

Resilience Context Analysis in the East Africa Region: Experiences from Uganda and South Sudan

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Introduction

The Resilience agenda has been widely promoted as an agent of change not for what development and humanitarian actors do, but for how they do it. Such a change requires that institutions undergo significant transformations in the way of working both internally and vis-à-vis partners, and invest in enhancing systems, tools and programmes to achieve better results. In order to promote this shift, a strategic joint situation analysis on resilience is required to ensure all stakeholders involved have the same understanding of what resilience means for the specific context. This analysis must provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of contextual risks, underlying vulnerabilities and capacities to inform multi-sectoral planning, programme prioritization and targeting.

In response to this need, the Resilience Context Analysis (RCA) methodology was developed by the IGAD Resilience Analysis Unit (RAU) to understand resilience in a given context by analysing available quantitative and qualitative data. The notion of resilience used in this analysis is the capacity of households to remain food secure and to ensure adequate nutrition status of their children despite having been affected by shocks or stressors.

The analysis identifies key capacities that make households and communities “resilient”, according to context-specific parameters. In addition, it offers a platform through which to enhance opportunities for joint planning by a multi-disciplinary and inter-agency team in line with national and regional policy and programmes on resilience. The RCA can also be used as the basis for additional panel data studies and consultations to better design resilience programmes.

RCA pilots have been rolled out in Karamoja (Uganda) in 2014 and in South Sudan in 2015 helping to improve the methodology and the analytical approach. This paper will present the experiences and lessons learnt of these two pilots by analysing four main aspects: rationale and partnership; methodology; key findings; and way forward.

1. Rationale and Partnership

Building resilience requires a multi-sector approach and a long-term commitment to flexible programming based on interventions that can be adapted as conditions, hazards and disaster risks

for a given population evolve. It also requires a strong culture of partnerships and a convergence of key stakeholders towards a common resilience building agenda, recognizing the need for a truly integrated and coordinated approach. Because of the multi-layer, multi-sector nature of the subject, the success of a RCA depends on the involvement, buy-in and commitment of partners. These include, but are not limited to, country representatives of UN agencies, international organizations, and national government from ministries to sub-national government representatives. The existence of a strong network of partners working on a common situational analysis is even more important when humanitarian and development actors are trying to find common grounds to adequately address the shift from a relief to a recovery-based approach through the transitional development lens.

In **Uganda**, where the first pilot for the RCA was conducted, partners included the members of the RAU (i.e. IGAD, FAO, UNDP, UNICEF and WFP) in close collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) national platform for disaster preparedness and management. While collaborations were ongoing at country level between the agencies before the exercise, the RCA enhanced the ongoing partnership and found common ground to constructively build a joint framework for resilience, both at national and regional level. As the RCA was being tested for the first time, strong technical support and leadership was provided by the partners at regional level.

In **South Sudan**, building on the success of the Uganda experience, the exercise was led by country-level actors, namely the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Health, the National Bureau of Statistics, and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management. A wide range of international actors such as FAO, OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, WHO, FEWSNET and the World Bank, played a pivotal role in the RCA analysis. The success of this exercise was crystallized by the broad partnership, which further expanded at the stage of operationalizing the findings, to include donor representatives, and national and international NGOs. This allowed for a shift from bilateral planning and discussions towards a more structured dialogue around joint programming on resilience at the country level.

Following the finalization of the RCA pilots, workshops in the two countries were conducted to validate the reports and start developing multi-stakeholders road maps on resilience based on the main findings. These consultations were also a good opportunity to discuss the establishment or the enhancement of multi-stakeholders coordination mechanisms to drive the agenda on resilience and ensure periodical monitoring of relevant indicators and capacities. Coordination mechanisms are also the bodies in charge of advocating for concrete actions to bridge the data gaps identified by the RCAs.

In both examples, the involvement of the government was key. It helped to galvanize the participation from all national level actors, hence ensuring that all relevant stakeholders, including relevant ministries, are adequately represented and have a voice in the process. This is essential to ensure that the findings of the RCA are credible and owned by the national actors.

