Rasmata Pafadnam, a member of the Taffoga cooperative in Burkina Faso, watering her vegetable patch. © Andy Hall/Oxfam

RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF FOOD INSECURITY

Reflecting on the experiences of women's organizations

Resilience is about more than technical fixes, it requires social transformation in the broadest sense. Investments in resilience will not 'trickle down' to women if they do not address deep-rooted gender inequality and the disproportionate burden placed on the shoulders of women living in poverty. Ultimately, a transformative approach to building resilience implies moving beyond the status quo and tackling the systemic forms of discrimination that put women at risk in the first place. The international community should recognize women's organizations as valued partners that can bring unique perspectives to resilience policy and practice.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Risk is on the rise. Weather patterns are more unpredictable, the number of climate-related disasters has tripled in the last three decades, food prices are increasingly volatile, and recurring droughts and floods hit certain regions in ever shorter succession. The development and humanitarian community has responded to this trend by addressing the underlying drivers of risk and increasingly focusing on building people's resilience to shocks and stresses.[1]

Oxfam's work on resilience has largely focused on the inequality of risk, recognizing that shocks and stresses do not impact people (or countries) equally, and that the poorest and most marginalized are hardest hit and least able to bounce back. At the heart of Oxfam's approach lies an understanding that reducing vulnerability requires more than technical solutions; it calls for a redistribution of power and a commitment to tackling the many forms of inequality that are on the rise.

Risks and vulnerability to disasters have a fundamental gender dimension. Women and girls, with their varied roles as food producers and providers, care-givers, and economic actors, are most likely to be affected by disasters, climate change, and food price shocks. The impacts of systemic shocks have repercussions at the household level, which often exacerbate women's vulnerability. Yet women demonstrate considerable strength in the face of adversity and can be powerful forces for change.

Even as aid organizations promote resilience building as a key strategy, emergency response efforts and development projects still do not always effectively address women's needs and interests, due in large part to pervasive underlying gender inequality. As well, these efforts are much less effective than they might be because they often do not capitalize on women's expertise, and because gender discrimination is understood as a compounding factor of vulnerability, not a key driver of inequality, poverty, and risk.

While some research has examined the gender dimensions of vulnerability to shocks and crises, the perspectives of women's organizations and their strategies to effectively link relief, recovery, and development are virtually absent from the development sector's current thinking on food security and resilience.[2] This research initiative, carried out by Oxfam Canada with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre, seeks to address this gap and contribute to the body of knowledge on resilience from a gender and women's rights perspective. It aims to identify what women's organizations consider to be the key threats to resilience and to draw lessons from their ways of working. The ultimate goal is to inform the work of emergency and development actors to ensure that efforts to build resilience better respond to the needs and priorities of women, and contribute to addressing the unequal risk they shoulder.

2 METHODOLOGY

The research was designed to rigorously capture the knowledge and strategies used by women's organizations to build resilience in the context of food insecurity, food crises, and emergencies. The methodology and activities used sought to facilitate dialogue and exchange between women's organizations, Oxfam partners and staff, civil society organizations and policy makers to critically reflect on food security initiatives and humanitarian response models and their potential to strengthen resilience from a gender perspective. Oxfam Canada used a participatory process to capture the experiences, perspectives, and reflections of women's organizations in an attempt to develop knowledge and help translate the concept of resilience into practical strategies.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As noted, the perspectives of women's organizations are conspicuously absent from the literature and policy discussions on how to build resilience. Based on its longstanding experience working in partnership with grassroots women's organizations, Oxfam Canada's assumption was that women's organizations may have distinct views on what it takes to build resilience, and therefore may have developed innovative strategies to effectively link long term development, disaster preparedness, relief, and rehabilitation.

In light of this, the following three questions guided the research process:

- How do women's organizations understand and approach the issue of resilience?
- What do women's organizations identify as the most critical risks that threaten the food security, livelihoods, and overall well-being of women and their communities?
- How do women's organizations contribute to building resilience and what can be learned from their ways of working?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The project began with an extensive review of the literature available on the intersection between women's rights and resilience in the context of food security and livelihoods. The purpose was to identify some of the main trends and gaps in the literature, with a specific focus on reviewing the research and analyses carried out by and with grassroots women's organizations in the Global South.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The centrepiece of the research process was a series of semi-structured interviews with leaders of women's organizations, groups, and networks in the Global South.

Oxfam Canada went about identifying women's organizations that could provide perspectives on responding to shocks and stresses in the food system and building resilience from a women's rights perspective, with some experience responding to humanitarian crises and providing emergency response. That being said, Oxfam Canada was well aware that the underfunding of women's organizations is a significant barrier to their full involvement in food security and emergency response initiatives – both in terms of scale and scope. The food security sector continues to be largely dominated by male-run organizations, and to this day very few women's organizations receive funding to engage in 'emergency response' as defined by the international community. For these reasons, Oxfam Canada chose to be flexible in its approach to selecting organizations to interview.

In total, Oxfam Canada conducted interviews with 21 women's organizations and networks across ten countries: Peru, Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, South Africa, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Sri Lanka.[3] All organizations interviewed were autonomous women-run organizations, with the exception of two women's commissions within larger rural networks.[4] Approximately half of the organizations work exclusively with rural women, while the others work in both rural and urban settings. Only a handful of the organizations interviewed had significant humanitarian response experience, and several (especially in the Sahel region) were small organizations with very limited resources and program scope.

All interviews were conducted by Oxfam staff using a standard interview guide between June and September 2013. Interview transcripts were then coded to facilitate analysis, highlight cross-cutting themes, and identify trends. Oxfam Canada also completed a two-week field visit to Niger and Burkina Faso to meet with women's organizations, humanitarian agencies, and food security actors to get a range of perspectives on resilience in the Sahel region.

LEARNING FORUM

Oxfam Canada held a Learning Forum on Women's Rights and Resilience[5] in Ottawa on September 24-25, 2013. The Forum brought together women's organizations, development and humanitarian practitioners, resilience experts, and academics from Central America, Africa, North America and Europe to discuss current approaches to resilience and analyze them from a women's rights perspective.

The Forum was intended to be a space where participants could both think critically about current knowledge and practice, as well as develop practical recommendations they could then integrate into their organizations' existing work. The Forum was also designed as an opportunity for Oxfam Canada to receive feedback on its preliminary research findings, and to gather additional analysis, lessons learned, and recommendations from participants.

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was modest in scale and several methodological limitations must be noted. Firstly, the literature on resilience is extremely vast and only a small portion of it was reviewed for the purpose of this project. Furthermore, the data collection process was limited by the following factors:

- Oxfam Canada identified organizations to be interviewed amongst the Oxfam confederation's global network of partners and allies. While this network is indeed large, it by no means captures the full diversity of women's organizations across the Global South.

- Most organizations interviewed were from Latin America (10 organizations) and Africa (9 organizations, including 7 from the Sahel). Despite efforts to contact more women's organizations from Asia, time and resource constraints resulted in having only one interview with an Asian women's organization (from Sri Lanka).

