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# PRIMING RESILIENCE WITH INTRA-HOUSEHOLD CHANGE

## Addressing gender norms

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# Acronyms

**BRIGE** Building Resilience through the Integration of Gender and Empowerment

**CDMC** Community Disaster Management Committee

**DRM** Disaster Risk Management

**DRR** Disaster Risk Reduction

**ERP** Earthquake Recovery Program

**FGD** Focus Group Discussion

**GBV** Gender-Based Violence

**GoN** Government of Nepal

**IGA** Income Generating Activity

**INGO** International Non-Governmental Organization

**KII** Key Informant Interview

**LEAP** Linking Social and Financial Capital to Enhance the Resilience of Agro-Pastoral Communities

**M-RED** Managing Risk through Economic Development

**MSD** Market System Development

**SGBV** Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

**TOC** Theory of Change

**ZFRP** Zurich Flood Resilience Program

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# Executive summary

Since "resilience" entered the international development community's lexicon, programs have begun to use more adaptive and systems-based approaches. Indeed, with the rising frequency of climate and ecological shocks and stresses—floods and droughts, etc.—there is a clear need to do so. While there is a growing movement to use a resilience lens, there has been limited INGO understanding related to gender programming and its interaction with resilience beyond considering issues of differential vulnerability to shocks and stresses. In particular, **in what way might women's capacities actually help build household and community resilience to climate and ecological disasters?**

## Priming resilience with intra-household change

Mercy Corps' BRIGE (Building Resilience through the Integration of Gender and Empowerment) Program was launched as a two-year pilot to strengthen resilience by increasing the organization's capacity to better respond to gender-specific needs. BRIGE introduced an additional layer of gender programming on to existing resilience "parent programs" in Nepal, Niger, and Indonesia. As a product of this pilot and its subsequent research, there is evidence that **priming resilience programs with a facilitated household dialogue curriculum focused on addressing household gender norms can catalyze women's participation in household and community decision-making, such that it improves resilience at both levels.**

Currently, many resilience programs focus on community- and systems-level interventions. However, due to socio-cultural barriers at the intra-household level, women are frequently excluded from access to resources and decision-making, and consequently are less able to take absorptive and adaptive measures to respond to shocks and stresses. **The household dialogue shifts resilience programs from the community level to include individual and intra-household change. This increases individuals' participation and agency in community-level decision-making.** In particular, women who are frequently discouraged from having opinions and speaking up, but may have knowledge, skills, and potential for improving resilience, are better included.

"Household dialogue" refers to a facilitated curriculum organized with two adults from the same household, typically a married couple. It presents couples with an opportunity to reflect together on the gendered division of labor within their households, and jointly design and implement plans for their households. Research conducted around this household dialogue intervention—piloted in the Far Western and Central Regions in Nepal and the Tillaberi Region in Niger—yielded four key learnings regarding a shift toward more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors to overcome barriers to participation.

**KEY LEARNING #1**

### Household dialogue increased women's confidence, thereby improving participation in household and community decision-making

In some households, **lack of confidence prevents women from speaking up, making decisions, or taking action related to household finances, including investments or spending.** In households that participated in the household dialogue training, women expressed more confidence, which helped them play a more active role in these areas. At the community level, women who participated in the household dialogue in Nepal were better able to speak up at home and in the presence of others, often **contributing valuable information that strengthened community decision-making.**

KEY LEARNING #2

### Household dialogue increased men's trust in women outside the home, thereby improving women's mobility

**Men's lack of trust is one important factor driving women's limited mobility.** Mobility can help reduce exposure to shocks and stresses and, moreover, it helps individuals access resources for coping. The research found that the household dialogue increased men's trust in women such that they were able to leave their homes to participate in community groups and activities where they learned skills, contributed to information-sharing, and built social capital.

