

Building a resilience programme

Ten key lessons from the EU RESET programme in Ethiopia

This Brief provides EU staff with operational recommendations for designing and implementing a resilience-building programme. It builds on major promising practices emerging from the EC's experience with the RESET (RESilience-building in ETHiopia) programme.¹ This Brief is intended to provide some inspiration through ten concrete operational practices currently implemented through RESET that may as well be appropriate for designing a resilience programme in other specific contexts. The widely respected journal *Science* published an article² demonstrating that multifaceted programmes, such as the RESET programme,³ can have lasting results in reducing the poverty and vulnerability of the extreme poor.

Recommended practices

1. Combine expertise for multisectoriality

- Ensure implementing partners have complementary expertise to tackle the main determinants of food insecurity and malnutrition in a particular area.
- Encourage joint planning and coordination between the different actors in each area of intervention, especially with local authorities.
- When feasible, support multi-sectorial local development plans (design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation) through the programme.
- Work in full cooperation with official technical services and the private sector to create the conditions for continuation of support after the termination of the project.

2. Focus on the poorest and tailor interventions

- Recognize and identify the heterogeneity of households within a given community.
- Tailor support to different wealth groups in accordance with their potential.
- Focus most resources on the poorest and most vulnerable.
- Understand the social and livelihood characteristics of the chronically poor.
- Design a package of intervention tackling both the social and economic determinants of their vulnerability.
- Carefully sequence the interventions and provide coaching to progressively build up the capacities and assets of the poorest.



Photo: H el ene Berton

3. Combine expertise for multisectoriality

- Identify if there is an institutionalised social assistance programmes in the area of intervention.
- If no such programme exists, ensure the most vulnerable can cover their basic food needs, before considering livelihoods support to this target group.
- If a social assistance programme exists, assess the options to support it and build synergies, notably through:
 - Targeting the same beneficiaries and providing complementary activities that will boost their productive capacity and improve their nutritional status.
 - Working with the wider community to identify and exploit opportunities that may exist to develop new livelihoods and markets for the social assistance beneficiaries.

4. Develop business skills and financial services

- Ensure beneficiaries are not simply recipients but are real agents of their own development.
- Assess opportunities to develop financial services in such a way that they can serve the most marginalised members of society.
- Consider the coaching of beneficiaries to help them expand their livelihoods opportunities progressively, including through the development of simple business plans and basic financial education.

5. Develop activities for landless and unemployed youth

- Ensure a good balance between on-farm and off-farm activities.
- Develop innovative business activities and favour value chain development where the poorest can play a role.
- Assess the options, and advocate policy alternatives, for the landless and marginalised to have access to exploit marginalised land.
- Support partnership and cooperative systems to empower the poorest, foster their organisation, increase their voice, and improve their access to sustainable financial services and markets.

6. Support alternatives to rainfed production

- Ensure that poor households can benefit from development initiatives and infrastructure programmes by giving them appropriate training, coaching and inputs.
- Encourage the production and consumption of agricultural products with high nutritional value; and optimise feeding practices of children aged 6-59 months through infant and young child feeding awareness.
- Work simultaneously on sanitation and health to reduce the risk of water-borne disease and malaria (which will in turn improve nutritional impacts).
- Create structures and systems at community level to ensure sustainable management of resources and infrastructure.

7. Facilitate adoption of applied research

- Link with research institutions to understand needs and opportunities to support the dissemination of improved varieties and breeds and to encourage the use of suitable modern technology and practices.
- Where feasible, facilitate the distribution and adoption of such products and practices.
- Support the access of the most vulnerable communities and individuals to appropriate research products.
- Ensure that learning on innovative practices is a core component of the programme.

8. Integrate crisis management in development programming

- Work in close collaboration with ECHO to define how best to factor the risk of a crisis into development programming.
- Assess the opportunity to strengthen early warning systems at local level, including data collection and analysis, and reporting to higher levels.
- Provide support to disaster risk management and community preparedness at local level, with links to regional authorities and regional disaster risk management and early warning systems.
- Include a contingency fund or crisis modifier into development programmes to ensure that rapid response can be implemented locally if required.