- The initial research methodology did not include interviews with mixed organizations (i.e. organizations made up of both men and women) working in the field of resilience and food security. In hindsight this was a shortcoming of the research design. Oxfam Canada ultimately did conduct a few such interviews, but the lack of sufficient comparative data limited its capacity to draw broader conclusions about the different or unique perspectives and ways of working of women's organizations.

Despite the methodological limitations of the research, Oxfam Canada was able to honour and rigorously capture the knowledge and experience of women's organizations from the Global South whose voices are too rarely heard within mainstream development and humanitarian circles.

3 HOW DO WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS DEFINE RESILIENCE?

Many leaders of women's organizations that were interviewed said that the idea of building resilience to shocks and stresses was deeply ingrained in their ways of working and program priorities, but that the term itself was relatively new to them. The results of the interviews showed that women's organizations define resilience in terms of capacity, agency, and empowerment. This clearly echoes Oxfam's approach to resilience which focuses on realizing rights and addressing power imbalances. Indeed, Oxfam defines resilience as "the ability of women, men, and children to realize their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses, and uncertainty."[6] On the other hand, many respondents also spoke of the lived experiences of women in their communities and the heart-wrenching coping strategies they employ in the face of adversity. This was a stark reminder of the distance that remains between Oxfam's aspirational approach to resilience[7] and the day-to-day realities of women living in poverty.

RESILIENCE AS CAPACITY AND AGENCY

Responses from the diverse group of organizations interviewed varied from context to context, but the first element that many respondents mentioned is that resilience is about agency, i.e., women's ability to make decisions and be proactive about addressing the challenges they face, from daily shocks to natural disasters.

Several women's organizations emphasized that technical capacity increases women's resilience only if it goes hand in hand with an awareness of their rights. They explained that meaningful resilience-building requires supporting women to become empowered and emboldened to take action based on their own knowledge and the skills they have acquired. Several respondents from the Americas articulated the dual importance of building women's technical capacity (for example risk mapping and disaster preparedness) and strengthening their capacity to organize, plan and act in response to shocks.

The Association Munyu des femmes de la Comoé (MUNYU), a women's organization in Burkina Faso, spoke about the key role that literacy and access to information play in ensuring that women have the self-confidence to raise their voices in order to make their needs known, access services that are available to them, and make crucial decisions in times of crisis. The Women on Farms Project in South Africa spoke of

'Resilience is the capacity a person has to face circumstances that happen in life, such as natural disasters or economic setbacks. The capacity to absorb difficulties, negotiate and get out of an existing problem.'

Federación de Mujeres de Ica (Peru)

women's self-confidence, leadership, and active citizenship as key pillars of resilience. They stressed the importance of building on women's indigenous knowledge and supporting women's organizations to articulate their needs and define their own agendas.

This emphasis on agency and rights does not appear front and centre in many mainstream definitions of resilience. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization defines resilience in a food security context as "the ability of a household to keep with a certain level of well-being by withstanding shocks and stresses,"[8] while the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction speaks of "the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions."[9] Participants in the Learning Forum emphasized that building resilience cannot be confined to ensuring communities are able to quickly bounce back after a shock. The structures and functions of society often discriminate against women, and restoring them after a shock does not ensure that women's rights are realized and that their well-being is improved.

The women's organizations interviewed explained that we must address the structural inequalities that make women more vulnerable to begin with and move beyond the status quo. They argued that we need to better understand the goals, hopes, and aspirations that inform women's choices and the risks they are willing to take. According to these women's organizations, resilience should be defined holistically, including emotional well-being and freedom from fear.

'MAKING DO' IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

The majority of the women leaders who were interviewed spoke of women's resilience in terms of their ability to withstand shocks and incredibly high levels of stress simply because they have no other choice. Women are systematically willing to make sacrifices and find ways to survive in the face of adversity to ensure that the basic needs of their children and families (food, shelter, education, health) are met. While some respondents said that this was innate, and others stated that women had been socialized to cope with hardship, all agreed that women bear the brunt of what it takes to keep families and communities afloat in times of crisis.

For example, a leader from the Maha Shakthi Federation in Sri Lanka described women's resilience as a willingness to sacrifice for others: "In a case where there is a family with six children, the mother can't feed all the children. She might try to get food by earning through unacceptable activities. It is not that they are forced to do it, nor that they voluntarily do

it. It is because of the home situation, they are pushed towards it." While she and other respondents spoke of women's coping abilities with awe, they also recognized that women's willingness to make sacrifices for others can lead them to accept their plight and to feel powerless to bring about changes that would improve their own status and well-being.

The lived experiences of women, as described by interview respondents, are a reminder of how far marginalized communities are from the aspirational definition of resilience that Oxfam has embraced. Indeed, Oxfam has developed an approach to resilience that focuses on enabling the poorest individuals and communities to thrive and prosper *despite* shocks, stresses and uncertainty. Oxfam speaks of resilience in the following terms:

> "Women and men should not just be able to cope with crises, but to realize their rights so that they have hope for the future, have choices about how to live their lives, and can adapt to change. The ambition must not just be to help people survive one shock after another, but to help them thrive despite shocks, stresses and uncertainty".[10]

While most respondents also spoke of rights and empowerment as cornerstones of resilience, they were quick to emphasize that the daily reality of women in their communities was still about *surviving* and *making do* in the face of adversity – a far cry from thriving and prospering.

4 WHAT DO WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IDENTIFY AS THREATS TO FOOD SECURITY?

Risk is central to the concept of resilience.[11] Much of the literature and many of the policy frameworks on resilience in the area of food security and livelihoods have thus far focused on the systemic shocks (such as food price volatility), high-impact events (such as the 2011-2012 droughts in the Sahel), and long term stresses (such as climate change and environmental degradation) that impact the ability of individuals and communities to cope. The international community is looking to find new ways to meaningfully integrate risk into the way development programs get designed and implemented, rather than view risks as externalities.

