to build new capacities.

- *Has a Base Line Survey / Inventory been conducted in each country? Were you able to collect or use quantitative data and surveys for the risk and capacities assessment?*

The baselines come from a FAO context analysis looking at conflict, gender, livelihoods, natural resources in these in these contexts and a specific focus on each value chain. A value chain analysis has

been done as well. Following that, FAO has employed their RIMA baseline assessment or Resilience Index Measurement Analysis. This is a very comprehensive survey held at household level.

FoSRA explores the dynamics of food system resilience factors with a more qualitative approach, combining the FAO data sets with literature and our own data collected through the earlier described application of the FoSRA toolkit at field level. These three data sources form our baseline. FoSRA will be done annually, further enhancing understanding of the resilience of food systems and keeping track of critical driving factors for enhancing FNS.

As for quantitative data, the RIMA analysis is quantitative data, as well as the IPC analysis. This is our quantitative data that also refers to risk and capacity assessments. The RIMA analysis is composed of questions on resilience capacities and shocks and stresses that people face. IPC provides data on food and nutrition levels.

We try to deepen that understanding by adding this more qualitative layer through the FoSRA, really looking into the dynamics of all these factors as well as a time component. So seeing how these factors have changed over time.

The baseline reports will be openly available when they are cleared and published. Our FoSRA consolidated report describing the conceptual framework, toolkit and validation check is being finalized and will be published soon. Also the FoSRA reports Somaliland and Sudan are upcoming.

- *Does the output of this programme include any feedback on the existing teaching modules at the local universities regarding food system resilience? And will a publicity aspect be included to create awareness about the programme in the area?*

It is very important for REPRO to identify and support local / national capacities. Therefore we work very closely with local universities and resource centres. The REPRO programme is complemented by a number of NUFFIC projects that work directly with local universities in the development of a master's programme on disaster risk management and food security studies. In addition, it will organize a number of short courses to tackle critical issues to promote food systems resilience. Apart from that there are also tailor made trainings. We are working with local universities to develop blended learning and to deliver services that are practical, responding to the needs of sector players. Like NGOs, local governments or private sector players.

- *What are some of the value chain activities you support in Somalia?*

Value chains are quite important and central to REPRO. That is why there is a focus in Somalia on fodder systems, which is an important value chain. Although that value is different for those people that have livestock and access to for instance grazing areas and water as compared to those with livestock but very constrained access to these resources. But when we talk about value chains the value is not only in terms of monetary value. Working in protracted crisis contexts, a value is also survival in times of disaster. For example, when you go to Sudan Arabic gum in a humanitarian emergency can be quite

important and even central to people's survival or meeting basic needs. So in developing value chains we do this in the context of a protracted crisis where the value seen and tapped by local communities changes as per context.

- *Why did you choose a food systems resilience perspective? We have heard a lot about household and community resilience capacities, but what about resilience capacities of food systems? How are you working with that?*

REPRO springs from a commitment not only to condemn the creation of food crises, but also to see new and innovative forms of engagement in protracted crises. And I think that most of us present today know and realize that the resilience agenda is becoming quite strong. This also flows from the UN Security Council resolution on hunger and conflict. We can see that donors are increasingly interested in promoting the idea of resilience, so there is a paradigm shift in various countries. We see initiatives also by the UN and donors to promote the idea of resilience and ask for resilience programming. At the same time there is shift away from sectoral interventions to food system interventions, and how food systems are dynamic over time in protracted crises.

So REPRO tries to bridge the call for new ways of engagement flowing from a policy and donor perspective with the actual realities on the ground. This is being done by working on it. Having said that, we realized that many actors on the ground in their programming already touch upon elements of food system resilience. That is why we want to tap into that experience and knowledge.

So a paradigm shift towards food systems and building more resilient food systems in protracted crisis situations. But how do we do this in practice? How do we ensure that we build the ability of local communities and food systems to maintain reasonable food and nutrition security outcomes in protracted crisis or even improve on it. And how does that then relate to the wishes of donors and policymakers to promote the idea of resilience? How do we understand resilience? What do we understand when talking about food systems? There are still many different perspectives on this. The REPRO programme in a way tries to develop the idea of food system resilience and what it means in practice on the ground for the betterment of local communities.