9. Mainstream family planning

- Assess if high population pressure may be a key bottleneck to building resilience, and determine how sensitive the issue is.
- Assess existing family planning initiatives, their effectiveness at local level, and the potential need for reinforcement.
- Support any national family planning initiative to increase their outreach at community level.
- Involve local representatives, and men, women, and youth in family planning activities.
- Increase awareness of the inter-linkages between issues of population, environment, wellbeing and women's empowerment.

10. Maximise synergies for greater cost-effectiveness

- Rigorously assess the costs and benefits of a livelihoods programme, to ensure that such an intensive and expensive approach is warranted in the prevailing circumstances.
- Wherever possible, operate livelihoods programmes as a complement to social assistance, rather than as a substitute.
- Wherever possible, map and establish linkages with existing programmes and initiatives, rather than attempting to achieve everything within a single programme.
- In particular, link to government structures, where necessary strengthening their capacity, to ensure better guarantees of sustainability.
- Build a strong monitoring and evaluation framework at programme level to ensure consistent collection and analysis of indicators, and to critically monitor cost-effectiveness.

Introduction

Enhancing resilience and improving food and nutrition security are key priorities of the European Commission. Many EU Delegations are implementing programmes within the framework of the 11th European Development Fund that aim at eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable and inclusive growth and helping the poor to overcome food crises and natural disasters.

Many approaches are possible: from sector reforms to reinforce the capacity of governments to mitigate and manage crises, to the mainstreaming of nutrition in agricultural programmes. All these approaches represent a **positive evolution from the traditional approach** of increasing agricultural production.

The EU Delegation in Ethiopia has, since 2012, been implementing an innovative programme called **RESET (RESilience-building in ETHiopia)**, which aims to build resilience at community level. It is essentially a livelihoods programme, focussed on areas most affected by food and nutrition insecurity, which provides a comprehensive package to the most vulnerable population with a strong emphasis on the needs of the poorest. It tackles the social, economic and environmental determinants of vulnerability in the long and medium term, while ensuring that immediate basic needs (both social and humanitarian) are met.

One innovative characteristic of RESET is that it has been conceived and operated in **collaboration between the EU Delegation and the ECHO office**. It combines interventions that have a humanitarian response objective with others that have a longer-term developmental objective, and is thus an interesting example of a programme working at the nexus between emergency response and social security.

This Brief sets out to learn lessons from the EC's experience with RESET in Ethiopia that might be useful to other Delegations. What have been the strengths of RESET? To what extent might it be replicable in other countries? What factors need to be taken into consideration when considering such an approach? What are the potential pitfalls that would need to be taken into account in other environments?

The RESET programme

RESET has been implemented since 2012; and is now entering a **second phase (2016 to 2020)**, with additional funding from the EU Trust Fund and from Dutch and Austrian Cooperation, and a strong partnership with the government of Ethiopia.

RESET is based on **four cornerstones for building resilience**:

- **Improved basic services:** nutrition, health, WASH, education;
- **Livelihoods support:** agriculture and livestock, diversification of income sources;
- **Safety nets** for the most chronically vulnerable groups;
- **Disaster Risk Management** and preparedness to shocks.

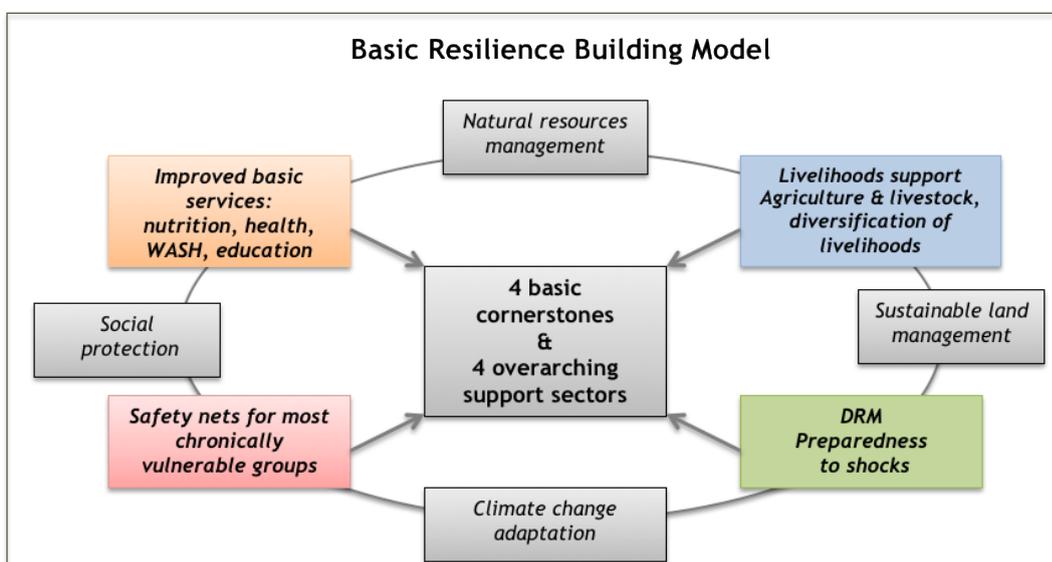
It works simultaneously on building resilience over three different time horizons:

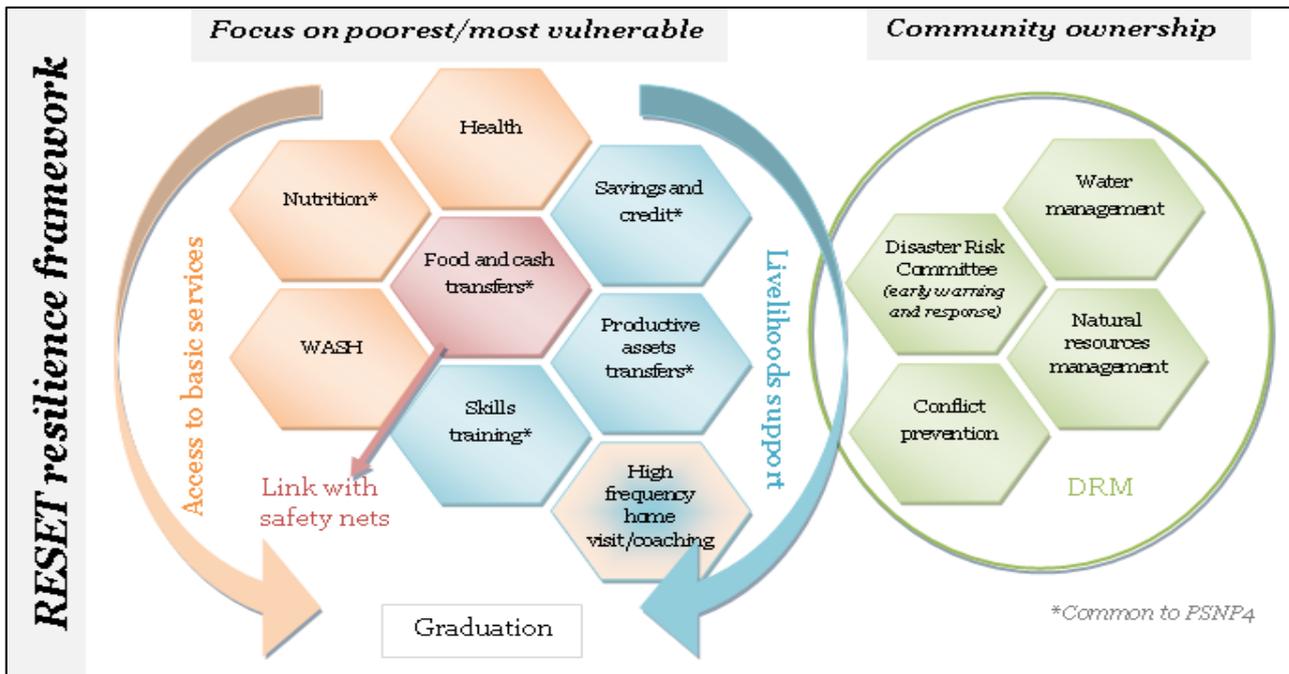
- **Short term:** crisis response if needed through a crisis modifier;
- **Medium term:** improvement of basic services, livelihoods, safety nets;
- **Long term:** natural resources, climate change, social protection, demographic growth, participatory disaster risk management.

