

Should resilience-building projects (always) be socially acceptable?

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It is imperative for humanitarian and development projects to be sensitive to and respectful of social norms in contexts where they are implemented. Should this systematically be the case however, when cultural practices are harmful and might undermine resilience outcomes? How do aid agencies deal with their objectives to support people affected by crisis without contradicting local values? Can interventions lead to positive impacts without interfering with social and political issues?



Dance Class, Adi Harush, Ethiopia. In 2015 the Jesuit Refugee Service opened an arts, education and social centre on the Adi Harush refugee camp. Many of the refugees have secured paid jobs teaching at the centre. Credit: ODI / G.Pecot, 2016



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CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

This series of BRACED papers explore the underlying assumptions made in the design of resilience-building approaches and whether these do or do not hold true in differing contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper draws on development literature, humanitarian guidelines, and learning from development programmes globally. It also integrates the perspectives of 19 researchers and practitioners working in sectors ranging from emergency nutrition responses to irrigation schemes, peace building and climate change adaptation, with the common objective to enhance the resilience of people affected by crises.

These 'contributing thinkers' (see Annex 1) were asked the same question: should resilience-building programmes always be socially acceptable? Their input is weaved throughout the analysis in order to gain insight into people's lived experiences of (trying) to build resilience.

What do we mean by *building resilience, resilience programming and crises*?

A common definition of **disaster resilience** is the ability of countries, communities and households to manage change, by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses – such as earthquakes, drought or violent conflict – without compromising their long-term prospects (DFID, 2011).

Some organisations follow a rights-based approach to risks and define resilience as an **ongoing process of social change** by which women and men realise their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses and uncertainty (Jeans, 2016).

Shock and stresses are considered in the broader terms **crisis** (sudden or protracted), which also encompasses 'everyday crises' (e.g. chronic malnutrition, lack of sanitation, intimate partner violence).

Resilience-building interventions

encompass a wide range of activities in both humanitarian and development settings – and in all sectors – to enhance people's livelihoods. **Resilience programming** can occur at different levels (global/regional, national, municipal/local, household) and requires a 'systems approach' which recognises the linkages between the sources of risks, vulnerability and poverty (Jeans, 2016).

2. WHAT IS 'SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE'? AND TO WHOM?

What makes humanitarian and development projects socially acceptable? Is it the fact that they focus on the needs of people affected by a crisis? Or is it when they intervene in a particular way that respects local cultural norms? Or is it when both outcomes and processes align with what people want or value? For instance, a project that provides nutrition supplements to children suffering acute malnutrition might be a socially acceptable intervention, for multiple reasons: it responds to a life-threatening situation, it cares for one of the most vulnerable groups, it alleviates the health burden on households, it helps people meet their nutrition needs and supports wider development prospects. Now suppose that in the same intervention, the food supplements contain proteins from animal sources whereas the crisis-affected children belong to a community largely vegetarian. One can thus assume that the project is not socially acceptable because although it aims to tackle food insecurity, it does so in a way, or via means, that disrespect the values of the community it is supposed to serve.

The majority of international humanitarian and development actors (those consulted as part of this work and from the literature) agree that any forms of assistance must be 'socially acceptable', i.e. accepted by a community of people as 'normal' according to their set of rules and principles. Former Coordinator for the Recovery, Return and Reintegration Cluster in Darfur (UNDP Sudan), Sebastian Kratzer asserts that:

'Like with every other humanitarian, recovery or development intervention, resilience programming is not exempt from core concept like 'do no harm', accountability to affected populations and national/local ownership and sustainability. Without the acceptance by the society/culture, the fulfilment of any of these underlying principles, and hence any hope for a positive impact, are barely imaginable. In Darfur, our job was to link immediate life-saving humanitarian assistance with medium and longer-term recovery and development plans to increase the resilience of people affected by one of the worst protracted crises. It was of utmost importance to design a programme that would take into account the complex local norms. How do you support the return of displaced people to their place of origin, if the question of land ownership/occupation lies at the heart of much of the violence?'

Therefore, the question of what is socially acceptable automatically brings two further inquiries: 'In what circumstances is a project acceptable?' and 'Acceptable to whom'? An intervention might be welcomed or even requested by a local community but rejected by national authorities because it contradicts a particular political agenda or because the crisis-affected community is discriminated against by the government e.g. the Rohingya community in Myanmar (Wake, 2017). Hence, intervening through national instruments might ensure that the project is politically accepted and even supported at the state level, but it might also alienate local communities when formal structures are not sensitive to local customs and priorities (see Box 1).

Government priorities might also not align with the values of advocacy organisations who aim to protect ethnic minorities, or the environment. Caroline Haywood, Law and Policy Advisor, Climate and Forests, at ClientEarth, questions, for example, how far programmes can be 'socially acceptable': *'Development organisations always enter a country with in-built values that we may then seek to make 'socially acceptable/appropriate', but not to the extent of changing those core values. Take my work in deforestation – we wouldn't work with [national] partners*

to facilitate the widespread clearance of forests, even if that is what government policy (as a proxy for 'social values' of the country) advocated. Programmes are selectively socially acceptable – either because we would maybe not choose to work in certain countries that don't uphold our core values, or because we only allow certain elements of our development interventions to be adapted, based on national social acceptability'.

Box 1. Socially acceptable for whom and at what level?

By Bruce Mead, Technical Director, Ecorys International Development, Zambia

In many southern African countries there is already a dual system of governance between the formal local and national government structures alongside an array of traditional authorities and informal institutions. On the one hand, how respectful is the national formal system of the local context, and how sensitive is it to cultural and social norms? In addition to this, how respectful are external development interventions in an already dual system? In one particular region where we have been working, the government had dictated, designed and delivered small-scale irrigation schemes. I cannot recall any that became sustainable (and therefore had achieved resilience goals) because the community do not believe they 'own' them. No one who is poor will refuse a plot on a smallholder scheme, but equally no one will invest on operation and maintenance, conservation practices and upgrading in their plot if i) the plot can be reallocated at any point, ii) the donors keep paying for maintenance and rehabilitation and iii) the government dictates what is grown,

how it is grown and where it is marketed (usually with small payouts to farmers and lots of rent opportunities further up the value chain). When the external funding stops, what was implemented fades and dies.