- *Does taking a food systems resilience perspective solve any problems that are currently faced by resilience programming in protracted crises?*

I think it's addressing a number of critical issues. One thing that it requires is that different local actors and stakeholders have an understanding of how food systems actually work and produce food and nutrition security outcomes, and how these systems have changed as a result of shocks and stresses. It requires their understanding of what this means for making the right type of investments to maintain or strengthen the ability of food systems to produce good or even better food and nutrition security outcomes in situations that are often very volatile, fluid and highly dynamic.

We know, for example, that it is important to build on existing capacities. But there may also be the need to build transformative resilience capacities. We can only do this at a local level in context specific

situations. We think that food system resilience provides the opportunity to localize and to build context sensitive food systems that can better respond to and manage shocks and stresses. Shocks and stresses that not only affect the people and households and communities, but also affect systems and those systems are where people create their livelihoods. So if you are facing a changing system, maybe you should also keep that in mind when you build resilience capacities because the resilience capacities you've been building 5 years ago, maybe don't fit the change system that is there currently.

Another thing is systems like the architectures that we have been building in protracted crisis contexts. Do they allow us to really build resilient food systems, or are there challenges within the current architectures that basically obstruct building resilience. Like the classical divide between relief and development - and donors not wanting to involve development in what they think is a crisis context.

Breakout group discussions

To examine what food systems resilience means from a local programming perspective, and what it can add to current programming in protracted crisis situations three cases were identified from programming by CARE, Cordaid and ZOA. These cases did not necessarily start from the perspective of food systems resilience, but they have many elements of a food systems resilience perspective. In the breakouts participants used these cases to identify food systems resilience aspects in the examples, and use contribute their own experience to identify good practices on a challenge put forward in the case. Unfortunately the ZOA case was cancelled last minute due to a family emergency.

CARE – Somaliland

CARE works on resilience in [Somaliland and Puntland](#) with a focus on rehabilitating land, rangeland management, increased fodder production, support to people engaged in fishery, and strengthening capacities of communities and government around natural resource management, resilience to droughts and floods and land governance. In the group discussion the CARE team discussed their approach to resilience and how they have been helping to re-introduce customary law in relation to land use and social fencing; and challenges of land tenure in a context of limited government capacity.

The approach of CARE to building community resilience is based on three pillars:

1. **Rehabilitation of degraded land for increased fodder production and animal health.** Soil and water conservation structures to prevent erosion and gulley formation are constructed together with communities through cash for work programming. Contractors and technical engineers help in these efforts. After structures are created fertilizer is spread and reseeding is done (either aerial or on the check dam).
2. **Building community capacity to improve and maintain land productivity.** Community rangeland management plans are created, built around practices like Farmer Managed Natural

Regeneration (FMNR), rotational grazing. This helps to prevent resource-based conflict between pastoralists and farmers. It also secures adequate animal feed through increased (non-commercial) fodder production, better grazing grounds and water provision for animals. The increased animal health prevents negative coping strategies like distress sales and charcoal burning while increasing income through better prices for meat – strengthening the livestock value chain.

3. **Strengthening institutions.** Customary laws that protect the land and wildlife are revitalized and awareness is raised around these laws. Through these laws, settlement in rangelands is prevented which previously caused degradation. Capacity of local institutions but also Ministries is built to conserve these rangelands and protect related livelihoods. Local conflict resolution mechanisms, for instance around migration routes for pastoralists are established. Strengthened relations between communities and the regional / central government is now a priority for sustained enforcement of customary laws.

Through this approach hundreds of kilometres of land have been restored, with a focus on women as the backbone for community resilience strengthening and household support. The project showed that as it takes some time to feel the impact of this kind of work it is important to also focus on quick-wins and small achievements to keep up motivation. Similarly, enforcement of customary laws takes time before it is appreciated by communities – multi-level and multi-stakeholder involvement is needed. Land tenure problems remain, however, because of private land enclosures and a social fencing / land protection approach that falls largely in the hands of communities with little support. Therefore the team asked participants to share their own experiences and solutions for these land tenure issues in places with weak government capacity.

What are food systems resilience aspects in the CARE case?

First, the group thought about what could be said about food systems resilience from this case. Contributions by the group can be sorted into two areas where food systems resilience elements were identified:

- **Building increased resilience to environmental shocks and disasters.** For instance by enhancing natural resource management for better fodder production; by building community capacity to respond to recurring shocks like floods and land degradation; or by improving pastures to improve animal health.
- **Strengthening institutions and governance at multiple (interlinked) levels.** For instance by building bridges between communities and the government, by revitalizing customary laws and establishing conflict resolution mechanisms.