This translates into a **multifaceted programme** to graduate the poorest from poverty and improve disaster risk management -at community level.

RESET operates in **eight ecologically homogenous geographic clusters** with high vulnerability to specific risks (mainly drought). It encompasses 41 *woredas* (districts) across five regions, and covers more than 2.8 million people.

RESET is implemented by NGOs, but works in full **cooperation with Ethiopian Government institutions** at national and local levels and supports national policies on nutrition, health, food security, agriculture, water management, social protection, livelihoods support and natural resource management.





Lesson 1. Combine expertise for multisectorality

RESET's entry points are food insecurity and malnutrition. The geographic clusters of districts have been selected according to their high vulnerability to these criteria. To reverse negative trends and achieve long-term changes, RESET needs to work through multiple pathways that complement each other (disaster risk reduction, health, nutrition, livelihoods, WASH). Because a single implementing partner cannot be expected to have the expertise to work to high standards in all sectors simultaneously, multiple implementing partners are organised into a consortium where the different NGOs each provide specific expertise and understanding of the context.

One of the NGOs leads the consortium and is in charge of compiling the **cluster strategy based on a thorough analysis** of the context with the active participation of local authorities in the area of intervention.

The consortium lead also has the responsibility to develop the **joint action framework** of the consortium that defines who will do what, establishes the operational links with other programmes implemented by other partners (including local authorities), defines a common monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, exchanges lessons learnt and good practices, and defines the need for contingency planning.

RESET works closely with local authorities, acts in full cooperation with the Ethiopian Government's existing flagship programmes, in particular the Productive Safety Net Programme, and promotes the streamlining of *woreda* development plans. RESET works in **close collaboration with official technical services** (and sometimes actors from the private sector), which represent a valuable resource for the provision of the full package of interventions to beneficiaries. They also ensure sustainability of the technical support and continued coaching of beneficiaries after the project is terminated.

Key Recommendations

- Ensure implementing partners have **complementary expertise to tackle the main determinants of food insecurity and malnutrition** in a particular area.
- Encourage **joint planning and coordination** between the different actors in each area of intervention, especially with local authorities.
- When feasible, support multi-sectorial **local development plans** (design, implementation, and M&E) through the programme.
- Work in **full cooperation with official technical services** and the private sector to create the conditions for continuation of support after the termination of the project.

Lesson 2. Focus on the poorest and tailor interventions

Not all households within a community have the same capacities and constraints. They are differently equipped to exploit the environmental and economic opportunities offered in a given area. Human capital and productive assets vary greatly from one household to another.

In Ethiopia, in each village (*kebele*), all households are categorised by **wealth rank**.

Development programmes, especially those related to agriculture and rural markets, typically work with middle or better off households who have more land and skills, and are therefore more likely to justify the investment. The poorest are supposed to benefit indirectly from the impact, but in practice they are often excluded, and remain in structural poverty.

Example of Household Economy Analysis information in Sekota, Amhara region

	Extreme Poor	Poor	Middle	Better off
% population	20%	35%	30%	15%
Land Assets	0-2 <i>timat</i> 4-6 chickens	2-3 <i>timat</i> 0-2 plough oxen, 4-6 shoats, 5-7 chicken, 0-2 beehives	4-6 <i>timat</i> 1-3 plough oxen, 2-4 cattle, 10-20 shoats, 0-5 donkeys, 2-4 beehives	7-9 <i>timat</i> 3-5 plough oxen, 5-7 cattle, 20-30 shoats, 1-3 donkeys, 2-4 beehives
Main income source	Casual labour, safety nets	Casual labour, crop and livestock sale	Crop and livestock sale	Crop and livestock sale
Annual income	1000-2000 ETB	2000-3000 ETB	3000-4000 ETB	3500-4500 ETB
Sources of food	40 % from own production	55% from own production	75% from own production	95% from own production

Notes: 1 *timat* = 0.25 hectare; ETB: Ethiopian Birr.

RESET primarily targets extremely poor households. They have limited productive assets (land and animals), lack skills and labour, and have no access to financial services. Working with this target group requires a specific package of interventions that addresses both the economic and the social determinants of their vulnerability, combining a set of activities that constitutes a real opportunity to exit from poverty. It also requires a **careful sequencing of support**, securing immediate access to food and basic services (e.g. through a safety net), while building up progressively their capacity to engage in new livelihoods opportunities. Households are coached until they graduate from poverty and no longer require external support.

