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Nutrition and Resilience

Discussion Brief on Better Integration of Nutrition
into Resilience-Strengthening Programs

December 14th, 2023

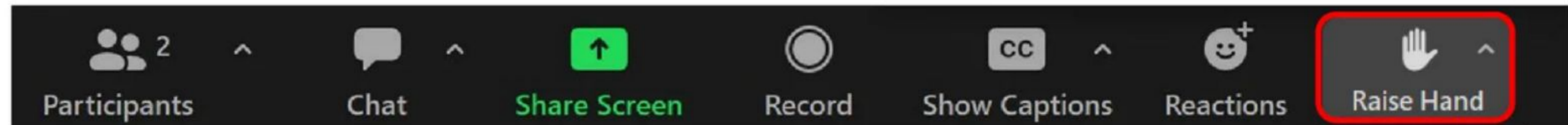
About the REAL Award

- This presentation is organized through the **Resilience, Evaluation Analysis and Learning (REAL) Award**.
- REAL responds to the growing demand for rigorous and practical support for **resilience evaluation, monitoring and learning**.
- REAL is expanding this work by addressing new technical areas, such as nutrition, within a resilience and resilience measurement framework.
- Today's event will present the **Discussion Brief on Better Integration of Nutrition into Resilience-Strengthening Programs** and discuss ideas for advancing this work.

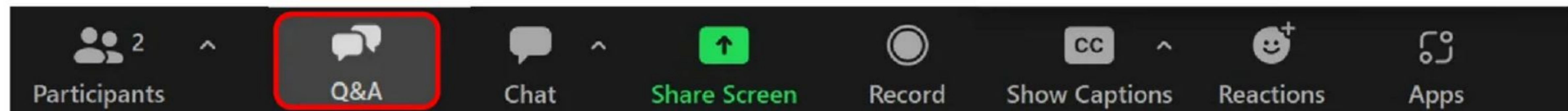


Let's Get Organized!

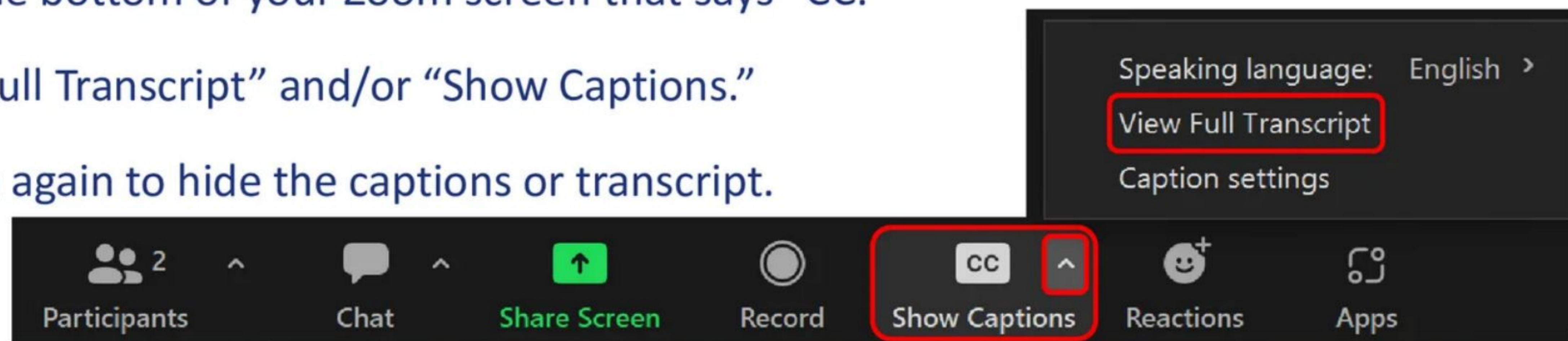
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OPENING REMARKS