KEY LEARNING #3

### Household dialogue increased sharing of household chores, thereby reducing the time burden on women so that they can participate in activities that build their ability to better absorb, adapt to, or respond to future shocks and stresses

The household dialogue led to increased sharing of household chores between men and women, thus **freeing time for women to engage in different resilience-building activities** such as participating in community trainings and activities, implementing what they learned (Nepal), or preparing more nutritious food (Niger).

KEY LEARNING #4

### Household dialogue increased men's respect for women and the value of their opinions, thereby improving women's participation in household decision-making

If women have informed opinions that can strengthen resilience, what is keeping them from sharing these opinions with their households and communities? Aside from confidence, a key factor is men's respect for women and recognition of the value of their input. The household dialogue helped men to better appreciate women and value their input into decisions.

## Assumptions for understanding the role of gender in resilience programs

The household dialogue helped to catalyze more resilient attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. It is important to consider, however, that the "resilience causal chain" is long, and consequently, for this study to measure "resilience," a set of assumptions and proxies were used. The report highlights these assumptions and draws attention to specific areas for further consideration.

1. It is assumed that increased, more pluralistic participation in household and community decision-making is a resilient behavior. However, more equitable household and community decision-making by itself will not necessarily lead to more resilient decisions. Efforts to strengthen decision-making combined with building knowledge and capacities of participants could lead to better outcomes.

2. Time, particularly that of women, seems to be extremely scarce. It is assumed that the time women spend in community groups and activities (e.g., for disaster risk management) contributes more to building resilience than the time women spend on other household-related activities. When we assess the "resilience value" of attendance in community groups, we must consider the opportunity cost associated with attending this group meeting.

## Conclusion

As resilience discourse continues to influence how development policies and practices are framed, it is important to consider that the desired community- and systems-level change often first requires change at the individual and intra-household level. Gender norms are deeply embedded at the intra-household level and often determine who is participating in the decisions and activities that build resilience capacities. Better inclusion of women and other marginalized groups can mean bringing more informed opinions or different perspectives to the discussion. It can also mean building the knowledge and skills of people who are uniquely positioned to help their households and communities better absorb, adapt to and respond to climatic or ecological shocks or stresses. Inclusion must be an active process—it will not happen by itself—and for that reason resilience approaches should incorporate intra-household-level interventions that will make their other strategic activities more effective in the long run.

# Background on gender and resilience

Currently, many resilience programs focus on community- and systems-level interventions. Which communities are more likely to be impacted by a climatic shock or stress? Which economic sectors are critical for adaptation? What infrastructure systems are most at risk? Attention at this macro-level often overlooks variables at the individual and intra-household level. At the individual and intra-household level, there remains the particular issue of gender, and how women might be differently vulnerable and differently positioned to provide knowledge and skills that can strengthen household and community resilience. Women are frequently excluded from access to resources and decision-making, and consequently are less able to take absorptive and adaptive measures to respond to shocks and stresses.

Mercy Corps contributes to the global discourse on resilience, addressing key framing questions such as: "What are the most important capacities for supporting resilience, at which stage, for whom, and for which types of shocks?" The present research takes the "resilience of whom?" question a step further to look at intra-household gender norms. It considers the learning from layering a thus-far missing gender approach to the current Mercy Corps resilience framing (Figure 1).[1] When considering the intersection of gender and resilience, most of the past research and programming has been focused on the question of vulnerability. "Resilience of whom?" mainly asks how some populations, including women, might be differently vulnerable. It does not, however, capture how women might have untapped potential and capacity for improving their individual, household, and community resilience.

Four guiding questions frame Mercy Corps' resilience analysis, helping to understand how shocks and stresses threaten desired development outcomes.

1 Mercy Corps, Our Resilience Approach to Relief, Recovery, and Development, https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/Mercy%20Corps%20Resilience%20Approach_April%202015.pdf

FIGURE 1

## MERCY CORPS' APPROACH TO RESILIENCE

### RESILIENCE OF WHAT?

**Understanding system dynamics:**

What needs to become more resilient?