This combined approach of improved livestock production and improved governance linked to environmental improvement improves resilience not only of communities, but also of food systems.

What are good practices for preventing further land degradation through recurring droughts?

Then, the group brought in their own experiences and good practices to think with the CARE team about how to further their approach in this context of weak governance. Contributions by the group can be sorted into three areas:

- **Build social cohesion through multi-stakeholder exchange and group organization.** For instance by strengthening organized groups of farmers and pastoralists to aid enforcement of customary laws; Or by organizing stakeholder consultations at community and local government level to exchange experiences and link to policy issues.
- **Strengthen links between local (informal) governance and government.** For instance by improving links between local community governance mechanisms and regional or national level policymaking; And by informing and involving government at various levels to get buy-in on the importance of customary laws for natural resource management, land tenure and conflict resolution, to ensure follow-up after closing of the project.
- **Adapt livelihoods to more sustainable practices.** There is a trade-off between short term and long-term goals of different stakeholders here. As some people lose out, alternatives need to be developed. For instance by developing alternatives to charcoal production as a livelihood to prevent degrading the natural resource base; And by focusing on strengthening the dominant livelihood system to improve economic opportunities and FNS outcomes, like fodder production.

As the CARE team mentioned that it was challenging to regenerate some areas due to frequent droughts, participants also suggested integrating analysis of climate and weather information may help communities better adapt to these specific hazards.

For the post-its, see the annex.

Key observations from the discussion

From the group discussion the following key elements stood out as interesting input for the panel discussion on food systems resilience following the breakouts:

1. There are pluriform ways of understanding keys (leverage points) to making systems more resilient, but the participants unanimously agreed that **governance is of high importance**. Reference was made to relating governance at different levels, but also: governance of a food system resilience agenda would imply priority setting as a multi-stakeholder process.
2. **Participants were puzzled about the question whether the project is enhancing absorptive, adaptive or transformative capacities.** When so disputable, this was either not clear from the presentation or participants have different understandings of these system responses.
3. Reference was made to developments in natural resource management that refer back to customary practices, and this was interpreted as a transformative process. In a way **it is remarkable that a process of re-establishing a practice from the past is considered a transformation**. Apparently, 'turning back a process in time' can be perceived as an innovation or change to the better.
4. Participants agreed **that a longer time horizon is needed to achieve enhanced capacity to respond to shocks. But short term wins are needed to motivate local stakeholders.** And sometimes, the time horizons of different stakeholders do not synchronize and may impose

tension or create trade-offs. Certainly, the immediate need of charcoal producers to generate cash can hamper longer term ambitions of restoring biodiversity. These conflicting time horizons and stakeholder interests can undermine collective action.

5. **Food system resilience is sometimes too much a container conceptualization which may blur people's understandings.** In this project in Somaliland, at least two shocks are being addressed, requiring different capacities to respond. It needs to be explored to what extent these two forms of resilience interact and whether they always align with each other. Of course, there is a causal relationship between conflict and climate shocks, but it would be recommendable to disentangle the relationship and be explicit what and when is needed to address each of these two sources of shocks.
6. Finally, **food system theory is not always equipped to explain political-economic and gender-related processes** whereby (groups of) people have different interests and power relations are asymmetric. In such cases, we need additional political-economic and gender analysis to understand these dynamics, bring them to the surface and address related obstacles for building system resilience.

Cordaid – South Sudan

Cordaid works on resilience in the [South Sudan Agribusiness Development Programme](#), which is implemented in 'hubs of stability' together with Agriterro and SPARK. In these hubs it works on both agribusiness development and disaster & conflict risk reduction. The Cordaid team presented their approach and discussed with the group how resilience aspects can be integrated into transitions from subsistence farming to farming for the market.

The programme is implemented in Yambio, Bor and Torit counties where it uses maize, sorghum, cassava and groundnuts value chains as an entry point for the subsistence-market transition. As this is an agribusiness for food security programme, farmers are selected that have the ability to produce for the market beyond their own consumption.

The approach of Cordaid is built on four pillars:

1. **Access to organization.** Farmer groups are created and supported in registering as cooperatives. Through these groups farmers are trained and reached with new technology. These groups, have a broader approach that includes savings groups, social insurance and running small businesses. They are called the Village Economy Market and Social Association (VEMSA).
2. **Access to inputs.** Inputs are both hardware and software, so seeds, farm tools but also soft skills like market oriented extension services, going beyond production oriented extension. Model/lead farmers are trained to coach other farmers in good agricultural practices up to marketing. Farmers are also trained in integrated pest management, post-harvest handling and for advanced farmers, value addition.

