

Resilience Marker Guidance

Why work on Increasing Resilience?

We live in turbulent times – extreme and unpredictable weather is becoming more common, natural disasters (both large and small) are occurring more frequently, and more and more people are being affected by violent conflicts. Sudden shocks and slow onset changes continue to erode the livelihoods of people living in poverty and increase pressure on the natural environment on which they depend. These conditions result in the undoing of hard-won development gains.

To overcome this, CARE aims to strengthen vulnerable people's capacities to deal with shocks and stresses, manage risks and transform their lives in response to new hazards and opportunities. At the same time, CARE seeks to address the underlying causes of vulnerability of different groups of people, and improve the social, economic and ecological systems and structures that support them. Building resilience goes beyond the ability to recover from shocks and includes addressing the context that makes people vulnerable. A central element of resilience building is working at multiple levels, from the community and household level to the national and international level.

Increasing resilience is not limited to long-term development programming only. Resilience building should be part of humanitarian relief and recovery programmes, even in complex crises, because only resilient people and communities will be able to transform their lives and escape the vicious cycle of poverty and disasters.

The CARE 2020 Program Strategy outlines three elements of CARE's core approach: strengthening gender equality and women's voice, promoting inclusive governance, and increasing resilience. The promotion of increasing resilience is central to CARE's work in all settings, from fragile and conflict-affected states and least developed countries (LDCs) to middle-income and high-income countries.

Five recommendations to increase resilience in CARE's programmes:

- **Empower vulnerable communities** to play a central role in the planning and decision-making processes affecting their lives. This will be more successful than offering pre-determining solutions.
- **Address climate change and ecosystems degradation.** Building adaptive capacity to climate change and strengthening the natural environment to function as both a buffer and a resource to recover from shocks and stresses, is key to increasing resilience.
- **Decide and design interventions based on an understanding of current and future impacts of climate change and other disasters.** Resilient development outcomes depend on Community-Based Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, adding new dimensions to good development practice.
- Apply a **multi-level, cross-sectoral approach** to involve a broad range of stakeholders to develop adaptive capacity and build long-term resilience.
- **Intensify knowledge exchange, strategy building and cooperation** across the local, national and global level, to maximise advocacy impact towards a favourable environment for resilience building.

CARE's Resilience Continuum

CARE's Resilience Marker uses a continuum to illustrate the level of integration of resilience in CARE's work. Given the fact that external shocks and stresses can be particularly detrimental to the achievement of goals and poverty and inequality eradication, it is key to ensure that the integration of resilience leads to a transformative way of working. This results in lasting change, both in our approach and in the change we can achieve with the people who receive our support.

GRADE 0 - Harmful:

The project or programme has not taken any risk perspective into account; the programme could lead to new risks or undermine existing resilience of individual groups.

GRADE 1 - Neutral:

The project or programme has a basic understanding of the risk landscape, and it ensures that activities do not lead to new risks or do not undermine existing resilience capacity.

GRADE 2 - Sensitive:

The project or programme is aware of the risk landscape and works towards increasing resilience of some groups by building capacities and assets.

GRADE 3 - Responsive:

The project or programme has a good understanding of the risk landscape and the key stakeholders and their interests. The project or programme explicitly seeks to build capacities and assets of vulnerable groups and aims to reduce the drivers of risk and influence the social and natural environment.

GRADE 4 - Transformative:

The project or programme has an excellent understanding of the risk landscape, the vulnerabilities and capacities of its impact groups, and the natural and social environment. Its activities address the drivers of risk, build the capacities and assets of communities and individuals and transform the social and natural environment.

GRADE N/A:

The project or programme does not integrate resilience building. Regardless of their timespan, their nature (short-term humanitarian response versus long-term sustainable development) and the available resources, we recommend the integration of resilience-building elements in all projects and programmes. However, adherence to the humanitarian principles means that the safety of people suffering and in need, and the speed of emergency responses are extremely critical and must prevail over all relevant resilience principles. **(Note: We are currently developing a basic set of programming principles to help build resilience in our humanitarian action work.)**



What is CARE's Resilience Marker?

CARE's Resilience Marker is a tool that allows teams to self-assess how well resilience has been integrated into their work. It supports CARE members, affiliates, country offices, and partners with assessing projects, programmes and the overall portfolio. This process encourages engagement and learning, in particular about ways in which we can improve and support the effective integration of resilience into all our programming in accordance with contextual constraints and opportunities.

This Resilience Marker is not a top-down judgment tool for projects or programmes. Rather, it should be considered as a bottom-up opportunity to reflect and learn about how we can integrate resilience into an intervention in the most appropriate way for the context and type of development or humanitarian programming.

