

Resilience in the Sahel

BUILDING BETTER LIVES WITH CHILDREN

Natasha Grist, Beatrice Mosello, Rebecca Roberts and Lyndsay Mclean Hilker





About Plan International

Plan has been working for and with children for more than 75 years. We currently develop programmes in 50 low- and middle-income countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas to promote child rights and lift millions of children out of poverty.

We focus on the inclusion, education and protection of the most marginalised children in partnership with communities, local and national government and civil society.

Plan works with more than 90,000 communities each year, covering a population of 84 million children. Plan is independent, with no religious, political or governmental affiliations.

Plan raises funds for its development and human rights programmes in 20 countries around the globe.

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The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is a leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues. Our mission is to inspire and inform policy and practice which lead to the reduction of poverty, the alleviation of suffering and the achievement of sustainable livelihoods. We do this by locking together high-quality applied research, practical policy advice and policy-focused dissemination and debate. We work with partners in the public and private sectors, in both developing and developed countries.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Plan-ODI report assesses and frames the work Plan is doing on resilience building in the Sahel. It strengthens Plan's understanding and articulation of resilience under current Plan programmes and provides direction for future coherent resilience programme design. Based on evidence from country programmes in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal, it provides a basis for Plan's further engagement with resilience at community, national and regional levels in the region.

The Sahelian region at the desert's edge is a challenging environment for people, principally because of its climate of low, uneven rainfall and increasing climate variability. Pressures on people's lives, and livelihoods, are increasing (SWG, 2011). The Sahel has now become well known for its recurrent and acute episodes of human hunger due to food and nutrition crises, prompting widespread humanitarian emergency responses. In 2014, an estimated 20 million people are facing food insecurity in the Sahel (ECHO, 2014). Food and nutritional insecurity have become long-term chronic problems (SWG, 2011). More recently, a number of initiatives across the Sahel have started to address the underlying issues of vulnerability. The aim is to achieve resilience in the region's people in the face of the shocks and stresses in this marginal environment.

Resilience is generally understood as the ability of individuals, communities and states and their institutions to absorb and recover from shocks. Current concepts of resilience stress the dynamic nature of this process, and usefully categorise resilience into absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities. Absorptive capacity reflects the ability to exhibit an initial 'persisting' coping response to a negative event. Adaptive capacity involves incremental changes in order to continue functioning in a similar manner to before. Transformative capacity is the ability to change substantially in response to a major or prolonged disturbance.

We need a long-term vision for the whole Sahel zone to tackle chronic issues and increase the resilience of families (UN OCHA, 2014). Most current approaches amongst governments and multilaterals and non-governmental organisations agree that the focus for resilience in the Sahel should be on attaining nutritional and food security. In practice, the means of achieving food security varies as it is dependent on the context, so an in-depth understanding is needed. The International Food Policy Research Institute recommends a multi-sectoral resilience assessment with stakeholders, and an integrated resilience programme that addresses absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities.

Plan defines resilience as the ability of children and their communities to deal positively with disturbances that undermine the fulfilment of their rights (to survival, development, protection and participation). Most of Plan's current programming in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal is focussed on short- and long-term health, safety and nutrition

for the most marginalised. Short-term emergency responses to improve child and maternal health include food supplies and cash transfers, vaccination, child protection and training on nutrition. Longer-term resilience-building initiatives in the communities include early warning systems, village savings and loans schemes, grain banks, education and training for alternative livelihoods. At the wider level, Plan has worked to transform governments' approach to child rights.

Plan's initiatives increase individuals' and communities' absorptive capacity and adaptive capacity of resilience. A theory of change demonstrates links between Plan's overall goal of supporting development of resilience for children and their communities, and the underlying outcomes of children's rights, shorter-term outcomes and programmatic activities. Plan's strengths include a long-term engagement in the Sahel, with in-depth understanding and trust generation within local communities, and a focus on essential health and nutritional interventions within a wider set of activities that contribute to resilience.

Developing relevant Monitoring and Evaluation criteria is essential for measuring efforts towards resilience. The set of criteria developed relate specifically to Plan's chosen areas of intervention.

In seeking to build resilience, Plan acknowledges the complexity and dynamic processes involved, not only in the communities themselves but also within the institutional structures of aid and development that shape investments in those communities.

Within this framework, Plan will:

1. Work with communities and most marginalised, especially women and girls, to build their capacity to identify their risks and develop plans to mitigate and better respond to these
2. Work with government authorities at both national and local levels, to ensure that interventions can be scaled up and eventually transformed into policies and laws for the protection of children and other vulnerable groups within the entire country.
3. Engage with, donors, UN agencies and practitioners and build a holistic approach to resilience building that prioritises the protection, wellbeing and agency of girls and boys and their communities.



INTRODUCTION WHY THE SAHEL NEEDS RESILIENCE

The Sahel region has now become well known for its acute, recurrent, episodes of human hunger which prompt widespread humanitarian emergency responses. Spikes of food crises often last for several years, overlying a regional baseline of insufficient food supply that causes severe malnutrition and serious stunting in children (AGIR 2013).

Disasters, emergencies and humanitarian crises linked to food and conflict are still common despite the population's efforts, and significant engagement from national governments, UN institutions and non-governmental organisations. In response, international agencies have called for greater investment in understanding and resolving the underlying causes of the recurrent crises (Save the Children and World Vision, 2012). This has come together recently in the development of the resilience approach, which provides a conceptual framework bringing together a series of practical steps to address underlying issues coherently (AGIR 2013). Plan West Africa, with more than 30 years' experience in both development and humanitarian interventions for the benefit of children and their communities in the Sahel, supports this approach strongly.

“ The Sahel region is still reeling from the aftershocks of four consecutive food and nutrition crises (2005, 2008, 2010 and 2012), with many vulnerable households struggling to recover. An estimated 20 million people are again facing food insecurity in 2014 across nine West African countries: Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Northern Cameroon and Northern Nigeria.”

(ECHO Factsheet, Sahel Food and Nutrition Crisis, February 2014)

“ Food crises can no longer be treated as limited events, caused by occasional hazards like droughts or floods. Food and nutrition insecurity have become long-term, chronic problems.”

Sahel Working Group, 2011¹

“ We need a long-term vision [for the whole Sahel Zone] to tackle chronic issues and increase the resilience of families.”

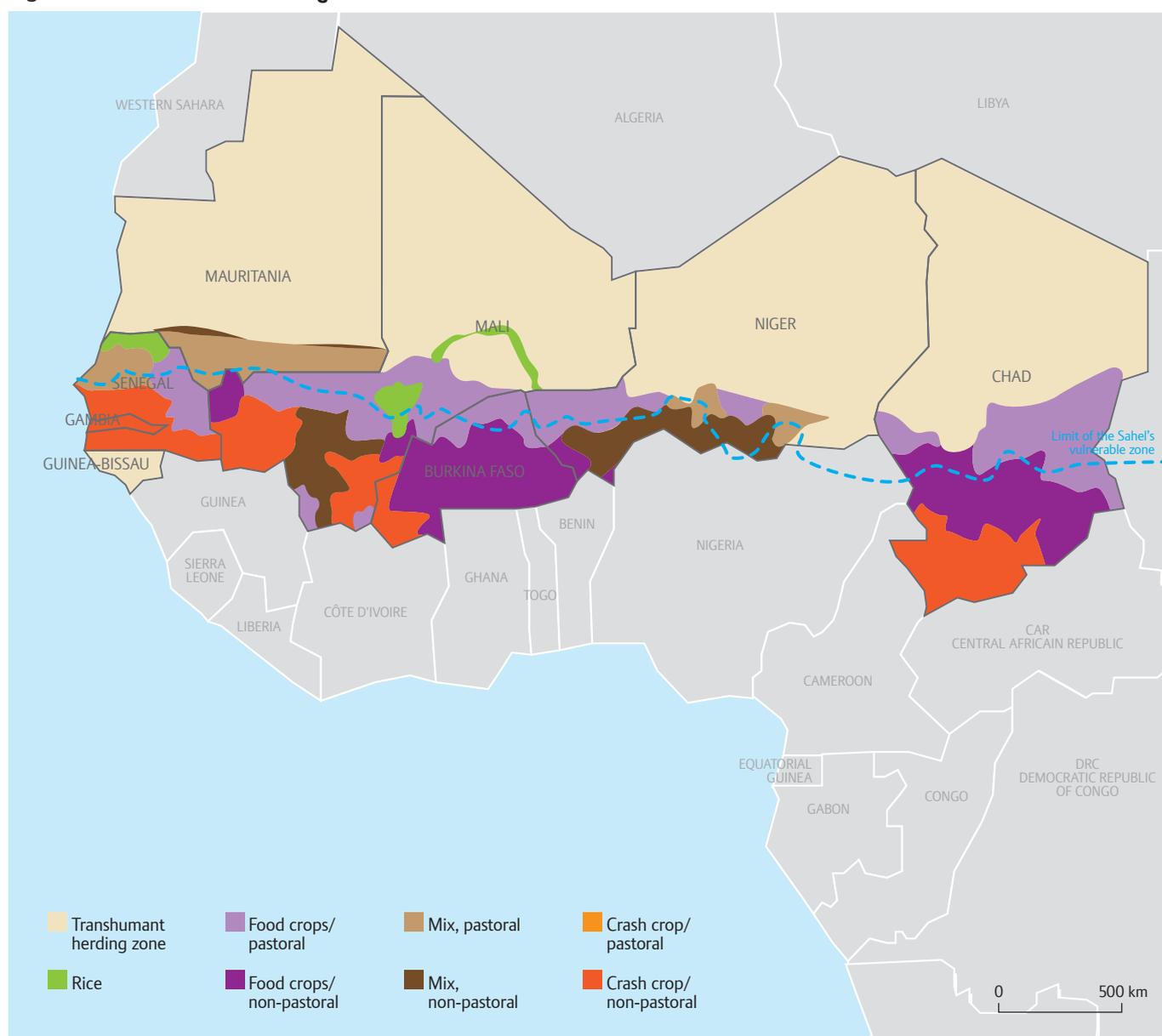
UNOCHA Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel, July 2014²

1. Gubbells, P. (2011) Escaping the Hunger Cycle: Pathways to Resilience in the Sahel, Sahel Working Group <http://www.groundswellinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/Pathways-to-Resilience-in-the-Sahel.pdf>
2. Reported on OCHA website July 2014 <http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/chad-we-need-long-term-vision-says-regional-humanitarian-chief>

Causes of food insecurity and nutritional vulnerability in the Sahel

The current difficulties of the Sahel relate to its ecologically fragile natural environment combined with a number of human-related factors. The dry Sahelian region stretches through six continental West African countries, including Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, the focus countries of this report. The Sahel supports nomadic, pastoral-based populations in the north, and ecologically vulnerable farming populations in the south (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Livestock and farming zones in the Sahel



Source: ECOWAS-SWAC/OECD CRA (2005)

INTRODUCTION

The region suffers from low and erratic rainfall, long droughts, and occasional heavy rains and flooding which significantly affect livestock and crop yields. In addition, over the last 30 years, the average rainfall has decreased across the whole of the southern Sahelian region, increasing the difficulties for those who survive on rain-fed agriculture and pasture (see Figure 2) (ECOWAS 2005).