3. **Access to technology.** Cooperatives who have started to produce and have a surplus for the market are supported with value addition equipment to start processing as part of farming as a business. Postharvest handling materials and storage technologies are promoted, joint warehouses for farmers are supported – which enhances their bargaining position.
4. **Access to finance.** For those farmers who have access to inputs and technology and would like to expand or start a new business three loan products are provided: a production loan, a non-production loan and a hire purchase lease.

As part of these activities the **farmer groups are supported to increase their resilience** to disasters through a Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) approach. This includes work on an early warning system, peace dialogue, conflict resolution and conflict risk analysis to reduce conflict risk while communities lead action planning.

Generally this approach shows success in raising incomes of farmers, improving household food security and job creation for agropreneurs. Some challenges are also faced, like restrictions on travel and community gatherings due to the Covid-19 pandemic, floods, desert locust infestation and inflation.

What are food systems resilience aspects in this case?

First, the group thought about what could be said about food systems resilience from this case. Contributions by the group can be sorted into four areas where food systems resilience elements were identified:

- **Taking an integrated approach.** For instance by implementing complementary activities on access to finance, inputs, organizations and technology, value addition – going beyond increased production; and by integrating disaster and conflict risk reduction into value chain development.
- **Working towards multiple outcomes.** For instance by achieving better food consumption practices while trying to go for commercial; or by enhancing soil productivity without depleting it (sustainable food production).
- **Building markets and developing value chains.** For instance by seeing markets as a way to increase availability and accessibility of food; by building new forms of public support for services through market creation; by creating an enabling environment for resilience and loans which is essential for business development; but also by building livelihoods where people are interdependent and connected.
- **Using resilience as a strategy to improve broader systems.** For instance by building resilience in more stable areas so that stronger food systems and economies can create ripple effects in a wider area – the hub of stability approach.

What are good practices for integrating resilience in the subsistence-to-market transition?

Then, the group brought in their own experiences and good practices to think with the Cordaid team about how to further their approach to integrate resilience into the transition. Contributions by the group can be sorted into three areas:

- **Integrating ecological resilience into farming practices.** For instance by using agroecological practices to raise production and soil productivity; by working on inter-cropping methods; or by ensuring that promoted crops are drought resistant, have short growing cycles, while having good market value.
- **Building (resilient) markets as part of food systems resilience.** For instance by seeing market systems as integral to resilient food systems and considering resilience from the perspective of the 'commercial' farmer; By seeing diversification in the market as a key strategy to improve resilience; By also working with buyers and middlemen, searching for their commitment to the wellbeing of suppliers; By strengthening input supply chains.
- **Promoting an enabling environment for resilience.** For instance by promoting safety nets or insurance to protect livelihoods against shocks; By building local capacity for risk analysis; By including the public sector in programming; By securing land rights.

Moreover, the group noted that working on market orientation requires a market that has been identified upfront – but that context analyses are quickly outdated in these settings; and that it is important to look into dietary diversity and ensure that food systems are able to address shortcomings.

For the post-its, see the annex.

Key observations from the discussion

From the group discussion the following key elements stood out as interesting input for the panel discussion on food systems resilience following the breakouts:

1. **The importance of (continuous) risk and conflict assessment in these projects** – without this intelligence it is difficult to pivot your programming and maintain its relevance for resilience;
2. **Taking a (food systems) resilience perspective in such projects can only add value if you monitor on (food systems) resilience as well.** If it is not part of the project design and MEL framework, it may be hard to steer explicitly on resilience outcomes. It can for instance be valuable to monitor how people are using their additional income gained from the programme activities. Do they also invest in better resilience? In this case people invested both in their household but also at community level for improved resilience.
3. **The choice to intervene in a 'Hub of Stability':** the choice to focus the project in a hub of stability (instead of focusing on instable areas with increased vulnerability) is interesting. Do we know enough about potential ripple effects, such as the increase of food availability and other effects in unstable areas around these hubs?

