Strengthening Resilience Around the World

Once broadly defined and loosely measured, the concept of resilience now shapes the development strategies of USAID, DFID, the World Bank, and an increasing number of partner government planning agencies. Resilience thinking provides the basis for a more coherent response to crises such as the 2011 droughts in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, and the fundamental question that emerged from them: How could more than 30 years of development investment in these regions result in yet another round of emergency relief?

Resilience as a Corporate Goal

As a central focus of our corporate strategic plan, Chemonics measures our annual company-wide contributions to 34 of the indicators aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Of the 34 indicators, 29 measure contributions to Intermediate Results 5 and 6 under Objective 2 of the US government's Global Food Security Strategy: Strengthened Resilience Among People and Systems.

We adhere to USAID's definition of resilience, with its emphasis on the ability or capacity to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses. Since 1975, with our first agriculture interventions, we have refined methods for building capacity of individuals, households, communities, countries, and systems. In recent years, we have developed approaches that proactively help stakeholders reduce, mitigate, and manage risk and adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in ways that reduce chronic vulnerability and facilitate inclusive growth. Resilience analysis and strategy is supported by our eleven Practice Areas, each supporting a distinct technical portfolio with evidence-based analyses, learning events, and advisory services. Below are examples of how we are currently incorporating resilience concepts and approaches in our work:

In 35 countries, we are **strengthening the capacity of governments and communities to reduce and manage disasters** through the USAID Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). We work with the U.S. government to advise on policy actions that support open trade, strengthen early warning and response preparedness, and increase access to weather forecasting and modeling. FEWS NET uses scenario development methodology to provide time-sensitive information, including food security monitoring during conflicts, and has provided information such as the effect of devaluation on food security and the expected impact of flooding on regional markets.

In 24 countries, we have **assisted governments and communities to effectively deal with the risks and stresses of weather and climate variability** through the USAID Adaptation Thought Leadership and Assessments (ATLAS) project. Under this USAID REPLACE IDIQ task order, we reduced vulnerability of 24 countries to weather and climate risks by building their capacity to predict and prepare for climate variability and change, so that those governments and communities can effectively deal with associated risks and stresses. For example, in Mozambique, where agriculture makes up more than 25 percent of gross domestic product and employs 80 percent of the workforce, ATLAS experts detailed the likely impact of climate changes on key crops, such as soy, pigeon pea, and sesame, and analyzed opportunities to manage those risks.

In Colombia, we are **increasing access to financial services for the rural poor that can help mitigate and manage risk, enable profitable enterprise, and increase asset accumulation.** Under the USAID Rural Finance Initiative (RFI), we target women, youth, and indigenous groups who have been systematically excluded from credit, insurance, and savings services. Since 2015, we have increased the number of new rural financial clients by more than 250,000, 49 percent of them women, and mobilized $228 million in financial services from 14 banks.

In Georgia, in the USAID Zrda (Growth) project, we are **strengthening formal and informal safety nets that individuals, households, and communities rely on during times of stress** resulting from political and security shocks associated with Russia. We are building capacity in communities adjacent to occupied territories by expanding use of and income from intensive greenhouse agriculture while also tracking impact through an innovative resilience index and survey to measure changes in community resilience and social capital.

In Uganda, under the USAID Feed the Future Youth Leadership in Agriculture (YLA) project, we are **preparing youth to take up new and profitable opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness** through a partnership with leading seed provider Equator Seeds Limited and Sing with Me Happily, a tractor-training institution. This collaboration has enabled us to provide 6,500 youth farmers with training opportunities in the fundamentals of agribusiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy, in the process creating new and diversified income sources.

In Mali, we are **increasing access to and use of climate information by vulnerable populations** through the USAID Mali Climate Change Adaptation Activity. Through access to improved rain gauges and a corresponding capacity development of village-level climate change committees, local communities can better manage risk and make smarter decisions based on data.

In South Africa, where 58 percent of 16 to 34-year-olds are unemployed, the USAID South Africa Low Emissions Development project is **improving human capital through workforce development**. By training university graduates as biogas digester technicians and embedding young experts in municipalities, young people are gaining valuable experience while building the operational capacity of municipalities in energy management.

In Senegal, Jordan, Colombia and other countries, under the HRH2030 (Human Resources for Health in 2030) project, we are **improving human capital investments in health systems by supporting workforce development,** including training community health workers, supporting crisis planning, and balancing health care worker presence based on evidence of population need. We address motivation and retention through community recognition programs, as well as training and career development.

In the Philippines, we are **improving access to natural resources by communities, allowing them to benefit from resources and strengthen resilience**. Under the USAID Biodiversity and Watersheds Improved for Stronger Economy and Ecosystem Resilience (B-WISER) project, we are improving access to and management of natural resources, placing local communities as stewards to strengthen resilience. Since 2012, this participatory forest protection program has led to more than 3 million hectares of forests being improved, creating direct economic benefits for over 4,000 neighboring residents.

For more information on Chemonics' commitment to resilience, visit www.chemonics.com/agriculture.