However, RESET does not work exclusively with the poorest. **Some interventions to other wealth groups** may be considered if they contribute to the overall food security of the area by increasing production or creating new livelihoods opportunities. Targeting different wealth groups with specifically tailored interventions also increases the acceptability of the intervention to the wider community and thereby improves social cohesion.

Key Recommendations

- Recognize and identify the **heterogeneity of households** within a given community.
- **Tailor support to different wealth groups** in accordance with their potential.
- **Focus most resources on the poorest** and most vulnerable.
- Understand the social and livelihood **characteristics of the chronically poor**.
- Design a **package of intervention tackling both the social and economic determinants** of their vulnerability.
- Carefully **sequence the interventions** and provide coaching to progressively build up the capacities and assets of the poorest.

Lesson 3. Link resilience interventions to social assistance

Ethiopia has a substantial government-operated **Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)** that will ultimately cover up to 10 million people with a combination of unconditional and conditional food and cash transfers. The latest phase of the PSNP (PSNP-4) will also include elements to support nutrition and livelihoods. The PSNP is a nationwide programme, whilst RESET covers only limited areas of the country; within these, however, it targets a larger number of beneficiaries than PSNP.

RESET offers a **complementary package to the PSNP** by ensuring comprehensive access of the most vulnerable recipients of PSNP to basic WASH, health and nutrition services and by supporting their livelihoods. It increases their likelihood of graduating from PSNP and thus reduces the number of transiently food insecure beneficiaries that may fall into crisis in the case of a shock.

The complementarity between the two programmes is being further enhanced in the second phase of RESET, through a formal **Memorandum of Understanding** that aims to integrate the RESET livelihoods component under the PSNP-4 umbrella. Cross-learning will also inform future programming to tackle extreme poverty.

Key Recommendations

- Identify if there is an **institutionalised social assistance** programmes in the area of intervention.
- If no such programme exists, ensure the most vulnerable can cover their **basic food needs**, before considering livelihoods support to this target group.
- If a social assistance programme exists, assess the options to support it and build **synergies**, notably through:
 - Targeting the same beneficiaries and providing complementary activities that will **boost their productive capacity and improve their nutritional status**.
 - Working with the wider community to identify and exploit opportunities that may exist to **develop new livelihoods and markets** for the social assistance beneficiaries

Box 1: Vita in Wolayita cluster

Vita joined the women's savings and loans group and started saving. Once she had saved 310 ETB, she was entitled to receive 3 sheep (310 ETB is about 10% of the value of animals). She also contributes 2 ETB monthly as micro-insurance for the animals. Subsequently, she wished to diversify her income and engage in off-farm activities. She continued saving and was supported by an NGO in the development of her business project. She started petty trading training and decided to bake and sell *injeras* (local pancakes). She took a loan of 700 ETB with 5% interest rate to be repaid after 6 months. Now, she has 6 sheep and makes a weekly profit of 100 ETB from selling *injeras*. Her life has improved significantly, and every week she saves 10 ETB, just like the other women in the group.

**Lesson 4. Develop business skills and financial services**

The beneficiaries of RESET receive social transfers including cash and food transfers and the free hand-out of productive assets. While they need ongoing mentoring and assistance, it is also important to make them aware of **their own role in reducing their poverty**, and to empower them in this process.

Linking the poorest to financial services is a common tool used in RESET to decrease vulnerability and dependency on aid. It enables the poorest to obtain micro-credit on reasonable terms to start new enterprises or expand farming activities. NGOs encourage the poorest to join savings and loans groups to engage in micro-savings, micro-credit and sometimes micro-insurance. For instance, some NGOs condition the provision of small ruminants on a contribution by the beneficiaries to a micro-insurance scheme, which allow the replacement of the animals in case of unexpected loss. In parallel, NGO support to micro-finance groups includes increasing their financial capacity and improving their governance so that they can serve larger numbers of clients and increase trust in the rural financial system.

