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Fostering Economic Resilience Suggested Activities

This list of suggested activities to improve economic resilience is organized in the domains and subcategories of the Economic Resilience Index developed by Handicap International.

LIVELIHOOD VIABILITY

LIVELIHOODS DIVERSITY

⇒ Diversify livelihoods and income sources (at household and community level), including on-farm and off-farm activities in rural areas.¹

⇒ Encourage work for household members with disabilities and women through gradual task management (while learning), small groups, skills development and work environment adaptations.

Urban areas:

- Introduce back garden cultivation, using available space including walls (vertical farming) and roofs. Develop container farming. Promote urban permaculture.
- Encourage transformation activities (crafting) over commercial activities (buy and sell) for they have a real added-value for the community.
- Organize study tours for household members to discover viable and duplicable activities.
- Provide information on entitlement/requirement to social benefits and pension schemes in accessible language and format, or support from self-help groups and charities.
- In case there is only one person generating the household income, strengthen links and cooperation with other community members engaged in similar activities.

Rural areas:

- Same as above, plus:
- Support commercial agriculture among households only practicing self-subsistence agriculture, support self-subsistence agriculture among households only practicing commercial agriculture.
- Diversify agricultural activities, adding activities such as horticulture, vegetables, mushrooms, fruit, bamboo plantation, legumes, aromatic and medicinal herbs & plants, honey production, aquacultures, ecotourism: select high-value crops that can be grown on very small plots.
- Increase crop and livestock portfolio. Diversify crops or crop varieties to reduce risk from failure of one particular crop due to pests or drought: grow both modern and traditional varieties, grow seasonal and non-seasonal crops. Improve access to traditional and new seed varieties.

¹ Be cautious the introduction of a new activity doesn't weaken the activities already taking place (plus, it can be more relevant to support the strengthening of the current activity rather than develop a new one).

- Support animal husbandry – pigs, goats, bees, fisheries... with a good emphasis on skills improvement². Pilot small livestock “pass-on” schemes³ for vulnerable households to learn animal rearing and join self-help groups.
- Introduce technologies to extend activities (e.g. donkey plough allow Sudanese farmers work wadi soil, floating gardens allow Bangladeshi farmers produce vegetables and rice seedlings on flood waters).
- Develop skills to pursue entirely new, possibly non-farm, livelihood options⁴, such as pottery and other types of craft, which can provide additional income or prove more resilient when agriculture is threatened by weather events.

STABILITY AND CONTROL OF THE ACTIVITY

General:

- For people who need personal assistance to work, mobilize, create awareness and train families, local authorities and resource persons on the necessity of and on roles of personal assistance.
- Train business holder on procurement & customer management.
- Promote official registration of business holders’ activity (moving out from informal sector) in countries where governments support small-scale farmers / small business holders with medical insurance, business insurance, pension scheme or compensation funds
- Develop repair capacity of transportation means in remote communities

Procurement:

- Secure access to land, water and other natural resources and productive assets for livelihoods. Support security of land ownership/tenancy rights for minimal level of homelessness and landlessness.
- Organize business holders in buying groups to lower the cost of supplies and be less dependent on intermediates.

Market:

- Facilitate physical and inclusive access to markets (roads, transportation means, authorizations...)
- Facilitate access to market information through mobile phone or internet access. Support producers have better market understanding of market demand and prices to select good cash crops, sell their products at a good price as well as take advantage of new market opportunities.
- Facilitate market linkages (exchange visits, participation to business fairs, joining small producers associations). Support producers build connections and relationships with key market actors such as service providers and buyers.
- Organize study tours to help producers analyze value-chain and identify niche markets.
- Form producers’ group to create or adhere to local products labeling.

Agricultural activity:

- Preserve seed biodiversity by promoting local species for risk reduction. Support seed selection and replication. Set up nurseries. Promote saline, drought and flood adapted high yielding crop varieties.