As such, this research explored how women's organizations perceive risk. The semi-structured interviews focused on identifying the most critical risks that threaten the food security, livelihoods, and overall well-being of women and their communities. Respondents were also asked whether they thought women face particular risks, shocks and stresses that are different than those faced by men.
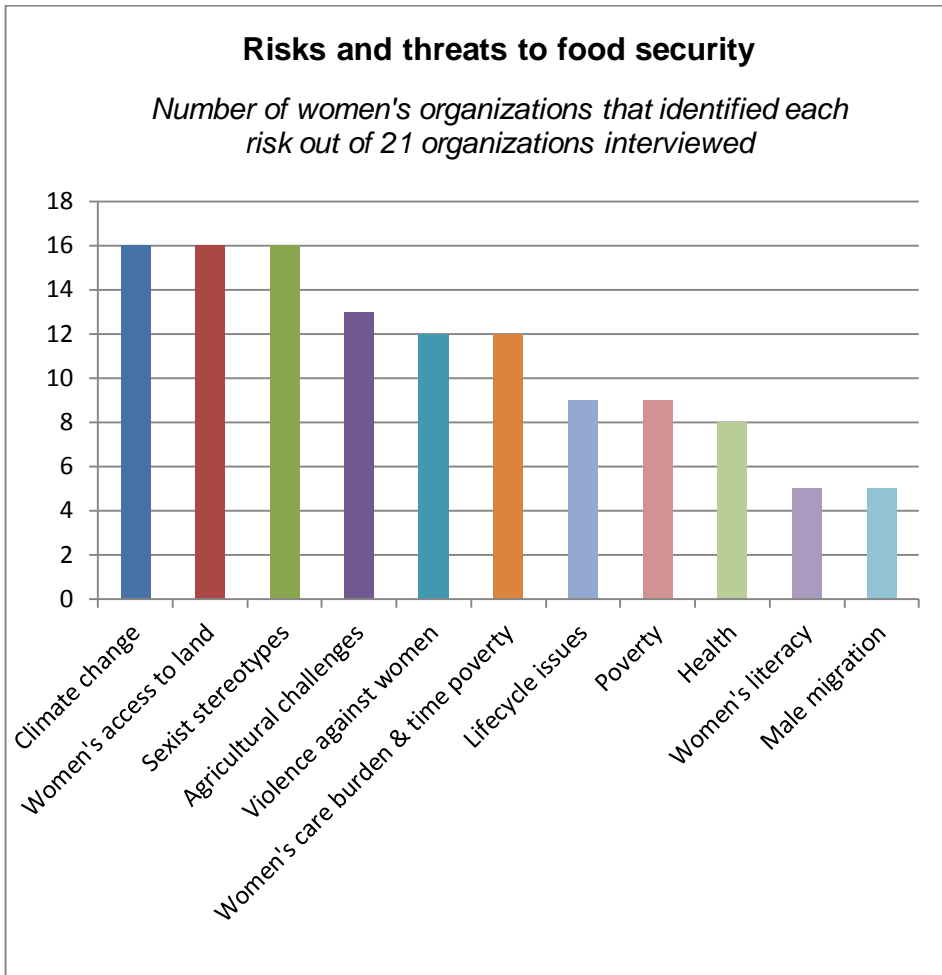
The following five broad trends emerged from the interviews:

- There are some commonalities between the risks identified by women's organizations and the broader literature on resilience in the area of food security.
- Women's organizations have a very broad understanding of risk and categorize risks differently than most resilience frameworks.
- Women's organizations identify gender discrimination and women's lack of decision-making power as risks that affect the community at large.
- Women's organizations attach a great deal of importance to risks that originate at the household level.
- Women's organizations emphasize a number of gender-specific issues that do not figure prominently as risks in the resilience literature (in particular women's land rights, violence against women, women's care responsibilities and time poverty, and male migration).

The following table provides an overview of the risks most frequently cited by the 21 women's organizations interviewed:

''Women are more aware of risks than the authorities themselves, and they are also more resilient. This is reflected in our ability to organize. What we lack are the resources to enhance that potential.'

GROOTS Perú

Risks and threats to food security

Number of women's organizations that identified each risk out of 21 organizations interviewed

Risk	Number
Climate change	16
Women's access to land	16
Sexist stereotypes	16
Agricultural challenges	13
Violence against women	12
Women's care burden & time poverty	12
Lifecycle issues	9
Poverty	9
Health	8
Women's literacy	5
Male migration	5

SOME COMMONALITIES WITH RESILIENCE LITERATURE

When asked to identify risks to food security and livelihoods, most respondents began by mentioning climate-related shocks (such as droughts, floods, and erratic weather patterns) that affect crops and food production. Over two-thirds of respondents (16 out of 21 organizations interviewed) specifically mentioned climate change as a threat to community resilience. Many (13 out of 21 organizations) also spoke of the challenges of agricultural production, referring specifically to the risks to overall family income and access to food posed by women's lack of access to extension services, credit, training, and markets.

These themes are central to the literature on resilience, but this is also where many of the commonalities between the literature and the interviews with women's organizations ended. After mentioning risks that pertain to climate change and agricultural production, respondents systematically went on to list a series of other risks they perceive to be crucial and yet are largely absent from the literature and mainstream resilience frameworks.

BROAD UNDERSTANDING OF RISK

A common thread running through virtually all the interviews was a very broad conception of risk. The representatives of women's organizations who were interviewed seldom made the distinction between *systemic shocks* and *risks at the individual or household level* that pose a threat to food security. Drought, violence against women, crop failure, male migration, and wife repudiation were often mentioned in the same breath. Respondents described risks and stresses on a continuum, and did not insist on distinguishing everyday challenges from full-blown disasters. In this sense, their typology of risks was quite distinct from the one used by the mainstream development community.

They were also far less likely to distinguish their regular development work from their emergency response initiatives. For example, the Women's Association of Tigray explained that it ran cash transfer programs in response to severe droughts, but did so with the same team and through its regular network of members – seamlessly integrating what the development community would call 'emergency response activities' into their day-to-day work on women's economic empowerment.

Many respondents spoke of the constant crises women experience, and the deep-rooted structural inequalities that prevent them from improving their well-being and livelihoods. They described this depth of poverty as much more threatening than any specific *event* or *crisis* that may occur. For example, one organization in South Africa noted that "people don't understand the depth of vulnerability of poor people. Small crises put people deeper into vulnerability and poverty. In an environment where there is nothing… no safety nets, no insurance… there is despair. Social crises like rampant violence against women, HIV/AIDS, access to land… are not looked at in the same way as natural crises… the urgency wears off."[12] They commented that poverty is a risk in and of itself because it pushes people – and especially women – to adopt coping strategies that generate ever more risk.

Respondents insisted that the diversity of women's lived experiences must be acknowledged and understood. Programs cannot simply address certain facets of women's vulnerability – for example as farmers threatened by climate change, or as survivors of violence – but must recognize the full range of risks that women face throughout their lives.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION & WOMEN'S LACK OF DECISION MAKING POWER

Many respondents referred to risks that are directly rooted in gender inequality and in cultural norms that dictate what women can and cannot do. Responses related to gender discrimination and sexist stereotypes were the risk most often identified by women's organizations (16 out of 21 in-

terviews) – just as often as climate change. Respondents explained that women's lack of decision-making power had direct repercussions not only on women, but on the ability of communities as a whole to withstand shocks and weather storms. They explained that women's inferior social status often prevents them from using their first-hand knowledge (of weather patterns, crops, health, etc.) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the broader community.