When to apply CARE's Resilience Marker?

The Resilience Marker can be applied in the following four stages:

- **Design stage:** At the project or programme development stage, the Resilience Marker will help assess the project or programme's overall approach to risks, the underlying drivers, the vulnerabilities of communities and individuals towards the risks, and the (enabling) environment. When designing the project or programme, the Resilience Marker can highlight areas to develop further to integrate resilience more fully.
- **Implementation stage:** The Resilience Marker can be applied to assess whether resilience is integrated into the different phases of implementation, to evaluate progress, to identify lessons, challenges and actions to incorporate into other project or programme activities or into future phases. When undertaking this assessment, teams should also consider whether the project or programme has the capacity and budget to support anything graded as YES.
- **Mid-term review stage:** A multi-year initiative's mid-term evaluation is an excellent opportunity to assess accountability of resilience integration, as well as learning from the evolution of the Resilience Marker during the implementation stage.
- **Final evaluation stage:** Upon completion, each project or programme must be evaluated and awarded a score to position the action on the CARE Resilience Continuum. This is compulsory for all CARE projects and programmes and is reported in the annual Project and Programme Information and Impact Reporting System (PIIRS).

Note: The use of the Resilience Marker is not restrictive. Consider using the tool in innovative ways to facilitate understanding, increase engagement (e.g. during strategy meetings, during after action reviews, for training purposes, etc.), and please share your learning experiences!

How to grade projects and programmes using CARE's Resilience Marker

The Resilience Marker grades projects and programmes from 0 to 4, then positions the result on CARE's Resilience Marker Continuum. The aim of the assessment and grade is not simply to acknowledge a result, but to foster accountability, to encourage engagement and to enhance effectiveness, outcomes, and accountability towards the people CARE serves.

- COs and CMPs (and partners) are encouraged to use the Resilience Marker Vetting Form to assess and score proposals, projects and programmes accurately and consistently.
- Member Partners are responsible for supporting the COs and partners to understand, work with, and apply the Resilience Marker.
- Grading is done based on a set of questions in the Resilience Marker Vetting Form (below) ; you will find guidance notes on completing the form below.

Guidance on completing CARE's Resilience Marker Vetting Form

In this section, you will read more about how to assess and grade projects and programmes using the Resilience Marker Vetting Form. The questions in this form are clarified in the text boxes below, where applicable with examples, to assist in accurate and appropriate grading. We highly recommend keeping these guidance notes close to hand when completing the Resilience Marker Vetting Form.

Step 1: Select which of the following statements best describes this intervention

To ensure you complete the appropriate column in the Resilience Marker Vetting Form, your first step is to roughly indicate where your project or programme sits on the Resilience Continuum. Please consider if your project or programme addresses resilience, vulnerabilities to shocks and stresses (or aims to address them), and if your project or programme takes the underlying causes that make people vulnerable to shocks and stresses into consideration.

Does NOT address the resilience of individuals and communities at risk

Grade 0

Increasing resilience is integral to CARE projects and programmes. By not taking resilience into account, the durability and impact of our programmes (in particular long-term programmes) can be affected. Project and programme activities can create or increase threats, undermine capacities of individuals, communities or governments to cope with future natural hazards and threats if they do not implement adequate measures to avoid or mitigate these adverse effects.

- » *When a project or programme does not address the resilience of individuals and communities, score a '0' and make a note on page 2 of the Resilience Marker Vetting Form why the project or programme does not integrate resilience.*

N/B Regardless of their timespan, availability of resources, their nature (short-term humanitarian response versus long-term sustainable development), we recommend the integration of resilience-building elements in all projects and programmes. However, adherence to the humanitarian principles means that the safety of people suffering and in need, and the speed of emergency responses are extremely critical and must prevail over all relevant resilience principles.

- » *In these cases, please note N/A and give a brief justification on page 2 of the Resilience Marker Vetting Form.*

Building the capacities and assets of vulnerable individuals and communities to deal with risks is key to any project or programme trying to resilience. Strong capacities allow communities and individuals to be better prepared, to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to the impacts of shocks and stresses, such as climate change. Simultaneously, it is of utmost importance to build assets of individuals and communities to improve their means to use such capacities. This includes improvements in access to basic services, economic resources, physical capital and access to (healthy) natural resources.

- » *When a project or programme addresses capacities and assets of individuals and communities at risk, however does not address the structural and underlying root causes of vulnerability to shocks and stresses, such as different drivers of risks and the enabling environment, move on to Column A in the Resilience Marker Vetting Form. This will result in a GRADE 1 or 2.*

Example of GRADE 1:

- A programme that has identified floods as a major risk has installed a community flood early warning system, established evacuation routes, and identified safe shelters.
- An education programme that has done a basic risk analysis and uses improved earthquake resistant designs for constructing school buildings.