4. **Projects that have complementary activities** (access to inputs; access to finance; production; post-harvest; value addition; etc) **are by definition more resilient** than projects that only focus on one activity. There is more potential for adaptive management.
5. We tend to focus on the resilience of primary producers, but **it is also necessary to look at the resilience of buyers and other middlemen in the chain downstream**. Buyers and middlemen can also be vulnerable to shocks, and could be supported or involved in strategies to promote resilience of producers and the entire chain. A food system perspective enables you to scan the whole system and identify entry points for resilience building. These entry points can be in surprising places that you would not expect. For instance, building resilient value chains may be a key part of building resilient food systems.

Panel discussion

After the breakouts a panel reflected on the group discussion outcomes and engaged in discussion with the participants. The goal of the discussion was to first come to a common understanding of food systems resilience and its added value from a local programming perspective. Then to see if, as a group, we could formulate some key messages about resilience in protracted crises that could be used to engage the Food Systems Summit Action Track 5 on resilience.

Hashi Abdullahi (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

- For policymakers above all impactful and sustainable interventions are key. **Monitoring is necessary to understand whether you are taking the right approach:** is the community that we are trying to help more resilient now than when the intervention started?
- In relation to that, an important lesson of today was the importance of governance as a central aspect of strengthening resilience. Whether this governance is organized at local, community, regional or national level. **It is important to exchange experience on how to best support governance in protracted crises to strengthen (food systems) resilience.**
- Beyond that, when looking at the resilience of a food system you need to look beyond producers, for instance also at the consumer. **When you are looking at more than one element of food security in your intervention pathways you are better able to bring together different elements of resilience through a systems approach.**

Michela Carucci (UN FAO)

- It is good that we are working to operationalize the concept of food systems resilience, but **we should not forget we are talking about two very broad and complex concepts: resilience and food systems**. This is important and innovative, but **we should take care to be practical and not be overwhelmed by the complexity**. We need to be pragmatic enough to pilot practical solutions for communities.
- **This links well to the question on what are we monitoring? Resilience to what, for whom? How can this be really mainstreamed across the food system?** These are important points to address when implementing REPRO. Like in the South Sudan case, are we working on the resilience of communities or also of other actors across the food system? It is very important to operationalize these tools to understand where we are going and what we are measuring. **Operationalize what are the different steps in a food systems approach to resilience.**
- **The added value of the food systems resilience concept**, compared to traditional approaches can be found in two points: **1) Co-creation with different actors that work in different parts of the food system**, from production all the way to consumption, who sit together to work on issues of mutual interest – including multi-level governance; **2) Sustainability. Traditional approaches may be effective, but what about the long run?** A more long-term systemic approach to intervening allows us to work towards more systemic and sustainable outcomes in the long-term instead of taking short-term approaches. The cases were good examples of this. So in short: the congregation of different perspectives on resilience of different food systems stakeholders at different levels of governance, and the long-term sustainability of intervention impacts versus more short-term approaches.

Gerrit-Jan van Uffelen (Wageningen CDI)

- When talking about governance, of course governments have a responsibility for developing people in their territories, and we can talk about expanding or retreating governance. But there is also governance in the international aid system. **The current aid architecture needs to create space to build on existing capacities of people to build their resilience and resilience of households, communities, institutions within the food system.**
- Further, different professionals from the development community may have different perspectives on food systems resilience, but it is key to have the perspectives of local communities. **To build food systems resilience a co-created understanding of food systems resilience between these professionals and communities has to be mapped out**, including how the system is dynamic over time and where it can be made more robust in the face of local shocks and stresses to maintain food security outcomes.
- We quite easily forget that shocks and stresses are part of the food system in many of these places, **crises are not the exception but the norm for local communities. So this should be**

taken as a starting point to identify interventions and pathways to strengthen resilience capacities of communities and food systems.

Group discussion – what to add to the FSS Action track 5 discussion?