More importantly, RESET provides **financial education** to the poorest prior to engaging them in income generating activities. Beneficiaries are for instance encouraged to save a certain amount before they receive a livelihoods transfer. They are also helped with the development of their basic business plans (see Box 1). Once beneficiaries have selected the activities in which they want to engage, they are then linked to relevant training structures, receive coaching and may only then receive the appropriate productive assets.

Key Recommendations

- Ensure **beneficiaries** are not simply recipients but are **real agents** of their own development.
- Assess opportunities to **develop financial services** in such a way that they can **serve the most marginalised** members of society.
- Consider the **coaching of beneficiaries** to help them expand their livelihoods opportunities progressively, including through the development of simple **business plans** and basic financial education.

Lesson 5. Develop activities for landless and unemployed youth

In Ethiopia, the less resilient areas are mostly in subsistence agro-pastoral or pastoral zones where the conditions are harsh, and **livelihood options are limited**. The most vulnerable food insecure households who are forced to live in such communities, generally have little or no land and few animals, hence limited on-farm production. Many young people are landless and unemployed, reliant on casual labour and migration as livelihood options, with all the resultant social problems that this may engender.

RESET supports the development of off-farm activities as a way of diversifying incomes and reducing climate risk. This is linked to financial education and services provided through **groups and sometimes through formal cooperatives**. Working in groups helps to build community institutions and gives more strength and voice to those who are marginalised, while training helps to change behaviours and attitudes towards a better work ethic and a greater openness to non-traditional livelihoods.

Youth groups are encouraged to engage in activities where they **acquire technical and business skills**, initiate group savings, and thus take the first step towards starting their own individual enterprise (see Box 2).

Key Recommendations

- Ensure a **good balance between on-farm and off-farm activities**.
- Develop innovative business activities and favour **value chain development where the poorest can play a role**.
- Assess the options, and advocate policy alternatives, for the landless and marginalised to have **access to exploit marginalised land**.
- Support **partnership and cooperative systems** to empower the poorest, foster their organisation, increase their voice, and improve their access to sustainable financial.

Box 2: Support to landless youth groups in Wolayta cluster

Concern Worldwide organised selected beneficiaries into groups of 30 to 60 members, based on geographical proximity, relationships and the availability of land. Orientation and discussion forums were organised for the selected beneficiaries on project objectives, activities, implementation modalities, and the roles and responsibilities of each actor. Degraded, abandoned or unproductive land was provided for rehabilitation under a leasing agreement with local authorities. Groups were trained on natural resource management, and received inputs (tools, seedlings) to rehabilitate the land. Members of the groups could then grow fodder and – in some cases – crops. With the available fodder and flora, they were able to engage in income generating activities such as animal fattening and bee-keeping, for which they also received training and inputs. The cooperative system enabled them to interact with micro-finance institutions and other private operators in the process of value chain development.

**Lesson 6. Support alternatives to rainfed production**

Communities that are dependent on rainwater for their livelihoods in drought-prone areas are highly vulnerable to food insecurity. Decreasing their reliance by **improving water management and catchment, and developing irrigation schemes accessible to the poor** can substantially increase the resilience of such communities by assuring agricultural production and generating new income opportunities. In some areas RESET ensures the poor can access irrigated land or techniques, and provides them with productive assets and coaching to kick-start irrigated production.

The multifaceted approach of RESET, working on **health and sanitation** (thus preventing malaria and water-borne diseases) **and nutrition** (promoting production and consumption of more nutritious foods) further reinforces the benefits. It also promotes community management of water resources through its disaster risk management component. RESET does not work on large infrastructure schemes, but contributes to increased water catchment through public works schemes (its own or PSNP's) and through links with other programmes (see Box 3).

Key Recommendations

- Ensure that poor households can benefit from development initiatives and infrastructure programmes by giving them **appropriate training, coaching and inputs**.
- Encourage the production and **consumption of agricultural products with high nutritional value**; and optimise feeding practices of children aged 6-59 months through infant and young child feeding awareness.
- Work simultaneously on sanitation and health to **reduce the risk of water-borne disease and malaria** (which will in turn improve nutritional impacts).
- Create **structures and systems at community level to ensure sustainable management** of resources and infrastructure.