2. Methodology

In order to carry out a RCA, the following prerequisites apply:

- Availability of a wide range of data on key parameters and indicators of food security; nutrition; livelihoods; shocks and stressors;
- Adequate data coverage and statistical representativeness at the geographical level of interest (i.e. district for Karamoja and State level for South Sudan);
- Continuous availability of data for the purpose of trend analysis, and to increase spectrum of analysis overtime by correlating capacities with resilience in a minimum number of cases (e.g. in South Sudan 15 rounds of the quarterly multi-agency, State level Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System since 2010 were used, while in Karamoja 7 rounds of Food security and Nutrition Assessment from 2011 were used).

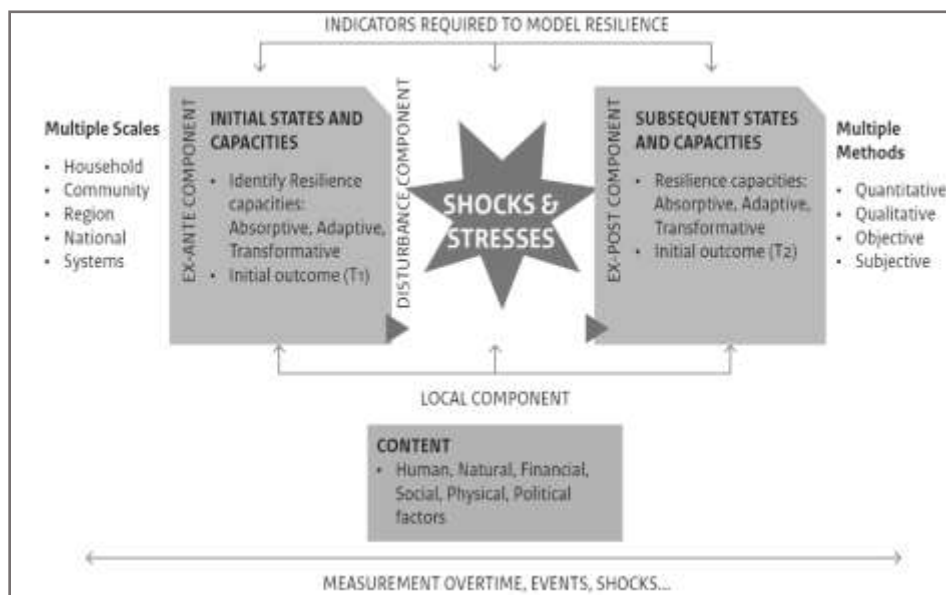
The RCA is consistent with the following principles on resilience:

- i. Resilience needs to be measured in relation to a given outcome.
- ii. Resilience needs to be related to shocks and stressors.
- iii. Resilience can be understood as a set of capacities: absorptive, adaptive and transformative.
- iv. Resilience can be measured at different levels, including individual, household, community, systems, sub-national, national and regional levels.
- v. Resilience is best understood through integration of quantitative and qualitative methods, considering objective and subjective measures.
- vi. Resilience must be understood over a significant time frame, with longitudinal data revealing how risks, responses and resilience interact – and affect food security and nutrition – over time and over shocks.
- vii. A resilience analysis useful to implementing agencies must reference current programmes and policy, in order to guide suggestions on where improvements could be made.

These principles are incorporated in the RCA resilience conceptual framework adapted from the one developed by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN)¹. The framework shows how a combination of resilience measurement approaches (considering qualitative and quantitative as well as subjective and objective data) are used to analyse states and capacities (at multiple scales from households to systems) before and after the occurrence of shocks and stressors, while also bearing in mind the context in which the analysis takes place.

