Systems Thinking and Resilience at USAID

Center for Resilience

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Increasingly complex risk environment

New, holistic responses needed

Embedded in our strategies, our measurement/M & E, and our approach to learning and adapting
USAID defines resilience as “the ability of people, households, communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth”

- USAID’s Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis (2012)
Systems thinking helps us see what keeps situations “stuck” even in the face of our best efforts to build resilience.

Why don’t job training programs decrease unemployment?

Why don’t clean cook stoves projects improve health?

Why don’t nutrition projects change nutrition outcomes?

Why is relevant academic research ignored in project design and implementation?
Strategy and Programming
Strategy and Programming: Breaking Down the Silos

Formal Collaboration

Actors pursue the same objective, with each assuming a role in the unified strategy.

Alignment

Actors have shared interests and the same ultimate goal, but not necessarily the same objective. Actors consider how their actions affect others.
- Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth
- Joint analysis, planning and implementation across humanitarian and development divides
- Different Funding Streams
  - Education
  - Governance
  - Agriculture
  - Conflict Mitigation
  - Environment/GCC
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Maternal and Child Health
  - Family Planning
  - WASH
  - Nutrition
Joint analysis, planning and implementation across humanitarian and development divides (and the divides in each)

Key attributes:

- Joint problem definition
- Joint analysis to identify types of resources needed
- Systems thinking to engage complexity
Measurement, M & E, and Strategic Analytics
Common Monitoring Approaches

Well Being at Baseline → Well Being at Interim → Well Being at Endline
Resilience Monitoring Approaches

Track the **relationship** between shocks/stresses, resilience capacities, and well being outcomes over time.

Explain **why** we see changes in well-being over time by honing in on the capacities individuals, households, communities, and systems have to manage shocks.
Learning and Adapting
Systems-focused Learning Questions

- How can we understand the problem better?
- How are people connected in the system?
- How is context affecting the system?
- What is and is not working now?
- What other scenarios are possible?

Are we doing the right things?
The approach to learning also differs.

If a strategy yields different than expected results...

...feedback is taken and adjustments made.

...goals, values, beliefs, and assumptions about the problem are reexamined.

Summary: Resilience and Systems Thinking

- Increasingly complex risk environment
- New, holistic responses needed
- Embedded in our strategies, our measurement/M & E, and our approach to learning and adapting
Thank you!

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Using systems thinking for strategy development.

- **What are the leverage points?** Places where a shift in one thing can produce big changes in many things.

- **Where are the bright spots?** A dynamic supporting positive change in the system.

- **What are the attractors in the system?** Factors or dynamics that have a disproportionate impact on the system.

- **What might be unintended consequences?** Places where a positive shift in one place can produce negative effects in others.
Systems Thinking Influences in Project Design & Implementation in the Bureau for Food Security

May 2, 2016
Feed the Future, the U.S. Government’s hunger and food security initiative, has mobilized billions of dollars in direct assistance and private resources to elevate food security on the global agenda, helping to reduce poverty and malnutrition.
U.S. GOVERNMENT PARTNERS
Top Goals: Feed the Future is expected to reduce the prevalence of poverty and stunting by 20 percent in the areas in which we work.
APPROACH EMPHASIZES LOCAL SYSTEMS

• Supporting *country led* strategies

• *Empowering* women

• *Integrating* agriculture and nutrition

• Embracing innovative *partnerships* and technologies to combat growing challenges including climate change.

• *Increasing resilience* to prevent recurrent crises and to help communities better withstand and bounce back from crises when they do happen.

• Maximizing cost-effective results that create the conditions where our *assistance is no longer needed*
19 FOCUS COUNTRIES

- Guatemala
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Ghana
- Liberia
- Mali
- Senegal
- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- Tajikistan
- Nepal
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Rwanda
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
FEED THE FUTURE WORKS WITH U.S. UNIVERSITIES TO FIGHT GLOBAL HUNGER

The Feed the Future initiative partners with universities throughout the world. This is a sampling of university partners located in the United States. For more information and updates, visit www.feedyourfuture.gov or follow on Twitter @FeedYourFuture.
VALUE CHAIN SYSTEMS APPROACH

• Consider end market demand opportunities & risks

• Address underlying constraints, not symptoms
  • Economic, political, and social structures
  • Commercial and other incentives

• Sequence interventions appropriately

• Facilitate and catalyze performance improvements
  • "Crowding-in"/partnering
  • Inclusivity
PROJECT EXAMPLES

1. Conversations that matter
2. Searching for ways that work: experiments & study tours
3. Institutionalize learning

The Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative (iAGRI) aims to strengthen training and collaborative research capacities of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and the Tanzanian Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (MAFC) with the goal of improving food security and agricultural productivity in Tanzania.

Africa RISING

Youth, gender, and workforce development at the primary, vocational/technical, university and post-graduate levels.
Matthew Jelacic

USAID
Franklin Fellow
Bureau of Economic Development, Education and the Environment
Office of Private Capital and Microenterprise

University of Colorado Boulder
- Assistant Professor- Environmental Design
- Associate Faculty- Engineering for Developing Communities
- Associate Faculty- Sustainability, Innovation, and Social Entrepreneurship
Residential Academic Program
MISSION → 5 YR COUNTRY STRATEGY → DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES → PROGRAM DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION → DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES → REDUCE POVERTY
Presidential Initiatives
Congressional Earmarks
Host Country Government
Other Organizations

Capital Supply
Capital Demand

Mission
5 Year Country Strategy
Development Objectives
Program Design & Implementation
Development Outcomes
Reduce Poverty

SEARCH COSTS

National Banks
Development Banks
Institutional Investors
Hedge Funds
Insurance Funds
Pension Funds
Mutual Funds
Investment Trusts
Local Investor
Retail Investors
Local Financial Institutions
Diaspora Funds

Pool of Capital

Private Capital Investment

Frontier Markets
Emerging Markets
Developed Markets

Social Impact
Corporate Social Responsibility
Charity
Philanthropy

Financial Return
49 - 87% increased adoption rates can be due to five attributes:
1) Relative Advantage
2) Compatibility
3) Complexity
4) Trialability
5) Observability

E.M. Rogers - Diffusion of Innovations
Climate Resilient Maize
This is a job for Design Thinking!
MAIZE SEED SYSTEM
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, an vim quod dolor discere. In vis amet tamquam, an omnis torquatos assentior sit, justo porro postea has eu. Mutat scripta saperet ut sed. Eli mei aliquip feugiat vulputate. Cu debet scripsta malorum ius.

EXPLORE THE MAIZE SYSTEM MAP

GENERAL MAP  COUNTRY SPECIFIC