

Definitions of Resilience Dimensions on Food Insecurity and Low-Income Generation

Introduction

The resilience dimensions were derived from 8 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and 8 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Limpopo South Africa, 7 KIIs and 4 FGDs in Pyramid, Pretoria South Africa, 7FGDs and 11KIIs in Malawi, 6FGDs and 14 KIIs in Beitbridge, Zimbabwe. These Southern African countries have suffered many stresses in recent years from current climatic hazards, poverty and unequal access to resources, food insecurity, globalization trends, social and political conflicts and incidences of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV and AIDS all close knit in close and complex ways.

A detailed content analysis of data generated from community consultations in these regions resulted in the identification of the following 9 resilience dimensions: 1) Wealth, 2) Social capital, 3) Human capital, 4) Infrastructure, 5) Psychosocial well-being, 6) Security, 7) Governance, 8) Health, and 9) Environment.

Defining Dimensions of Resilience

Tulane University led and drafted a RAN Dimension Lexicon with the aim of ensuring that resilience dimension definitions are consistent across RAN. Although the dimensions are thematically interconnected, there is considerable RILab and country specific/contextual variations. Consequently, the SA RILab has presented herein the harmonized dimension definitions given the context of its theme on food insecurity and low income generation. Aspects of these dimensions may be direct or may include other factors that could indirectly affect them (inter-relationships).

1. Wealth Dimension

Within RAN, and the SA RILab, the wealth dimension extends beyond what's normally defined as wealth to include elements of livelihoods and food security. Aspects of the wealth dimension include:

- Both financial (liquidity) and non-financial assets.
- Access to credit/insurance facilities.
- Access to non-food items necessary for survival (e.g. housing materials, clothing)
- Livelihoods – This focuses on activities required to make a living and have a good quality of life. It touches on individuals' forms of (formal and informal) employment and sources of incomes, as well as activities and choices within the household and local population that provide food, health, income, shelter and other tangible and intangible benefits, such as comfort, safety, respect and fulfillment.

2. Social capital

This dimension includes forms of connectedness among individuals, households and groups (e.g. Community networks, formal and informal institutions). It includes social networks, norms of reciprocity, mutual assistance and trustworthiness.

3. Human Capital Dimension

Aspects that comprise the human capital dimension include skills, knowledge, and labor that together enable people to pursue different strategies and achieve their livelihood outcomes - such as generating income and meeting their needs. Education level and workforce capacity are some of the indicators for ability to generate income. Therefore RAN and the SA RILab consider the Human Capital dimension to include indicators of access to quality education such as:

- Access to and quality of formal schooling including technical or vocational training.
- Mentoring of children and youth by family members and community elders (Informal education).
- Education infrastructure and materials/resources such as classrooms, textbooks, teachers among others.
- The influence of systems such as leaderships, community involvement in education and food supply on education outcomes.

4. Infrastructure Dimension

This includes the basic infrastructure or physical community or societal assets (e.g., roads, bridges, bore holes, wells, markets, railways, and telecommunications) that people use to function more productively. In particular, the dimension also makes connections between access to basic services and its effects on livelihoods and the ability of people to mitigate against shocks and stressors in the environment.

5. Psychosocial wellbeing

This dimension includes information on the cognitive and social issues that highlights the role of human agency as it relates to personal and interpersonal behaviors, including feelings of optimism/positive mind-sets, motivation, and information on religious and cultural beliefs of people in this community. The dimension also makes connections between stigma and discrimination as it relates to HIV/AIDS and its effects on social capital and social networks as emerged from the data. Beliefs about the role of women and gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS in the community are also explained.

This dimension recognizes that psychological status and wellbeing of individuals in a community is often adversely affected in the short term, and potentially long-term, depending upon the nature and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. This includes the ability of resumption of *normal life*, and facilitates affected people's participation in their convalescence and preventing pathological consequences of traumatic events.

6. Security

This includes exposure to personal and property crime, measures of solving violent conflict, and personal sense of/perceived security. In SA RILab this dimension describes aspects of existence in the community that comprise feelings of security and protection. The ability or inability of the state to fulfill their duties to protect communities from crime as a shock is also covered. The dimension also relates the high incidence of crime in the area.

7. Governance Dimension

Governance involves:

- Activities, processes and frameworks with in which political, economic and administrative authority is exercised to manage the affairs of a country or administrative unit.
- Formal and informal mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.
- The functioning of relevant groups in society, including private sector and civil society organizations, from household and local levels, to provincial, national and international levels.
- Issues of accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and responsiveness by governments (e.g., good governance).

8. Health Dimension

Aspects that are captured under this dimension include physical health and captures aspects such as health status-Illness/disease, access to health services; quality of health services, physical and financial access to healthcare/medical attention; and human resources for health.

9. Environment and Agriculture Dimension

This dimension captures the following aspects:

- Natural resources (e.g., soil, water, air, minerals, forest, fisheries, flora and fauna land, forests, water) and associated services (e.g., erosion protection, storm protection) upon which resource-based activities (e.g., farming, fishing etc.) depend;
- The management of natural resources: The practice of maintaining and enhancing natural resources through a variety of means, including forest and range management, agroforestry, livestock rearing, water resource management, animal waste management and coastal and river bank protection; and

- Recognition of the value of natural resources and ecosystems, prioritizing identification of natural resource concerns and addressing those concerns is critical for ensuring the lives and livelihoods of women, men and children who depend on them.

This dimension is linked with Agriculture including

- Food production and related factors– includes systems for food production and distribution and their functioning (e.g. availability of seeds for planting, type of seeds, farm inputs, harvests/yields, livestock well-being, food markets, prices, transportation).
- Food security and related factors– includes access (physical or economic) to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences.

In the context of SA RILab this dimension describes problems associated with unpredictable natural weather patterns, resource scarcity and land degradation, which make communities vulnerable to poverty, food insecurity and HIV/AIDS. This dimension describes the various environmental conditions under which agricultural practices (both crop and livestock production) are undertaken as a means of earning a living. It also includes information on the various environmental risks to crops, livestock and the impact of HIV and AIDS on communities' ability to derive their livelihoods from agriculture in the presence of drought and/or floods.