A leader from the Asociación de Mujeres Madre Tierra in Guatemala explained the impact of gender discrimination very clearly with the following example:

> "Communities and families live in constant food insecurity, but women's opinion is not valued by men and that exacerbates risk. Many women can't decide at all about family assets or what to do with the harvest, whether they have contributed to the land or not. If the man decides to only leave two *quintales* of corn for family consumption and sell the rest, it may not last the family the whole year. Depending on the decisions made by men really increases food insecurity for all."

A study commissioned by Oxfam on the lessons from the 2012 food crisis in the Sahel echoes this analysis, finding that women's ability to negotiate or influence decision-making within their households enhances food security for all family members, in particular through the diversification of crops and the better management of food stocks and supplies.[13]

Another cross-cutting thread throughout many of the interviews was women's lack of power, namely the power to seize opportunities that could ultimately strengthen their resilience. Two examples of this were raised during interviews in the Sahel.

In Burkina Faso, several development actors explained that programs to secure land for women were often much less successful than anticipated because a number of factors made it impossible for women to reap the full benefits of the opportunity. These factors included: the expectation that women farm the family plot (usually controlled by their husbands or male relatives) first, and their own plot last; women's disproportionate responsibility for care responsibilities that left them with little time to farm and sell their produce; the tendency for husbands to claim the profits women made; and discriminatory property rights that dissuaded women from investing in the land, knowing it could be taken away from them. Gender dynamics at play directly undermined the resilience-building potential of these programs, in terms of both family food production and women's empowerment.

Similarly in Niger, representatives from a farmers' union explained that in some instances women were reluctant to farm their own plots of land given the well-founded concern that their husbands would claim the profit from their harvests in order to acquire additional wives. In this scenario,

'Women are more vulnerable to risks due to existing traditional practices that do not see women as equal. Traditional thinking that women should not plough land prevents them from using their land and encourages dependence on the men.'

Women's Association of Tigray (Ethiopia)

'Women are at a disadvantage even when they have the space for productive work because they can't access adequate tools, agricultural inputs and equipment. So even where they contribute to food production with their own work, they do so under unfavourable conditions.'

Asociación de Mujeres Madre Tierra (Guatemala)

women's access to land would not contribute to strengthened resilience in the face of recurring food crises, but would actually put further pressure on family food security with additional mouths to feed.

The leaders of women's organizations who were interviewed made it clear that investing in women's economic empowerment does not make women more resilient if other barriers caused by gender inequality (such as time poverty, sexist stereotypes about women's work, discriminatory inheritance and property rights, gendered division of labour, and unequal distribution of care responsibilities) are not addressed. These are more than mere externalities: they significantly negate the potential resilience-building effects of community development initiatives and can cause women to lose ground.

RISKS THAT ORIGINATE AT THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

The literature on resilience generally focuses on the outside shocks (natural disasters, conflict, economic crises) that threaten the well-being of families and communities. In their comments on risk and resilience, most interview respondents provided a very different perspective, emphasizing that what takes place *within* the household poses as much (if not more) of a risk to family well-being and food security than any *external* shock or crisis.

This emphasis on risks, shocks, and stresses that *originate* at the individual and household level was certainly one of the most interesting findings of the research. Many of these risks are related to women's lifecycle, and rarely appear on the resilience radar of the development community. For example, many respondents identified widowhood as one of life's greatest threats, and members of a women's community group in Burkina Faso explained that the birth of a new child is one of the biggest stresses on family food security. Alcoholism among male household members was also mentioned by several organizations in South Africa as having a profound impact on food security.

The literature on resilience does recognize that inequality and discrimination tend to exacerbate the impacts of shocks and crises. For example, it is well documented that natural disasters and their subsequent impacts kill more women than men, and that this effect is magnified in major calamities and most pronounced among women with lower socio-economic status.[14] In *No Accident: Resilience and the inequality of risk*, Oxfam states that "the impact of these increasing systemic shocks exacerbates the life-cycle shocks to income felt at the household level – such as widowhood, childbirth, and unexpected illness – which hit women the hardest."[15] However, these shocks and stresses that affect women at the individual and household level are rarely identified as core resilience issues, but rather as facts of life that *compound* the serious threats that communities increasingly face due to climate change, economic crisis, and conflict.

GENDER-SPECIFIC RISKS

In addition to this broader analysis of gender inequality as a threat to resilience, leaders of women's organizations repeatedly mentioned four gender-specific risks: women's land rights, violence against women, women's care responsibilities and time poverty, and male migration. While these issues are by no means new in terms of women's rights programming, they only rarely come up in the mainstream literature on resilience, which is often blind to both gender and power.

Firstly, women's lack of secure access to land was mentioned as a threat to resilience in over two-thirds of interviews conducted (16 out of 21 organizations). Respondents spoke of discriminatory laws and practices related to women's property rights, land ownership, and inheritance as factors that entrench women's vulnerability. The struggle for women's equal and effective land rights is of utmost priority for rural women's movements around the world, but has yet to make its way to the forefront of mainstream resilience-building frameworks and interventions.

Violence against women and harmful traditional practices were mentioned by two-thirds of all respondents (14 out of 21 organizations). This echoes Oxfam's analysis that violence against women is a resilience issue because it affects women's capacity to withstand shocks and stresses.[16] While it does not come as a surprise that women's organizations would mention these issues, it is interesting to note that they articulated violence against women as a direct threat to *community food security* – because of its effect on women's health, productivity, and capacity to engage in decision-making at the household and community level.

'Harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, rape, and early marriage hinder women from achieving food security.'

Women's Association of Tigray (Ethiopia)

Over half of all respondents mentioned women's disproportionate responsibility for care, which in turns deprives women of the time needed to engage in productive endeavours and participate in decision-making spaces. During the Learning Forum, participants discussed how women's time poverty undermines their resilience, and pointed out that social protection systems and emergency responses are often predicated on over-burdening female household members in ways that exacerbate existing inequalities and deny access to opportunities. They stressed that resilience-building programs must recognize all the unpaid, invisible work that women do at the household level that enable families to carry on despite shocks, and develop strategies to reduce and redistribute the burden of care.

Women's organizations in the Sahel, South Africa, and Brazil also specifically mentioned male migration as a rising threat to community resilience, depriving rural communities of income and crops for household consumption. Women are left behind to farm land that is ever more depleted and over which they often have no legal claims. Sexist serotypes

about women's work and discriminatory property laws also deprive women of the opportunity to take on the full range of productive activities that men once controlled in these regions.

Oxfam Canada interviewed several mixed farmers' associations during its field visit in the Sahel. When asked to identify specific risks faced by women, many male leaders gave similar responses to those given by women's organizations (male rural exodus, violence against women, women's lack of decision making power, etc.). However, they were also very clear that these were not food security issues *per se* and therefore tangential to their mission. In other words, discrimination and violence against women were perceived as 'externalities', not core threats to food security and community well-being. Consequently, in their view, building resilience in the face of food insecurity did not imply addressing these issues head-on.