² Especially for middle age people/elderly. Quite often targeted beneficiaries think they know how to raise livestock as it is traditional activity. But they actually have low productivity, higher expenses, low profitability etc. Technical coaching is very important as they often don’t put into practice learning from technical training, which requires technical resources within projects.

³ An animal is given to a beneficiary with an agreement that a number of its offspring will be passed on to others in the community or back to the scheme organizers to start a new project.

⁴ Projects promoting entirely new livelihood options should use a psychology of change method in order to overcome resistance among people who are reluctant to change.

- Provide livestock keepers with extension or advisory services to improve their management or feeding strategies (crop residues). Improve skills in managing emerging livestock pests and diseases and reduce disease through use of vaccinations and herbal treatments supported.
- Improve food conservation (solar drying, cheese making...), food processing, packaging and marketing. Promote better storage of grains and food to prevent pest infestation and damage during rainy season (post-harvest crop storage structures).

SUFFICIENT INCOME

- Assist the household in assessing the profitability of the activity, taking into account the actual time spent for the activity. Support marketing & value addition. Increase profitability by improving production quality and labeling. Promote continuous investment/ gradual increase of business. Support people disengage from hazard-vulnerable activities (e.g. rain fed agriculture in drought prone locations).
- Facilitate the purchase of the necessary inputs, such as seed, tools or other materials. Support producers' access to output markets and employment to diversify livelihoods and gain cash income.
- Support food security by promoting vegetable/kitchen gardens as well as crop and livestock production. Support household dietary diversity. Improve crop storage to ensure food supply between harvests. Secure food supply through reserve stocks of grain and other staple foods managed by the community, with an equitable distribution system during food crisis.
- Ensure access to basic social services (including registration for social protection and safety net services). Establish information and communication channels through community volunteers or CBR workers so that vulnerable people are not isolated. Ensure that existing social protection schemes and social safety nets are accessible to vulnerable groups at normal times and in response to crisis.

SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Support household basic financial management, including financial education that enables them to become less risk adverse, to be more equipped to choose the right financial service and have less fear to contract a loan at reasonable rate.
- Support business basic financial management and investment plans.
- Promote community/group savings and credit schemes, including community solidarity/emergency funds, and/or access to micro-finance facilities.
- Facilitate access to loans and credit services for investing in new initiatives.
- Create community awareness on non-productive expenses.

PEOPLE SAFETY AND WORKING CAPACITY

- Ensure secure living conditions. Support high levels of personal security and freedom from physical and psychological threats.
- Create awareness on occupational disease prevention and safety measures at work and on the way to work for people with sensory impairments and tricycle users. Support people disengage from unsafe livelihood activities (e.g. small-scale mining, dynamite fishing, etc.)
- Support access to sufficient quantity and quality of water for domestic needs for 12 months of year. Construct toilets and set up sanitation systems. Make accessible water and sanitation facilities. Support sustainable access to low-carbon energy.
- Raise awareness on means of staying healthy (e.g. hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, water treatment). Promote herbal gardening and use of traditional immunity boosters. Promote access to community health care (including MCH) and integrate those into public health systems.

SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY

SOCIAL NETWORKS MEMBERSHIP

- Strengthen the skills of the Community Based Organizations and support them being inclusive.
- Develop and strengthen the community external networks. Organize study tours.
- Set up self-support groups to support community livelihood activities.
- Support actions of Disabled Person's Organizations. Refer to them persons with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities.

GOVERNANCE PARTICIPATION

- Ensure a more enabling governance environment. Strengthen community organization and voice. Support community empowerment and self-reliance. Promote equitable distribution of wealth and livelihood assets in the community.
- Ensure inclusion/representation of vulnerable people in community decision making as well as political representation of poor/marginalized groups. Build capacities of persons with disabilities to participate to consultations and governing bodies. Educate persons with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities on their rights, on the local governance system and on funding allocation and existing services and options.
- Communicate on how climate change impacts disproportionately on the poor. Promote integrated approaches to livelihoods, disasters and climate change. Ensure underlying systemic issues are addressed.
- Strengthen links between local, district and national levels. Advocate for decentralized and participatory decision making. Engage the international community in support of community-based adaptation.