On the other hand, the quickest way to get thrown out of a country is to overtly intervene at the local level and circumvent the formal structures. External funding can be blocked and initiatives might bypass governmental efforts with missed opportunities for knowledge sharing, capacity-building and continuation of promising activities. Intervening at the national level through centralised programmes might be an effective way to enhance resilience in contexts where inhabitants need large-scale infrastructure development (i.e. water access, transport, communication, etc.) or protective laws that allow people's access to land, social protection or justice. Centralised interventions that work well to reduce vulnerability should be supported. Sadly, in the field there are a lot more examples of failure than success and genuinely local interventions might succeed better in improving resilience. It's a tricky balance and it is very context-specific.

It is equally important to look at how organisations implement a project and if the attitudes and behaviours of their staff are socially acceptable from the perspective of local communities, public opinion and international standards. For instance, the code of conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent (RC/RC) movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in disaster relief, sets out guiding principles for organisations involved in humanitarian activities, including the principle to 'respect the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries we are working in' (IFRC and ICRC, 1994). Such guidelines help universalise the provision of relief aid and build a general consensus, in both humanitarian and development contexts, that projects must be sensitive to, and respectful of, social and cultural aspects in contexts where they are implemented. This does not only constitute a core commitment to humanitarian standards (CHS Alliance, Group URD and the Sphere Project, 2015), it is also a requirement to ensure that projects bring about positive and long-lasting impacts (BRACED Alliance Myanmar, 2015).

The distinction between socially acceptable outcomes and socially acceptable processes is useful to better understand if and how aid programmes are appropriate and according to whose perspective. The difficulty lies in the fact that the parameters of what is or what is not a socially acceptable behaviour will vary according to cultural and political contexts, ideologies, historical heritages (i.e. colonisation), organisations and their institutional principles, as well as individuals' own value systems. As emphasised by ALNAP's Head of Research Paul Knox Clarke, reflecting on the Haiti prostitution scandal: *'the general public, who directly or indirectly pay for most*

humanitarian action, cares deeply about NGO behaviour. People expect agencies and the people who work for them to keep to basic standards of morality' (Knox Clarke, 2018). Without trying to debate what morality is, the following sections will attempt to unpack the characteristics of aid strategies that make them socially acceptable or not and to whom (also see Annex 1). The Core Humanitarian Standards define humanitarian response as appropriate when programmes are **'acceptable to the different groups affected within the community'** and when they 'seek to uphold rights of all community members by: **meeting their basic needs; responding to their protection concerns** (e.g. preventing sexual exploitation and violence); and **enabling people to maintain their sense of dignity and self-respect'** (CHS Alliance, the Sphere Project and Groupe URD, 2015). These guidelines provide a framework to interrogate how each principle might or might not be applicable in every context and at every level.

3. ENABLING PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR SENSE OF DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT

Being attentive to people's dignity and focusing on the individual level is an important reminder of the prime motivation of humanitarian and development projects: to care about people and alleviate their suffering. Senior Medical Adviser for the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dr. Paul Bouvier writes that a '*core ethical duty in humanitarian action is to provide care and solicitude to affected persons*' (Bouvier, 2014). In the context of responding to sexual violence, he advocates for a holistic, person-centred approach:

'A priority concern in building a response for survivors of sexual violence is to treat them with respect and sympathy – in a word, with humanity. Treating someone with respect implies considering and promoting the dignity of the individual, as a human person, despite and beyond the traumatic experience and feelings of dehumanization. To treat with sympathy involves recognizing the vulnerabilities and the suffering of the person and expressing human solidarity, concern and support, while at the same time recognizing and promoting the capacities of the person' (Bouvier, 2014: 572).

To adopt a person-centred approach is helpful to recognise the importance of respecting and promoting the agency of people affected by a crisis. Their resilience will only enhance if aid builds on people's capacities to choose the most appropriate response to their particular situation and needs, as opposed to reducing individuals to their vulnerabilities. Hence, a project that works towards improving someone's livelihoods must follow an approach that is acceptable to that person in order

to maintain their sense of dignity and self-respect.

However, what an external aid worker might consider necessary to maintain someone's dignity might conflict with the value system in which that person lives. For example, to support survivors of gender-based violence through accessing protection, healthcare, and judiciary services might clash with the gender norms that tolerate adolescent girls to be married at a young age and women to be sexually assaulted (see Box 2).

Former Deputy Director of Operations for Save the Children in Greece, Anne-Lise Dewulf relates how emergency response sometimes goes against certain cultural habits if those habits endanger the lives of the most vulnerable. '*I am thinking of women refugees from Syria, the majority of which do not breastfeed. But in crisis situations like in Greece or when they are on the move, breastfeeding could save the life of their babies. So, we had to go against certain cultural habits and encourage mothers to breastfeed. But this raises a lot of questions/dilemmas in terms of their dignity ... and yet this practice can have a real impact*'.

It might not be the responsibility of external organisations to maintain people's dignity ('*an individuals' dignity is theirs alone*'), but projects can support an enabling environment for people to maintain their self-esteem; however they can also create unfavourable conditions.

Resilience will only enhance if aid builds on people's capacities to choose the most appropriate response to their particular situation and needs.

¹ Comments kindly provided by Rachel Gordon who reviewed the paper.

Box 2. How to protect adolescent girls' dignity when child marriage is customary

By Colette Benoudji, Coordinator,
Association LEAD Tchad

In eastern Chad, it is customary to marry off girls as soon as they have their first menstruations to ensure that any intercourse and resulting pregnancies will be occurring within the remit of the marriage institution (Le Masson et al., 2018). As documented in other contexts in Ethiopia, Uganda or Vietnam, parents often perceive marriage as a way to protect their daughter's reputation (Harper et al., 2014). Early marriage is used to preserve the virginity of girls as they interact more and more with the opposite sex during their schooling, and can protect the family from shame in case of underage intercourse (forced or consented) and early pregnancy. Even when used as a coping mechanism by women to meet their basic needs or as a protective strategy against sexual violence, research shows the damaging consequences of child marriage for girls' health and their future development prospects (Schlecht, 2016). In Chad, adolescent girls who become pregnant before their reproductive system has fully developed and who live in rural areas with extremely low access to health services, are at high risks of facing complications when giving birth. If they survive a complicated birth, they are likely to suffer devastating injuries including obstetric fistula (i.e. a hole between the vagina and the bladder or rectum, through which urine or stool leaks continuously) (Le Masson et al., 2018).