MADELEINE SMITH

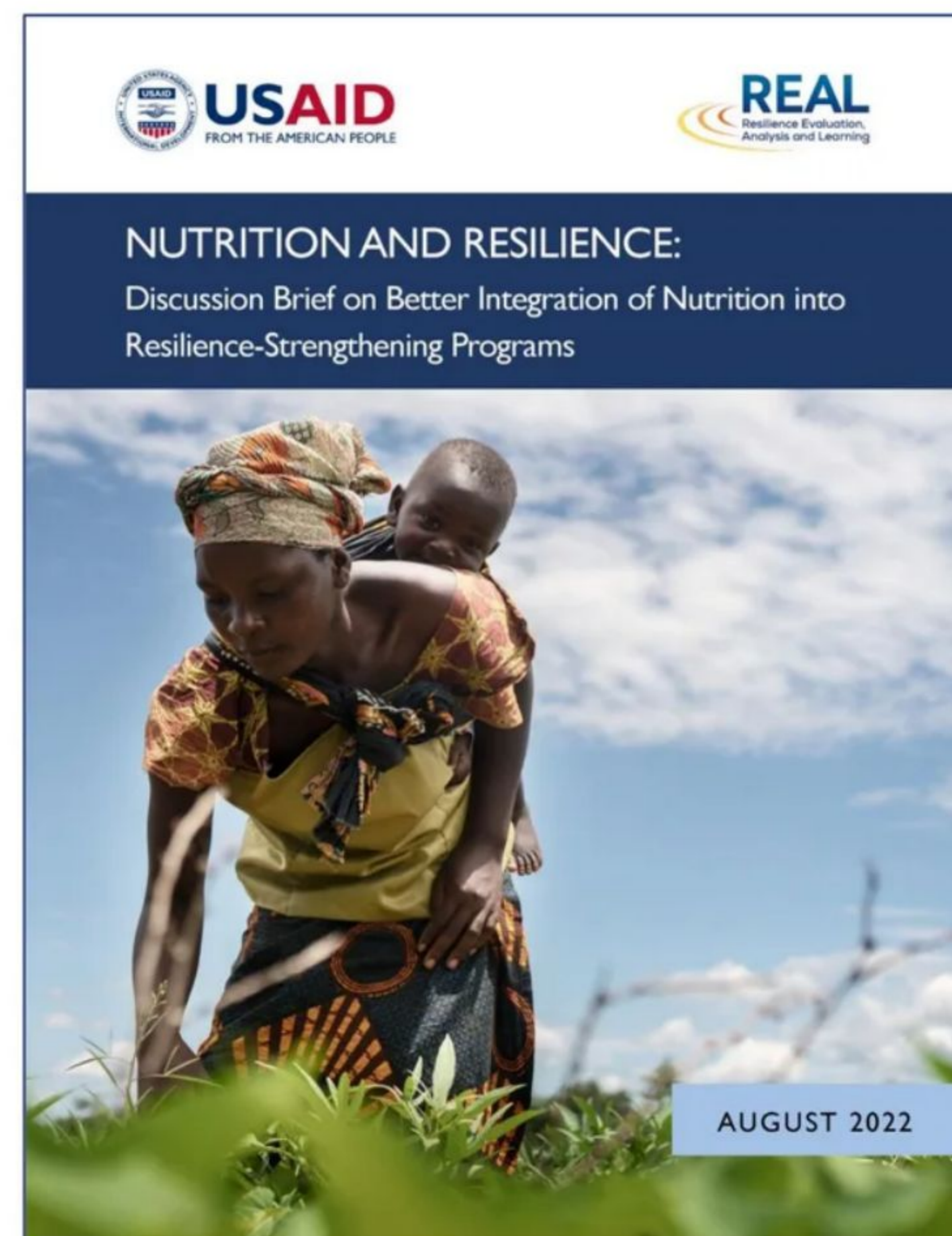
RESILIENCE INTEGRATION ADVISOR

USAID CENTER FOR RESILIENCE

BUREAU FOR RESILIENCE, ENVIRONMENT, AND FOOD SECURITY (REFS)

Nutrition and Resilience: Discussion Brief on Better Integration of Nutrition into Resilience-Strengthening Programs

- Optimal nutrition is fundamental to achieving the USAID's wider mission to end extreme poverty and promote resilient societies (USAID Multi-sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014-2025).
- Nutrition is both an **input** to resilience and an **outcome** of resilience.
- Nutrition-specific interventions address the immediate causes of malnutrition (such as vitamin A supplementation or the promotion of biofortified foods).
- Nutrition-sensitive interventions address the underlying causes (such as livelihood diversification and women's empowerment).