Example of GRADE 2:

- A programme that has identified floods as a major threat has undertaken a **participatory assessment** to understand differential vulnerabilities and capacities of individuals and groups better. A flood early warning system has been **linked with government systems** to ensure sustainability; the programme has considered the **needs of vulnerable groups** (the elderly and disabled) and women when designing and implementing evaluation plans; and the impact of the programme on new and changing risks has also been considered.
- A Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights programme is aware of the potential risk of floods and its impact on the programme. The programme has adjusted operations to ensure continuity during flooding, increased awareness of impact groups to flood risks, worked to improve the capacities of their impact groups to flood impacts, and ensured that they can continue to receive support from the programme even during flooding events.

WORKS on addressing the underlying causes that can support the resilience of individual and communities at risk

Go to Column B

A project or programme that increases resilience holistically, builds up the capacities and assets of individuals and communities and systematically addresses the drivers of risk that are the cause of shocks or stresses. Simultaneously, projects and programmes have a better understanding of the social and natural environment that allow these communities and individuals to survive and thrive in the face of risks. Addressing these root causes and building an enabling environment, empowering communities and individuals so they can in turn influence this environment, forms the basis for transformative resilience building.

- » *When a project or programme considers both the capacities and assets, as well as the root causes of shocks and stresses and the institutional and natural environment that can support the resilience of individuals and communities at risk, Column B should be completed in the Resilience Marker Vetting Form, resulting in a GRADE 3 or 4.*

Example of GRADE 3:

- A programme has conducted a participatory vulnerability and capacity analysis and understands the risk of drought aggravated by climate change and ecosystem degradation. It strengthens the ability of the communities and individuals through activities like livelihood diversification, introduction of drought-resistant crops, and preparedness training (such as community drills, and contingency plans). The programme also leverages government support to intervene in a case of drought, through legislation, appropriate funding mechanisms, and identification of trigger moments for releasing additional funding.
- A Women's Economic Empowerment programme that works on strengthening market value-chains has done a risk assessment and understands how potential risks influence this value-chain. The programme works with stakeholders such as the private sector and government, to address drivers of these risks, and to set up structures to minimise risks to these markets (e.g. veterinarian services for cattle diseases, support commercial destocking in the face of imminent drought) and its women producers.

Example of GRADE 4:

- A comprehensive flood programme aims to reduce risk through upstream reforestation, installation of early warning systems, flood protection mechanisms, introduction of flood resistant crops, and construction of granaries. The programme works together with the government (and private sector) to ensure logging is in compliance with laws, investments support flood protection infrastructure, and flood affected communities receive compensation.
- A humanitarian programme in response to an earthquake rebuilds homes, schools and community buildings using earthquake resistant materials and methods. The programme includes first aid training, contingency planning in case of future earthquakes, ensures that there are no negative impact on local markets or the natural environment from response activities, and raises government accountability around creating and enforcing safe building codes.

Step 2: Sub-questions per column (A or B):

Based on your choice in Step 1, you are requested to answer the questions in either Column A or B. Complete each box with a Yes or No, depending on whether your project or programme meets the criteria. Further explanation and examples are provided per question to help you.

ANALYSIS

COLUMN A

Analysis: Is this intervention informed by a vulnerability analysis and basic consultation?

☐

OR

COLUMN B

Analysis: Is this intervention informed by a participatory risk and vulnerability analysis with extensive stakeholder consultation for all three elements of CARE's Increasing Resilience Approach: capacities and assets, drivers of risk, and enabling environment?

☐

Good resilience programming takes current and future risks into account at the community, landscape and national level, and analyses existing capacities and assets. This assessment and analysis process is conducted in a participatory manner and repeated during the design and implementation stages of a project or long-term programme.

An analysis may be based on previous studies and may be thematic, sectoral or territorial.

A resilience responsive or transformative project includes an analysis that covers all three domains of the CARE Increasing Resilience Approach: strengthening capacities and assets, reducing drivers of risk, and supporting an enabling environment.

The primary analysis may only be carried out during the inception phase of an intervention, in which case this element of the scoring might change from proposal to implementation stage.

We recommend consulting the [Increasing Resilience Guidance Note](#) for support and using [CARE's Climate and Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment Handbook \(CVCA\)](#) as guidance for this step.

Example of Column A: Is this intervention informed by a vulnerability analysis and basic consultation?