The stigma associated with this injury means that the sufferer will often be shunned by her family and community, and thus even less likely to receive care (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2018). This situation seriously undermines any opportunities for women, and adolescent girls in particular, to access and secure livelihoods, let alone to maintain their integrity and self-respect. The combination of poor health and limited knowledge to look after their newborns further undermines food security for both mother and child in a context characterised by high levels of malnutrition. It is among the youngest women (15–19 years of age) that the level of chronic energy deficiency is the highest (26%). Volunteers from a health centre in the Sila region told us that the majority of patients are very young mothers who come with malnourished children, but often women do not have the decision-making power to access health services: *'there are men who are really resistant to women coming to bring their children to the health centre. They think that if the child is sick or unhappy, why should a woman come to expose this child at the hospital? It is shameful; other villagers will think that the head of household does not provide for his family'* (Le Masson et al., 2018). Strong social norms that dictate the attitudes of fathers (and mothers) towards early marriage, maternity and access to healthcare are particularly restrictive in terms of the health and wellbeing of women, adolescent girls and their children. So, if projects are supposed to respect the local culture, does it mean they (should) tolerate harmful traditional norms?

For example, an increasing amount of studies report accounts of men being, and feeling, excluded from economic assistance because aid agencies target women (Hilhorst, 2016). Supporting women's economic empowerment is necessary from an equity perspective, but the integration of all members of communities in development projects is equally important to reduce the gender divide and tackle gender stereotyping.

Hence, while the principle of supporting someone's integrity is helpful to tailor assistance to their needs and views, most

people do not live in isolation from other family or community members. They live with parents and/or spouses, in villages or cities; they belong to a family, a neighbourhood; and they identify themselves with gender, class, ethnic, religious and citizen groups. So, whether or not resilience building projects should always be acceptable – and to whom – depends on the scale of enquiry and it becomes more difficult to answer this question when looking not just at the individual level but also at the social and political context to which they belong.



In Zambia, a mother poses with her two daughters (with all their consents) in front of the house where she relocated after leaving her abusive husband. Repeated abuse and life threats significantly undermined her sense of self-respect which is why, she said, she stayed in this relationship for 20 years before she managed to escape. Credit: @V. Le Masson, 2014

4. BEING ACCEPTABLE TO DIFFERENT GROUPS WITHIN COMMUNITIES

People living in the same community, even in the same household, have different vulnerabilities and capacities, and different needs and interests.

Communities are comprised of people with different social identities and economic backgrounds. These socioeconomic attributes influence their conditions (i.e. their access to basic services and living standards); and their position (i.e. their status and power) within the community. They further shape people's ability and means they have to protect themselves in times of crisis, and to recover from a disaster. In a nutshell, people living in the same community, even in the same household, have different vulnerabilities and capacities, and different needs and interests.

Hence, for a programme to be acceptable to the diverse groups affected within a community, it must first assess what the distinct needs might be, and not assume that everyone is affected in the same way. Senior Advisor on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction for Practical Action, Colin McQuistan stresses that *'Resilience must consider the role of culture and human agency, and that the development aims of all people do not align. But all people, communities and/or countries will not align to the same outcome. What builds the resilience of a farmer with a tractor may not be the same as what would build the resilience of a farmer dependent on livestock for motive power. Different vulnerabilities, different contexts, stress the need for different resilience building processes'* (McQuistan, 2017).

This requires not only to conduct systematic and ongoing analyses of the context but also to undertake *impartial* needs assessment (CHS, the Sphere Project and Groupe URD, 2015). An impartial assessment acknowledges barriers, and seeks to reach marginalised people to assess their needs and make sure that their views are also taken into consideration in the design of a project in spite of those barriers. Acting impartially means to recognise, for example, that some households might be located in hard-to-reach geographical areas, some community members might be ostracised because they are HIV positive or because of their disability, while others might be confined to their homes simply because of their gender and their associated social status (e.g. adolescent girls). In practice, the undertaking of such assessments requires more time, rigour and resources than would otherwise be needed if practitioners simply consulted people living in the most easily accessible communities or if they only talked to head of households, village chiefs and local authorities, all of whom tend to be men. Still, such efforts remain paramount in order to gauge what is needed, who needs it the most and why, and who has expressed such need. As Professor Susan Buckingham suggests: *'Appropriate measures are those which respond to what women need which might not be what their male partners think they need.'*

To conduct these impartial assessments however, could lead to lists of different, and sometimes contradictory needs and interests that reflect the diversity of community members' experiences. For example, to raise women's opportunities to engage in income-generation activities is a need and an interest expressed by many rural women. This becomes a component often included in development projects that aim to enhance people's livelihoods and promote greater gender equity. The underlying assumption is that by helping women engage in productive activities, they will also gain a better access to other assets (e.g. agriculture inputs, insurance products, healthcare, schooling for their children) which will improve their conditions and enhance not only

their resilience but that of their household. Restoring someone's source of income is one thing, but to creating new opportunities for other people to earn an income is another. It implies to facilitate access to an economic resource that some community members did not necessarily have before and might lead to economic assets being (re)distributed within households and within communities. In many settings, the promotion of new economic agents and entrepreneurs might lead to positive development outcomes (such as tapping into potential resources and innovators) but also result in changes in gender roles and shifts in power relations that might not be socially acceptable by all groups within a community, particularly those whose privileges are challenged (Ritchie, 2018).



Group discussion with men in one coastal village in Southern Bangladesh to assess their vulnerabilities and capacities to disaster risks, facilitated by ActionAid Bangladesh Credit: @V.Le Masson, 2015

In one case study documented by the Sphere Project in Pakistan, one local NGO aimed to re-establish livelihoods to communities affected by the earthquake in 2005. Many heads of household (mostly men) were lost, leaving women to assume responsibility for their families. Yet many of them were left out of general assistance and decision-making processes. In this context, how can we support these women through cash-for-work assistance while still respecting local customs, customs in which women who work are seen as going against social norms. The organisation took a phased approach that included (i) raising awareness of rights for both men and women, to gain acceptance from the community, and to ensure that the programme did not pose further risks; and (ii) give opportunities for employment to both men and women without increasing their vulnerability (Wooster, 2013).