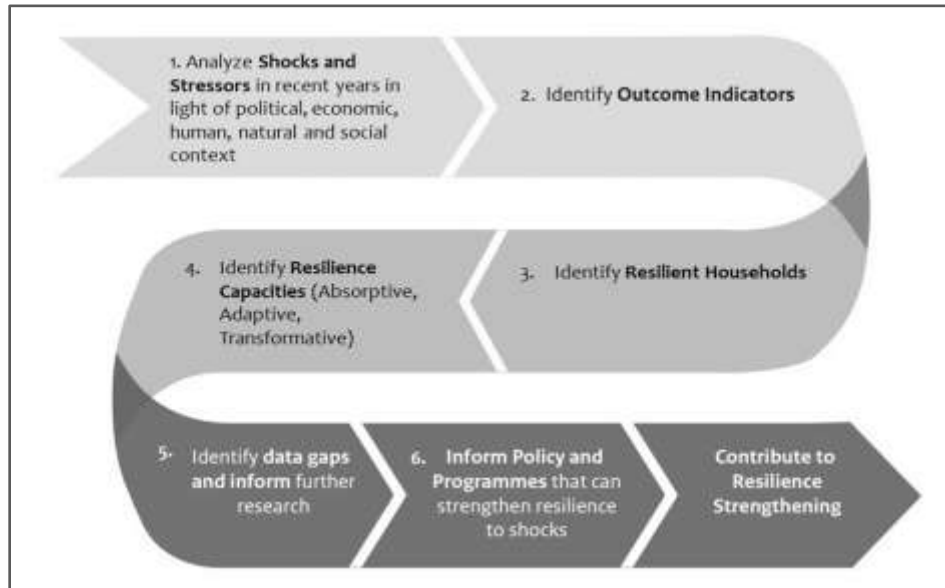
¹ 2014 model by Frankenberg and Costas, RM TWG (FSIN Technical Series No. 2 ‘A Proposed Common Analytical Model for Resilience Measurement: A General Causal Structure and Some Methodological Options’). Available at: <http://www.fsincop.net/resource-centre/detail/en/c/267086/> <http://www.fsincop.net/resource-centre/detail/en/c/267086/>

Figure 1: RCA conceptual framework



Based on the principles and on the framework, an analytical approach was developed for the studies in Karamoja and South Sudan. The RCA analytical approach, summarized in Figure 2, shows how the available data was used in a resilience analysis, with follow-up steps for contributing to resilience strengthening through improved and informed programming.

Figure 2: RCA Analytical Approach



The steps taken during the analysis are as follows:

1. **Analyse shocks and stressors in recent years:** The main shocks affecting outcomes in the context, and against which resilience is tested, include a wide range of natural, economic and insecurity-related shocks. The most common stressors include cumulative impacts of slow-onset factors negatively affecting livelihoods, food security and general wellbeing, thus making communities more vulnerable to the effects of shocks and less able to recover. A preliminary literature review is combined with quantitative data available to define a calendar or at least a list of shocks and stressors affecting rural households.
2. **Agree on outcome indicators and analyse their trends in recent years:** A RCA identifies outcomes that are proxies for wellbeing and, if sustained despite shocks, signify resilience. In the two studies, food insecurity and malnutrition were selected as outcomes, based on available data and on the convergence of interests of involved agencies. Quantitative data were used to identify outcome indicators and capture their trends since 2010 (South Sudan) and 2011 (Karamoja).
3. **Identify resilient households that are able to sustain their wellbeing throughout the analysis period:** Resilient households were defined slightly differently in the two RCAs. In Uganda resilient households were defined as households that, despite shocks and stressors, were: 1) food secure; and 2) did not have any malnourished children. In South Sudan in addition to these two criteria, a household should not have received food assistance in the three months prior to the survey to be considered resilient. A thorough quantitative data analysis was carried out - mainly from the periodical multi-agency Food Security and Nutrition monitoring systems – that helped to identify the resilient households.
4. **Identify key capacities that distinguish resilient households:** Using long term household data and a literature review, a list of capacities was identified. Capacities are divided into

three categories: absorptive, adaptive and transformative. A second step using quantitative data analysis generated the set of capacities that distinguished non-resilient from resilient households. This was corroborated by qualitative inputs from joint field validation missions (in Uganda) and ad-hoc workshops (in Uganda and South Sudan). The same data sources and quantitative approach as in step 3 were then used to identify the capacities needed to distinguish between resilient and non-resilient households. In the case of Karamoja, the list of capacities was fine-tuned based on qualitative information gathered through focus group discussions and key informant interviews conducted during the field mission. Although qualitative information was not collected in South Sudan, the list of capacities was finalized through technical multi-stakeholders consultations.

5. **Identify data gaps and inform further research:** The analysis helped identify data gaps on the main indicators of resilience capacities that could be collected with existing, and adapted future surveys.
6. **Inform policies and programmes that can strengthen resilience:** By identifying both capacities that strengthen resilience and the most frequent and severe shocks and stressors, this analysis will contribute to improving future resilience policy and programming for the most vulnerable households in Karamoja and South Sudan. This section is informed by consultative workshops that aim to bring together stakeholders from a wide range of sectors, and have the knowledge and capacity to implement relevant resilience building initiatives.