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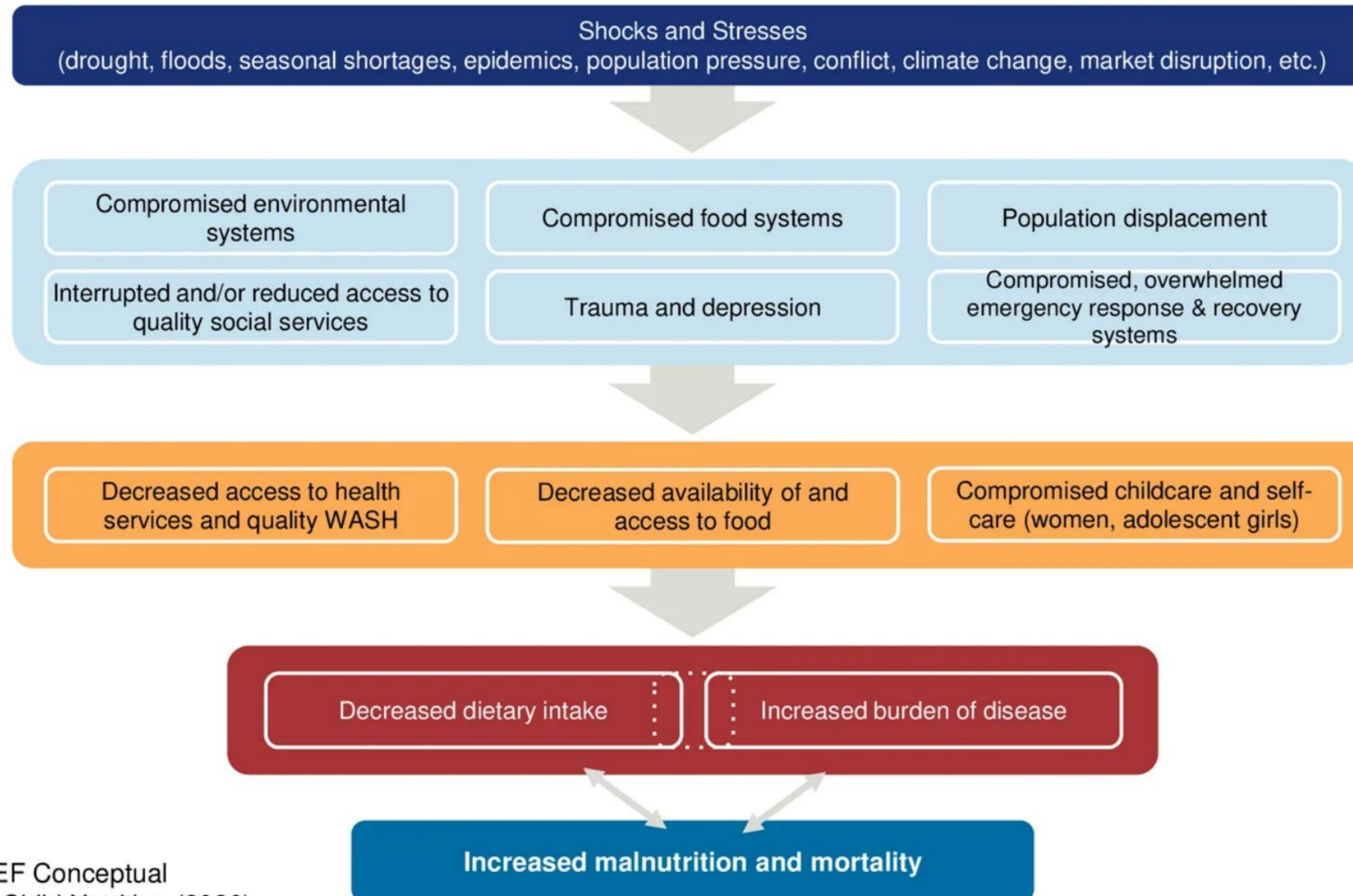
Why seek to better understand nutrition and resilience?