Working in collaboration with those who hold power is paramount and this point is repeatedly made by researchers and practitioners who work on promoting social development, equality and rights. US-based Researcher Rachel Gordon regrets that *'too often, programmes bypass community leaders to go straight to the categories of people they're targeting. If I wanted to run a programme to benefit women in South Sudan, for example, I would probably want to devote at least the first half of the project – if not the whole thing – to working with the chief, just building trust, discussing how*

chiefs' roles are changing these days, what are the roles and futures of his wives and daughters ... maybe having respectful disagreements, but ultimately working to get his support, ideally with the help of someone he already knows and trusts. We were very fortunate in my recent project in South Sudan, for example, to have both senior South Sudanese researchers on our team as well as an anthropologist who knew the context well and essentially had a South Sudanese family and network, which came in very handy when we were working there. I know it's not possible for every programme to have a resident anthropologist, but [...] I think it would only increase programme success in the long run. And the hiring of local team members – on equal terms with internationals – is crucial. These are also culturally appropriate ways to work toward change, though they unfortunately wouldn't look like good "value for money".'

5. MEETING PEOPLE'S BASIC NEEDS

The prime motivation of humanitarians, as set out in the Code of Conduct of the RC/RC Movement, is to alleviate human suffering whenever it is found and particularly amongst those least able to withstand the stress caused by a crisis. How to prioritise the nature of relief and who needs it the most however, requires an assessment of the priority humanitarian needs. Focusing on responding to people's basic needs constitutes a useful guiding principle for aid priorities, as emphasised by Humanitarian Specialist for Médecins Sans Frontières Michiel Hofman: *'Lofty goals like stabilisation, state building and resilience represent the strengthening of the "normal" situation, but crisis is when normality is suspended, so these objectives need to be temporarily suspended too. Lives are saved by focusing on the basics: food, water, shelter and medical care'* (Hofman, 2016).

The challenge for resilience-building labelled projects is that the majority of them are not operating in the humanitarian sector. They are often implemented following a crisis (although many contexts characterised by chronic malnutrition, lack of basic sanitation or political instability, could arguably be considered as crises, i.e. protracted ones). Resilience-building projects tend to have a longer-term span and aim 'to protect or re-establish people's livelihoods, ensure that systems (including governance and infrastructure) are better able to withstand future shocks and also ensure that communities are organised and prepared to respond better to subsequent disasters' (CHS Alliance, the Sphere Project and Groupe URD, 2015).

Based on the objective to integrate risk and sustainability in development planning, resilience-building activities might prioritise certain sectors to reduce inequalities and people's vulnerabilities in the long term, such as child protection or women's empowerment. But immediate activities still need to respond, or at least relate to the primary needs of crisis-affected people. Senior Lecturer at Northumbria University Bernard Manyena takes the example of tackling child labour to stress that social acceptability depends a lot on what local communities consider being a priority: *'In the Tonga dominated Binga district, north-western Zimbabwe, if you went there waving the Convention on the Rights of the Child up in the air to stop children working in the fields, you will cause more harm to children. Child labour is institutionalised in the Tonga cultural system; it is expected that children will wake up early in the morning to assist with ploughing and weeding to improve the harvests. Being a poor community, they would need extra support from somewhere to replace child labour. Yes, theoretically and morally, it is wrong to use child labour – but the reality is different, I have heard parents say, "children have to work in order to eat"'*. This example emphasises the challenge for resilience-building projects: farmers relying on the labour force of their children to maintain their livelihoods could be viewed as a resilience capacity for their household, if it allows their members to secure food and earning opportunities. In addition to a deep understanding of different value systems, the manner in which interventions are conducted matters as much as the issue the project aims to tackle if they are to be socially accepted by all community members.

What might build resilience may need to alter the socio-cultural-ecological system that created people's vulnerabilities in the first place

Hence, building resilience happens in phases, as also pointed out by BRACED Myanmar Alliance Coordinator Jeremy Stone: *'Community resilience begins with meeting immediate disaster resilience needs (e.g. access to food and basic services), only then do community members begin to identify and address issues that will take effect over a longer period. [...] The central issue of resilience is related to understanding uncertainty and being able to adapt to changing conditions. Many communities already have these skills but not always the information to understand risk and plan for future uncertainty'*. One of the objectives of the project in Myanmar was to support improved access to scientific and weather information in order to support risk-informed development planning at the community level. In addition, the project supported 155 Community Resilience Assessments

to identify risks as well as people's strengths, which can be leveraged (BRACED Myanmar Alliance, 2015). This helped communities articulate their priorities and submit proposals to fund activities to address their needs (thanks to proposal writing training for example).

Another example from Bangladesh (see Box 3) shows the extent to which resilience building is a process that can follow many phases. A useful approach is perhaps to clarify the intention of the resilience building process in terms of changes. Colin McQuistan of Practical Action distinguishes the difference between (i) **traditional change**, a minor adjustment of existing practices to make things work faster, produce better or cheaper outputs; (ii) **transitional change**, resilience built through an update in the process, still producing the same outcome



A social science researcher (right) is interviewing a woman in South Kivu, DRC, to explore her experience of attending a training on raising advocacy skills and what potential impact it might have had on her decisions
Credit: @ P.Tshomba, 2016

but doing it in a different way, by perhaps using new technology; (iii) **transformational change**, where systems significantly change in the process and in the outcomes, for example, to relocate a community to a flood safe area rather than trying to build walls to protect houses. *'Resilience as an outcome is dangerous, it suggests an end state of resilience, whereas resilience is dynamic. It also suggests that resilience can be bolted onto the socio-cultural-ecological system present to make it persist. But in many cases what might build resilience may not be appropriate in the local context.'* In addition to this, what might build resilience may need to alter the socio-cultural-ecological system that created people's vulnerabilities in the first place.