INTEGRITY OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RISK AWARENESS

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE ACTIVITY

- Support the community manage natural resources (wood, water, soil, fauna and flora) so that they continue to provide valuable ecosystem services and are not degraded for future generations. Preserve and promote indigenous knowledge relevant to environmental management. Preserve biodiversity (e.g. through community-managed seed banks, with equitable distribution system). Conserve and replant forests with local species to reduce landslides and erosion as climate change brings more intense rainfall. Reduce over-grazing by restoring or setting-up pastures management and herd management (keeping live animals at the minimum and developing meat preservation systems).
- Train community members in sustainable and hazard resistant agriculture. Promote permaculture and set up demonstration plots. Train in soil and water conservation methods, watershed management and hillside reforestation, terraces and contour ridges to prevent water runoff and erosion, earth dams, early planting, cropping patterns geared to low or variable rainfall, intercropping and agro-forestry, zero tillage cultivation, mulching, manures and composting, employment of indigenous/organic methods to prevent pests and increase yield, integrated pest management, pit cultivation, in-field rainwater harvesting including dead level contours, infiltration pits and improved rainwater storage facilities, irrigation channel, shallow tube wells... Set up networks around these practices. Create partnerships between community-based organizations and local research or conservation institutes.
- Secure access to natural resources for people to think long term (e.g. land rented on longer term makes farmers keener to invest in soil conservation). Create dialogue when there are conflicts over resources

- (e.g. livestock watering points). Establish a Resource Management Committee to oversee appropriate management of resources and to distribute profits equally (e.g. restocking and limited harvesting).
- Define at the beginning of a project the list of livelihood activities that may have an environmental negative impact and find examples of practices that could reduce the negative impact, with create positive incentive such as financial support to put them in place.

KNOWLEDGE OF RISKS AND TRENDS

- Improve the community understanding of the local natural environment (e.g. drainage, watersheds, slope and wetlands), the risks associated with these natural features and the human interventions that affect them. Identify disaster-prone locations with the community (e.g. through a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment). Make sure the community knows about the main risks associated with their environment.
- Among hazards, raise awareness about trends and their local impacts. Inform about implications of processes such as desertification for crop production. Raise awareness about climate change and its impacts on livelihoods amongst communities, NGOs and officials. Inform about climate change in schools.
- Assess the community knowledge and perceptions of climatic conditions, interactions with farming systems, biodiversity and water resources. Assess the community vulnerability and capacity to adapt and cope (e.g. through a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment).
- Improve access to weather and climate information for better decision making ability. Inform about short range forecasts and long range climate predictions. Ensure access to relevant and timely information relating to risks and how to mitigate them.

INNOVATION POTENTIAL

CAPACITIES OF ADAPTATION AND INNOVATION

- Build confidence and flexibility to learn and experiment in order to adapt: learning trips, support groups, demonstration networks, information in accessible language and format.
- Build capacity of local CBOs, NGOs and local authorities to analyze and monitor risks to livelihoods and to incorporate actions into long-term development plans. Foster alliances between organizations with technical knowledge and organizations having access to vulnerable populations.
- Promote inclusive educational facilities for all, ensure transport system to schools.

ACCESS TO ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

- Facilitate access to information & skills for adaptation to climate change. Identify and share good practices and alternatives. Support pilot & demonstration plots. Set up apprenticeship or learning trips.
- Train community-based extension workers with skills in agriculture. Promote appropriate technologies⁵ to overcome the physical and environmental constraints of fragile ecosystems, adapt to climate change and improve productivity and incomes. Introduce labor saving techniques (e.g. mulching to avoid weeding).
- Facilitate access to financial resources for investing in new initiatives (loans and credit services).