As a result, food security in this fragile environment has long been a critical issue. In 2014, 20 million people in the Sahel are 'food insecure': lacking access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food (ECHO 2014). The rate of Global Acute Malnutrition³ in the Sahel has now exceeded the 'alert threshold' of 10% of the population for more than 10 years (AGIR 2013) and in 2011, between 40-45% of children under 5 years old in the Sahel lagged behind normal growth rates (AGIR 2013⁴).

This negative picture masks significant positive change recently in the region: although absolute levels are still very high, all four focus countries in this report demonstrated a very significant reduction in poverty over the last 15 years. Africa is the world's second fastest-growing region, with extreme poverty declining fast (MDG Report 2013). However the absolute number of poor has increased in Africa over this time (1990-2010) from 290m to 414m, in part due to high population growth (MDG 2013). Both Mali and Niger show a startling reduction in the proportion of people suffering from hunger during the last 20 years (see Table 1).

Table 1: Millennium Development Goal Progress on Goal 1 Indicators for 4 Sahelian Countries

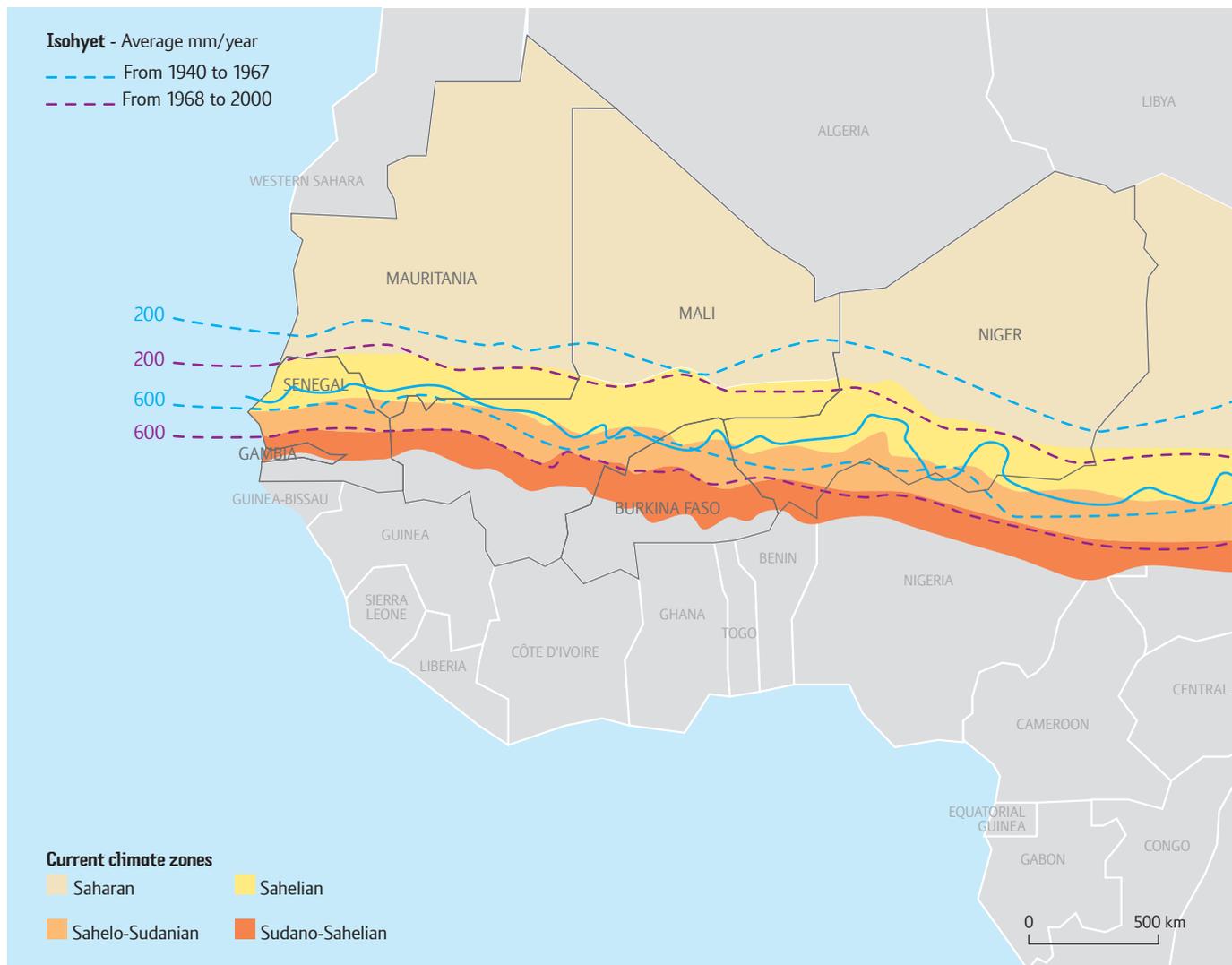
	Poverty levels: Proportion living at below USD1.25 (ppp) per day - start		Hunger levels: Proportion living below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	
	Initial	Most recent	Initial	Most recent
Burkina Faso	71.2% (1994)	44.6% (2009)	22.9% (1991)	25.0% (2012)
Mali	86.1% (1994)	50.4% (2010)	24.9% (1991)	7.3% (2012)
Niger	72.8% (1992)	43.6% (2008)	35.5% (1991)	13.9% (2012)
Senegal	65.8% (1991)	29.6% (2011)	22.0% (1991)	21.6% (2012)

Source (2013) MDG Country Snapshots: <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Data/snapshots.htm>

3. The rate of Global Acute Malnutrition is the proportion of children who weigh less than 80% of the median weight of children with the same height in the reference population which has no shortage of nutrition

4. AGIR (2013) Regional Roadmap, Global Alliance for Resilience AGIR Sahel and West Africa <http://www.oecd.org/dac/governance-development/FINAL%20WP%2013%20Resilience%20and%20Risk.pdf>

Figure 2: Rainfall and Climate Zones in Sahelian Countries in West Africa



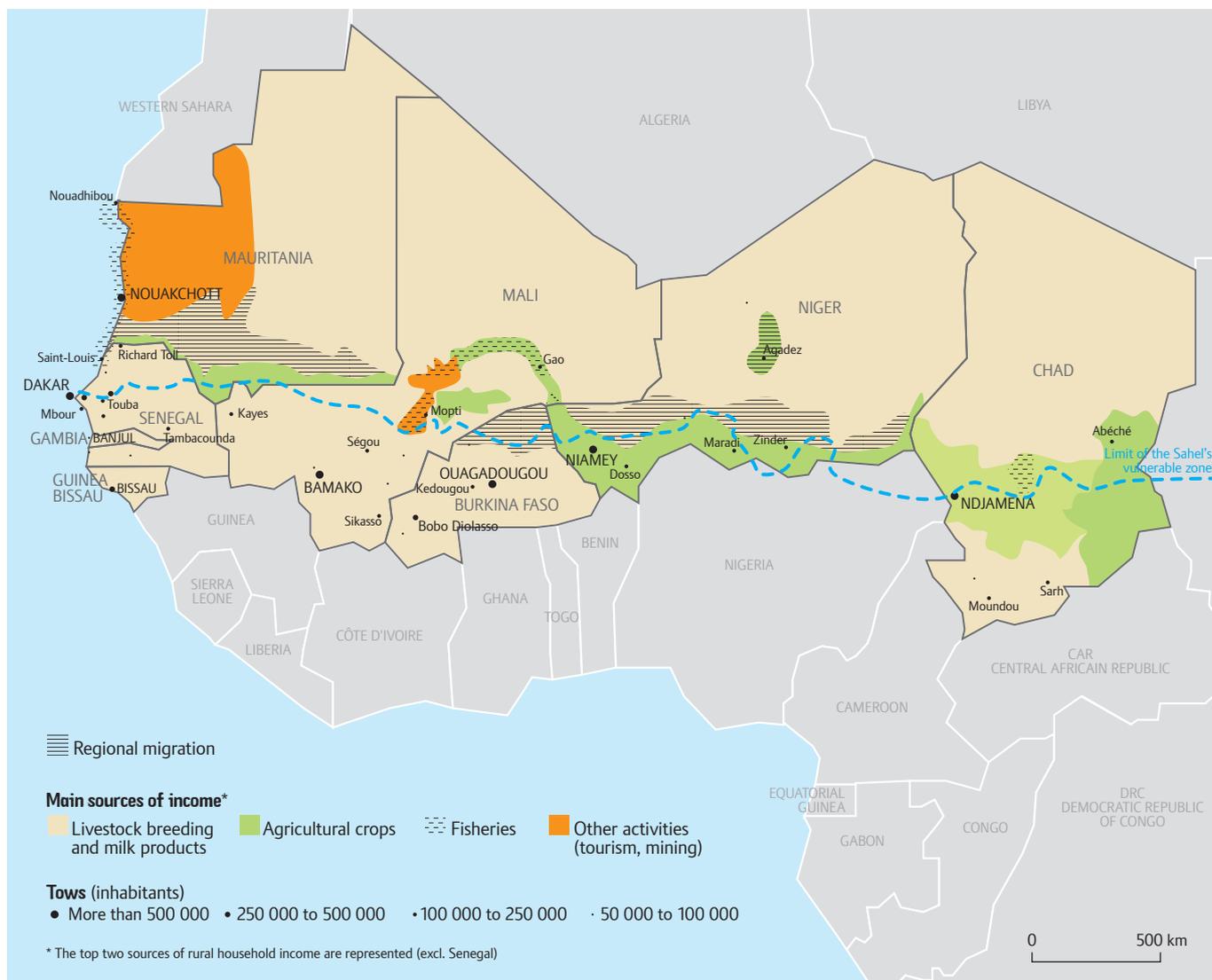
Source: ECOWAS-SWAC/OECD CRA (2005)

Despite this, food insecurity and malnutrition remain very significant, and the causes go beyond inherent ecological fragility. People are highly dependent on the land in the Sahel: the main sources of income for most areas are directly related to the natural resource base (see Figure 3), and more than 75% of the populations live in rural areas in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger (SWAC 2011). This level of exposure to the natural resource base and precarious ecological conditions increases people’s vulnerability significantly. In addition to this, high rates of extreme poverty and population increase (3-4% per year), high levels of inequality, conflict, limited access to basic services, environmental degradation and poor educational opportunities coalesce to threaten people’s livelihoods further and undermine their ability to meet their own basic needs on an ongoing, chronic basis (ECHO 2014⁵). Figure 4 gives a snapshot of impacts of conflict in Mali on people’s resilience.

5. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/sahel_en.pdf

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Figure 3: Main Sources of Income in the Sahel



Source: ECOWAS-SWAC/OECD CRA (2005)

Figure 4: The impact of conflict on resilience: the case of Mali 2012-2013

In a previously stable democracy, the conflict in Mali has resulted in political instability, sporadic fighting and worsening of pre-existing food insecurity and nutritional difficulties. Up to 300,000 people have fled conflict zones, exhausting local coping mechanisms as nomadic pastoralist grazing routes are cut off and markets closed, and increasing pressure on other areas in the Sahel as they struggle to cope with the influx of refugees. During this conflict, girls' pre-existing vulnerability increases with the rate of early, forced marriages and interference with education and increased higher school drop-out rates (Plan Mali 2013). Food insecurity has rocketed, whilst households' absorptive and adaptive capacities are stretched to breaking point. The result: a cycle of chronic or extreme poverty.