When it comes to adapting to climate change, however, how can programmes respond sustainably to people's basic needs when they live in areas where it becomes increasingly challenging to access water and secure food? According to Charles Reeve, team leader of the Climate Resilient Infrastructure Development Facility, parts of southern Africa are already experiencing a 3 degrees rise in temperatures, as well as serious water shortages: *'In some areas, I don't see any opportunities. There is no food, no water supply, the state can't afford supply of water and food. It's simply unsustainable to keep people where they are, so serious questions should be asked [...] To build resilience to climate shocks, means to address people's current food and water issues in a way that is sustainable for the long-term future, and through wealth creation by linking the production of energy or food to supply chains, but to create false incentives is wrong'*. So even when focusing on people's needs, resilience programmes might face several dilemmas: why providing assistance in places that 'external' development actors

might consider unsuitable as a matter of sustainability and therefore unacceptable from their point of view; how to support people's wellbeing durably when this requires changing some important elements of the context where they live, an approach they could consider unacceptable; if local communities had access and understood the same level of information used by aid workers or experts to design projects, and if, in turn, these 'experts' systematically drew on local knowledge and impartial needs assessments, would their perspectives align better?

The focus of interventions often depends on aid organisations' agendas – on what their mandate is and where they want or have been requested to work. This is all strongly influenced by funding opportunities and raises the question of accountability. Aid projects are accountable to both funders and people affected by crisis. In reality, interventions are often more driven by funding requirements than the views of 'aid recipients'. As emphasised in the Humanitarian Policy Group's latest report, which reimagines humanitarian action, 'Stronger accountability to people affected by crisis ought to be integrated into longer-term response strategies from the onset' (HPN/ThinkPlace, 2018) to build trust and relationships that will also help to ensure that projects are adaptive and better tailored to people's perspectives.

While (most) interventions aim to address people's needs, they also cannot tackle all contributing factors to poverty and inequality. Results Manager for the BRACED Fund Manager John Choptiany suggests, *'If we are to work in a particular area then we might be forced to concede some things that we think are not socially acceptable in order to help other aspects of [people's] livelihoods.'* This implies being

aware of the potential and/or likely social consequences of an intervention. As emphasised by India-based researcher Thomas Tanner, *'One part of planning and implementing actions is to consider the socio-economic consequences and mediate any trade-offs between people, over time, between environmental and economic impacts, etc. We have plenty of examples of adaptation and resilience where actions have had consequences on other groups (e.g. building resilience to floods in one part of a slum in Gorakhpur here in India, diverting the water into another area)'*. Being more explicit about trade-offs is also advocated by ODI Principal Research Fellow John Twigg: *'The assumption is that projects are socially neutral but they are not. Especially if projects call for*

transformation, there are going to be losers and winners and that political dimension often gets missed out. Instead, we must be explicit about it'. The political aspect of interventions becomes more obvious when the process of enhancing resilience involves not only technical support, (e.g. vaccination campaigns and the distribution of mosquito nets – all extremely beneficial), but also when it engages with normative activities including addressing discriminatory social norms. In a nutshell, focusing on meeting people's basic needs is not only difficult due to the trade-offs that have to be made, but it is also not enough to ensure that projects are adequate to the interests of people who are targeted by development aid.

Box 3. Building resilience step by step in Bangladesh – Pumpkins Against Poverty

By Colin McQuistan, Practical Action

In Bangladesh, annual monsoon rains cause the country's three major rivers to swell, resulting in floods that wash away homes, submerge land and force families to find a new place to live and a new means of earning a living without land to cultivate (Practical Action, 2018). Communities are aware of the flood peril they face and find the uncertainty and risks more associated with how the flood will occur each year: Will it be rapid? Will it be prolonged? Providing as much advance warning as possible enables families to adapt their livelihoods and prepare for the flood, but we also notice that Bangladeshi farmers appear very receptive to new ideas, whether this is climate proof house construction, adoption of floating

gardens or more elaborate aqua-geonics systems. One project has introduced a technique called sandbar cropping that allows pumpkins to be grown on sandy, barren soil left behind when flood waters recede. Families adopt this technique very quickly as it only requires a minor adjustment in their traditional farming practices and allows them to continue to farm, their primary livelihood activity. But we found that many of these landless farmers cultivate pumpkins for four to five years and then drop out. Upon preliminary investigation, it appeared that they have saved enough money to be able to graduate to a more reliable, year-round source of livelihood (e.g. tailoring, renting fields, mechanic, etc.) and thus no longer wish to cultivate pumpkins. So, in that instance, the initial limitations to resilience building appear to be around access to new ideas and investment capital to get started.

6. RESPONDING TO PROTECTION CONCERNS

The fifth principle of the code of conduct for the International RC/RC movement and NGOs in disaster relief establishes that projects 'shall respect culture and custom' (IFRC and ICRC, 1994). However, how does this principle guide organisations to deal with cultural practices such as gender-based violence that undermine resilience?

A powerful rationale for organisations to intervene and advocate for changes to be made in contexts affected by a crisis, is the goal to protect people from harm (i.e. not 'just' responding to their needs). The protection argument builds on the previous principle of enabling people to maintain their sense of dignity and self-respect, but it goes further by implementing mechanisms to protect people from violence perpetrated by combatants, community or household members or even self-inflicted violence. These mechanisms range from medical and psychosocial assistance to legal advice to supporting survivors' access to justice and judicial systems, where those exist. To protect people from harm however, entails to intervene and alter power relations in a particular setting. In other words, interventions that are concerned with people's rights have to be more politically-engaged, which most humanitarian agencies might not be comfortable with if their work is supposed to be 'neutral' (Darcy and Hofmann, 2003).

Neutrality, one of the four main principles that guide humanitarian action implies that 'humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature' (CHS Alliance et al., 2015: 8). Yet gender inequalities, including gender-based violence, constitute highly political issues, arguably controversial in many contexts where women fight against social and economic discrimination.

Does that mean that interventions should not attempt to tackle harmful gender norms? *'Does it make sense trying to be acceptable to something I am trying to change?'* adds Sebastian Kratzer, a former UN worker. *'At the end of the day, you explain to people that "We respect your social norms and culture, but they have to change because they are the cause of your/someone else's vulnerability". The development of norms and practices within any society are inherently political processes. So, as much as we wish for resilience programming to be a technical exercise, when we engage in the transformation of norms we are intervening in national/local/private socio-political processes. In these, everywhere, there will be oppressors and oppressed, powerful and vulnerable, winners and losers'.*

As documented in the Humanitarian Policy Group's latest report, it is widely acknowledged by international humanitarian actors that interventions rarely abide fully by the neutrality or impartiality principles without making trade-offs (HPN/ThinkPlace, 2018). The Core Humanitarian Standards guidelines explains that while some organisations are committed to giving impartial assistance, the principle of neutrality should not necessarily preclude undertaking advocacy

on issues related to accountability and justice (CHS Alliance, the Sphere Project and Groupe URD, 2015). Could such advocacy efforts include programmes that support improved access to reproductive healthcare and family planning? (See Box 4.) Some donors have adopted an explicit stance on rights. The UK Department for International Development, for example, recently shared its 2018 Strategic Vision for Gender Equality that calls all actors of societies to 'Challenge and change unequal power relations between men and women, and negative attitudes and discriminatory practices that hold women and girls back' (DFID, 2018).