⁵ **Appropriate technologies** are those which are cost effective for small scale producers, can be managed and maintained by them over the long term, and integrate environmental, economic and social sustainability.

ACCESS TO CONTINGENCY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Community awareness:

- Develop community disaster risk reduction awareness skills. Make a participatory risk assessment that drafts a hazard historic profile and a hazard map of the area. Raise awareness on how hazards become disasters and how the risk of disasters can be reduced through individual action.
- Train on inclusive disaster risk reduction. Support the community identify vulnerable people/household as well as resource persons who can assist them. Provide education in DRR at local schools. Set up a Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Plan and local organizational structures (e.g. Disaster Preparedness Committee).
- Develop disaster risk reduction initiatives at community and family level to increase capacities and reduce vulnerabilities help to build resilience, such as; identification of communities at risk, strengthening disaster management authorities, community risk assessment, early warning system, local contingency planning, search, rescue and evacuation, shelter and stock management, simulation exercise (mock drill for people and school children).

Mitigation measures:

- Support community decision making regarding land use and built environment take into account the hazard risks as well as the vulnerabilities of different groups. Identify/build safe locations.
- Build structural mitigation devices to prevent and reduce the impact of hazards (e.g. for flood: coastal embankments, retaining walls and dykes, raised housing, flood diversion channels and drainage canal, backfilled roads and slopes...). Plant trees on riverbanks and to reduce run-off. Conduct desert and coast 'greenbelt' projects. As far as possible, use local labor, skills, materials and appropriate technology.
- Support the community adopt hazard-resilient construction and maintenance practices for homes and public facilities. Ensure infrastructure (roads, bridges, water supplies, power lines...) and critical facilities (hospital, fire station...) be resilient and adapted to emergency management (e.g. shelters, evacuation). Ensure disaster management infrastructure accessibility (wheelchair friendly, distance...)
- Protect productive assets from hazards (e.g. for flood: raised internal platforms and storage, portable stoves, livestock shelters, high cages for chickens...).

Emergency plans:

- Set up a community early warning system, which generates timely, trustworthy and understandable information to all members of community (e.g. early warning committee, house to house EWS). Establish links with meteorological service. Promote access to mobile phones and radios.
- Design evacuation plan and route for all community members (including vulnerable households and school children). Raise people awareness of evacuation plans and routes. Support the community adopt physical measures against impending events (e.g. protection of doors and windows from cyclone winds).
- Create and train response teams. Sensitize relevant authorities on requirements for providing emergency support to persons with disabilities. Ensure local authorities and CBOs identify and locate households with persons with disabilities. Build a community shelter. Promote collection and storage of water and food during hazard prone months. Set up emergency supplies managed by community (buffer stocks of medicines, grain/seed). Set up bamboo plantations for temporary housing reconstruction.

COPING MECHANISMS AND SAFETY NETS

- Support the diversification of household and community asset bases (e.g. income, savings, convertible property) to support crisis coping strategies. Support collective ownership of community assets to share the risks and costs of disasters. Support small enterprises have business protection and recovery plans.
- Develop ability of poor people to save in the form of cash or other items which can be easily sold or exchanged in times of need (e.g. jewelry). Open savings accounts and set up savings groups (women, forest users...). Support access to affordable insurance (covering lives, homes, crops/livestock and other property).
- Set up a community disaster fund to implement recovery activities (to recover personal loss or to rebuild community-based infrastructures). Set up mutual assistance systems, micro-finance, cash aid, credit schemes, loan guarantees, etc., to restart livelihoods. Facilitate access to money transfers from community members working away. Ensure vulnerable people, including men and women with disabilities, are aware of support mechanisms and know the procedures to apply.
- Register with relevant ministries to get support in case of emergencies (e.g. damage compensation). Support government, private sector and civil society organizations plan for mitigation and management of crises and design financial measures targeted at vulnerable communities. Ensure people are part of existing CBOs, since this often help to get support from government schemes.
- Set up community structures to manage psychological consequences of disasters (e.g. trauma, PTSD).