Source: ECOWAS-SWAC/OECD CRA (2005)

Plan International responds directly to the most pressing issues in the Sahel through its dual focus on emergency humanitarian work and longer-term interventions on child-centred disaster risk reduction and improvements in livelihoods.

This report aims to provide Plan with a conceptual and practical basis for deepening existing initiatives and developing further activities at community, national and regional levels to support increased resilience in children and their communities in the Sahel.

The report analyses current approaches to resilience with reference to resilience programming in the Sahel, articulating Plan's approach to resilience. The report is structured as follows: Section 2 outlines concepts of resilience and current initiatives relating to resilience in the Sahel. Section 3 outlines Plan's Resilience strategy at global level and West African perspectives on this, articulating a theory of change on resilience and describing some of Plan's country-level work on resilience in the Sahel. Section 4 outlines a set of Monitoring and Evaluation criteria that could be used specifically for Plan's Sahel resilience activities.



Hari Amadou carrying a measure of millet on her head, Niger



RESILIENCE CONCEPTS AND SAHELIAN RESILIENCE INITIATIVES

“Resilience is the ability of individuals, communities and states and their institutions to absorb and recover from shocks, whilst positively adapting and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term changes and uncertainty.”

OECD, 2012⁶

2.1 What is Resilience?

The concept of resilience in international development grew from concerns from humanitarian organisations in their responses to emergencies and disasters. They noted that their emergency responses to extreme events did not improve people’s underlying structural poverty in a way that would make them less vulnerable to shocks in the future (OECD 2012). Similarly, the development community noted that their investments were being undermined by extreme events and disasters, which set back progress.

‘Risk reduction’ and ‘vulnerability reduction’ were proposed as ways to buffer people and communities against future risks, leading to approaches of Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Risk Management alongside longer-term structural initiatives focussing on strengthening livelihoods, such as vulnerability reduction and strengthening adaptive capacity to climate change.

A ‘twin track’ approach combining emergency response, recovery and disaster risk reduction brings together both the humanitarian and development communities, focussing on improving the lives and livelihoods of communities in the short and longer term through building resilience (IFRC 2013). This approach, labelled ‘resilience building’, has rapidly gained traction in the humanitarian emergency community and the development community. There is now widespread agreement in policy circles that resilience should be a central concern (Levine et al. 2012).

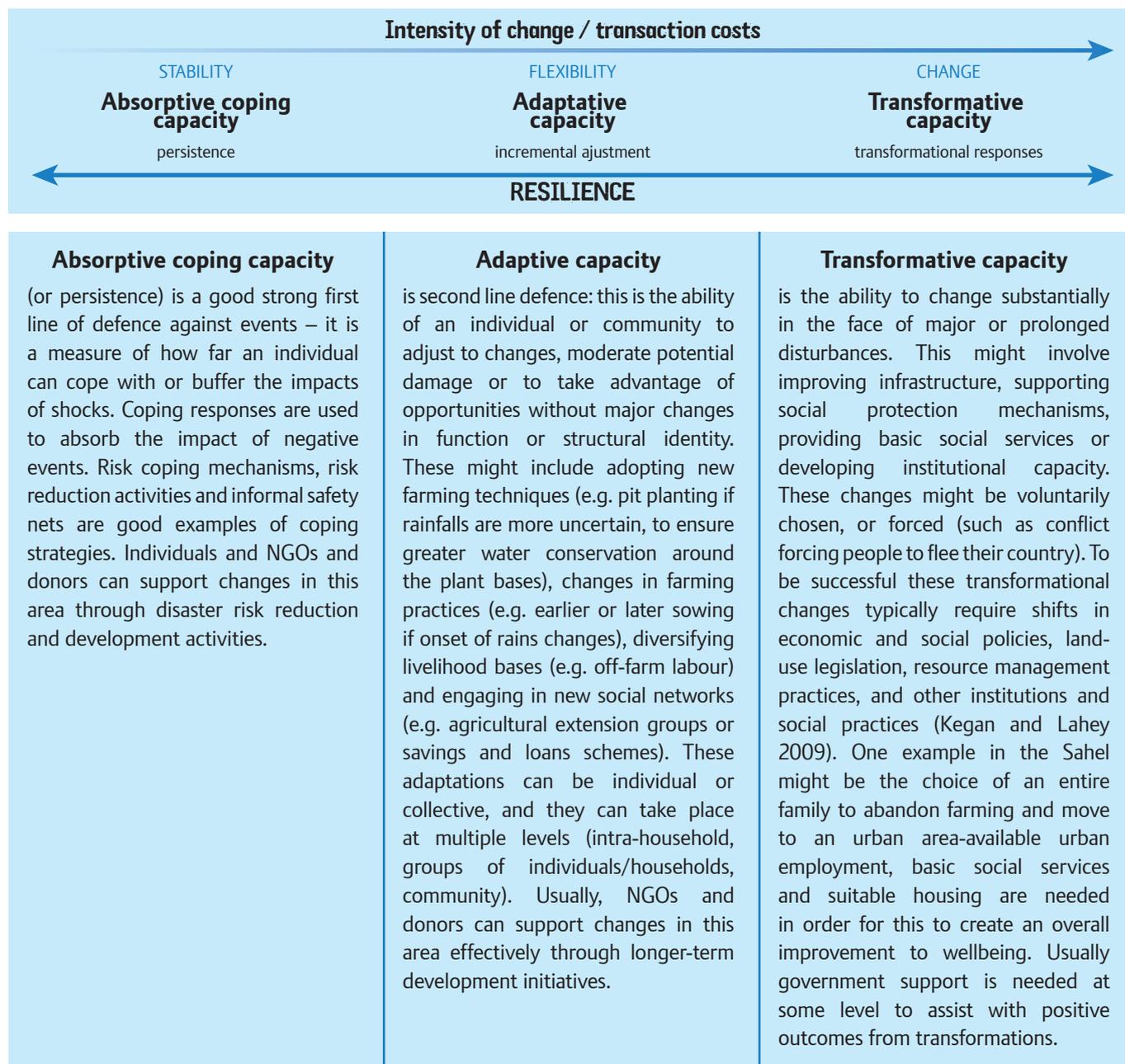
Resilience approaches integrate development and humanitarian efforts by bringing together both emergency survival responses and the longer term preparations required to lessen severity and number of emergencies that occur by adapting and transforming underlying structures (Mitchell and Harris, 2012). Resilience frameworks usually define a baseline of the ecosystem, people’s vulnerability, and levels of external and internal risks and shocks, and develop a series of activities designed to address weaknesses that lead to inability to absorb shocks.

6. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/sahel_en.pdf

Breaking down the components of resilience

Actions that promote resilience have usefully been categorised in three dimensions which assist conceptualisation and programming of activities (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: The 3 Dimension Resilience Framework



Source: Bene 2012

RESILIENCE CONCEPTS AND SAHELIAN RESILIENCE INITIATIVES

Three key aspects of resilience are particularly relevant in the Sahelian context (see Figure 6):

- a resilient population is able to cope and transform through disturbances
- increasing resilience is a process, rather than a stand-alone goal
- a resilient system is diverse and complex

Figure 6: **Key aspects of Social Resilience**

1. Social resilience is how a community, or individual, copes with disturbance and change and their capacity for coping.
2. Social and ecological systems are resilient when they can shift around, and change, but within boundaries. The main components will keep the same function, structure and feedbacks.
3. Resilience is a process. It involves actions and reactions of communities and the environment where they live. We need to understand the ability to cope, recover from and adjust to a variety of risks and difficulties, along with the capacity to anticipate and prepare for these.
4. Resilient systems are diverse. They have lots of connections between different components. Resilient systems are more inclusive of marginal groups, and social networks are strong. In resilient systems, people resolve problems and understand solutions in a variety of ways that work in resilient systems; diversity of approach is important.

Sources: Mitchell and Harris 2012; Holling et al., 1994; Bahadur et al. 2010; Folkema et al. 2013

Resilience approaches analyse and address root causes of vulnerabilities including poverty, rights and wellbeing, gender, exclusion, power relations and governance. This can be applied to issues such as food security, agriculture, health and education (FAO, 2013).

Some people question the value of the concept of resilience for the humanitarian and development community. This is certainly worth considering, as any new approach takes time and financial resources for any organisation to integrate into strategy, planning and practice. Aside from bringing together both short- and longer- term approaches to increasing human security, resilience is attractive as a concept and emphasizes what people can do for themselves, so is more appealing than a focus on 'vulnerability' (Levine et al., 2012), even though it may address similar issues. However, there are legitimate concerns that 'resilience-building' programmes may be applied as a descriptive term to "re-package interventions which have been run for decades without noticeably challenging the structural factors that keep people in poverty" (Levine et al., 2012 p. 4).

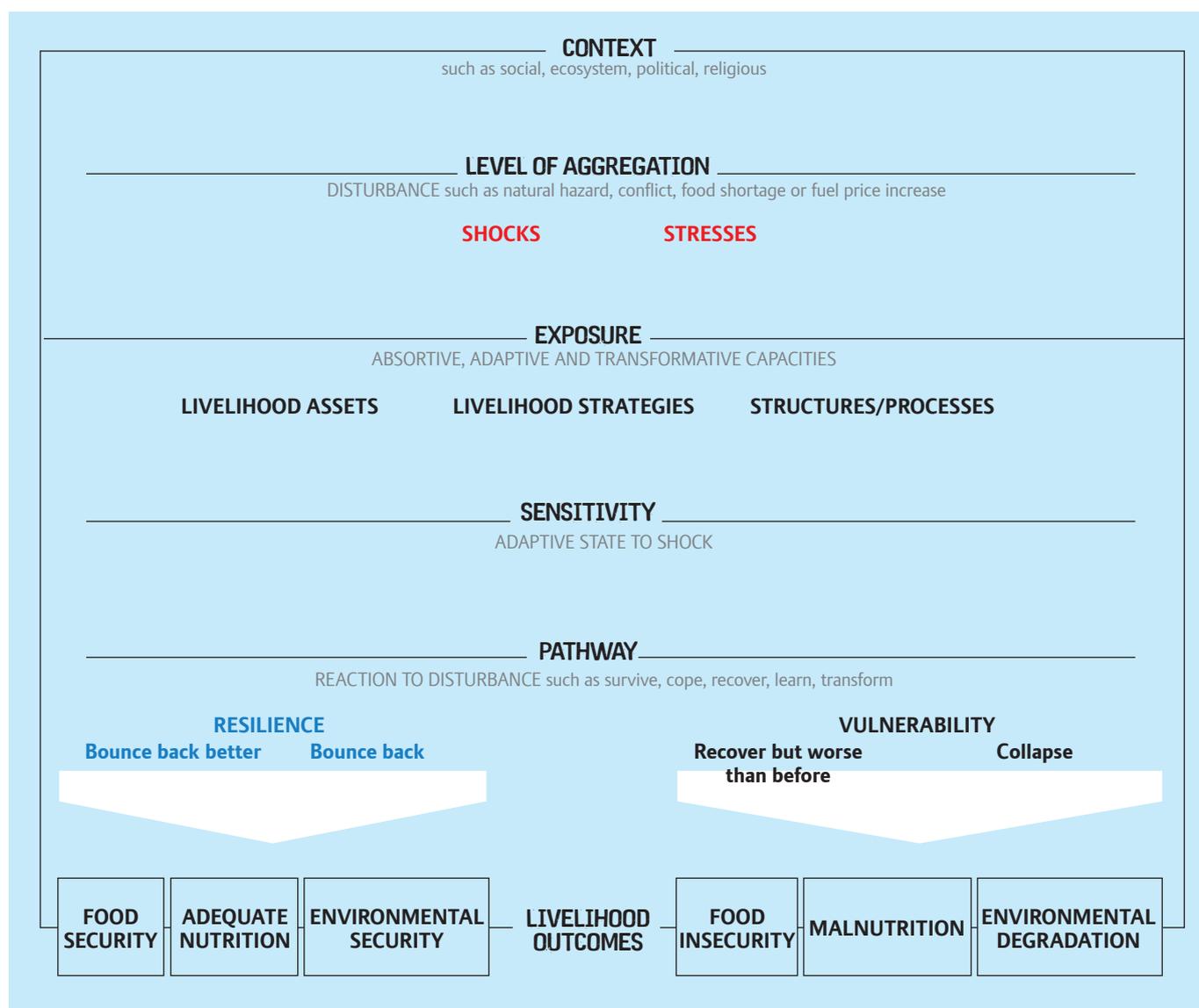
Levine et al. (2012) recommend that:

- i) Any resilience-building programme that includes immediate emergency response and longer-term development intervention should consider the impacts and potential trade-offs between people's present and future wellbeing in the channelling of resources in specific directions;
- ii) There should be explicit acknowledgement of what professional and moral judgements have been involved in deciding the determinants of resilience in any programme.

Fleshing out the concept of resilience to a Planning Framework

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) analysed NGO approaches to resilience planning and programming (IFPRI 2014). It developed a conceptual framework of resilience that incorporates the three capacities of resilience (absorptive, adaptive, transformational – see Fig. 4). This framework demonstrates how, in a given context, shocks and stresses are mediated through people’s different livelihoods (with their varying resilience capacities and reactions to disturbances) in order to produce outcomes that increase or decrease food security and environmental security/quality (Figure 7) (IFPRI 2014).

Figure 7: Resilience Conceptual Framework

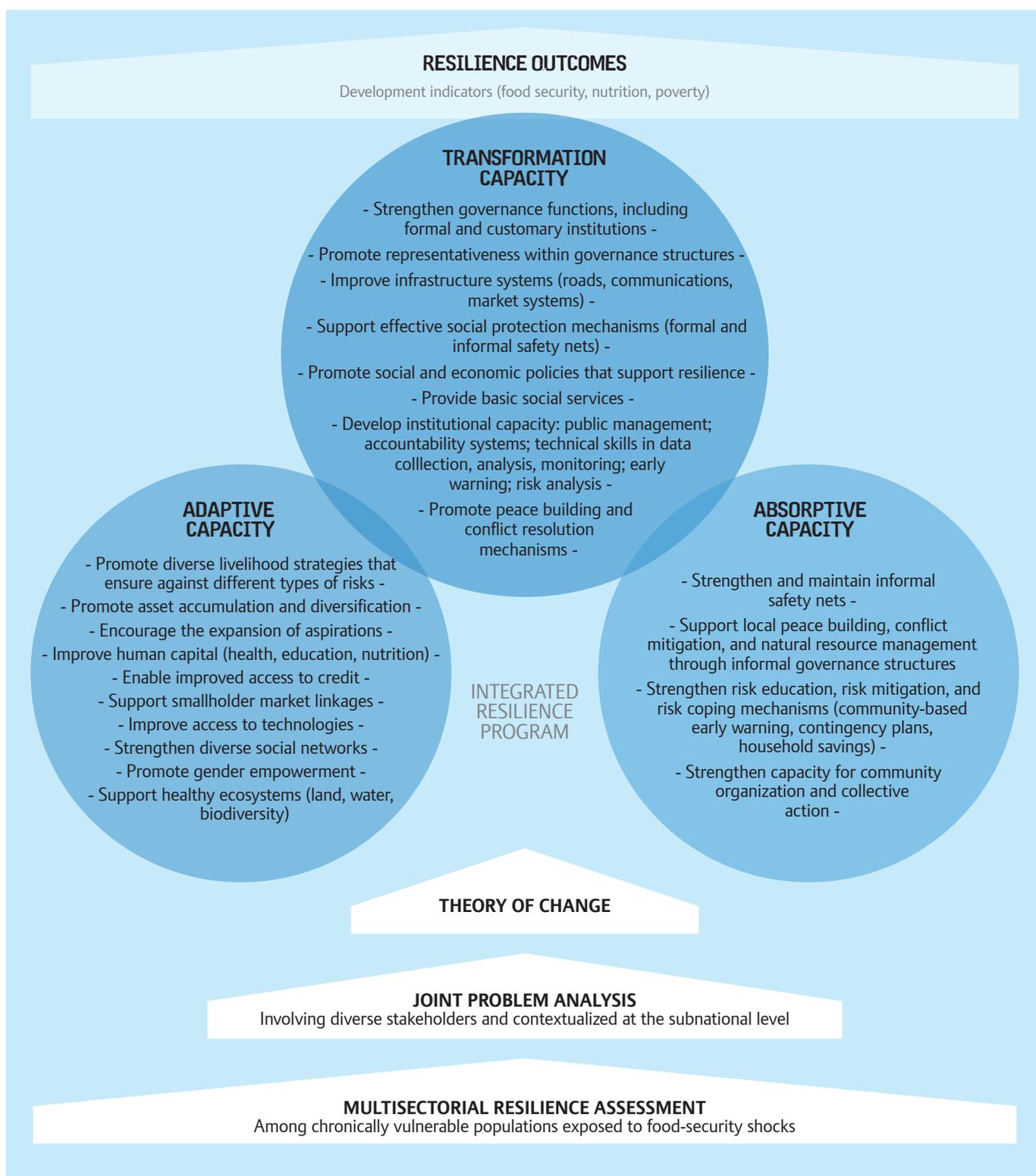


Source: IFPRI (2014)

IFPRI has developed this conceptual framework and applies it to programming approaches for NGO programming (IFPRI 2014). IFPRI recommends that NGOs take a broader structural approach to considering the populations they work with through the following approach (see Figure 8).

RESILIENCE CONCEPTS AND SAHELIAN RESILIENCE INITIATIVES

Figure 8: Programming framework for resilience



Source: IFPRI 2014

1. Carry out a multisectoral resilience assessment to assess risks to vulnerable populations exposed to food security shocks in a region.
2. Engage in a collaborative multi-stakeholder problem analysis.
3. Co-create a theory of change that articulates integrated resilience programmes.
4. Implement a set of activities that enhance adaptive capacity, absorptive capacity and transformative capacity.
5. Develop and monitor against a set of clear resilience outcomes which are measured by development indicators relating to food security, nutrition and poverty.

This approach is strong; crucially, it requires close agreement and collaboration on definitions of resilience and activities across the set of key stakeholders involved. The importance of collaborative approaches to resilience is also reflected by other NGOs working in the Sahel (WorldVision and Save the Children, 2012). This approach retains a clear focus on resilience outcomes, and requires strong conceptual thinking about how activities will add up to the outcome. It addresses Levine et al.'s (2012) concern that existing activities might be repackaged as 'resilience building' without addressing structural issues effectively.

However, it is unlikely that one government, multilateral body, private organisation, NGO or community representative would be able to cover all activities needed in order to achieve 'resilience'. Related to this is the significant risk that some linked activities may not be funded at the same time, or the right time, or enough, to be effective. Implementation of strategic frameworks and planned activities is complex and funding-dependent.

2.2 Resilience in the Sahel: who's doing what?

The picture we have today of resilience in the Sahel is mixed. There is no doubt that there is significant poverty and hunger, and a history of people being pushed past their coping capacities into serious personal crisis. But the people of the Sahel also display significant inherent resilience: many people's livelihoods are designed to absorb existing climate variability through on-farm and off-farm diversification; proportions of people in poverty and suffering hunger levels have decreased in the last 15 years; and vibrant economies and markets exist in some locations, encouraging growth and diversification in farm production and incomes (MDG data, 2013; Hesse et al. 2013). Clearly, opportunities exist to encourage resilience beyond the emergency crisis coping mechanisms of humanitarian response.

A number of initiatives currently operate in the Sahel, focussing on resilience issues (see Table 2). Of these, most, including AGIR, African Development Bank, the EU, FAO, Islamic Development Bank, USAID, World Food Programme and several NGOs, prioritise nutrition-related goals. A few focus on wider resilience issues, emergency response, or response to climate change. Several of these stakeholders stress the need for cooperation and working together to achieve resilience. Despite this, World Vision and Save the Children (2012) found that, currently in the Sahel:

“ Most agencies are conceptualising resilience in their own terms, without considering the entire system of what needs to be collectively accomplished for lasting results. A key initial challenge, therefore, is for the main actors in the Sahel to reach consensus on a conceptual framework for strengthened resilience at the community, national and regional levels, defining roles and responsibilities, and how to collectively monitor progress, and assess results in overcoming the root causes of vulnerability, rather than limiting the process to individual projects”

Sector-wide approaches are being developed. One regional strategic framework on the Sahel is the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR) launched in 2012. AGIR, like many initiatives in the Sahel, focuses on food and nutritional security as the goal, and resilience as the approach through which to attain this. This includes action across health, nutrition, and social protection systems primarily. Given the long-term nutrition crisis of the Sahel, this nutrition-related focus is also reflected in the UK NGO's Sahel Working Group (SWG) and most of the agencies working in the Sahel on resilience. For the UK Sahel Working Group, the goal of resilience is the long-term health of the Sahel's children (SWG, 2011). This focus on nutrition and wellbeing assists the meshing of agencies in their overall aims and goals, but not on their programming.

Table 2: **Key Initiatives on Resilience in the Sahel**

1. AGIR

is a long-term political partnership for resilience building in the Sahel and West Africa, working at local, national and regional levels including CILSS (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel), ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and UEMOA (West African Economic and Monetary Union). Its approach builds on the Zero Hunger target⁷. Its objective is to “Structurally reduce food and nutritional vulnerability in a sustainable manner by supporting the implementation of Sahelian and West African policies” Vulnerable households include marginalised agricultural households, agro-pastoralists and fishermen, and poor workers in the informal economy. The focus is on restoring livelihoods, strengthening nutrition in vulnerable households, strengthening agriculture and food productivity among the marginalised and strengthen governance around this issue.

- Related to this, the Cadre Harmonisé (Harmonised Framework for the analysis and identification of areas at risk and vulnerable groups in the Sahel) is a multi-sectoral and integrated early warning system, particularly for food security and nutrition.