5 WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS' WAYS OF WORKING?

With risk on the rise and disasters hitting vulnerable communities in ever quicker succession, aid agencies are coming to the realization that institutional barriers across the humanitarian and development sector must be reduced, and that joint planning and integrated strategies need to be developed to better respond to the challenge of cyclical crises. The literature on resilience is very focused on process, exploring ways in which aid actors can work more effectively, collaboratively, and across sectors. Many donors, aid agencies, and civil society organizations have begun to rethink their ways of working and develop strategies to bridge the divide between development programs and emergency response.[17]

Oxfam Canada has supported the work of grassroots women's organizations in the Global South for several decades and has been able to observe their holistic approach to development. Based on this experience, and on the findings of research that Oxfam Canada commissioned on the humanitarian response approaches of women's rights organizations in Central America,[18] Oxfam Canada's assumption was that women's organizations may have developed innovative strategies to effectively link long-term development, disaster preparedness, relief, and rehabilitation.

The semi-structured interviews explored the ways of working of women's organizations, identifying experiences that have the potential to be brought to scale or replicated in different settings, and drawing lessons that could inform the work of the broader aid community. In particular, the interviews focused on how women's organizations determine their program priorities; who they partner with; their assessment of their capacity to respond to changing circumstances and react to crises; and their understanding of short-term versus long-term programming.

The main findings from the interviews can be summarized as follows:

- Many women's organizations feel they have been sidelined by the mainstream aid community and excluded from emergency preparedness and resilience-building initiatives.

- Women's organizations view collective organizing as the foundation of resilience and an essential rampart against shocks.

- Women's organizations describe their flexible, responsive, and holistic approach to programming as an effective way to build resilience that sets them apart from other development and humanitarian actors.
- Women's organizations address gender inequality as a structural barrier to resilience rather than simply a compounding factor of vulnerability.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS SIDELINED

The majority of the women's organizations that were interviewed had never been consulted by aid agencies on resilience and disaster preparedness strategies, and had no contact with government and non-governmental actors in charge of disaster response and recovery initiatives. Several articles in the literature underscore this marginalization.[19] For example, a survey conducted by the Huairou Commission and GROOTS International in 2009 revealed that grassroots women's organizations believe they have been excluded from emergency preparedness and other disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs, and express frustration at not being considered serious actors when it comes time to distribute DRR resources.[20]

'Women's organizations are the poorest of all NGOs, just as women are the poorest in society.'

Réseau des femmes pour la paix au Niger

The representatives of women's organizations that were interviewed explained that they aren't valued as legitimate actors in the area of resilience and emergency response because of their perceived lack of technical capacity and reach. Several studies have referred to the untapped potential of women's groups in terms of disaster preparedness and relief efforts.[21] For example, the Gender and Disasters Network has written that:

> "The continuous focus on women's vulnerabilities alone can be contentious, as this promotes the perception of women as victims, rather than as capable and equal actors [….]. The common perception of women as dependent, weak and subordinate acts as a barrier that isolates them from planning and decision making processes [...]. This situation constitutes a tremendous loss to women as individuals and a loss of resource to their families, communities and nations."[22]

During the Learning Forum, Gloria Cerón from the Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace (ORMUSA)[23] spoke of the need to ensure that donors and aid agencies not merely focus on women's *vulnerability* to shocks, but recognize and support women's *capacity* to respond to crises.

WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE ORGANIZING AS A RAMPART AGAINST SHOCKS

The majority of organizations interviewed (17 out of 21) spoke of the strength that comes from women working together, and of the importance of women's networked solidarity and collective organizing. The Director of MUNYU in Burkina Faso eloquently stated that "solidarity is our guiding light in the face of changing circumstances and uncertainty." While solidarity among women in situations of hardship is nothing new, many respondents spoke of the crucial role that women's organizations play in terms of harnessing women's solidarity in order to strengthen their collective power, leadership, and agency.

The critical role that women's collective organizing plays in building resilience has been very well documented by the Huairou Commission and GROOTS International, two global networks of women's organizations. Their campaign on community resilience is rooted in a belief that the most effective solutions arise from organized groups of grassroots women framing resilience in their own terms, and aims to empower women's networks to bring their priorities and practices to the forefront in order to reduce vulnerability to disasters.[24]

Many of the organizations interviewed support women's self-help groups as a protection against shocks that can plunge families into deeper poverty. Their approach is to help build the capacity of women to self-organize and become collectively autonomous in order to decrease their dependency on outside assistance in times of crisis. A women leader from the Asociación de Mujeres Madre Tierra from Guatemala proudly stated: "Strengthening our own capacity is key. Our organization may have had difficulties accessing funding, but we have been trained, our capacity has increased and with or without resources we are able to start work immediately in the communities when a crisis stikes."

Five of the organizations interviewed are membership-based organizations. For example, MUNYU supports 180 women's groups and has over 10,000 members across three provinces of Burkina Faso, and the Women's Association of Tigray has close to 700,000 members in Ethiopia. These membership-based organizations and networks define their priorities and work streams based on the needs identified by their members, and are directly accountable to them through reporting on progress and results. Having a membership base and a direct relationship with the women they serve appears to have a strong impact on the way these organizations deal with risks and crises at the community level, and on their approaches to building community resilience.

For example, the Women's Association of Tigray (WAT) collects an annual membership fee of 10 Birr (less than 50 cents CAD) from all of its members. The leaders interviewed explained that this helps make WAT less dependent on outside donations, contributes to a high sense of

'Collective organizing is a resilience strategy. When women are organized in networks, they have greater capacity to withstand shocks.'

Casa da Mulher do Nordeste (Brazil)

'Being organized as the Mother Earth Association is what helps us most; otherwise we would feel completely abandoned as women. Rather than feeling alone, women feel supported by an organization that has their back and mobilizes to see what can be done to improve the situation.'

Asociación de Mujeres Madre Tierra (Guatemala)

ownership and mutual accountability for its mission, and builds real solidarity among all members – whether rich or poor, young or old. The association has expressly sought to foster strong solidarity among women at the local level, and its decentralized structure means that members at the village and group level can independently act to mobilize resources amongst themselves and help each other out in times of crisis, and when poor women in the community (including non-members) face crises such as money or food shortages. WAT's motto, *my association is my shield*, is an interesting illustration of resilience itself.

HOLISTIC AND RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

When discussing their ways of working, a common thread throughout over half of the interviews was the capacity of women's organizations to be flexible in the face of changing circumstances and responsive to women's needs. Many respondents explained that their flexible and responsive approach to programming sets their organizations apart from other development and humanitarian actors.

Several respondents spoke at length about their holistic approach to programming, which mirrors their analysis of the broad range of risks and threats that women face. They explained that resilience cannot be built by focusing on a single or narrow set of issues, and that resilience-building requires an understanding of the intersection between rights and risks. This echoes other calls for an integrated approach to resilience. For example, a 2012 paper by the Institute for Development Studies and the Centre for Social Protection claimed that one of the positive elements of the concept of resilience is that it fosters an integrated approach across sectors that would otherwise seem disconnected.[25] In many ways, women's organizations are ahead of the 'resilience curve' – they have had an integrated and holistic programming approach for years, despite donor funding mechanisms that push organizations to focus and specialize ever more narrowly.