### RESILIENCE OF WHOM?

**Developing vulnerability profiles:**

Whose resilience capacity needs to be enhanced?

How are different people vulnerable to differnent shocks and stresses, and why?

### RESILIENCE TO WHAT?

**Mapping shocks and stresses:**

To what types of shocks and stresses should individuals, households, communities and systems be resilient?

### RESILIENCE THROUGH WHAT?

**Identifying resilience capacities:**

What resources and strategies do people need to maintain progress, even when facing shocks and stresses?

At present, Mercy Corps' gender approach considers that "complex crises impact men, women, boys, and girls differently and that vulnerability to crisis is compounded by intersecting identities, such as age, caste, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity."[2] Furthermore, Mercy Corps' 2014 research in the Sahel on gender and resilience revealed not only that gender affects the perception of the impact of shocks, but also that, even within the same household, individuals will experience shocks and stresses in different ways. This in turn affects the skills, strategies, and mechanisms individuals use to cope with and adapt to disturbances.[3]

The International Development Research Centre and Oxfam Canada have demonstrated that at the household level, there are "barriers to building resilience that are linked to sexual stereotypes, care responsibilities and time poverty."[4] Limited household decision-making power is also among these hindered drivers of resilience. As the Mercy Corps research in the Sahel has clearly shown, although women and girls are heavily dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, they lack the critical skills, information, and decision-making power to adapt to climate change.[5] In short, gender norms create barriers to building resilience capacities that might enable women to be more effective agents of resilience in their households and communities.

Broadly, evidence from the research in this report shows that the discourse around resilience should start at the individual and intra-household levels through confidence-building, in order to then extend effectively to the community level. Specifically, it emerged that when working through a facilitated household dialogue curriculum (see below), both men and women could develop more gender-equitable attitudes that increased women's contributions to household decision-making and participation in community groups, such that, further down the "resilience causal chain" there is likely to be increased household and community resilience. Examples include women's contributions to financial decisions at home (e.g., saving and investments) and women's participation in community decisions around investments in agricultural inputs.

2 Mercy Corps, August 2017, Gender Approach, p.5, available upon request
3 Mercy Corps, 2014, Rethinking Resilience, https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/Mercy%20Corps%20Gender%20and%20Resilience%20September%202014.pdf
4 Oxfam Canada, Learning Forum on Women's Rights and Resilience, Ottawa, September 2013, http://go.oxfam.ca/docs/learning-forum-on-wr-and-resilience-september-2013.pdf
5 Mercy Corps, 2014, p.8

The household dialogue curriculum shifts resilience programs from the community level to include individual and intra-household-level change. It prepares individuals and households for better participation and decision-making in the community-level interventions. In particular, women who are frequently discouraged from having opinions and speaking up, but may have knowledge, skills and potential for improving resilience, are better included. Women need to have confidence to share their opinions and exercise risk-reducing and management strategies; at the same time, women need to have access to the right information, knowledge, and skills that will be effective for managing shocks and stresses.

# The BRIGE program

The aforementioned research in the Sahel laid the groundwork for the draft of a first organizational Theory of Change (ToC) around gender and resilience. This ToC became the backbone of BRIGE, which was launched by Mercy Corps in 2015 as a two-year pilot program to strengthen household and community resilience by increasing the organization's and its partners' capacity to better respond to gender-specific needs in the context of natural disasters and climate-related hazards. BRIGE identified six ongoing "parent programs" that were working on resilience in three countries—Nepal, Indonesia, and Niger. To these six programs, BRIGE introduced an additional layer of gender programming through three phases:

1. **Assess:** BRIGE conducted gender assessments of the parent programs.
2. **Act:** Based on the findings of the gender assessments, Gender Action Plans were created and implemented.
3. **Learn:** BRIGE consolidated research of the pilots and made recommendations for future activities, including through this research.