2. The European Union

- Food Security Thematic Programme addresses the structural causes of food insecurity, putting agriculture at the heart of the international debate on development. Part 2 aims at strengthening the link between information and decision-making with the object of improving food security in ECOWAS and CILSS member countries.
 - The Global Alliance for Climate Change (GACC) supports ECOWAS and CILSS member countries to address climate change impacts, with a view to achieving the MDGs.
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⁷ <http://www.oecd.org/site/rpca/agir/>

3. The African Development Bank

regional programme to strengthen the resilience of populations to recurrent food and nutritional insecurity in the Sahel. This programme aims to increase agro-forestry-pastoral and fisheries productivity in a context of climate change in the Sahel. Building on the priorities of the National Agricultural Investment Programmes and the Regional Agricultural Investment Programme, this programme aims to increase investment in resilience and medium- and long-term actions targeting vulnerable households, to reduce emergency aid costs, and break the cycle of recurring famine.

4. FAO's Sahelian regional programme

- The Regional Programme is a response to the 2012 Sahel crisis. It first responded to urgent needs for 2012. In a second phase, it addresses recovery needs in 2013 and longer-term needs in 2014 and 2015.
 - Programme for strengthening food crisis prevention and management instruments in the Sahel, it supports the implementation of various regional tools for food and nutritional crisis prevention and management (Crisis Prevention and Management Network (PREGEC), Harmonised Framework on analysis of food and nutritional vulnerability (HF), Regional Cooperation Framework of National Food Stock Agencies (RESOGEST)).
-

5. Islamic Development Bank

framework programme for strengthening resilience in 7 Sahelian countries suffering from recurrent food insecurity, including Burkina Faso, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.

6. The Sahel Facility, with the support of the West African Development Bank (BOAD/WADB)

aims to reduce agricultural vulnerability by promoting irrigation practices and preventing post-harvest losses. Based on co-operation between the BOAD/WADB and KFW Development and Finance, a mechanism for funding projects on climate change adaptation is being implemented in four ECOWAS member countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal).

7. The Regional Programme for Sustainable Land Management (PRGDT), with the support of the EU and in partnership with the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) and Canadian development aid (IDRC).

The objective is to contribute to sustainable land management (SLM) and the capacity to adapt to climate change in ECOWAS and CILSS member states with a view to achieving the MDGs.

8. USAID

- The 'Feed the Future' Initiative (2011-2016). Its objective is to assist countries in West Africa to achieve MDG 1, namely eradicating hunger and extreme poverty. Focused on agriculture, the environment, health, trade and investment, the programme also addresses cross-cutting issues such as adaptation to climatic variability, improved market access for farmers and traders, improved food and nutritional security, gender issues, capacity-building and partnership development.
 - Resilience Programmes (2013-2018). Cross-sectoral resilience programming to address the most vulnerable in a comprehensive manner that supports the AGIR objectives to be implemented in Burkina Faso and Niger.
-

9. World Bank

US\$ 1.5bn Sahel initiative announced in November 2013. First project is Senegal River Basin Multipurpose Water Resources Development Project. World Bank also runs programmes on social safety nets.

10. DFID's BRACED programme (Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters)

is a new programme, part of which is Sahel based. In the initial analysis undertaken for this, Hesse et al. (2013) prioritised four areas for building resilience: strengthening production systems (agriculture and livestock, primarily, and related services); strengthening land rights, government and small towns; and social protection mechanisms and large-scale infrastructure projects (such as rice irrigation schemes)

11. World Food Programme

- Food for Assets and Malnutrition Prevention Programmes including large-scale irrigation and water management, food for work and blanket feeding programmes for the prevention of acute malnutrition with distribution of fortified corn and soya flour
 - Uses knowledge, training and critical time food interventions to build nutritional resilience among vulnerable populations (WFP USA 2013)
-

12. NGOs

- Oxfam: found that cash transfer programmes in the Sahel need knowledge, analysis and skills to be successful. Cash for work projects help people access food. Other activities include agricultural support (including irrigation and grain banks), improving health of livestock; improving public health with WASH and early warning systems
 - Save the Children: an initial focus on emergency response and prevention of acute and chronic malnutrition moved to longer-term inputs in nutritional screening, water sanitation and health assessment, interventions with children in refugee camps
 - World Vision: focusses on (emergency) response, recovery and resilience, providing food, health and nutrition programmes, and commissioning information-sharing reports on resilience in the Sahel
 - SOS Sahel: In Mali, SOS Sahel promotes pastoralists' participation in decentralised government through education, awareness raising with government officials, and research. Livestock and forestry management; non-timber forest product marketing; water supply and wells; also supports farmer unions. In Niger, it promotes micro-irrigation and decentralised management of natural resources and forest plantations.
 - Action against Hunger reduces impact of lean season on people through: strengthening community networks, monitoring nutritional status of children, nutritional supplements for pregnant women and young children, technical support to develop Early Warning Systems
-

Modified from AGIR Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative: Sahel and West Africa Regional Roadmap Sahel 2013; NGOs' information from their websites

Oxfam USA (2013) found that structural challenges to achieving resilience in the Sahel included food price volatility, conflict and donors' tendency to respond to emergencies. Building resilience at the regional level in the Sahel involves better coordination, capacity strengthening and a focus on child undernutrition across the agencies. In terms of programming, NGOs recommend a focus on nutrition and health, with agricultural interventions and a range of sectoral interventions including structural investment in agricultural development by government, as well as implementing a regional food reserve strategy and increasing social protection schemes for those who are most marginalised (see Table 3).

Table 3: **Recommendations for building resilience in the Sahel**

1	Increase coordination between governments, donors and agencies, and break down humanitarian and development community divide
2	Make reduction of child undernutrition central to resilience
3	Develop deeper understanding of vulnerability
4	Strengthen local and national capacity to build resilience
5	Implementation of existing national and regional food and agricultural policies, including the 2003 commitment to invest at least 10% at national budget on agricultural development
6	Support regional food reserve strategy
7	Expand safety nets and social protection schemes
8	Low-cost agricultural techniques to increase sustainable production of food crops and income
9	Develop nutrition-sensitive programmes integrating efforts to reduce undernutrition across a series of sectoral interventions including livelihoods, education, WASH, health, gender and care practices.
10	Improve and expand integrated programmes to manage undernutrition

Source: Oxfam USA, 2013 and World Vision and Save the Children, 2012



Yanoussa Mamane tends to the sheep while his father plants peanuts



PLAN'S WORK ON RESILIENCE

3.1 Plan's understanding of resilience: global level

Existing Strategy on Resilience

In its 2007-2014 Disaster Risk Management strategy, Plan has identified resilience as a key issue:

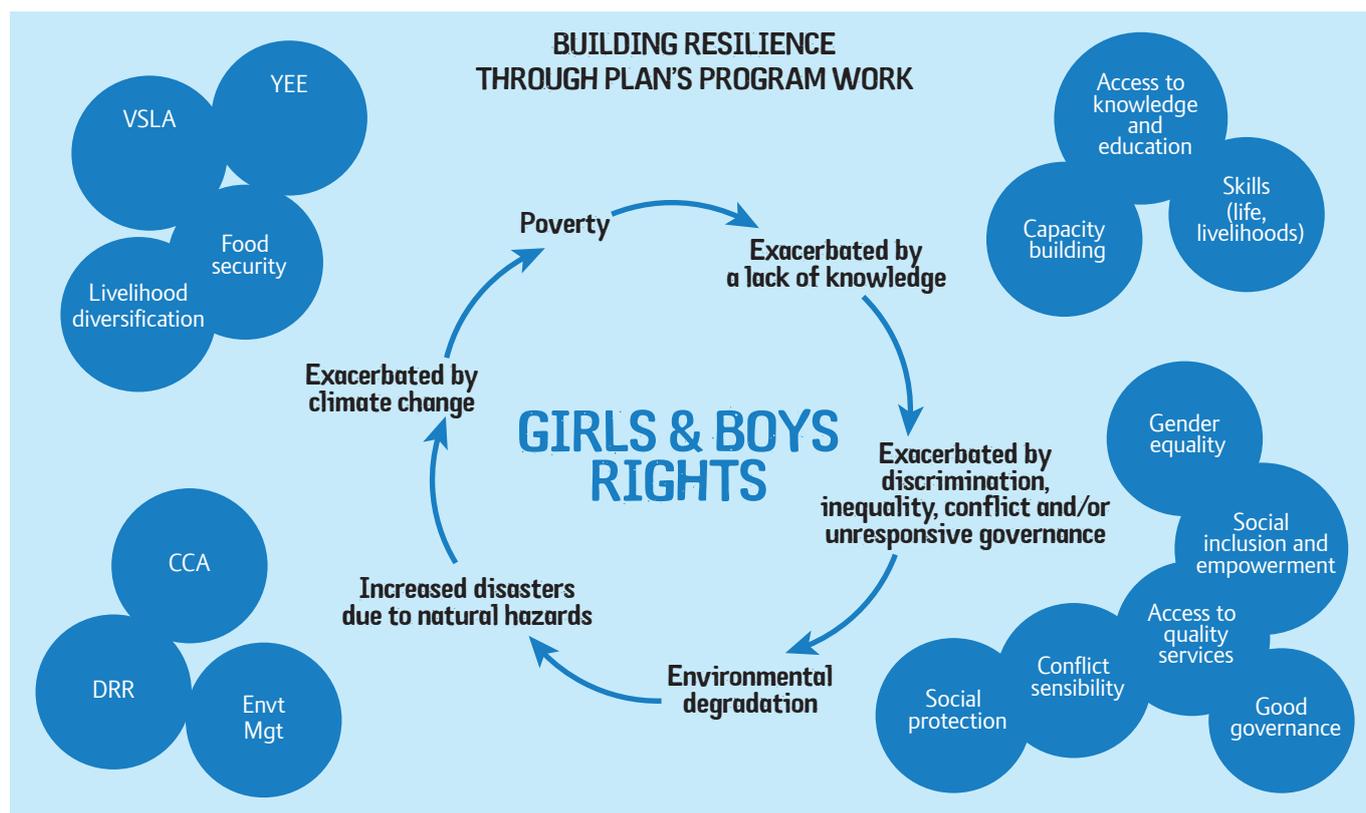
Plan wants children and youth to grow up in communities that are able to claim their rights sustainably – i.e. withstand shocks, maintain services during a disaster, and bounce back afterwards. These are resilient communities. Plan believes that such communities will minimise the vulnerability of children and youth and maximise the opportunities open to them.

Plan International has a strong background of working on disaster, vulnerability and disaster risk management in communities and with children. Through this work, Plan already has developed significant capacity in areas related to resilience. For example, Plan's Disaster Risk Reduction Toolkit supports existing community-based DRR work, focusing on assessment of hazards, vulnerability and capacity assessment, action planning and advocacy with children on Disaster Risk Reduction (Plan 2010).

Plan has been supporting Disaster Risk Management capacity building in the Sahel to strengthen its capacity, as well as that of local communities and government bodies to work before, during and after the disaster. Plan aims to expand this to support communities to confront not just recurring natural hazards, but also future shocks and stresses aggravated by climate change, economic crises and/or conflicts.