When asked whether resilience-building projects should always be socially acceptable, Professor and Director of the Centre for Gender and Disaster at University College London, Maureen Fordham considers that: *'You cannot ask this question without asking the next question – "socially acceptable to whom?"*

Transforming the context that creates vulnerability means addressing power imbalances within the identified programming location. This means that interventions designed to redress discriminatory norms and actions against one group or segment of the population, will be resisted by another. If the intervention is far beyond the social and cultural norms of the mass of the population, or is identified with a hated or despised group, then it will appear too extreme and the countervailing response will be too great to overcome.' In other words, projects that aim to challenge local discriminatory customs must acknowledge the norms that guide their interventions. For external, predominantly western agencies, these norms are often rooted in Christian ethics and Euro-centric values (HPN/ThinkPlace, 2018). Ignoring historical paternalism can compromise the relevance and the effectiveness of projects and more problematically, it could lead to community backlash or retaliation.



*In Chad, during the International Week for Women's Rights, a representative of the regional government explains to villagers the different types of violence against women and girls which are against the Constitution
Credit: @ C. Benoudji, 2017*

Box 4. Supporting family planning to enhance resilience to floods, Kinshasa, DRC.

By Patricia Tshomba, independent researcher

Resilience programming must be sensitive to social norms, otherwise the impact of interventions might not be lasting. However, does it actually benefit the most vulnerable? Those socially excluded tend to suffer from social norms such as child marriages and other forms of violence against girls and women. These social norms often make some groups within poor communities even more vulnerable to further shocks and stresses. For example, in January 2018, DRC's capital Kinshasa was hit by floods: 465 houses were destroyed, 51 people died, 17 were injured and 2,624 households were affected (IFRC and ICRC, 2018). For journalist Samir Tounsi, reporting for AFP in Kinshasa, *'the fatalities were predictable given the triple contribution of poverty, uncontrolled development and over-population. Three-quarters of homes in Kinshasa are slums which have no access to sanitation or electricity'* (Tounsi, 2018). Inhabitants' homes are made of weak materials, built illegally and without foundations in flood-prone areas.

After the floods, the governments and other agencies provided relief focusing on primary needs: food, clothing, kitchen sets, mattresses, etc. (Agenzia fides, 2018) while trying to relocate people permanently. However, to build effective resilience to floods, means on the one hand to improve people's physical resources (housing and basic infrastructures), and on the other

hand to tackle some of the causes of people's vulnerabilities – namely child marriage and early pregnancies, and the lack of access to family planning information and to sexual and reproductive health services. In one affected area called Kingabwa (Pakadjuma), most people, however, do not believe in contraception. One woman interviewed by a journalist in August 2017 pointed out *'Contraception is not good for the body. It does damage the body, so stay away'*. Child marriages or underage sex is socially acceptable, as another woman explained: *'The reason children have kids here is because rape does not exist. It is a simple way for kids to make money. They meet someone who can afford to provide for them and go with them'* (Ma Mission TV, 2017).

To introduce programmes on birth control, children's rights, protection against early marriage and to raise awareness on the danger for adolescents to have children, all might be viewed by the community as socially unacceptable. Yet, this will be the only effective way for the community to transform their means of living in the face of hazards, long-term changes and uncertainty. Otherwise, the continuation of adolescents having children, whom they cannot provide for, maintains their vulnerability and their susceptibility to suffer from the next disaster. Facing this circle of poverty, resilience programming that is socially acceptable might not necessarily lead to the reduction of the long-term impacts of crises on the most vulnerable if the social norms are negative and increase people's vulnerabilities in the first place.

Researching the effects of gender-focused international aid on women and men in Afghanistan, gender expert Lina Abirafteh writes that in conflict/post-conflict settings, *'gender roles are changing and*

gender relations may be renegotiated. The space created for women may bring resentment and backlash, manifesting in a shift from public to private violence [...] there is a displacement of the anger people

feel over something they have no power to control, on to the place where they feel they have dominance – their relations with women' (Johnson and Leslie, 2004: 23). In 2005, at the time of her report, Abirafeh warned against a dramatic increase in violence against women castigated for being 'Western-influenced', and urged for increased sensitivity in programmes, promises, and the impact of NGOs presence: 'In May 2005, three Afghan women were found raped and strangled in Baghlan Province. It is believed that these women were murdered for their involvement with international non-governmental organizations and

"whoredom". Another woman was stoned in Badakhshan Province' (Abirafeh, 2005). So when projects aim to increase the awareness of people's rights, they might not only go against the values of local communities but also conflict with the interests of power holders, which could put further risk on any social groups that were targeted by aid, particularly those in the absence of institutional support. Is it then socially acceptable for NGOs to increase the risk of social backlash? But what are the chances for transformative resilience if projects do not engage with any forms of power relations?



Consultative focus group discussion between women living in an area regularly exposed to floods in the city of Gorakhpur, India, and practitioners of a local non-governmental organisation working on resilience building in urban areas. Credit: @V.Le Masson, 2015

7. BEING REALISTIC AND MINDFUL YET AMBITIOUS AND INCLUSIVE

The awareness and identification of potential unintended and negative consequences lead many projects that aim to tackle harmful norms to proceed step by step and/or to tailor activities to the targeted audience at specific level. In one BRACED-supported project in Kenya, Mercy Corps supported the County Government of Wajir to develop their Gender and Resilience Strategy 2017–2020 to address inequalities affecting women and girls. Strategic priorities include: (i) promoting women's leadership in natural resource management and governance, (ii) building inclusive markets, (iii) transforming harmful socio-cultural norms, and (iv) strengthening institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming (Wajir County Government, 2017). For Ubah Kahiye, Programme Manager for Mercy Corps in Wajir, *'Transformation is ideal but difficult or impossible to be achieved in the short term since behaviour change takes a long time. In our case, social acceptance is paramount. We strive to find a middle ground and address the absorptive and adaptive capacities during the programme and hoping for transformation in the long run. For instance, while we avoid discussions on contraceptives in our curriculum for girls in Wajir, we stress on the importance of abstinence and retention in schools as we know the longer a girl stays in school the less likely she will have children before reaching 21. With the government it's a lot easier to be bold and transformative since the ideas we are working on are institutionalised in the constitution. Issues like rapes and gender-based violence are addressed wholly and there are champions both male and female that we engage to bring this forward'*.