Lesson 7. Facilitate adoption of applied research

For many years, research centres in the Horn of Africa region have been working on ways to optimise land use through **modern technology, improved varieties, and more productive breeds**, which are more drought-resistant and provide higher nutritional value. Although these research products show clear comparative advantages, they are not broadly disseminated, and the most vulnerable communities and individuals rarely have access to them.

RESET partners support the **dissemination of research products** to entire beneficiary communities using decentralised farmer training centres or model farmer systems. The poorest benefit from free hand-outs of seed and seedlings, while other wealth groups gain access to improved varieties through micro-credit. RESET partners also work on increasing the availability of improved seedlings, notably through the creation of tree and fodder nurseries run by youth or landless groups.

RESET has encouraged the **introduction of new species** such as quinoa and amaranth, which have high nutritional value as well as being drought resistant; and it has supported the adoption of modern technologies, such as the use of modern beehives and honey extractors that are four times more productive than traditional techniques.

While disseminating existing research products, RESET also aims to contribute to **learning on alternative livelihoods**, and on the interaction between safety net and resilience programmes.

Key Recommendations

- **Link with research institutions** to understand needs and opportunities to support the dissemination of improved varieties and breeds and to encourage the use of suitable modern technology and practices.
- Where feasible, **facilitate the distribution and adoption** of such products and practices.
- Support the **access of the most vulnerable communities and individuals** to appropriate research products.
- Ensure that **learning on innovative practices** is a core component of the programme.

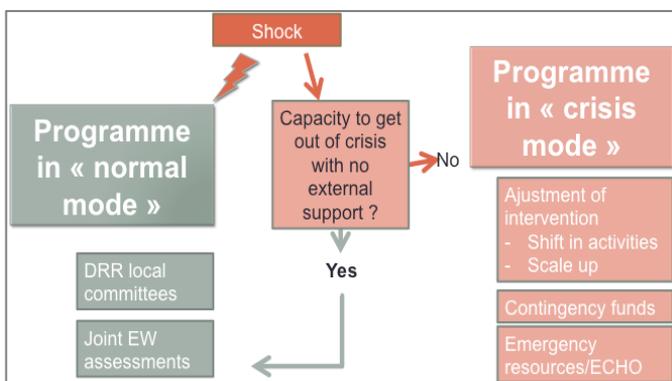
Box 3: Linking RESET beneficiaries with a large infrastructure project for irrigation

Concern Worldwide bridged two programmes to leverage greater impact. Irish Aid funded substantial infrastructure works (an aqueduct and water reservoir) to make water available for irrigation in a district that was previously affected by drought. RESET then trained poor farmers in the building of mud irrigation channels and in cultivation of irrigated crops. The poorest also received a free hand-out of seeds and seedlings, plus technical support. RESET further supported the wider community in malaria prevention and worked on sanitation, family planning and training in infant and young child feeding practices. In an area of previously high food insecurity, farmers are now able to produce at least two crops a year, so the nutritional and health status of the population has improved.



Lesson 8. Integrate crisis management in development programming

As RESET focuses on areas highly vulnerable to disasters, the occurrence of a shock during the timeframe of programme implementation is high. This risk is factored into RESET programming via the inclusion of a **crisis modifier**, a contingency fund that can be mobilised rapidly in response to a shock. In 2015, a severe drought induced by the El Niño phenomenon led to crop failure and water shortages. Whilst RESET areas coped better with the shock, it was nonetheless clear that significant parts of the population remained vulnerable and still needed emergency assistance.



Most RESET partners had previous experience of emergency response. NGOs were able to **rapidly shift development activities to 'emergency action'** (such as provision of water and food for humans and of feed for animals, distribution of free seeds for the next planting season, scale up of support to cover new beneficiaries, etc.). The RESET funding was

sufficiently flexible that budget lines could be shifted, contingency funds could be accessed, and additional ECHO funding could be mobilised.

Communities are supported through disaster risk management to provide them with the skills and insight to identify and respond to a crisis with their own resources. This is achieved through the establishment of **disaster risk management committees at local level** (village/districts), which are involved in early warning (local data collection and analysis and reporting to higher levels) and are in charge of setting up local contingency plans endorsed by higher authorities. The second phase of RESET includes an emergency envelope of €1.5 million euros to deal with localised emergencies, in addition to extra funds that may be mobilised through ECHO in the event of a major crisis.