Plan International's strategy on resilience shows a set of areas where Plan interacts to generate resilience (see Figure 9 below). The negative cycle is shown in the middle: poverty, lack of knowledge, discrimination, environmental degradation and disasters, heightened by climate variability and change. This negative cycle is clearly reflected in the Sahelian context, leading to lower resilience and increased vulnerability of children and communities. The outer circles show Plan's activities and programmes that are designed to counteract this negative cycle, and wider approaches (such as good governance) needed to facilitate long-term, lasting change.

Figure 9: **Building Resilience: How Plan's activities destroy the negative cycle**



Plan's definition of Resilience

Plan International's goals and mission have clear links to the goals of social resilience. Based on its vision for change, Plan takes the broader concept of resilience to external shocks and stresses and hones it to reflect the **Child-Centred Community Development strategic approach** (see below):

Resilience is the ability of children and their communities to deal positively with disturbances that undermine the fulfilment of their rights

Plan's definition focusses on children and the fulfilment of their rights. According to Plan, these rights are:

- **Rights to Survival** (reduction in disease and injury, and better nutrition),
- **Rights to Development** (access to primary and secondary education, access to health, access to sustainable water and sanitation, employment and economic security, livelihoods),
- **Rights to Protection** (physical and psychological security and wellbeing) and
- **Rights to Participation** (status within community, sense of belonging and active engagement in community activities).

PLAN'S WORK ON RESILIENCE

All these accesses and rights, if fulfilled or possible, lead to increased resilience. Plan's definition of resilience reflects the broader, more widely accepted (OECD 2012) definition of resilience as the ability to cope with shocks and stresses. However, the focus on children's and their communities' rights for survival, development, protection and participation add a layer of detail that reflects the emergency coping (survival and protection) and the longer-term structural improvements to wellbeing (development and participation) that come after the fulfilment of basic needs of food, water and shelter.

3.2 Plan West Africa and Focus Countries Work on Resilience

Within the Regional Programme Strategy for Plan West and Central Africa "Putting Plan's Global Strategy 2015 into Practice" there are several important aspects relating to how Plan works on resilience in the Sahel:

1. Children are at the core of Plan's mandate and hence activities/interventions. Children are seen as active agents of change, hence the need to build their capacity (through access to quality and relevant education, provision of healthcare and safeguarding children from harm/neglect/abuse).
2. Plan focuses on vulnerable populations including excluded and marginalised groups, especially young women and girls.
3. The rights-based perspective Plan uses requires investment not only in the Absorptive coping capacity aspect of resilience (the Right to Survival) but also in the Adaptive capacity and Transformational elements relating to the other Rights that are central to Plan's strategic approach. Figure 6 demonstrates how these fit, broadly, with the Resilience Framework.
4. Vulnerability is exacerbated by natural hazards, food shortages, drought, epidemics, armed conflict and national debt.
5. Institutional weakness in the Sahelian region requires Plan to collaborate with donors, sponsors and governments, and emphasise the role of self-organisation within communities.
6. Low education hampers achievement of children's rights and has a wider impact on economic growth, improved governance and democracy. It is therefore a building block to all resilience approaches under Plan.

At country level, in the four countries that were the focus of this report, Plan's interventions span across emergency response and longer-term development interventions. Their work is rooted in a "Child-Centred Community Development" (CCCD) approach. Their interventions are inclusive to vulnerable populations and make gender mainstreaming a central concern.

Plan works in-country at the national level, advocating for greater empowerment, and supporting capacity building and empowerment for young people. Most of its work, however, is based at the community level, where it engages in direct project implementation both directly and through intermediary partners trusted by the community.

At organisational level in-country, some of Plan's staff already work closely on resilience in Disaster Risk Reduction projects. Capacity-building activities and economic and social empowerment are projects that Plan's staff perceive as being very closely linked to resilience building. Figure 10 shows a summary of Plan's activities on Resilience. These are detailed by country in Table 4.

Figure 10: Resilience component capacities for Plan's Four Sahel Focus Countries

<p>1. Plan's activities increase short-term absorptive capacity (in disasters) through contributing to basic health, sanitation, access to food and physical safety, ensuring that people are supported when under severe livelihood stress and emergency, including:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection through services for violence victims and psychosocial care for refugees. Safe spaces for children in refugee camps mean improved protection from harm, abuse and neglect • Food, including blanket feeding, handouts and nutrition programmes • Medicine, vaccinations and nutrition for children and mothers: support for centres for recovery and nutrition education • Cash transfers; and increase in available cash from VSL programmes increases absorptive capacity • Water, sanitation and health projects reduce disease • Early warning systems lead to decrease in food loss
<p>2. Plan's activities to develop adaptive capacity in its Sahelian countries include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early warning systems • Disaster preparedness to support nutrition (cereal banks, security stocks) and reduce flood impacts • Village Savings and Loans programmes buffer against food shortage, improve livelihoods for women and youths, and enable small business development • Youth employment training • Market and community garden initiatives • Activities to bring children from non-formal to formal education
<p>3. Plan's activities to develop transformational capacity in the Sahel include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy prioritisation of children through creation and support of children's parliaments to foster youth empowerment • Improving civic, leadership skills and literacy for handicapped girls • Improved governance within schools means girls' issues are prioritised • Policy change through awareness raising on gender-based violence, child trafficking, child marriage and child labour at national level • Children's views are sought on risk assessments (DRR) and others • Advocacy for children and youth rights

Source: Grist, Mosello and Roberts (2014) Plan Resilience Country Case Studies

Ibrahima and his friends in the courtyard of their school in Makani Doukou village, Tillaberi, Niger



© Plan / Florence Cisse (Plan staff)

PLAN'S WORK ON RESILIENCE

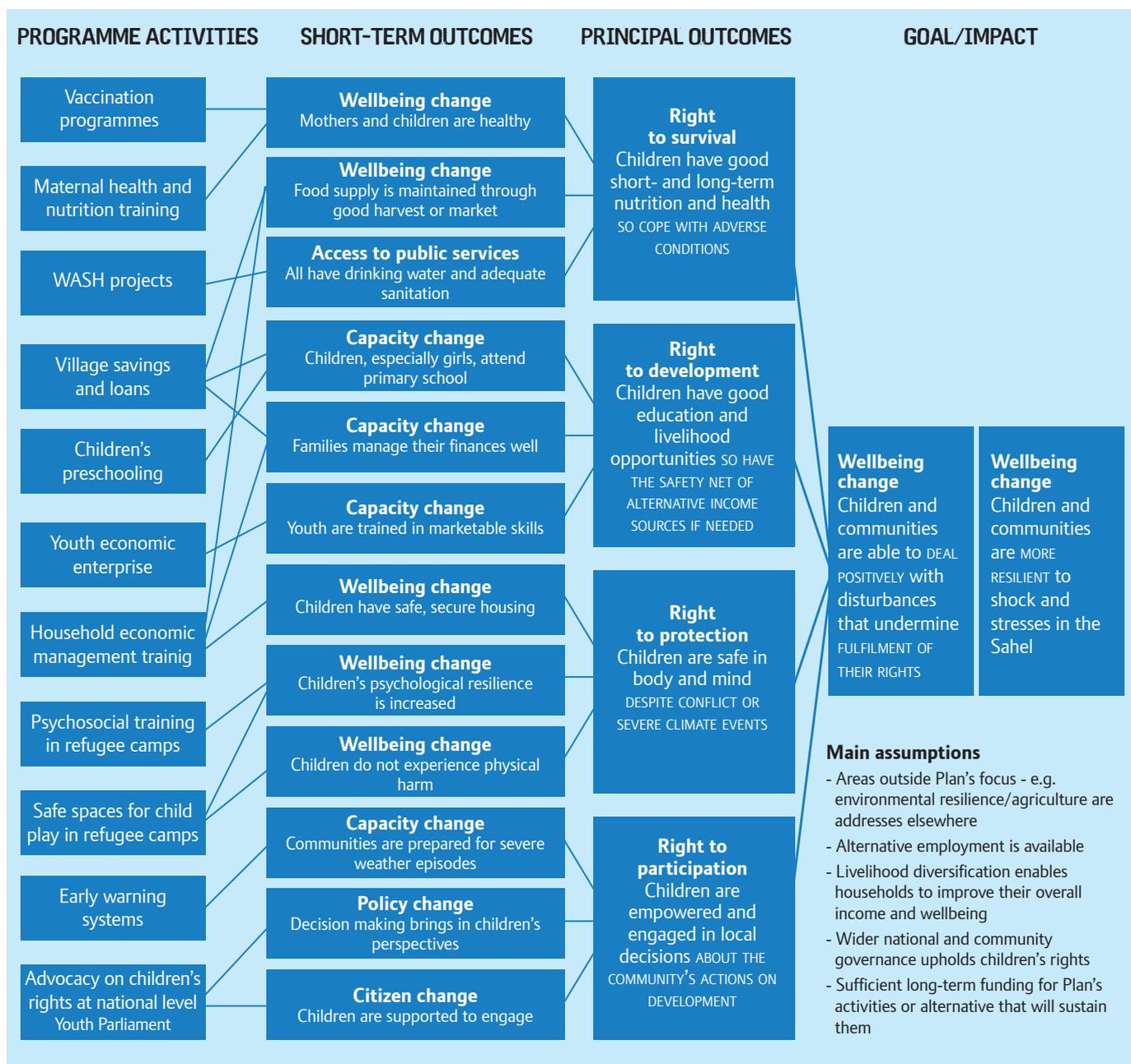
Table 4: **Principal Activities in Plan's Sahel focus countries relating to the Three Resilience Capacities**

	Short-term absorptive capacity	Medium-term adaptive capacity	Longer-term transformative capacity
Link to Resilience	Basic health, sanitation, access to food (through handouts and cash transfers) and physical safety ensures people will survive under stress.		Capacity building of communities and parents regarding educators, Partnership with government authorities in education, Transforming skillsets of disadvantaged persons
Countries			
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency child protection • Food handouts • Cash transfers • Access to medication • Health and Nutrition Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster preparedness and planning: cereal banks, security stocks • Market and community gardens initiatives, village savings and loans associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy programmes; • Schooling improvements; • Advocacy
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanket feeding and nutrition programmes • Food, medicine • Support for recuperation of malnourished children <5 yrs old in Centres for Recovery and Nutrition Education (CREN) • Cash transfers • Psychosocial care for refugee children • Birth registration documents to enable access to services • Access to safe water, sanitation and health care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Savings and Loans to promote safety nets and improve livelihoods • Early warning weather systems • Vocational training of youths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance initiatives within schools and advocacy • Children's parliament created in 1997 • Use of youth groups, advisory councils and school governance • Training teachers on workplace violence • Capacity building on child protection with community-based organisation working in emergencies
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency relief • Hygiene training • Child protection services for victims of violence (esp. gender-based violence GBV), child labour • Health and Nutrition • WASH – access to potable water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster risk preparedness: flood response measures including in schools and environmental education for young people • Capacity building: Early Warning Systems, information sharing • Bringing children from non-formal to formal education • Village Savings and Loans Programme for youth economic empowerment to improve livelihoods • VSL programme for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handicapped women and children improving access to finance, developing civic and leadership skills and literacy, training on DRR • Establish school governance systems that protect girls from violent practices • Awareness raising on GBV, child trafficking, child marriage and child labour • Creation of children's parliament in 2013 and Global Child Protection Services 2013-2016
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redirection of some country budget resources to dire humanitarian crisis of 2012-2013 • Protection of women's and girls' rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic empowerment of women : VSL programmes (Kita, Mali) 	

3.3 Plan’s Theory of Change on Resilience Building in the Sahel

In creating a theory of change⁸ for resilience building in the Sahel with Plan, the overarching change desired, or goal, is increasing children’s wellbeing through enhancing children’s resilience to shocks and stresses in the Sahel. This will be achieved through working on the specific rights-based outcomes which lead to children’s and their parents/duty-bearers’ ability to deal positively with shocks and stresses. Figure 11 shows an outline of a Theory of Change for Plan Sahel, where programme activities contribute to short-term outcomes. In turn, these contribute to Principal Outcomes and the Overall Goal.