- Although child and maternal nutrition indicators are a concern in the countries in which we work, it is important to remember that *large percentages* of children and women are not malnourished, yet they live in the same context as those who are.
- Identifying the factors that assist these families to maintain nutrition in the presence of shocks can guide our programming.



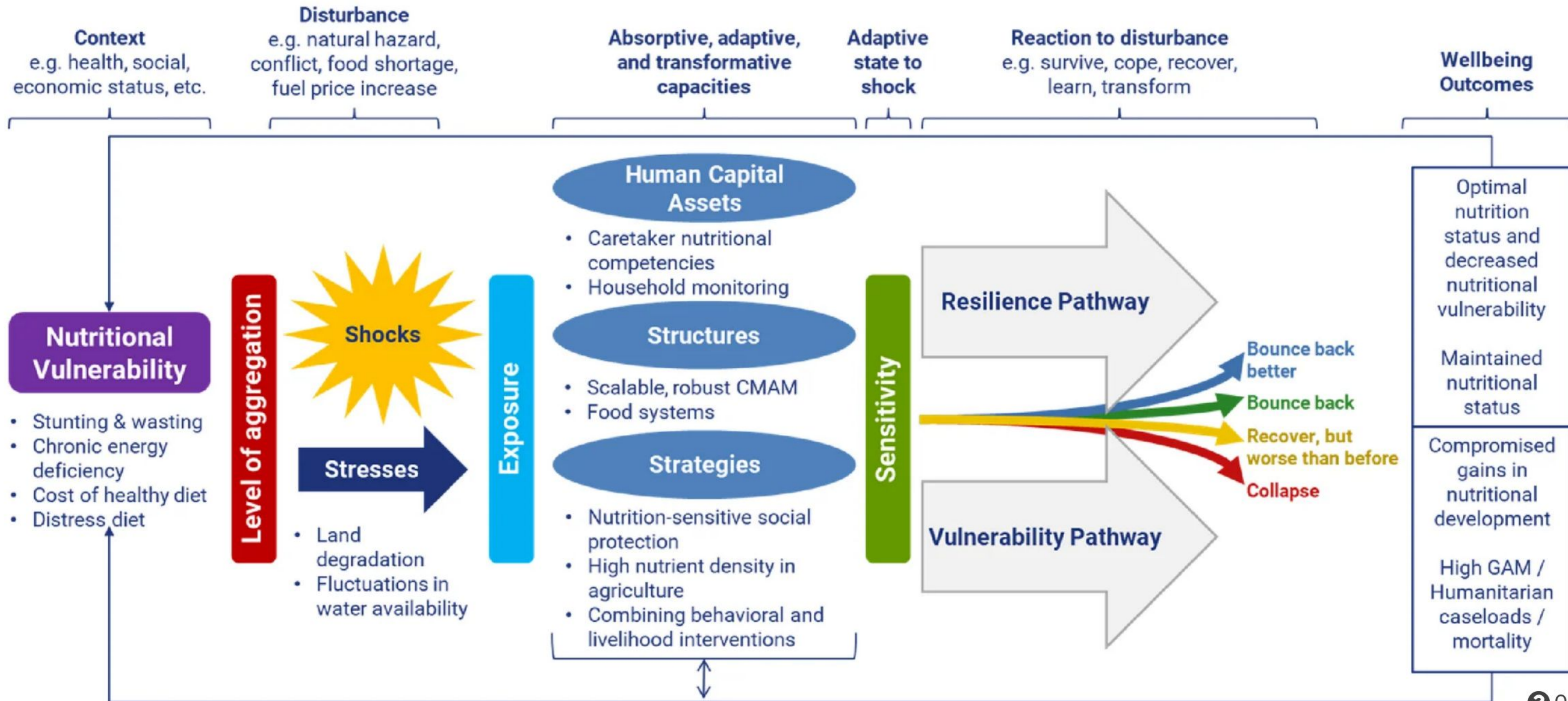
Photo: Fredrik Lerneryd / Save the Children