While Oxfam Canada deliberately chose to interview women's organizations that work in the field of food security, it is interesting to note that every single organization interviewed runs programs on a range of issues and that none would fit narrowly into one thematic category. They explained that to be truly responsive to women's needs and to build their long-term resilience, it is crucial to have a multi-disciplinary approach and to work across sectors and themes. For example, MUNYU explained that its community food production initiatives were more effective when run in tandem with women's literacy programs, while Women on Farms stressed that its efforts to build family resilience to food shocks were meaningless if they did not address one of the main root causes of vulnerability – violence against women.

'Women on Farms has always had a demand-led approach to programming. Its programs have always reflected the changing priorities, needs, and demands of farmwomen. In the beginning, violence against women was identified as a significant issue and experience for farmwomen, and thus it became a major focus.'

Women on Farms Project (South Africa)

ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITY AS A STRUCTURAL BARRIER TO RESILIENCE

There is some acknowledgement in the literature that approaches to resilience have thus far tended to be too technical, focused on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption without sufficiently addressing broader structural inequalities and power imbalances. A recent article in the *International Development Journal* that assesses the advantages and limits of resilience argues that the main challenges associated with transformational change are not technical, and often involve "the questioning of values, the challenging of assumptions, and the capacity to closely examine fixed beliefs, identities and stereotypes".[26] Oxfam also speaks of the need to marry the rights and empowerment aspects of development work with some of the more technical efforts to reduce risk, and argues that:

> "Building skills and capacity must go alongside tackling the inequality and injustice that make poor women and men more vulnerable in the first place. This means challenging the social, economic, and political institutions that lock in security for some but vulnerability for many, by redistributing power and wealth (and with them, risk) to build models of shared societal risk." [27]

What emerges from the interviews with women's organizations is the need to recognize gender inequality as a *structural barrier* to resilience, not simply a *compounding factor* of vulnerability, and to tackle it as such. Respondents explained that it is not only a matter of redistributing risk (between men and women) but also addressing the systemic gender inequalities that actually exacerbate vulnerability for all. This resonates with some of the literature that criticizes the marginalization of gender considerations as mere 'add-ons' in broader disaster and food security policies and practice.[28]

Women's organizations interviewed spoke of adopting a two-pronged approach, focused on both technical capacity to withstand shocks and secure livelihoods (e.g., through DRR training and income generating activities), and transformative programs to shift power relations. Many identified their efforts to challenge sexist attitudes and beliefs as a means of strengthening overall community resilience in the long term.

In terms of specific strategies used to build resilience, the following were most frequently mentioned during the interviews:

- **Building women's leadership and self-confidence** was the most frequently mentioned strategy (16 out of 21 organizations interviewed). Activities ranged from support groups to build women's self-esteem, to leadership programs that encourage women to run for office and engage in policy-making.

'Women need to increase their awareness and recognize that they are a priority, and assert the value of women within their families.'

Asociación de Mujeres Madre Tierra (Guatemala)

- **Promoting women's economic empowerment** (15 out of 21 organizations), including support for women's entrepreneurship, income-generating activities, and food production, transformation, and marketing initiatives.

- **Raising awareness about women's rights** (11 out of 21 organizations), including changing attitudes and beliefs about gender, and challenging sexist stereotypes that dictate what women can and cannot do.

- **Advocacy to defend and promote women's rights** (10 out of 21 organizations), such as engaging in policy consultations and working on legislative reform.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The advocacy of some women's organizations and NGOs has been effective in drawing attention to the need for gender perspectives to inform all aspects of resilience-building and disaster risk reduction.[29] However, gender is still poorly understood by mainstream actors and far from an integral element of resilience policy and practice.[30] It is recognized that misleading conceptions of women as passive and helpless victims have limited the effectiveness of humanitarian responses thus far, and the emerging field of resilience-building could run a similar risk. To this day very few women's organizations are invited to the table where resilience frameworks are designed, receive funding to implement resilience-building programs, or are integrated into multi-stakeholder emergency response initiatives.

The women leaders who were interviewed in the context of this research all argued for the need to recognize women's organizations as legitimate actors within the field of resilience because of their capacity to design solutions, not simply as a vulnerable group to be consulted. Indeed, their understanding of the specific issues that women face and their analysis of how inequality exacerbates risk puts them in a unique position to strengthen the relevance and impact of resilience-building efforts.

What emerged clearly from the research is that resilience is about more than technical fixes; ultimately it requires social transformation in the broadest sense. The vulnerabilities people experience are linked to structures of oppression and discrimination, and investments in resilience will not 'trickle down' to women if they do not address deep-rooted gender inequality and the disproportionate burden placed on women's shoulders.

The main recommendations that emerged from the experiences of women's organizations can be summarized as follows:

- Power and inequality are key determinants of resilience. Definitions of resilience should therefore refer not only to the technical capacity to respond and recover from shocks, but also the critical importance of rights, agency, and active citizenship. Resilience-building should be understood as a long-term process of social transformation, designed to address immediate risks, shift power dynamics that exacerbate vulnerabilities, and strengthen people's fundamental rights.

- Technical disaster preparedness and risk reduction projects should go hand-in-hand with efforts to shift attitudes and beliefs about gender, and challenge cultural stereotypes that reinforce women's inferior social status and exacerbate their vulnerability to shocks and stresses. These should include projects to build women's leadership and self-confidence, raise awareness about women's rights, and promote women's economic empowerment.

- Resilience frameworks should address risks that are rooted in gender discrimination and women's lack of decision-making power, including the shocks and stresses that originate at the household level. In particular, violence against women, women's unequal access to land, and women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work should be recognized as core resilience issues.

- In addition to risk assessments, resilience frameworks should include power analyses to determine how power dynamics and structural inequalities affect men and women's different needs, capacities, opportunities, and coping mechanisms.

- Development programs and emergency response initiatives should take particular care not to unintentionally reinforce sexual stereotypes and exacerbate women's disproportionate responsibility for coping with the effects of stresses and shocks at the household level. Instead, they should design strategies to shift gendered coping mechanisms and contribute to more equal risk-sharing among men and women.

- The international community should recognize women's organizations as legitimate actors who can bring unique value to resilience policy and practice. Fostering collaborations between government actors, development agencies, and grassroots women's organizations would contribute to strengthening women's leadership and bring mainstream attention to the specific risks women face and the ways in which gender inequality erodes resilience.

- Donor agencies and NGOs should set targets to increase their number of partnerships and percentage of funding going to women's organizations, and should invest in building the capacity of women's organizations to work on some of the more technical dimensions of resilience.

Ultimately, resilience cannot be strengthened if women continue to lack power and equal rights. A transformative approach to building resilience implies moving beyond the status quo and tackling the systemic forms of discrimination that put women at risk in the first place.