Figure 11: Theory of change for Plan’s Sahelian Resilience Building



8. A theory of change identifies how a programme’s activities are expected to bring about changes in the situation that would otherwise not occur, the expected impacts of these activities, and what moderating factors may influence said impacts.

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What this theory of change does not demonstrate is the relative weighting that should be applied to Principal Outcomes in different contexts. For a country-level resilience strategy, this exercise would ideally be carried out with a prior vulnerability/risk assessment of the country context, which includes an assessment of other donor and government activities at regional and country levels and cooperation possibilities, and Plan would choose areas of focus relating within that relating to the most pressing needs for resilience building. In the Sahel, much of the focus might ideally be on strengthening Principal Outcome Pillar 1: the Right to Survival, as chronic malnutrition, amongst other basic needs, is a key obstacle to the 'softer' rights of the other pillars. The outcomes are described in more detail in Figure 12, with examples from the Plan Country Case Studies.

Figure 12: **Principal Outcomes and Country examples**

The Right to Survival

Good nutrition and health are essential building blocks for survival, and are vital for coping with any adverse conditions such as harvest failure or disease outbreak. The Right to Survival can be met through short-term outcomes including keeping mothers and children healthy, access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation, early warning systems and community preparedness and adequate food supply. Examples include: blanket feeding and nutrition programmes and support for recuperation of malnourished children in Centres for Recovery and Nutrition Education in Burkina Faso; cash transfers and food handouts in Niger; and hygiene and access to potable water in Senegal.

The Right to Development

Skilled youths can possess a safety net of alternative income sources and abilities in a crisis and in the longer term as diversified livelihoods may provide greater stability, and so will assist family's positive response to crisis. Building to this point, guaranteeing access to good quality education for both girls and boys, and training in skills and family finance management. Examples include: village savings and loans schemes in all of the Plan Sahel focus countries, early warning weather systems in Burkina Faso, disaster preparedness and planning through cereal banks and security stocks in Niger, and bringing children from non-formal to formal education systems in Senegal.

The Right to Protection

Children are often vulnerable, and especially so in acute and emergency situations, such as during conflict, or when migration is needed as a result of severe food shortage. Protecting children from physical harm, situations of child labour, neglect and abuse and building their psychological resilience is essential in these emergency situations. At a broader level, ensuring that housing is secure and that communities are better prepared for severe weather episodes strengthens coping capacity. In Senegal, Plan runs child protection services for victims of violence and programmes on child labour. In refugee camps in Burkina Faso, psychosocial care assists refugee children. Official registration of births supported by Plan enables children and their mothers to receive medical assistance.

The Right to Participation

Much of Plan's work indirectly creates self-esteem and empowerment within communities. It is very important that young people are engaged in decisions about their communities, in particular some of the longer-term choices about farming futures in the light of long-term climate change and water security issues. Plan supports the children's parliament in Burkina Faso and other countries and advocacy on children's rights, and capacity building on child protection.

3.4

Strengths of Plan's approach

Plan's focus on food security and 'Survival' for resilience echoes regional priorities:

Resilience priorities in the Sahel focus on food security and survival for the human population (see Section 2.2). This is strongly reflected in Plan's activities on Principal Outcome I (Right to Survival).

Plan has already contributed to improving the health and nutrition of thousands of children and their mothers in the region through direct medical interventions, access to water and treatment and prevention of malnutrition. Plan also works on the longer-term strategies of increasing food security through increasing absorptive capacities of communities with creation of grain banks (see Figure 13 below for Plan Niger's work as an example).

Figure 13: **Plan Niger: Building absorptive capacity through supporting young children and mothers' health and nutrition and food supply**

Water and sanitation provision is central to basic survival and is a key part of Plan Niger's work through Community-Led Total Sanitation. Plan engages in the physical construction of latrines, water point rehabilitation and training and awareness-raising around hygiene and water management.

Food and nutrition security is essential, particularly amongst breastfeeding and lactating women and children aged 6-59 months. Plan Niger supports Nutritional Rehabilitation and Training Centres (FARN). Mothers are trained at community level in food preparation and nutrition. Plan also supports targeted food distributions, cash transfers and non-food items (e.g. blankets, mosquito nets, mats and water containers). To date, 6320 women and 3154 children have benefited from these actions in Dosso and Tillaberi regions (Country Quarterly Report, 2013).

Plan Niger has also helped 86 communities across Niger to establish grain banks to provide a long-term sustainable solution to hunger. They have constructed granaries to store grain⁹. At harvest time, when grain prices are low, the grain bank can fill their store; when prices rise, the grain banks will sell grain at lower than market price so the poorest can buy it. This reduces vulnerability to food price volatility within the community.

These activities strengthen individuals' absorptive coping capacity – how they deal with immediate, short-term shocks and stresses of hunger and malnutrition.

However, building food security in the longer term is not just about directly working on food supply. One of the most successful activities Plan supports in all its focus countries is the village savings and loans schemes, initially set up for women and now being piloted as a youth scheme. They allow individuals and households to increase their absorptive and adaptive capacity with some transformation of levels of empowerment. Plan Mali's Kita Village Savings and Loans Group is a good example.

9. <http://www.plan-uk.org/what-we-do/our-global-programme/economic-household-security/cereal-banks-niger/>

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Figure 14: **Plan Mali: Resilience building with Kita Village Savings and Loans Group**

The Village Savings and Loans (VSL) Programme in Kita, Mali is a good example of resilience. VSLs create a social safety net, through self-help groups that save small amounts of money regularly, and can then spend savings, or borrow against the 'micro-bank' if needed. The VSL programme is run through Plan Mali by setting up groups and supporting them. Funding stops once the groups have proved they are self-sufficient in organisation and administration.



Children playing on slide at pre-school in Kita

Plan Mali has set up this group with the help of Tonis, a local NGO working on women's rights and empowerment. Two women from Tonis are in charge with organising and facilitating meetings: they train village women on how to manage funds, which work like a micro-credit.

Most women spend money saved on health and education for children, food, and on funerals weddings and health emergencies, so the VSL is an important financial and social safety net. Some also borrow against the VSL, on approval by the group, in order to invest in small businesses to make soap. Women self-select their groups of 25-30 participants, mostly excluding the richest and the very poorest who are too poor to be able to save at all.

There are knock-on indirect effects that are positive in these groups. Primarily, creating an organised group of women in the village provides a vehicle for training and other forms of information sharing. Messages are passed this way on nutrition with community-based management of malnutrition (up to moderate acute malnutrition), and provides a way to refer refer acute malnutrition cases to health centres.

The VSL projects are cited widely as the best examples of resilience amongst Plan's current work. They promote transformative capacities of empowerment and education alongside increasing the short-term absorptive capacity of a household to shocks and stresses experienced. And, in the medium term, investments in children's education increase adaptive capacity for the household as a whole. However, there has, to date, been little methodical measurement of incomes and livelihoods conditions pre- and post- VSL engagement in Plan Mali, which means that improvements are anecdotally reported rather than substantively proven. Baseline surveys and repeated measurement over time of communities involved is essential in order to test this approach in terms of its contributions to improving the economic and livelihood resilience of the communities involved.

Adapted from Mali Country Case Study by Beatrice Mosello, ODI, February 2014

Plan's collaboration opportunities

Plan's international country office network means that there is significant expertise on resilience and disaster risk management within the organisation that can be shared.

Plan can work at the regional level to be involved with articulating and responding to a Sahel-wide effort to achieve resilience. There are multiple aspects to work on resilience: Plan works on some of these, and it is clear that this forms an essential, but not complete, part of the whole approach to achieve resilience in the Sahel.

Plan's activities are a combination of elements that can build resilience in communities in the Sahel. It's useful to think of these as a jigsaw of activities that will go together and will involve activities from other agencies and groups also.



In-country, Plan can broaden its partnership range to other institutions and NGOs which will allow a combined method to address multiple resilience dimensions (see Table 5).

PLAN'S WORK ON RESILIENCE

Table 5: Potential interventions in partnership in the Sahel

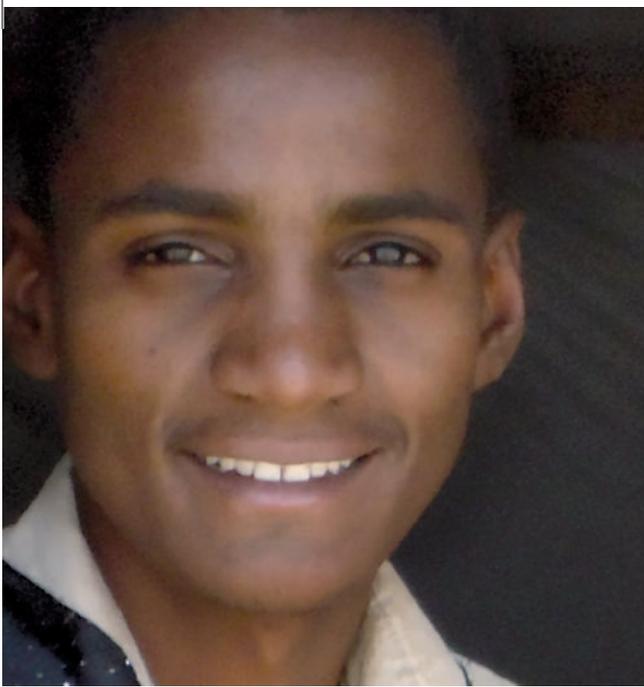
Intervention type	Detail	Who involved
Absorptive capacity interventions	Investments in agricultural/water technologies – e.g. drought-resistant seeds, flood management;	NGOs; donors
Adaptive capacity interventions	Household organisation/education on financial and household management;	Donors
	More on household resilience e.g. VS&L;	NGOs
	Contribute to capacity-building aimed at creating more relevant market-tested skills among certain population groups, and in particular the youth and women;	National government, NGOs, private sector
	Investments in irrigation efficiency – as irrigation is key in the Sahel (and will become even more so in the future);	National government
Transformative capacity interventions	Support the eventual re-localisation of communities and households that may have to move because of drier climate conditions in some areas (e.g. as a consequence of desertification);	National government
	Encourage social practices and policies aimed at limiting population growth (also in partnership with governmental authorities);	National government, donors
	Resilience-building in urban contexts	NGOs, National government
	Consider advocacy around transport infrastructure through other NGOs, as this is critical for access to markets and hence income generation	

Plan will continue to:

1. Work with communities and most marginalised, especially women and girls, to build their capacity to identify their risks and develop plans to mitigate and better respond to these
2. Work with government authorities at both national and local levels, to ensure that interventions can be scaled up and eventually transformed into policies and laws for the protection of children and other vulnerable groups within the entire country.
3. Engage with, and advocate to donors, UN agencies and practitioners, a holistic approach to resilience building that prioritises the protection, wellbeing and agency of girls and boys and their communities.

