Integrated Resilience Programming: Lessons from Uganda, Nepal, and Ethiopia

Event overview

- **Location/Date:** Online, October 08th 2020
- **Participants:** 70 participants representing USAID resilience programming partners, REAL partners and other stakeholders
- **Objective:** Participants will have learned about the added value of integrated resilience programming in food security activities, hear examples of what integration looks like in practice, and learn about challenges faced when attempting to integrate programs at different stages of the program life cycle.
- **Organizer:** Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Award
- **Key Links:**
  Presentation by Jeeyon Kim, Sr. Resilience Researcher and Jill Scantlan Resilience MEL (Monitor, Evaluation and Learning) Advisor, Mercy Corps
  What Facilitates Integration in Resilience Programs? A Case Study on Nepal REAL Case Study
  Recording of the presentation and plenary discussions

Panel Discussion Key Takeaways: Examples of Integrated Resilience programming

Promoting Agriculture, Health, and Alternative Livelihoods (PAHAL)

- PAHAL seeks to improve nutritional status by strengthening livelihoods and increasing the capacity of vulnerable households to prevent, mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks

and stresses in communities with deep poverty and high rates of malnutrition in critical zones of the Far-Western and Mid-Western Regions of Nepal.

- Landslides and flooding are major shocks in the areas where PAHAL works in Nepal
- In order to stabilize slopes and reduce risk of landslides PAHAL intentionally layered its livestock intervention through the integration of natural resource management, disaster risk reduction, livestock production and markets teams.
- The natural resource management group, community forest groups and farmer groups coordinated to collectively reduce risk of landslides by empowering farmers to plant broom grass roots of which help stabilize slopes.
- PAHAL's integrated resilience programming impacted multiple outcomes. The farmers sold broom grass in the market, which led to diversification of income sources. The fodder was used to feed the goats, which resulted in stronger livestock.
- A lack of integrated resilience programming would have led to a gap of shared understanding among team members about connectedness of systems, shocks and stresses and the potential synergy and would result in time burden for communities and lack of sustainable models.

Improved Breed Poultry Production, Ethiopia (SPIR DFSA)

- Working with local private sector actor to enable our rural PSMP clients to access dual-purpose chickens which produce four times as many eggs per year as the local indigenous breeds contributing to more income for women
- Poultry production has the ability to impact multiple outcomes
- Relatively low startup and operational costs.
- Has the potential to generate ongoing income through egg sales and meat sales leading to increased income for women.
- Potential to improve nutrition status of children because it leads to availability of meat and eggs
- We intentionally designed the activity with the participation from multiple teams including Health and Nutrition, WASH, and Women's Empowerment teams in order to impact other key outcomes
- Involvement of Health and Nutrition teams led to reinforcement of key nutritional messages for communities resulting in regular inclusion of animal source foods, especially in the diets of key categories of young children, and pregnant and lactating women.
- Increasing the number of poultry also risks increasing exposure of children to animal fecal matter. Through integrating a strong WASH component in the activity, we were able to include important hygiene messages in our communication.
- If we had failed to integrate resilience programming children and lactating women's nutrition would decline.

Breakout Sessions Key Takeaways

During breakout sessions, participants discussed integration challenges and successes. The ***successes*** include:

- Integrated measurement through working with the community to identify indicators for success.
- Estimating the time drain on beneficiaries due to participation in the activities.
- Integration of the different target populations and targeting criteria at community level. (different households have different target populations represented)
- Early collaboration during design has led to greater success.
- Intentional design that encourages integration.
- Conducting assessments by target group versus technical sector.
- Multi-stakeholder engagement for kickoffs to build awareness.
- Participant tracking when programs are not directly intervening with households. (i.e., MSD approaches)
- Bringing together technical experts from across sectors in design.

> "It would be helpful to know more about human-centered design, and learning approaches on individual-level indicators, as the ability to deal with diversity of circumstance, need and roles within HHs is an important strength of integrated resilience program approaches."
> *Event participant*

Furthermore, the following ***challenges*** in implementing integrated resilience programming were highlighted during breakout sessions:

- Planning interventions that integrate with activities/priorities of external stakeholders and organizations
- Different contracting mechanisms such as cooperative agreement vs. contracts complicate collaboration
- Set up and planning can take longer than teams anticipate, leaving them to feel 'rushed' once implementation starts.
- Putting the design into practice is a large obstacle for teams
- Inability to hire generalists versus technical specialists
- Not doing cross-sector collaborative design
- Challenging if the local government or other key entity was not part of programming from the design stage.
- Integration across different projects at different points in their project cycles (as opposed to integration within a project)
- Limited information on measuring the resilience indicators and integrating them into the TOC and MEAL system.
- Measuring success/impact of integrated resilience programming is a challenge. (Agreement on integrated indicators vs. sector-specific)
- All key stakeholders including local governments, and community/beneficiaries must buy-in and understand the benefits of integrated resilience programming

Lastly, during breakout sessions the participants had the opportunity to discuss and share ideas on where the humanitarian/development community should invest resources to advance understanding of how to integrate programming to catalyze resilience and sustain wellbeing. ***Highlights include:***

- Effective integrated resilience programming models for fragile/insecure environments.

- Thinking through the Theory of Change to inform sequencing.
- Adaptive management to navigate through a well-thought-through TOC
- Training for program leadership so they can promote a culture of integration and collaboration
- Additional research and policy recommendations on integrating between programs
- More practical tools and guidance for integrating activities during start-up
- Increased coordination at all levels to ensure a targeted approach.
- Start small, evaluate, and adapt as needed.
- Consider how adaptive management and mid-stream opportunities for further integration can support integration.
- Better human-centered design. Individuals and households do not have single-sectoral needs.
- Co-financing, co-creation and joint planning.
- Integrating HR and logistics components as their processes have implications on the implementation of activities.

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