- Beyond governance related to connections between the local and national state **we need to think about how to create an enabling environment for the private sector**, for instance to enable multi-stakeholder partnerships. You cannot work just at production level and for that the private sector is crucial. This could be one of the points missing from the food systems resilience action track.
- We need to recognize the challenges faced by private sector in engaging in protracted crises contexts. **We need to understand what it would mean for companies to engage in such contexts, for instance with conflict and displacement. How does that work?** Do agencies and actors operating in such contexts coordinate with private sector players? Of course, funding siloes between relief and development plays an important limiting role here, but does food systems resilience provide an opportunity for this? **It could be a springboard for better coordination and alignment by different sector players, for instance through co-creating this understanding of food systems resilience.** What does this demand in terms of funding options? Should assessments, like baseline reports and context analyses, be provided in the public domain?
- Entrepreneurial activities are important, from smaller to larger ones – including the discussion about responsibility (for food systems resilience) of different chain actors. **In this light, there sometimes is a tension between local business and humanitarian aid.** A well-known example is when providing free seed to farmers, seed companies that are already active in the area – both formal and informal – go out of business.
- **Engaging with the private sector in conflict context also requires us to recognize the impact of humanitarian aid on businesses.** For example, the market for agricultural inputs in Somalia is non-existent because traders/wholesalers are focused on filling NGO orders, and ignore individual customers. That has the impact of undermining production because agricultural inputs can largely only be obtained through NGOs. It is disempowering for farmers, and undermines food security overall.
- **We should not act like we do not know how to engage the private sector. It is made up of individuals in communities we work with who are just trying to keep their small business going.** We need to understand their position and try to strengthen it, instead of undermining. If the sector was doing an action that was really bad for women it would stop, and yet it does not take this approach to the private sector. Whether it is vaccine provision or seeds, these are things currently provided by humanitarian structures but should not be. **Different ways of thinking are needed, starting with thinking about businesses as people in the communities that we work with.**

- **A certain level of stability is needed however to make a food systems approach possible.** But economic approaches can also lead to more of this stability, by making people from different groups work together from shared interests in the value chain.
- What may be missing from the discussion is the purpose of governance: managing and regulating human behaviour. If that is the case then we need to acknowledge that **different stakeholders may have conflicting interests. Managing these interests is key to building food system resilience.** Especially when there are a-symmetric power relations these need to be addressed. Public-private partnerships can help but also risk to hide these interests and even become part of the problem.
- **The discussion about local procurement and market distortion by humanitarian actors is already ongoing for 10-15 years. Coordination does happen, but a number of challenges are accompanied with local procurement; seed quality, availability, and demand.** The quality needs to be good enough, if good quality seeds are available locally agencies should source from them, but often this is not the case. Finally, if you have a very limited supply of seeds prices will shoot up – which also risks market distortion. So there needs to be a balance between formal sector and informal sector, both need to be given space. Talking about seed systems in South-Sudan, the informal sectors plays a huge role in the system. **Creating space for an enabling environment for private sector actors whilst strengthening the role of informal sector actors in contexts of protracted crises needs to be combined.**
- The food systems summit action track also misses **reference to capacities for climate change adaptation and conflict sensitivity - at local level - when working on food system strengthening.**

Follow-up: paper and national level CoPs

Following this meeting these insights will be used to produce a short paper on food systems resilience to engage the [Food Systems Summit action track 5](#) on resilience. A reference group of meeting participants has been created to review the paper throughout its writing. The paper will outline what the local programming perspective discussed in this meeting can add to the required follow-up and the operationalization of the concept.

Beyond this meeting, the REPRO programme invites participants to join the national level communities of practice it is starting in Sudan, South Sudan and Somaliland. If you would like to join one of these Communities of Practice, please reach out to the REPRO team via: fns-repro.wcdi@wur.nl

Participant list

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Annex: post-its

Somaliland - What do you think are food systems resilience elements in the case and challenge of CARE?

Increasing resilience to environmental shocks/disasters

Enhancing NRM for better fodder production for livestock
Pasture improvement and animal body improvement
Addressing recurring shocks and stresses: floods, land degradation
better land and water management to support livestock health
Community capacity building to respond to climate shocks
soil conservation

Strengthening institutions and governance at multiple (interlinked) levels

revitalization of customary laws, building bridge between central government and community level governance
strengthening institutions that can support
Establishing conflict resolution mechanisms
linkage between communities and the government authorities.
Good interaction with communities and local government

Other

- local communities, local authorities, pastoralists, private land grabbers
Combining improved livestock production with improved governance that could have other environmental benefits to increase resilience
challenges: weak government; free riding practice, tragedy of the commons

Somaliland - Challenge: land still degrades due to recurring droughts, how to prevent further deterioration? What are your experiences and good practices?