ANNEX: WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED

CASA DA MULHER DO NORDESTE (BRAZIL)

http://www.casadamulherdonordeste.org.br

Casa da mulher do nordeste (CMN) is a non-governmental feminist organization founded in 1980 to increase the economic and political autonomy of urban and rural women in the Northeast Region of Brazil, with a focus on the state of Pernambuco. CMN works to transform society by confronting inequalities of gender, race, class and ethnicity; by broadening women's political representation in positions of power; as well as by supporting women-led initiatives.

MOVIMIENTO DE MULHERES CAMPONESAS (BRAZIL)

http://www.mmcbrasil.br/site/

The Movimiento de Mulheres Camponesas (Rural Women's Movement) is a grassroots membership-based organization that works on food sovereignty, food security and domestic violence. Its members are all peasant women who determine the organization's agenda and produce clear strategies to increase women's food security and independence.MMC focuses on violence against women, women's lack of access to financial support, women's lack of control over family food production, and the overuse of chemical pesticides.

ASSOCIATION MUNYU DES FEMMES DE LA COMOÉ (BURKINA FASO)

http://www.munyu-burkina.org/

MUNYU was established in 1992 to advance women's rights, with a focus on women's social and economic rights, and on women's literacy and education. MUNYU supports 180 women's groups and has 10,000 members across three provinces, 95% of whom live in rural areas. In the area of food security, MUNYU supports women's cooperatives by providing them with the means to farm communal plots, access microcredit and benefit from their food transformation unit in Banfora.

FÉDÉRATION DES FEMMES RURALES (BURKINA FASO)

The Federation of Rural Women is a network made up of women from 14 different farming federations. It has 5,600 members from 28 out of the 45 provinces of Burkina Faso. The FFR focuses on increasing rural women's literacy, raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, improving women's health and strengthening women's leadership. The FFR also trains women in new farming technologies, marketing and management, and aims to revive women's collective grain reserves.

WOMEN IN LAW AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (BURKINA FASO)

http://www.wildaf-ao.org/

WILDAF Burkina Faso was established in 1998 as the national chapter of Women in Law and Development in Africa, a pan-African network of women's rights organizations. In Burkina Faso, WILDAF is a network of 25 member organizations, including associations of women lawyers, teachers, nurses and rural literacy groups. It focuses on women's access to land and property rights, and women's economic and political rights. WILDAF also provides paralegal training to rural women, who then work to educate their communities about violence against women.

ASOCIACIÓN MELIDA ANAYA MONTES (EL SALVADOR)

'Las Melidas' is a feminist organization that promotes women's leadership, offers training to increase women's political participation, and mobilizes women to claim their rights at the local and national level. The organization supports productive projects in rural areas, prioritizes the prevention of violence against women and the promotion of women's sexual and reproductive rights, and offers disaster preparedness trainings for women at the community level. Currently about 5,800 women are affiliated with the organization, 70% of which are in rural areas.

INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN, CAPACITACIÓN Y DESARROLLO DE LA MUJER (EL SALVADOR)

http://imuelsalvador.org/

IMU is a feminist organization that works to promote women's active citizenship and strengthen women's movements. Its work on women's economic rights and autonomy focuses on the care economy and its links to food security. IMU supports agro-ecological projects and disaster preparedness initiatives, in addition to work on women's sexual and reproductive rights, and policy and advocacy to advance women's rights.

MOVIMIENTO SALVADOREŇO DE MUJERES (EL SALVADOR)

http://www.mujeresmsm.org/

The Salvadorian Women's Movement is a feminist organization founded in 1988 to promote the rights of women in both rural and urban areas. It implements a variety of projects focused on strengthening the social fabric of communities, fostering women's personal development and awareness of their rights, and helping women and youth organize to improve food security and promote collective entrepreneurship. MSM has an eco-feminist approach and sensitizes the public on natural resource protection and climate change adaptation.

SECRETARÍA DE LA MUJER DE LA ASOCIACIÓN DE COMUNIDADES PARA EL DESARROLLO DE CHALATENANGO (EL SALVADOR)

The CCR has worked in the department of Chalatenango since 1989. It was founded by the first five communities that repopulated the department from the refugee camps in Honduras, and today it is made up of 110 communities in 22 municipalities. Together, these communities promote grassroots community organizing, education, leadership training, civil participation, and empowerment. The Women's Committee of the CCR runs specific projects on women's empowerment through food security and microfinance.

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF TIGRAY (ETHIOPIA)

The Women's Association of Tigray is a large networked organization whose members include some 700,000 women in the Tigray regional state of Ethiopia. Established in 1991, WAT advances women's equality by promoting their active participation in economic and decision-making activities, and advocates for equal space for women to participate in dialogue related to food security, health, and education at all levels of government. WAT plays a recognized role in developing agricultural technologies and training women to increase their agricultural productivity.

ASOCIACIÓN DE MUJERES MADRE TIERRA (GUATEMALA)

AMMT is a women's association that works with peasant, rural and indigenous women in seven communities in the South Coast of Guatemala. AMMT mainly provides training in women's rights, education, and political leadership. In response to food insecurity, AMMT is encouraging families to plant basic grains in the summer that can be harvested before the rainy season, which reduces the risk of failed crops. AMMT also developed a successful cattle rearing program which has increased women's resilience to food shocks.

SOYNICA (NICARAGUA)

http://www.soynica.org.ni/

SOYNICA's is a women's group that works on food sovereignty and food security, focusing on nutrition education for both rural and urban families. SOYNICA educates households on the importance of breastfeeding and the links between early childhood nutrition and brain development, and also promotes sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural practices. The organization contributed to a successful campaign to push for the passing of Nicaragua's 2009 Food Security and Food Sovereignty Act.

ASSOCIATION NIGÉRIENNE POUR LE PROGRÈS ET LA DÉFENSE DES DROITS DES FEMMES (NIGER)

The Nigerien Association for the Advancement and Defense of Women's Rights was established in 2001 as a small volunteer-run women's rights organization. In response to recurring food crises, ANPDDF has increasingly focused on women's economic empowerment, running small-scale support programs with widows and female-headed households. ANPDDF also conducts advocacy initiatives in favor of women's political participation and to raise awareness about violence against women, forced marriages and wife repudiation.

COLLÈGE DES FEMMES DE LA PLATEFORME PAYSANNE DU NIGER

http://www.pfpniger.org/

The Women's Commission of the Plateforme Paysanne du Niger (PPN) was established in 2004 to increase women's representation, voice and decision making power within the PPN. Its priority is to increase rural women's financial independence by building links between women producers, improving communication between rural women's groups, and elevating the profile and visibility of women in farming.