Sitan (left) with a calabash full of peanuts taken from her garret, Mali





MEASURING RESILIENCE

4.1

Approaches to measuring resilience

Amidst a background of concern about demonstrable aid effectiveness and value for money from the donor community, the question of how to effectively measure resilience, and improvements to resilience, is extremely important. One of the first requirements would be to tease out from existing programming what budget lines go to which aspects of resilience building, and how this relates to the goal inputs across areas of resilience. Donors and NGOs are currently working hard on this nascent field to identify robust, meaningful indicators of resilience (see Table 6). Indicators need to be able to cross scales and dimensions, and include both objective quantifiable change as well as subjective perception. It would be important to ensure that the indicators are comparable across different communities.

Table 6: **Recommendations for NGO measurements of resilience in development programming**

- 1 Multi-scale: Resilience indicators should be able to capture change in resilience at different scales: individual, household, community, (eco)system, national levels;
- 2 Multi-dimension: resilience is not simply about coping strategies that help households to 'survive' a shock; resilience is also about adaptive strategies or even transformative strategies. It is about ex-post but also ex-ante (anticipation) strategies. An appropriate resilience indicator would be one that captures all these different dimensions.
- 3 Objective and subjective: resilience is as much about what people do to go through a harsh period, as it is about how they feel about it. Resilience indicators should therefore aim at monitoring both objective changes and subjective perceptions – including stress.
- 4 Generic: Although we recognise that indicators are relevant only if they can capture and reflect the specificity of the situation they are applied to, too many indicators are currently built on specific circumstances or a specific agenda. An appropriate resilience indicator is one that can be scaled out and replicated.
- 5 Independently built: to be analytically useful, a resilience indicator needs to be defined and measured independently from the factors and processes that are (presumably) affecting its level, such as income, assets, level of participation or social coherency. Only when these factors are not incorporated in the resilience index can we explore and test rigorously the actual effect of these characteristics on resilience.

Sources: Costas and Barrett in Mitchell, 2013

6. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/sahel_en.pdf

4.2

Measuring resilience for Plan Sahel

Based on the Outcome pillars of the Theory of Change elaborated in Section 3, a set of results outcomes and indicators for measuring resilience for Plan Sahel is detailed in Table 7 below. Further resources on measuring resilience are in the references section at the end of the document. Several assumptions/risks are involved in the outcomes and indicators here:

- Areas outside Plan’s remit that are influential of resilience (e.g. agriculture) are addressed effectively in partnership in areas of Plan’s work
- Alternative paid employments are available
- Livelihood diversification enables households to improve their overall income and wellbeing
- Sufficient long-term funding for Plan’s activities is accessible

Objective	Indicators (impact)	Verifiable Evidence
<i>Overall objective</i>		
Children and communities are able to deal positively with disturbances that undermine the fulfilment of their rights (i.e. more resilient to shocks and stresses in the Sahel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in numbers of people in communities, especially children, who are malnourished • Increase in access to quality education and alternative livelihoods • Increase in numbers of children who are safe and protected in their communities • Evidence of engagement of children at community- and national-level decision making 	to be decided at WARO level
<i>Specific Objectives</i>		
Right to Survival Children have good short-term and long-term nutrition and health so can cope with adverse conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of healthy mothers and children • Food supply is maintained or increased • Increase in provision of adequate drinking water and sanitation 	to be decided at WARO level
Right to Development Children have good education and livelihood opportunities so have the safety net of alternative income sources if needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in numbers of children, especially girls, accessing quality education • Increase in youths trained in marketable skills • Significant improvement in management of family finances to allow buffering in case of shocks to the household • Increase in number of households with savings and alternative livelihoods in place 	to be decided at WARO level
Right to Protection Children are safe in body and mind despite conflict or severe climate events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in children’s psychological resilience post conflict • Decrease in incidence of child labour/gender-based violence and abuse that is disaster-/climate-induced • Increase in children’s access to safe, secure housing • Increase in number of children aware of risks and how to protect themselves from abuse and harm • Decreased effect of severe weather episodes on children • Increase in physical safety of children and freedom from physical abuse 	to be decided at WARO level
Right to Participation Children are Empowered and Engaged about the Community’s actions on development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in involvement of children in community decision making • Increase in representation of youth perspectives nationally 	to be decided at WARO level



CREATING A PATHWAY FOR PLAN IN THE SAHEL

Communities and individuals living in the environmentally-vulnerable Sahel face considerable challenges. Extreme climatic events overlain with troubled politics, a degrading natural environment, high population growth and fragile government institutions create a high level of underlying vulnerability for the region as a whole. Food and nutrition insecurity are long-term chronic problems which economic growth in the region has failed to dispel.

Both the goal and the process of generating resilience are clearly an attractive proposition. They bring together both short-term emergency coping and longer-term structural adaptations and transformational changes to improve people's livelihoods and quality of life. The reality of people's lives and livelihoods is that they are dynamic, messy, fluctuating and responsive to external and internal changes. Building resilience is a process to increase capacities – defining a static end goal is not the best way forward.

In building resilience in the Sahel, nutrition and basic food security are overwhelming priorities. Robust assessments, models and methodologies are needed to address risks and provide solutions to the issues that the Sahel faces. The priorities of nutrition and food security are reflected across government priorities and multilateral and non-government organisations, providing a useful overarching goal and a strong basis for good cooperation and effective working together. However, the means of addressing these priorities are manifold, and progress on one area is often dependent on another. For example, for a small enterprise to grow significantly through a microcredit scheme, it might need market access, for example, which may require some hard infrastructure of roads. And this is where cooperation towards overarching goals is essential.

Plan's work at country level in the Sahel encompasses many of the activities that are building blocks of resilience – a sustained, trusted, community engagement; focus on the most marginalised groups; a responsiveness to emergency situations when they arise, and effective programming within the three key building blocks of resilience. The challenge, as IFPRI (2014) discussed, is weaving these together in a way which can then create a sustained pathway towards resilience in specific locations and countries – this can be addressed best with a multisectoral resilience assessment and planning process stemming from that.

Widening Plan's approach to Resilience

1. Plan will continue with its range of child-centred development activities in the Sahel, and frame these from a resilience perspective in country-level resilience strategy documents. These will clarify how resilience goes beyond DRR and DRM approaches using the 'Resilience 3D' conceptual framework. These strategy documents will build

CREATING A PATHWAY FOR PLAN IN THE SAHEL

internal capacity and will consider the community as a whole, and demonstrate how Plan's activities contribute to resilience, and will, in addition, be clear about limits to contributions to resilience within the community setting and where opportunities lie for collaborative work with partners.

2. Plan will seek to engage in wider national and regional strategy and planning on resilience to influence most effective use of emergency and development funding. Whilst it continues its work at community level, it would be very useful for Plan to engage with the national and regional bodies working together to assess underlying vulnerabilities through a multi-sectoral resilience assessment of chronically vulnerable populations exposed to food security shocks. Through a joint problem analysis, an integrated resilience programme can be drawn up where outcomes and goals of development indicators are clear for the country and districts. This will provide Plan with a clear strategy and mandate of priority areas and partners with whom to work. Work with regionally-based bodies such as AGIR will help, and also with expert groups such as the UK Sahel Working Group.



© Plan / Estelle Vedome (Plan Staff)

Girls football team at one of Plan Mali's child-friendly spaces, Mali

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Country documents and approach to study

Plan International and Plan West Africa Regional office worked closely with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to review current programming approaches in four countries in the region and articulate a coherent resilience approach and programme strategies in Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and Senegal. The ODI team covered specific areas of concepts and application of resilience to existing strategy, programmes and projects and ideas for future developments. Staff from the Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Niger country offices contributed in group and individual discussions to inform the conceptual framework around resilience. Interim findings from the report were discussed and elaborated further in the “Plan West and Central Africa Regional Joint Programme Manager and TM Networks Meeting”. This was held in Niamey from 3rd to 7th March 2014 with Country Directors and other Plan International staff and partners. This report provides a basis for Plan’s further engagement with resilience at community, national and regional levels in the Sahel.

Plan Office	Activities
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Country Programme documents • Group interviews • Individual interviews with Plan Mali staff • Individual interviews with Mali partners – UNICEF, WFP, DPGU, CBOs • One-day field visit to Kita Programme Unit
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Country Programme documents • Group overview introductory interview • Individual interviews with Plan Niger staff in person and by telephone
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Country Programme documents • Individual interviews with Plan Senegal staff, where available, by telephone
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Country Programme documents • Individual interviews with Plan Burkina Staff • One-day visit to Programme Unit
West Africa Region Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of external and internal documentation • Telephone discussions with staff members
Plan International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of external and internal documentation • Telephone discussions with international Steering Committee

GLOSSARY

Absorptive Capacity

The ability of an individual or community to cope with or buffer the impacts of shocks on their livelihood and basic needs

Adaptive Capacity

The ability of an individual or community to adjust to changes, to moderate potential damage and to take advantage of opportunities without major changes in function or structural identity

Climate Change

Change in the state of climate that can be identified by changes in the average and/or the variability of its properties, usually for a decade or longer. Climate change may be due to natural processes or human-influenced changes in atmospheric gases in the atmosphere.

Disaster

Severe alterations in the normal functioning of a community or society due to hazardous physical events interacting with vulnerable social conditions. Emergency response is needed to satisfy critical human needs.

Disaster Risk

Likelihood of severe changes in normal functioning of a community or society due to hazardous physical events interacting with vulnerable social conditions in a way that may require emergency response to satisfy critical human needs.

Disaster Risk Management

Processes for designing, implementing and evaluating measures for improvement of preparedness for disasters, with the purpose of improving human wellbeing and human security.

Food security

is a state when all people have access at all times to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.

Resilience

The ability of an individual or community to anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover from the effects of a hazardous event. For Plan, there are three aspects of resilience in a community or individual: absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity and transformational capacity

Transformative Capacity

The ability (of the individual or community) to alter fundamental attributes of a system to change substantially in the face of major or prolonged disturbances. This includes value systems, regimes, financial systems, and technological and biological systems.

Vulnerability

A measurement of the tendency or possibility of being negatively affected .





Providing psychosocial support to children affected by floods, Burkina Faso



Plan

Dukes Court, Block A,
Duke Street,
Woking, Surrey GU21 5BH
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1483 755155
Fax: +44 (0) 1483 756505
Email: publishing@plan-international.org
www.plan-international.org

Overseas Development Institute

203 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8NJ
Tel: +44 (0)20 7922 0300
Fax: +44 (0)20 7922 0399
www.odi.org.uk

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Dr Natasha Grist is a Research Fellow in the Agricultural Development and Policy Programme and Dr Beatrice Mosello is a Research Officer in the Water Policy Programme at ODI. Dr Lyndsay Mclean Hilker and Rebecca Roberts are independent research consultants. For correspondence with the authors please contact n.grist@odi.org.uk