Adapt livelihoods to more sustainable practices

Focus on dominant livelihood system strengthening to improve economic opportunities and FNS outcomes
> fodder and NRM
develop alternatives for charcoal production for those people who make a living out of that activity
Need to prevent degrading natural resource base due to unsustainable NRM practices and deforestation

Build social/community cohesion through multi-stakeholder exchanges and group organization

natural resource management: collective versus individual interests. How to manage these
Organize consultations with stakeholders at community and local government level. Exchange experiences, link to policy issues
strengthen organized groups (farmers, pastoralists) as social cohesion helps in law enforcement

Strengthen links between local (informal) governance and government

Importance of recognition of customary laws to deal with NRM, land tenure and conflict resolution
Further improve relationship and linkages between local community governance mechanisms and regional/national governance and policy making
Best practice: link government to communities
inform & involve government at various levels to get their buy-in and follow-up after project closure

Other

If the effects of weather extremes determine whether land degradation or NRM outcomes are achieved, we should ask ourselves if the measures are designed to adapt to these specific hazards. Use and integrated analysis of climate and weather information may help
expectation from the donors demand impact to be seen in the near future

South Sudan breakout - what are food systems elements?

An integrated approach

the integral manner of focussing on access to finance, inputs, organisation and technology; not just one manner, so beyond increased product, JTV
the intervention activities are quite complementary and work at different levels: access to inputs and finance, production, post-harvest and some value addition activities. Different key agricultural crops important for communities
Good link between local context incl. disaster risks, with food production, food processing and marketing / income generation. (ML)
Risk assessments/resilience building integrated (early warning, conflict risk reduction, peacebuilding) into value chain development RB
In South Sudan the focus of eh SSADP II on conflict analysis and mitigation is a must

Working towards multiple outcomes

Achieve better food consumption practices while trying to go commercial TR
increased sustainable food production (enhancing soil productivity without depleting it)

Building markets and developing value chains

Def role of markets in increasing availability and accessibility to food GJvU

Increased food production and diversity, local value addition IV

Enabling environment for loans, essential for business development, and resilience (ADR)

creating a value chain and livelihoods in which people are interdependent and connected

Build new forms of public support for services through creation of markets

Resilience as a strategy to improve broader systems

RB - resilience building in more stable areas, so that stronger food systems/economies there can create ripple effect to wider area

This contribute to resilience in Hub of Stability ... and beyond areas of Hubs of Smight work in Hubs of Stability ... what about other areas b ----- Build new forms of public support for services through creation of markets ----- creating a value chain and livelihoods in which people are interdependent and connected

Other

Not much on the food system as a whole beyond production?

Some components of building resilience against flooding to protect food production, through dykes

Questions

Building resilience to what? Is household food and nutrition security being measured and monitored?

CH - good to see that the group is becoming more market oriented, but in yield and sales I see no increase between 2019 and 2020. Why?

Demand factor, or actually more the BNF HH. Who are they and is that a challenge for the programme? (ADR)

In transforming subsistence farmers 'commercial' you raise exposure and vulnerability - inflation beyond control. How manage? GJvU

South Sudan case - How to integrate resilience in the transition from subsistence farming to farming for the market?

Integrate ecological resilience into farming practices

production needs to be higher, soil productivity needs to be raised - using agroecological practices to sustainably enhance food production

Looking at production methods by working on inter-cropping and CA methods. The project is already working on different crops (MC)

HB: ensuring that the crops you promote are actually drought resistant and have short growing cycles (also that crops have good market value

Build (resilient) markets as a part of food systems resilience

Project works on improving peoples resilience and food securit. Good to also reflect on resilient food system further - e.g. market systems.

Resilience in local food systems in terms of impr local availability and (hopefully) accessibility - people having resources to buy GJvU

Consider resilience from the perspective of the 'commercial' farmer

You mentioned "the market". who is the market? local one, international one? Is there a single buyer ?

Diversification in the market as a key strategy to improve resilience MC

CH - Also work with buyers and middlemen, to search for commitment to the wellbeing of their suppliers
Strengthen input supply chains. Also depends on functioning of input and output markets in a (protracted) crisis situation IV

Public/social

integrating 'safety nets'/some sort of insurance or otherwise, in order to build resilience of farmer's livelihoods against shocks

CH - Farming for the market will expose the farmer to more risks, due to having to take out loans etc.

Capacity building in risk analysis?

Whats the role of public sector?

Secure land rights IV

Other

working on market orientation requires a market ; it is important to have a market identified. upfront JTV analyses that take a long time to do, are quickly outdated in fragile contexts as in South Sudan JTV

Looking into dietary diversity, and ensuring that food systems can address shortcomings.

Link this project to REPRO in South Sudan (seed system strengthening) Community of Practise.