



GLOBAL
RESILIENCE
PARTNERSHIP

Why Building Resilience is Critical for the SDGs



Photo: Danish Refugee Council

The Challenge

We face a new reality. Disasters and shocks are occurring more frequently, and chronic stresses are lasting longer. Healthy ecosystems that underpin our social and economic systems are strained. Many gradual changes, like climate change, are beginning to have significant and far-reaching cumulative impacts. It is clear that stability and assumptions of linear, incremental change are no longer valid.

This unprecedented level of unpredictability requires a different approach to how we ensure that all people have a productive and prosperous life – even in the middle of unforeseen events.

We therefore require new approaches to development to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We believe that resilience, the capacity to persist, adapt and transform in the face of change, is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development and achieving the SDGs. It provides opportunities for positive, environmentally sustainable and lasting change in this new reality.

Responding to this, the Global Resilience Partnership (GRP) has been established as an independent partnership of public and private organisations joining forces towards a sustainable and prosperous future for the most vulnerable people and places.

Year of opportunity

The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2018 marks the beginning of a year of opportunity, concluding with the UN Secretary General's Climate Summit in September 2019. Resilience is one of the Summit's main themes and significant commitments and investments are expected to be announced.

Resilience in Practice

GRP has developed a set of principles to guide our approach to resilience in pursuit of the SDGs. These are:

1. **Embrace complexity.** Working to identify the root causes of complex development challenges, and how these can be addressed within political, economic, ecological and social systems.
2. **Recognise constant change.** Risks and stresses are becoming increasingly unpredictable, uncertain and unavoidable. Systems need the capacity to navigate dynamic and uncertain futures.
3. **Enable inclusive decision-making.** Putting people and communities, especially women and marginalised groups, at the centre of decisions and empowering them to help develop equitable and sustainable solutions.
4. **Enhance ecosystems integrity.** Approaches to development must ensure a good life for all while maintaining the integrity of the Earth's ecosystems.
5. **Promote flexibility and learning.** A rigid or fixed solution will not build resilience for change; approaches need to be adaptive and responsive, constantly learning from success and failure.
6. **Leverage innovation and opportunity.** Developing new solutions and innovations that address the complexity of development challenges will be essential for transforming to sustainable and just development.

Putting Resilience into Practice

The following three projects show how enhancing resilience helps achieve three of the SDGs under review at the High Level Political Forum. These projects are supported under the GRP challenges, funded by USAID and Z Zurich Foundation.



SDG 6 – Rethinking Roads as a Pathway to Resilience

Roads have a negative impact on landscapes in developing regions, causing local flooding, drainage congestion and water logging. In some instances, roads are responsible for initiating landslides. Surveys undertaken along roads in upland Ethiopia and Uganda showed that between 8 to 25 problem spots exist every 10 kilometre of road.

There are an estimated 900 million rural people who do not have access to roads and transport infrastructure. Roads and railways on all continents are predicted to increase significantly by 2050. Global expenditure to

upgrade and maintain roads and railways, as well as providing new infrastructure in the developing world, is expected to approach USD 3 trillion per year over the next 40 years.

In the Horn of Africa and Bangladesh, Meta Meta is transforming the way roads are planned and built. Through their innovative design these smart roads are able to harvest rainwater, prevent soil erosion, and use roadside land productively.

Strengthening the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management, one of the targets of SDG 6, is key. Meta Meta has worked to include local communities, especially women, in the decision-making process and the design and implementation of the project.

The new roads are also designed with nature in mind. Conventional road planning in the Horn of Africa and Bangladesh does not always take into account the natural hydrology of the area, and may block off natural waterways limiting access to water or increasing flood risk. Meta Meta has designed roads that work with nature, not against it. This supports the ecosystem integrity of the area and enables roadside communities to have access to water harvesting, another important target of SDG 6.

Inclusive decision-making and enhancing ecosystem integrity are two of the core resilience principles that this project addresses, and successfully shows GRP's vision for resilience in action.