This methodology involved the use of a mixed methods approach to analyse existing qualitative and quantitative data on shocks and stressors, and the ‘resilience capacities’ that affected their impacts vis-à-vis household food security and child nutrition outcomes. The statistical significance of relationships between capacities and ‘resilience’ (sustained outcomes despite a backdrop of shocks) was then demonstrated through significance tests on the correlation level between these variables (i.e. Chi-square and T-test). Community and stakeholder consultations were then convened to validate and strengthen findings, as well as to explore how to increase the effectiveness of their respective resilience programmes and policies using the findings of the RCA.

3. Key findings

This section focuses on the main outcomes of the two RCA studies conducted in Karamoja and South Sudan, organized in: i) main shocks and stressors; ii) Capacities of resilient households; iii) Information gaps; iv) Support of the RCA on resilience programming.

Main shocks/stressors: Households in Karamoja identified climatic hazards and climate-related shocks as the most severe and frequent factors affecting livelihoods and access to food. Recurrent dry spells during the lean season, as well as flooding and heavy rainfall conducive to crop and livestock diseases are the main drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition. Limited

Conflict management and justice		✓
Small businesses	✓	
Asset Ownership		✓
Adaptive capacities		
Livelihood risk diversification	✓	✓
Household labour capacity	✓	
Skilled/salaried Household Labor		✓
Access to productive and fertile land	✓	✓
Food preservation and storage	✓	✓
Income Source Reliability and Sustainability (ISRS)		✓
Remittances		✓
Seasonal migration		✓
Educated household head		✓
Early Warning & Disaster Mitigation Systems	✓	✓
Transformative capacities		
Access to Health Service	✓	✓
Access to productive services	✓	
Access to Education	✓	✓
Safety nets and social protection	✓	✓
Empowerment, governance and leadership (women and youth empowerment, community leadership)	✓	
Women empowerment attitudes and Aspirations		✓
Youth employment and empowerment		✓
Support land tenure and pastoralism policy		✓
Community networks		✓
Access to Water and Sanitation	✓	✓
Access to Market and Infrastructures		✓

- Absorptive capacities:* Food-related coping strategies; ownership of a key assets (e.g. livestock); psychological strength of household members in areas often affected by local conflicts; and the opportunity to access informal safety nets are the most common absorptive capacities sustaining resilient households in the aftermath of a shock both in Karamoja and South Sudan. The traditional household cohesion, seen as a capacity to find solutions in hardship, and availability of income from are relevant assets for ensuring resilience in Karamoja. In South Sudan, the presence of customary or formal means to resolve local conflicts, an indicator of the local capacity to resolve disputes that arise and could undermine wellbeing, economic development and social stability seems to be more decisive, as well as the number of assets owned, directly linked to coping opportunities in hardship.
- Adaptive capacities:* The diversification of income sources, including the presence of income from skilled and salaried labour and the access to productive land are adaptive capacities common to the two pilots. Resilience in South Sudan seems more enhanced by availability of funds from remittances and seasonal migration opportunities from the rural to urban areas during the lean season. Finally, stable and reliable income is a common adaptive capacity for populations of Karamoja and South Sudan.
- Transformative capacities:* There is a convergence on transformative capacities conducive to resilience in the two contexts. In particular, access to social and productive services, to social safety nets and empowerment of women and youth are key capacities distinguishing resilient and non-resilient systems. They both highlight the centrality of the government and its institutions' role in providing services to ensure that households

and communities have the capacity to be resilient to shocks. Furthermore, the presence of strong communities is essential to make South Sudanese households resilient. Communities and community networks provide the capacity for bonding (within communities), bridging (between communities) and linking (between communities and higher levels including state) in ways that mitigate risks, forge collective solutions to shocks and stressors, and reduce underlying causes of vulnerability.

Information gaps: The RCA analyses helped to identify gaps in information on relevant capacities that are important to understanding resilience in a specific context. While a wealth of information was available in the pilots in Karamoja and South Sudan, it was often scattered, at times intermittent and partial due to different areas of interest and focus of actors involved in data collection. In addition, during the RCA workshops, partners identified more appropriate indicators on relevant capacities than those currently being collected. In conclusion, the RCA methodology not only contributes to identifying the main gaps in existing information, it also helps the existing monitoring mechanisms to identify strategies and methods to bridge the information gaps in a more harmonized, timely and efficient fashion.