Key Recommendations

- Work in **close collaboration with ECHO** to define how best to factor the risk of a crisis into development programming.
- Assess the opportunity to **strengthen early warning systems** at local level, including data collection and analysis, and reporting to higher levels.
- Provide support to **disaster risk management and community preparedness at local level**, with links to regional authorities and regional disaster risk management and early warning systems.
- Include a **contingency fund** or crisis modifier into development programmes to ensure that rapid response can be implemented locally if required.

Lesson 9. Mainstreaming family planning

There is a **clear link between population pressure and vulnerability**. In many of the RESET areas, the environmental and economic carrying capacity has been exceeded due to overpopulation, jeopardising the sustainability of the programme. The livelihoods of marginalised communities rely heavily on natural resources. With population growth, the deterioration of the environment leads to decreased fertility of land (and hence productivity), reduced availability of water and wild products (used for own consumption and to generate income), which in turn undermines food security.

RESET places great importance on **natural resource management**, which is a part of the response to limiting carrying capacity. The other part of the answer lies in population control (although this can be a sensitive issue depending on the political, cultural or religious context).

In three of the geographic clusters of RESET, NGOs are supporting **family planning** at grass-roots level in the framework of activities to support the primary health system. Family planning activities aim to increase the outreach of curative, preventive and promotive services, consistent with the national strategy. This includes organising outreach sessions, training health workers and key community representatives, supporting the supply chain, and so on.

More broadly, population control is linked to **women's empowerment**. Programme activities that stimulate change in community perceptions of women, and in women's self-perception, also provide windows of opportunity to promote awareness of, and access to, family planning

Key Recommendations

- Assess if high **population pressure** may be a key bottleneck to building resilience, and determine how sensitive the issue is.
- Assess existing **family planning** initiatives, their effectiveness at local level, and the potential need for reinforcement.
- Support any national family planning initiative to increase their **outreach at community level**.
- **Involve local representatives**, and men, women, and youth in family planning activities.
- Increase **awareness of the inter-linkages** between issues of population, environment, wellbeing and women's empowerment.

Lesson 10. Maximise synergies for greater cost-effectiveness

Livelihoods programmes like RESET are expensive; and, to be effective, they require significant skilled manpower for the intensive support and individual mentoring that is required.

RESET benefits from several sources of funding. Having a **consistent approach shared by different donors** across different regions already offers several advantages over the traditional fragmented interventions through multiple smaller projects funded by different partners. These include economies of scale, reduced transaction costs, higher visibility, opportunities for cross-learning, and greater attention from government.

Even so, every opportunity should be taken to **build links and maximise synergies** with other services and programmes that already exist (in particular government ones), in order to increase cost-effectiveness. Livelihoods programmes should map and exploit all other emergency and development initiatives, and should ensure full complementarity, rather than competition, with any national social assistance or safety net programmes.

Key Recommendations

- Rigorously **assess the costs and benefits** of a livelihoods programme, to ensure that such an intensive and expensive approach is warranted in the prevailing circumstances.
- Wherever possible, operate livelihoods programmes as a **complement to social assistance**, rather than as a substitute.
- Wherever possible, map and **establish linkages with existing programmes and initiatives**, rather than attempting to achieve everything within a single programme.
- In particular, **link to government structures**, where necessary strengthening their capacity, to ensure better guarantees of sustainability.
- Build a **strong M&E framework** at programme level to ensure consistent collection and analysis of indicators, and to critically monitor cost-effectiveness.

Endnotes

- ¹ ASIST, ECHO and EU Delegation in Ethiopia (2016), *Building a resilience programme: Learning from EU RESET programme in Ethiopia, Take your inspiration from 10 key concrete and operational solutions*.
- ² Banerjee A et al. (2015) 'A multifaceted program causes lasting progress for the very poor: Evidence from six countries', *Science*, vol. 348, n°6236.
- ³ The RESET programme presents an even more complete package of intervention than the one studied in Banerjee et al. (2015).

The contents of this publication do not necessarily represent the official position or opinion of the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use that might be made of information in this publication.

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