SDG 11- Sustainable Resilient Cities for All

South Asia has witnessed numerous climate-related events in the recent past. While shocks such as heat waves and floods often get most of the attention, it is the stresses of high temperatures, water logging, water scarcity and deteriorating water quality that have the biggest impacts on human health and livelihoods.

In 2010, Ahmedabad's temperature reached a high of 46.8°C. 1,344 deaths were likely caused by this heat wave. The combination of increased rainfall and flooding with inadequate sanitation systems has led to sewage water mixing with the flood water. This becomes a breeding ground for diseases in the short term, and in the long term impacts human health by contaminating water supplies. India already reports two million cases of malaria every year, and it has been projected that malaria risk in South Asia will increase by 5 percent in 2030. There is also an increase in the number of dengue cases being registered annually over the last five years from 12,561 cases in 2008 to 75,808 cases in 2013.



Photo: Mahila Housing

Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT) and its partners developed the “Women-led Resilience Building of Urban Poor in South Asia” project. This project built the resilience capacities of 25,000 low income families living in slums or informal settlements in seven cities of South Asia. It did this by taking action against four climate risks: (a) heat waves; (b) flooding and inundation; (c) water scarcity; and (d) increased climate change-related incidence of water and vector borne diseases.

Women took the lead to devise locally relevant, climate resilient solutions that were suitable for poor communities to implement. These sustainable solutions included terrace gardening, landscaping with native plants, mosquito traps, rainwater harvesting, community based water supply systems, and vermicomposting. The project successfully demonstrated how women-led initiatives build the necessary social capital, policy influence and technical expertise, for poor urban communities to respond effectively to climate change.



SDG 15 - Transformational Resilience in the Drylands of the Sahel

Agriculture and food systems in the Sahel are in crisis. An estimated 12 million small holder farmers have become chronically vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity. About 20% of dryland farm households have become ultra-poor suffering from chronic malnutrition. Even in good rainfall years, many adopt negative coping mechanisms, including going into debt, reducing daily meals and selling assets. By 2050 scientists predict climate change could decrease agricultural production of millet and sorghum by 13%

percent in Burkina Faso, 25.9 percent in Mali and 44.7 percent in Senegal.

Groundswell International has helped farmers use agroecological innovations to increase climate-resilient food production and dietary diversity in their communities. Groundswell took a systems approach, called Agroecology Plus 6 (AE+6), to scale out methods that greatly differ from the conventional, top-down transfer of technology. AE+6 focused on proven conservation agriculture methods to improve crop productivity and regenerate soils along with a focus on 1) scaling 2) equity 3) gender 4) nutrition and diets 5) livelihood diversity and 6) governance.

Using the GRP resilience principles as a framework, this project has improved the resilience of over 100,000 rural farming families in the Sahel, allowing them to thrive in uncertainty. The basis for the AE+6 approach, grounded by local knowledge, is that a healthy biosphere underpins a thriving society and the economy.

We believe that a new approach that has resilience at its core is required to meet the SDGs. Meta Meta, Mahila Housing SEWATrust and Groundswell International have demonstrated that by designing and implementing projects guided by key resilience principles, they were able to build sustainable solutions to achieving the SDGs in challenging environments. GRP is committed to finding more resilient solutions, ensuring they get to scale and widely sharing the lessons of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

More about GRP and How to Join

GRP acts as an incubator for resilience innovations and a knowledge platform on how to invest in resilience for development. We work to develop new mechanisms for financing and actively advocating for progressive policy change.

GRP is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), Z Zurich Foundation, and UK's Department for International Development (DFID), and comprises a partnership of over 30 organizations including multilateral development banks, governments, regional organizations, academic institutes, community groups and NGOs. It is hosted by the Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University.

Organisations who share our ambition and believe that building resilience underpins the achievement of sustainable development in a rapidly changing world are welcome to join us. For more information on GRP and becoming a partner please contact:

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