Shocks, stresses, and negative relationships with nutritional status



Nutrition and Resilience Conceptual Framework

*Nutrition is an **input** to and **outcome** of resilience*



Examples of resilience-strengthening strategies that may improve nutritional well-being include:

Absorptive

- Nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive shock responsive **safety net services** provided through formal government systems and/or via humanitarian assistance are critical for supporting undernourished households exposed to shocks and stresses.
- When such activities target the nutritionally vulnerable and are effectively **linked with maternal-child healthcare** and behavioral change initiatives, they can help maintain nutritional status of the most vulnerable during and after the onset of food security shocks.

Adaptive

- Activities **promoting the cultivation of nutrient-dense, drought-tolerant crops; access to/utilization of financial services; and sustainable management of natural resources** can improve households' capacity to adapt to shocks by supporting diverse means of nutrient consumption, income generation, and risk reduction.
 - To have the greatest impact on nutrition, they must be adapted to context (accounting for trade-offs between household consumption and income) and linked with behavioral interventions to improve household feeding and caregiving practices.
- Activities **strengthening women's economic and social roles** in managing productive resources contribute to improved nutrition.

Transformative

- **Gender equity and access of marginalized groups to health and social protection interventions** are particularly important for mitigating risk and maintaining resilience and nutritional status in shock-prone environments.
- Programs can incorporate normative change into designs and **social and behavior change strategies** as key drivers of improved nutrition (e.g. to address complementary feeding).
- Strengthening the capacity of formal and informal institutions to **scale-up safety net and community-oriented nutrition programs** to prevent and manage severe acute malnutrition also helps strengthen system-level change to increase resilience to shocks and, in turn, avert emergencies and prevent or limit backsliding on nutritional outcomes.

Humanitarian-Development-Peace Coherence

Looking at nutrition with a resilience lens means not only strengthening multi-sectoral programming through a nutrition lens, but also strategically considering nutrition in the context of shocks and stresses.

A dynamic risk context in shock-prone countries has led USAID to adopt the approach:

Humanitarian-Development-Peace Coherence

Actions:

- Adopt portfolio approaches
- Sequence, Layer and Integrate to ensure consumption stability and SBC is layered/integrated
- Prepare to scale up nutrition-specific interventions during shocks
- Seek opportunities to strengthen and prioritize shock-responsive, nutrition-sensitive interventions
- Consider the complex relationships between shocks and social response (e.g. Ebola, COVID-19)

Analyzing nutritional impacts of resilience-strengthening activities

Resilience-strengthening initiatives must focus deliberately on improving the nutritional status of nutritionally vulnerable populations (e.g., women, adolescent girls, and children) through nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions.



Photo: Talitha Brauer / Save the Children

Measuring and monitoring resilience indicators

- Measure and monitor nutritional status **in the face of shocks and stresses**
- Wasting, stunting, food consumption, dietary quality, morbidity
- Analyze relationships between coping mechanisms and outcomes



Photo: Rik Goverde/Save the Children

Future Directions

- Seek a better understanding of effects of resilience approaches on nutritional outcomes
- If resilience is demonstrably increased, do wasting levels improve in the absence of CMAM?
- What else is needed to better integrate nutrition into resilience programming for meaningful improvements?



Photo: Fredrik Lemeryd / Save the Children

Question & Answer Session

Scan this QR code
to join



What are the information gaps related to integrating nutrition and resilience programming?

nutrition status of demographics outside of women and children under 5 (i.e. Older adults, adolescents, adulthood)

Evidence

What interventions work best, and in what combination?

Indicators forecasting risk

SBC and demand generation for agriculture production in resilience settings

Examples of successful programs that have achieved success in integrating the two things well which has led to transformational impact especially for women and adolescent girls.