The project established 'Gender Desks' to institutionalise the provision of information related to gender-based violence while at the same time the Gender and Resilience Strategy also recommends that the county government support communication activities to raise awareness on gender discriminatory norms, and gender activists who are motivated to put this awareness into practice through advocating for gender sensitive legislative, policy and service delivery reform (Wajir County Government, 2017).

Avenues to foster transformation will differ from one project to another, and what seems appropriate in Kenya might not be the approach chosen by practitioners in West Africa. To reduce teenage pregnancy in Sierra Leone, for example, the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium recommends that information provided to teenagers should target not just girls but boys as well, and include inter-generational discussions about sex, contraception, pregnancy, childbirth and child-rearing. These activities however, must rely on *'locally respected channels that are likely to have more resonance with local communities and can help to challenge discriminatory and unhelpful attitudes. This may mean engaging people with difficult and potentially contradictory views to those promoted by programming but working with them to find mutually agreeable messages'* (Denney and Gordon, 2016).

Working at multiple levels and relying on 'boundary people' or champions can help not only reduce potential clashes but also promote 'insiders' who advocate

for change. Reflecting on a research project that examined the integration of gender equality in climate compatible development initiatives, Freelance Programme Manager Rebecca Clements (Argentina) considers that *'while change should come from within a community, planned interventions can provide the space necessary for transformation 'agents' to flourish. For example, women producers in Gorakhpur (India) took the opportunity created and promoted by the project to take up and disseminate improved agricultural practices. The research found that these were mainly isolated cases of individual transformation and we simply don't know whether deeper social transformation would have come about should the project have designed for it. Perhaps if project planning and design can become more inclusive, then the transformational hopes of local people can be better represented and projects will be able to reflect this 'internal' desire for change and create the necessary conditions for this to come about'*.

Key ingredients to ensure that resilience-building interventions are inclusive in their design and implementation include time and true participation (as opposed to representation only). This is also emphasised by Indian independent researcher Reetu Sogani who works with women's groups in rural areas:

'Resilient strategies encourage people's participation in the decision-making fora and processes, where adaptive and mitigation strategies are being formulated and planned. But traditional roles of women, particularly in countries like India, discourage women from accepting these active, less traditional roles and responsibilities. So these strategies do not go down well with the patriarchal set up which governs society at large. For example, we promote agriculture systems

and techniques based on traditional knowledge and diversity (biological and cultural) and we try to show the negative impacts of chemical intensive farming by sharing information and knowledge, holding meetings and discussions. But it is not socially acceptable because of the prevailing 'mindset' which believes traditional agriculture to be 'backward'. We are up against a huge challenge coming primarily from people in favour of pursuing this kind of agriculture for supposedly higher productivity, especially with men who are more connected to the market, new technologies and who own the land (very few women have land titles). But we need to challenge this 'lack of acceptability'. We started having these discussions, trainings, studies way back, in 2001, in certain areas in the middle Himalayan ranges, and it took a very long, but we were proved right eventually. It is certainly important to challenge these mindsets which are promoting inequality, injustice and violence (of all kinds) and adding to food and nutrition insecurity, ill health and economic poverty'.

Sogani's account highlights the point of legitimacy and echoes the question of who judges what is acceptable and who will be perceived as legitimate to try and change norms. Caroline Haywood, Law and Policy Advisor, Climate and Forests, at ClientEarth, asks, *'What legitimacy do we, as non-national lawyers, have to start a legal action or bring a case in a developing country? And what legitimacy do we, as non-nationals in general, have to dictate the actions of others in a developing country. And this is something that drives the way in which my team determines what to focus our legal advice/advocacy on – we always make sure that national NGOs or lawyers are either already working on or would like to work on a topic before we start. I think that goes some way to saying that yes, programmes*

do need to be socially acceptable, particularly longer-term development programmes, in which you're seeking to bring about some degree of systemic change; there is evidence that adapting those programmes and interventions to social norms in the country, region or town can achieve more lasting change'.

To simultaneously address people's needs, protection concerns and the uncertainty associated with environmental changes and political instabilities is possible, necessary even, but this is not the role and the responsibility of one single organisation. Collaboration, and therefore trust, are needed, as well as the realisation that some outcomes can only be evaluated after many years.



In Ethiopia, She Abdulkadir Tuka, 64, clan leader in Guticha district, poses with his family. "When one member of the community is educated, they teach the rest of us, creating a ripple effect of shared learning. I have four wives, 27 children and many grandchildren, and although I feel regret that I had no access to modern education when I was younger, I am happy for the opportunity for all of my children to go to school. Some of them are even going to university and working abroad. I am committed to teaching them my knowledge and them teaching me theirs, and their children in the future, which fills me with happiness, positivity and love."
Credit: @She Abdulkadir Tuka / EMRDA / ODI / PhotoVoice, 2014

8. CONCLUSION

Should resilience-building projects always be socially acceptable? There is a consensus that any external interventions supposed to assist people affected by crisis should be respectful of the cultural, social, legal and political environment in which they operate. However, it is not a yes or no answer, and accounts from practitioners and researchers who contributed to the analysis show that it very much depends on the context: Who is providing and funding aid? Who is being targeted and where? At what level are projects designed and implemented? How long is the project supposed to last? And who is judging what is socially acceptable?