COORDINATION DES ONG ET ASSOCIATIONS FÉMININES NIGÉRIENNES (NIGER)

http://congafen.org/

CONGAFEN is a network of 56 organizations that work to promote and defend women and children's rights in Niger. It was established in 1995 to increase collaboration among women's organizations; build the capacity of women's organizations and help them find funding to carry out their activities; and serve as a channel of communication between women's organizations and the State. CONGAFEN's five thematic areas of focus are health, education, environment and agriculture, economic empowerment and human rights.

RÉSEAU DES FEMMES POUR LA PAIX AU NIGER

The Women's Network for Peace is a small volunteer-run women's network that aims to promote women's participation in conflict prevention and peace building in Niger. It also advocates for women's access to land and equal property and inheritance rights, and supports small income generating activities to help women's cooperatives raise funds to purchase plots of land.

FEDERACIÓN DE MUJERES DE ICA (PERU)

FEPROMUICA was founded in 1989 to advance women's rights in the Ica Region of Peru. Made up of 17 autonomous member organizations, FEPROMUICA empowers women to exercise their rights and enjoy equal participation in the building of a democratic society. FEPROMUICA en-

gages with food security from multiple dimensions, including improving the working conditions of women workers in the agricultural industry, enforcing children's rights to food, and running a microcredit program that improves women's access to food and resources.

GROOTS PERÚ

GROOTS Perú is a national network of five grassroots women's organizations and a member of GROOTS International, a movement that links grassroots initiatives across poor rural and urban areas. GROOTS Perú works on community resilience by facilitating the sharing of effective leadership practices across communities; by working on land and housing rights and the reforestation of degraded urban and community gardens; by building networks and alliances between cities; and by supporting food sovereignty initiatives and women engaged in food production.

WOMEN ON FARMS PROJECT (SOUTH AFRICA)

http://www.wfp.org.za/

Established in 2002, the Women on Farms Project is a members-based organization that is aimed at meeting the needs of women who live and work on commercial farms. WPF's trains women on agro-ecological methods and improves women's food security by developing ways to grow vegetables efficiently on small plots of land. WPF also aims at ensuring the housing, tenure and land rights and security of farm dwellers, especially farmwomen. WFP works from an explicitly feminist approach and creates spaces in which farmwomen occupy positions of leadership.

MAHA SHAKTHI FEDERATION (SRI LANKA)

Formed in 2008, the Maha Shakthi Federation is a large savings and credit federation located in the Kilinochchi District of Wanni, Sri Lanka. Based on a savings and credit model pioneered in India, MSF consists of women's groups of 16 to 20 members each and supports over 2,000 women through economic and social empowerment programs. MSF helps women collectively save money, access credit facilities and improve their economic situation, and creates a space for women to discuss key issues that affect women and their communities.

NOTE

[1] On the growing enthusiasm for the concept of resilience in the international development and humanitarian community, see Christophe Béné, Andy Newsham and Mark Davies, "Making the Most of Resilience*," IDS In Focus Policy Briefing*, Issue 32 (2013) and Caroline *Hargreaves, The Concept of 'Resilience': Assessing the Applicability of the Discourse across the Development and Humanitarian Sectors (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2012).*

[2] Elaine Enarson and P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti (eds.), *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives* (London: Sage, 2009).

[3] A description of each of the 21 organizations interviewed is available in the Annex.

[4] The Secretaría de la Mujer de la Asociación de Comunidades para el Desarrollo de Chalatenango (El Salvador) and the Collège des femmes de la Plateforme Paysanne du Niger.

[5] http://go.oxfam.ca/docs/learning-forum-on-wr-and-resilience-september-2013.pdf

[6] *No Accident: Resilience and the inequality of risk* (Oxfam, 2013), page 9.

[7] In its definition, Oxfam emphasizes the aspirational element of resilience, such that poor and marginalized women and men can not only survive but actually *thrive* despite shocks, stresses and uncertainty.

[8] *Measuring Resilience: A Concept Note on the Resilience Tool* (Rome: FAO, 2010).

[9] *2009 UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction* (Geneva: UNISDR, 2009).

[10] *No Accident*, page 4.

[11] In *No Accident*, Oxfam defines risk as a combination of the consequences of an event and the likelihood of its occurrence. Risk is as a composite of the size of a shock; the exposure of people, assets and services to the shock; and the vulnerability to the shock, which is offset by the capacity to cope and respond to it.

[12] Trust for Community Outreach and Education.

[13] Marthe Diarra Doka, Djibrilla Madougou and Alexandre Diouf, *Food crisis, gender and resilience in the Sahel: Lessons from the 2012 crisis in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger* (Oxfam, 2014).

[14] Eric Neumayer and Thomas Plümper, (2007*) "The gendered nature of natural disasters: the impact of catastrophic events on the gender gap in life expectancy, 1981–2002", Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97 (3): pp. 551-566.

[15] *No Accident*, page 3.

[16] *No Accident*, page 13.

[17] Katherine Marshall, *Bridging the divide in the field of humanitarianism and development.* (Georgetown University, 2012)

[18] Mia Vukojević, *A Critical Analysis of the Humanitarian Response Approach of Central American Women's Rights Organizations* (Oxfam Canada, 2013).

[19] See for example Enarson Dhar Chakrabarti, *Women, Gender and Disaster* and Suranjana Gupta and Irene S. Leung, *Turning Good Practice into Institutional Mechanisms: Investing in Grassroots Women's Leadership to Scale Up Local Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action* (The Huairou Commission and GROOTS International, 2013).

[20] *Women's Views from the Frontlines* (The Huairou Commission, 2009).

[21] See for example J. Cupples, "Gender and Hurricane Mitch: reconstructing subjectivities after disaster", *Disasters* 31:2 (2007) and B. Asaki and S. Hayes, "Leaders, not clients: grassroots women's groups transforming social protection", *Gender & Development* (2011).

[22] *The Disaster Risk Reduction Process: A Gender Perspective* (Gender and Disasters Network, 2009), page 5.

[23] ORMUSA was not interviewed as part of this research but did participate in a previous research project that Oxfam Canada commissioned on the humanitarian response approach of Central American women's rights organizations. See Mia Vukojević, *A Critical Analysis of the Humanitarian Response Approach of Central American Women's Rights Organizations* (Oxfam Canada, 2013)

[24] *What Communities Want: Putting community resilience priorities on the agenda for 2015* (The Huairou Commission, 2013).

[25] *Resilience: New Utopia or New Tyranny? Reflection about the Potentials and Limits of the Concept of Resilience in Relation to Vulnerability Reduction Programmes* (Institute of Development Studies and Center for Social Protection, 2012).

[26] *Review article: resilience, poverty and development* (Journal of International Development, 2014).

[27] *No Accident*, page 4.

[28] Rebecca Holmes, Nicola Jones and Hannah Marsden, *Gender vulnerabilities, food price shocks and social protection responses* (Overseas Development Institute, 2009).

[29] The work of GROOTS International and the Gender and Disaster Network is particularly noteworthy.

[30] *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines* (United Nations, 2009).

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