Evidence on scalable project models

More rapid monitoring of resilience capacities and behavior change (simplified measures along the impact pathway would be helpful)

knowledge between resilience and nutrition programming workers to identify integration points

Limited Policy integration, insufficient longitudinal studies which evaluate the long term impact of integrated nutrition and resilience programmes and limited or lack of national food consumption data.

How to operationalize across the nexus

evidence of approaches that work and can be scaled.

Link with other complementary approaches such as nurturing care

Understanding who are the resilience actors

What are first, second order interventions etc

Examples of approaches/models we know work and can be easily taught and scaled up

Lack of adequate data for action.

a more concrete definition of 'resilience' with specific indicators directly influenced by nutrition

Let's think objectively and self-critically, if necessary: Why should improving nutrition be so complicated, including in areas of recurrent crises - is that our doing, as development practitioners and academics? How can we simplify our effective response?

indicators for integrated programmes

How do we work in a joint FOOD & MARKET SYSTEMS approach to improve nutrition in areas of recurrent crises? In "peacetime" areas, strengthening nutrition by transforming food systems is difficult & is confounded by the political economy of food systems actors & the power of transnational corporations. How can we improve nutrition in areas where food systems are being shocked in many ways, by multiple causes? Cash & access to credit (ex. mobile) is a great answer because it's portable. What else?

Nutrition integration in to PSE and marketing

Evidence - we need evidence that all of this is working

How can programs better understand and address the specific needs of the most vulnerable HH groups/ segments who may not be able to participate in activities?

Ignorance to nutrition by sector

how to adapt interventions for specific contexts

Defining what else besides dietary diversity can be measured for nutrition outcomes

Cost-benefit - what are the key actions in areas of recurrent crisis that measurably and sustainably improve and eliminate SAM rates/SAM, in terms of bang-for-the-buck, in an environment of perennial shortfalls in humanitarian assistance spending - in an era of ever-higher humanitarian need?

The information gaps related to integrating nutrition and resilience programming reside on the poor guidance about the information flow and quality check issues. The non linkages of the two funding streams because Resilience is defined as provider while nutrition is defined as consumer, so if the resilience is not strengthened, nutrition also suffers.

How can we improve food safety in areas of recurrent crises as a way of improving nutritional outcomes and lowering/eliminating SAM?

What activities or organizations are generating evidence to fill these information gaps?

WFP and UNICEF are doing so much

Action Against Hunger in the Sahel region,

MERIAM research project Action Against Hunger

WFP, UNHCR,

Has the RMS ZimVAC helped improve Zimbabwe's nutrition in areas of humanitarian need and recurrent crises? How can measurement lead to practical actions and tractable improvements?

IDEAL is working on a practice note series on operationalizing HDP coherence that will be published in the first quarter of 2024

Get local - ask Missions about what government actions are indeed working, for example. We need to look beyond the international humanitarian partners and academic studies and see what is actually working, since HA can be considered life-saving throwing good money after bad, as it were, because it doesn't sustainably solve the problems that are indeed development failures, but does (admirably and thankfully) save lives.

CRS and Mercy-Corps led RFSAs in Kenya

FAO using RIMA assessment

World Vision PDH

World Vision has programmatic data from private funded projects integrating nutrition and resilience in stable and fragile contexts in Africa and Asia.

Resilience Resources and Trainings

Resources

- [ResilienceLinks](#)
- [AgriLinks](#)
- [ClimateLinks](#)
- Subscribe to the ResilienceLinks newsletter [here](#)
- Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Award [resources](#)
- Resilience Evidence Forum

Reports:

- 2018 [Resilience Evidence Forum Report](#)
- 2023 [Resilience Evidence Forum Synthesis Report](#)

Trainings

Resilience 101 – Introductory Course

- [English](#)
- [French](#)
- AgriLinks Trainings
 - [Measuring Resilience](#)
 - [Resilience and Livelihoods Diversification](#)
 - [Resilience and Sustainable Poverty Escapes](#)
- Further Resilience Measurement materials available on REAL's web page, including:
 - [REAL Short Course in Resilience Measurement](#)
 - [Resilience and Resilience Capacities Measurement Options](#)

Thank you!

Reach out to the REAL award at REAL@savechildren.org



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