Table 2: Main sources of secondary quantitative data

Karamoja	Reference period	South Sudan	Reference period
Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (FSNA)	2011-2014 (7 rounds)	Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Survey	2011-2015 (15 rounds)
Food security Assessment (FSA)	February 2014		

Impact of the RCA on resilience programming: Once relevant capacities helping households to sustain their wellbeing through shocks and stressors were identified and the findings validated, a series of consultative workshops were organized to discuss the programmatic implications for ongoing resilience policies in Uganda and South Sudan. A wide range of actors including government representatives, UN agencies, international institutions, international NGOs, local community based organisations (CBOs), and donors gathered in Kampala and in Juba to have a discussion on how to better translate these findings into concrete joint action plans.

In **Uganda**, the discussion on the multi-stakeholders resilience road map is still ongoing, and will certainly make use of findings from other relevant documents and approaches to resilience measurement. However, the RCA Karamoja has already started informing decision makers on the importance to invest in the following focus areas:

- Livelihoods support which includes strengthening of pastoral production as well as diversification of livelihood activities.
- Support for access to basic services to strengthen human and social capital.
- Support for both formal and informal social safety nets and social protection.
- Support for local governance and empowerment with due consideration of women and youth.

In **South Sudan**, the main conclusions of the RCA paved the way for a comprehensive multi-stakeholders discussion on the mapping of ongoing monitoring systems and programmes supporting the relevant resilience-related capacities, and enhanced frank debates on how to improve their effectiveness. This debate allowed not only to identify synergies among actors working in the same area and on the same capacities, but also highlighted gaps in the geographical coverage of resilience interventions.

4. Way forward

The following steps should be taken to strengthen the RCA methodology:

- **Strengthen the analysis:** even though efforts were made to ensure soundness of the analysis at all stages, a range of constraints were faced throughout the process. These included the lack of quantitative correlation between incidence of shocks/stressors and the capacities. In both pilot studies, efforts were made using both qualitative and subjective measures, such as inputs from a workshop, to document this correlation. This process requires several layers of validation and strengthening. Further implementation of the RCA should systematize how this process can be conducted to ensure the validity of results.
- **Strengthen the partnerships approach:** while the South Sudan pilot experience built on lessons learnt from the Uganda experience, opportunities to expand remain. In countries where more national capacity exist, further engagement of national actors, such as National NGOs and Community Based Organizations, should be ensured. A coordination body should ensure the adequate geographical scope and coverage of the RCA and streamline the findings into a continuous policy review.
- **Strengthen the implementation approach:** The South Sudan experience has led to the development of three tools that can be used to translate findings into practical action for all actors involved. The first tool determines the geographical distribution of shocks and stressors based on frequency and severity of occurrence of such hazards. The second one links each type of shock and stressors with the most relevant capacities needed to withstand them. Finally, the third tool details the ongoing programmes and policies aimed at strengthening each capacity and presents how to increase their effectiveness. These tools can be tested in other countries, and refined, to ensure their usefulness and effectiveness. As they have been just developed, serious efforts are needed to operationalize them and make them as appropriate as possible for all actors involved.

- **Integrate the RCA indicators within the existing analytical tools and define the ideal period of review for an RCA:** Ideally, the monitoring of resilience capacities through identified indicators, should be incorporated in the ongoing data collection surveys in a given country or area. For instance, FSNMS and FSNA in South Sudan and Karamoja, respectively, should include those indicators informing on resilience capacities thereby allowing updates on key parameters on a regular basis. The stock of relevant information will provide a technical basis for a thorough review of the RCA that should ideally take place within three years from the first pilot. Representatives of the coordination mechanism on resilience might however consider it appropriate to call for an update of the first exercise before the three years if relevant for planning purposes on resilience.
- **Increasing RCA ownership by local institutions:** It is pivotal to identify the governmental bodies that monitor capacities' indicators and translate them into concrete actions aimed at increasing the effectiveness of resilience policies and programmes. These bodies shall be part of, and ideally lead, the coordination mechanisms.