If resilience-building approaches are development projects that support communities in dealing with shocks and stresses, they must reduce people's vulnerabilities, i.e. change the factors that expose people and their livelihoods to risk. To change these factors means to modify practices and decisions that lead to vulnerable conditions in the first place. Such changes are required at the local level and also more broadly to change economic and political structures that restrict development prospects. The analysis questioned the legitimacy of aid actors, particularly when projects are (overly) ambitious in aiming to change social norms or support state-building with indicators to be met in a few years.

Still, the literature and knowledge acquired from development programming show that for development projects to be transformative and build resilience, they cannot ignore social structures that tolerate discriminatory norms against certain groups (Sotelo, 2017). In other

words, they need to question harmful cultural practices, and foster changes in norms that are detrimental to the rights and livelihoods of the marginalised. So, how can development projects be both socially appropriate and supportive of people's rights, safety and livelihoods? A starting point is to clarify where the accountability of resilience building projects lies. While funding schemes drive agendas and come with requirements that projects must comply with, aid actors (must) remain primarily accountable to the needs of the people they are supposed to assist. Keeping in mind the priorities and perspectives of local populations is paramount for interventions to respect people's dignity and agency, and deliver aid in a way that is adaptive to local values. Responses from contributing thinkers provided a few important principles summarised below:

- Apply impartial assessments to understand the vulnerability and resilience capacities.
- Respect people's integrity at all times.
- Respond to people's primary needs.
- Be mindful of not creating further harm and integrate protection principles.
- Find 'boundary people' who can bridge the divide between opposing groups and norms, who can normalise the apparently extreme, and who can build trust.
- Argue against discriminatory social norms through participatory processes and inclusive practice, ideally community-led.
- Take time, be patient and be prepared to see (or not see) results in the long run.

Keeping in mind the priorities and perspectives of local populations is paramount for interventions to respect people's dignity and agency, and deliver aid in a way that is adaptive to local values.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF CONTRIBUTING THINKERS

Name	Affiliation	Location	Gender
Colette Benoudji	Coordinator, Association LEAD Tchad	Chad	F
Prof. Susan Buckingham	Independent consultant	UK	F
Rebecca Clements	Freelance Programme Manager	Argentina	F
Dr. John Choptiany	Result Manager, BRACED Fund Manager	UK	M
Anne-Lise Dewulf	Former Deputy Director of Operations, Save the Children	France/ Greece	F
Prof. Maureen Fordham	Director, Centre for Gender and Disaster, UCL	UK	F
Rachel Gordon	Independent Researcher	US	F
Caroline Haywood	Law and Policy Advisor, ClientEarth, Climate and Forests	UK	F
Ubah Abdi Kahiye	Programme Manager, Mercy Corps	Kenya	F
Sebastian Kratzer	Former UN worker, UNDP Sudan	Switzerland	M
Dr. Bernard Manyena	Senior Lecturer, University of Northumbria	UK/ Zimbabwe	M
Colin McQuistan	Senior Advisor on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction	UK	M
Bruce Mead	Technical Director, Ecorys International Development	Zambia	M
Charles Reeve	Team Leader, Climate Resilient Infrastructure Development Facility	South Africa	M
Reetu Sogani	Independent Researcher	India	F
Jeremy Stone	BRACED Myanmar Alliance Coordinator, Plan International	Myanmar	M
Dr. Thomas Tanner	Research Associate, ODI	India	M
Patricia Tshomba	Independent Researcher	UK/DRC	F
Prof. John Twigg	Principal Research Fellow, ODI	UK	M

ANNEX 2: THE CORE HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS (EXTRACTS*)

Commitment	Performance indicators **	Key actions and organisational responsibilities **	Guidance notes
1. Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate to their needs.	1. Communities and people affected by crisis consider that the response takes account of their specific needs and culture.	1.2. Design and implement appropriate programmes based on an impartial assessment of needs and risks, and an understanding of the vulnerabilities and capacities of different groups.	<p>Appropriate programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humanitarian response must be acceptable to the different groups affected within the community and should seek to uphold rights of all community members by: meeting their basic needs; responding to their protection concerns (e.g. preventing sexual exploitation and violence); and enabling people to maintain their sense of dignity and self-respect. Some culturally acceptable practices violate people's human rights or are founded on misconceptions (e.g. biased targeting of girls, boys or specific castes, denial of education to girls, refusal of immunisation, etc.) and should not be supported.
3. Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.	3. Communities and people affected by crisis (including the most vulnerable) do not identify any negative effects resulting from humanitarian action.	<p>3.6. Identify and act upon potential or actual unintended negative effects in a timely and systematic manner, including in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. people's safety, security, dignity and rights; b. sexual exploitation and abuse by staff; c. culture, gender, and social and political relationships. 	<p>Negative effects and 'do no harm'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The high value of aid resources and the powerful position of aid workers can lead to exploitation and abuse, competition, conflict, misuse or misappropriation of aid. Aid can undermine livelihoods and amplify unequal power relations between different groups and/or between men, women and children. These potential negative effects should be monitored and actions taken to prevent them. Safe and responsive feedback and complaints mechanisms can reduce abuse and misuse and [...] staff should be trained in how to exercise confidentiality and refer sensitive information, such as disclosures of exploitation and abuse.

Commitment	Performance indicators **	Key actions and organisational responsibilities **	Guidance notes
4. Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.	1. Communities and people affected by crisis (including the most vulnerable) are aware of their rights and entitlements.	4.2. Communicate in languages, formats and media that are easily understood, respectful and culturally appropriate for different members of the community, especially vulnerable and marginalised groups.	<p>Effective and inclusive communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different groups (e.g. mothers with young children, older men or women with disabilities) will have different communication and information needs and may well have different trusted sources of communication. • Instead of using one-way communication, organisations should ensure not only that existing communication systems are used but also that people are consulted on their preferences and the degree of privacy required.
		4.4. Encourage and facilitate communities and people affected by crisis to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received, paying particular attention to the gender, age and diversity of those giving feedback.	<p>Feedback</p> <p>People may fear that critical feedback will lead to a loss of assistance or have negative repercussions. There may also be cultural reasons why criticism of an intervention is unacceptable. Exploring different methods of providing informal and formal feedback is important.</p>

*Contents in this table are all directly taken from the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS Alliance, the Sphere Project and Groupe URD (2015).

**The performance indicators, and key actions and organisational responsibilities listed here have been selected specifically for this paper from a longer list. To see the full list, go to: <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources/chs-guidance-notes-and-indicators>

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