- An analysis has been conducted to understand the risks that a community faces, vulnerable community members (women groups, local administrators, etc.) are involved in this analysis, and attempts are made to understand how they are affected by different risks and their current risk mitigation measures.

Example of Column B: Is this intervention informed by a participatory risk and vulnerability analysis, with extensive community, regional and national level consultations? Does the intervention include ALL THREE elements of CARE's Increasing Resilience approach: capacities and assets, drivers of risk, and an enabling environment.

- A participatory analysis has been conducted to understand the risks that a community faces, with specific attention paid to vulnerable groups. All relevant stakeholders are involved at the local and national level, including CSO/CBO, government units and the private sector. The current capacities and assets are assessed, as well as the underlying causes of shocks (the origins, the triggers, and how to address them). The natural and social environment is analysed (current legislation, natural resources, infrastructure, active engagement of power-holders).

COLUMN A	OR	COLUMN B
<p>Activities: Does the intervention build on the needs identified in the analysis by addressing at least one element of CARE's Increasing Resilience approach: capacities and assets, drivers of risk, and an enabling environment?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>		<p>Activities: Does the intervention build on the needs identified in the analysis by addressing all three elements of CARE's Increasing Resilience approach: capacities and assets, drivers of risk, and an enabling environment?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>

Building capacities and assets of the communities and individuals we work with is one of the three core elements of CARE's Resilience Framework. To better cope with shocks, stresses and uncertainty, we recognise different capacities and assets as defined in the [Increasing Resilience Guidance Note](#):

- **Anticipate risk:** foresee and therefore reduce the impact of hazards that are likely to occur, and be ready for unexpected events through prevention, preparedness and planning (e.g. first aid training, early warning systems, construction of embankments, contingency plans).
- **Absorb shocks:** accommodate and respond to the immediate impact shocks and stresses have on individuals and communities, their well-being and livelihoods. Make changes in their usual practices and behaviours using available skills and resources, and manage adverse conditions (e.g. ensure stockpiling before disaster strikes, construct granaries to preserve seeds from floods, diversify income sources, ensure savings to allow for recovery).
- **Adapt to evolving conditions:** adjust individuals' and communities' behaviours, practices, lifestyles and livelihood strategies to respond to changed circumstances and conditions over time under multiple, complex and at times changing risks (e.g. introduction of new breeds or crops that are drought resistant, building elevated stilt houses to adapt to future flooding).
- **Transform the social and natural environment:** influence the enabling environment and drivers of risks to create individual and systemic changes to behaviours, local governance and decision-making structures, market economics, policies and legislation (e.g. training on advocacy, awareness raising around international agreements, strengthening the voice of marginalised groups through community score card).

The assets that people have access to and can control determine the existence of the capacities described above. Significant assets allow a household or individual to absorb and recover fully from a shock (e.g. storing seeds in a dry location to have adequate seed volumes to allow for re-sewing after losing crops to floods). Assets include:

- **Human potential** (such as skills, knowledge, education, health, family size, individual motivation);
- **Social capital** (e.g. extended family, community cohesion, voice and political influence);
- **Economic resources** (e.g. market access, savings, insurance mechanisms, livestock, productive assets);
- **Physical capital** (e.g. tools, premises, infrastructure, productive land);
- **Natural resources** (e.g. forests, pasture land, water, soils and environmental resources, ecosystem balance, biodiversity).

Column A indicates that we should be aware and build at least two capacities, as well as increase assets in working towards increasing resilience.

Example:

- » *A programme that sets up an early warning system, strengthens the establishment of VSLAs, and helps raise awareness of the use of VSLA generated savings during times of distress and crisis. In such cases, the programme works on improving anticipatory and absorptive capacities and financial assets.*

Column B indicates that high-quality resilience building programmes require a strategic plan to build up all capacities (anticipatory, absorptive, adaptive and transformative) and significantly increase assets.

Example:

- » *A programme that sets up an early warning system strengthens the establishment of VSLAs, introduces links to meteorological information on long term and seasonal climate forecasts. It also builds capacities to adapt to expected drought or floods, and community members have the ability to hold their local government accountable using tools such as the community scorecards and public audits. Simultaneously, the programme works towards building financial savings and improving access to natural resources.*

ADDRESSING DRIVERS OF RISK AND SUPPORTING THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

COLUMN A	OR	COLUMN B
<p>CARE's resilience elements: Does the intervention ensure that at least two elements of CARE's approach for increasing resilience are included: a forward looking assessment, flexibility to change, and innovation through learning?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>		<p>CARE's resilience elements: Does the intervention incorporate all three elements of CARE's approach for increasing resilience: a forward looking assessment, flexibility to change, and innovation through learning?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>

Addressing drivers of risk and creating a supportive enabling environment are the two remaining core elements of CARE's Resilience Framework. Addressing the enabling environment allows us to look beyond the community and individuals, to understand larger system-level dynamics of where shocks and stresses originate, the wider environmental context, and how this natural and social environment affects the ability of the communities and individuals to build resilience.

