

“Resilience” in CBM’s Program Work

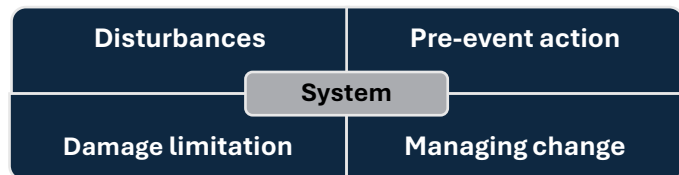
Purpose of this Document

"Resilience" has become a widely used term in long-term development programming as well as in humanitarian action. This document aims to provide a shared understanding of resilience by exploring its key dimensions and offering practical examples. It helps align CBM staff around a consistent definition while enabling staff and partners to apply the concept effectively in diverse contexts.

Definition of “Resilience”

Resilience is the capacity of individuals, households, communities, or systems to recover from or adapt to adversity.

It involves the ability to bounce back from setbacks, overcome challenges, and maintain a sense of well-being. The literature shows four commonalities when defining resilience:



- Disturbances: always occur; resilience is critical in enabling systems to function or flourish in the face of shocks and stresses.
- Pre-event action: actions that need to be taken in preparation for shocks and stresses, e.g., anticipatory actions and risk management.
- Damage limitation: resilience as limiting damage from disturbances, including recovery, “bouncing back,” or absorbing shocks.
- Managing change: resilience is about initiating or managing processes of change to deal with changing circumstances, e.g., learning, reorganization, adaptation, and evolution.



The Three Dimensions of Resilience Strengthening

Resilience Capacity	Stabilisation Capacity	Adaptation Capacity	Transformation Capacity
Description	Enables people to meet their basic needs and supports systems in maintaining functionality, ensuring survival during and after crises. By reducing exposure to shocks and stresses through preventive measures and effective coping strategies, it helps avoid lasting negative impacts.	Empowers people and systems to respond to long-term changes, cope with negative impacts, and minimize their effects where possible. It involves making proactive, informed decisions about alternative livelihood strategies, grounded in an understanding of evolving conditions and future risks.	Promotes structural change to establish sustainable livelihoods by addressing the root causes of vulnerability. It encompasses governance systems, policies, infrastructure, community networks, and social protection mechanisms—both formal and informal—that create an enabling environment for systemic and lasting transformation.



Examples of Resilience Strengthening in CBM's Program Work

Resilience capacities can be strengthened at one, two or all three levels within societies. In addition, a single activity can strengthen one, two or all three resilience capacities. In the context of CBM's programmatic work, we have these examples.

Level	Stabilisation capacity	Adaptation capacity	Transformation capacity
Individual	Psychological first aid and temporary cash assistance, food, or shelter.	Participation in psychosocial support programs to learn coping strategies for managing stress and trauma.	Gaining new confidence, skills, and networks that enable long-term resilience through education, training and skills development.
Household	Social Safety Nets, such as cash transfers, help families maintain basic needs and avoid destabilizing decisions like selling assets.	Climate-Smart Agriculture; Families learn new income-generating activities or switch to more resilient agricultural methods, enabling them to cope better with future droughts.	Households get access to livelihoods programmes (e.g. savings groups, skills development) or permanent access to other social protection programmes.
Community	Provision of temporary flood shelters and relief supplies (such as clean water, food, and sanitation kits) during and after the floods.	Community training sessions on flood preparedness, early warning systems, and evacuation plans.	The community invests in large-scale infrastructure, such as improving accessibility, constructing flood-resistant housing, building flood barriers, and implementing land-use planning to avoid high-risk areas.

Key Resources and Further Reading

- [Product sheet on resilience analyses](#), BMZ, 2021
- [Resilience and Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus](#), European Commission, 2022
- [Analysis of Resilience Measurement Frameworks and Approaches](#), ODI, 2016

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