The enabling environment and drivers of risk are often two sides of the same coin, as some factors can be sources of both risk and opportunity, behaving differently at different times. Enabling systems and structures assist people to build resilience, while the drivers of risk pose continual challenges to that resilience.

Ways of addressing the drivers of risk are:

- Reducing the likelihood of shocks arising in the first place, or limiting their severity (e.g. reforestation, improved rangeland management, mangrove restoration, improved aquifer recharge).
- Addressing the conditions that make people exposed to shocks and stresses (e.g. construction of seawalls and embankments, earthquake proof housing, prevention of settlement in risk prone areas such as floodplains).
- Preventing exacerbation of pre-existing risk and creation of new risk (e.g. by building water storage systems in such a way that they do not become a breeding place for mosquitoes, by promoting livelihood diversification that does not lead to destruction of natural barriers against hazards/ degradation of ecosystems).

Ways of supporting the enabling environment are:

- Interventions in the natural environment in a manner that seeks to meet human requirements for natural resources, while sustaining the composition, structure and function of the ecosystems concerned (e.g. Evergreen Agriculture, Super Agriculture, Climate Smart Agriculture, non-timber forest production, rangeland grazing management).
- Interventions in the social environment to mobilise necessary resources, increase commitment, support decision-making, investments and actions to build resilience (e.g. advocacy work for supportive legislation around disaster prevention, improvement of accountability of National Adaptation Plans, support of government budget planning processes).

Column A indicates that the project or programme has done some basic thinking about the drivers of risk and factors in the enabling environment. Although the emphasis in Column A is on the community and individuals, this question can also help to identify whether some actions relate to risk drivers and/or the wider context.

Example:

- » *A Food and Nutrition Security programme works on building adaptive and anticipatory capacities for improved farming in drought-prone areas, organizing advocacy events for the promotion of Climate Smart Agriculture that supports small-scale farmers with national government.*

Column B Indicates that the intervention builds on the needs identified in the analysis by addressing **BOTH** the driver(s) of risk and the enabling environment.

Example:

- » *An SRHR programme that aims to reduce malaria incidence by distributing mosquito nets, and supporting the formulation of government policies around indoor residual spraying and distribution of prophylaxis.*

Step 3&4:**Add up the score and mark your place on CARE's Resilience Continuum**

Based on your answers (YES or NO), add up your score using the Grading Guidance below:

If you completed Column A:

0 YES= Grade 0
1-2 YES= Grade 1
3 YES= Grade 2

If you completed Column B:

0 YES= Please complete Column A instead
1-2 YES= Grade 3
3 YES= Grade 4

GRADE 0 Harmful: The project or programme has not taken any risk perspective into account; the programme may lead to new risks or undermine existing resilience of groups.

GRADE 1 Neutral: The project or programme has a basic understanding of the risk landscape and ensures that activities do not lead to new risks or undermine existing resilience capacity.

GRADE 2 Sensitive: The project or programme is aware of the risk landscape, and works towards increasing the resilience of some groups by building capacities and assets of its impact groups.

GRADE 3 Responsive: The project or programme has a good understanding of the risk landscape and the key stakeholders and their interests (positive and negative). The project or programme explicitly builds capacities and assets of the relevant stakeholders and aims to reduce the drivers of risk and influence the social and natural environment.

GRADE 4 Transformative: The project or programme has an excellent understanding of the risk landscape, its stakeholders and the natural and social environment. Activities address the drivers of risk and build the capacities and assets of communities and individuals, and the project or programme works to transform the social and natural environment.

Step 5:**Justification of choices (page 2 of the CARE Resilience Marker Vetting Form)**

For our learning and a better understanding of the choices made, we would like to ask you to clarify your choices. Kindly describe the reasons that support your YES answers in Step 2 and provide any supporting documents or links.

Step 6:**Learning, case studies, mistakes**

What were the three most important lessons (positive or negative) for integrating resilience into your project design or project implementation? Please be as concise as possible. Based on your experiences, what would you change in the intervention to improve the integration of resilience?

If you have any questions on the Resilience Guidance Notes or the Resilience Marker Vetting Form, please do reach out to us:

[Wouter Bokdam](#)

[Aarjan Dixit](#)