Based on the resulting Gender Action Plans, several women's empowerment pathways emerged as key areas that needed strengthening in the parent programs and for which BRIGE proposed pilot interventions and measurement tools:

- **Pathway 1:** Women's equitable participation in household decision-making
- **Pathway 2:** Women's meaningful participation in community groups
- **Pathway 3:** Women's access to market linkages

In Nepal, the major country of focus for primary data collection, BRIGE worked across all the three pathways in partnership with two resilience-focused "parent" programs: Managing Risk through Economic Development (M-RED) in four districts in the Far Western Region, and the Earthquake Recovery Program (ERP) in three districts severely impacted by the 2015 earthquake. In both programs, Mercy Corps conducted activities to promote disaster risk reduction (DRR), market systems development (MSD), and livelihood opportunities. In Niger, BRIGE applied the first pathway to Linking Social and Financial Capital to Enhance the Resilience of Agro-Pastoral Communities (LEAP), a resilience-focused program that aimed to increase resilience by providing financial services to vulnerable communities. In Indonesia, BRIGE applied the second pathway to the Zurich Flood Resilience Program (ZFRP) in Semarang, Central Java, and the third pathway to AgriFin Mobile, a program providing farmers with a bundled set of services and agricultural inputs.

The present research contributes to the broader international development and humanitarian sectors' understanding of how individual and intra-household dynamics can influence resilience programming. It focuses on the intersection of gender and resilience due to the immense role that gender plays on these individual and intra-household dynamics, and seeks to understand in what way women's empowerment could contribute to strengthening household and community resilience to climate and ecological shocks and stresses. Evidence gathered during the research process demonstrates that women's equitable participation in household decision-making (Pathway 1) plays a central role in developing capacities for household and community resilience. As the report focuses only on the first pathway, Indonesia (which explored Pathways 2 and 3) was not included. This report is a synthesis of the aforementioned research and contains recommendations for practitioners as well as a summary of research methodology, a description of the household dialogue intervention, key learnings, assumptions to help understand the role of gender and resilience, other recommendations, and a conclusion.

### BOX 1: GENDER COUNTRY CONTEXT—NIGER AND NEPAL[6]

**Niger** scores 157th out of 159 countries on the latest Gender Inequality Index, which considers women's empowerment and their access to health and markets. Underlying this cumulative score, at the household level, the acceptance of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is high: 60% of women believe that it is justifiable in at least one situation for a husband to beat his wife. In addition, even though 85% of married women report being able to decide on the use of the money they earn, only 12% of women (ages 15 to 49 years) affirm they are able to decide autonomously over expenses related to their own health, household items, and their mobility to visit relatives.[7] In relation to community values, there is a very high rate of early marriage (62.9% of girls aged 15 to 19 years are married, divorced, or widowed) and teenage pregnancies (203.6 live births among 1000 girls aged 15 to 19 years). This reflects the prevailing gender norms that discriminate against women and girls—norms that are also present in the official public and legal spheres, where women have lower property ownership rates than men and are significantly underrepresented in positions of authority in public and private institutions, from central bodies in Niamey to village-level development committees.[8] Although customary law and traditions vary according to place and ethnic group, the main household assets—such as land—usually belong to men, and nationally only 20% of women report owning land. Prevailing gender norms also translate to educational and economic activities, where women have lower literacy rates, lower income levels, and only 25% of women of reproductive age are working, as compared to 81% of men.[9] In Niger, 21.6% of married women live in polygamous unions.[10]

**Nepal** scores 115th out of 159 countries in the latest Gender Inequality Index.[11] In Nepal, gender inequalities overlap with a hierarchical system based on castes, which exacerbates inequalities and distinctions relating to roles and responsibilities, both in the private and in the public spheres.

MORE

6 BRIGE conducted specific gender assessments for Nepal and Niger that provide detailed gender analyses on the specific areas of BRIGE intervention and provide an overview of the countries gender context.

7 USAID Office Of Food For Peace, Food Security Desk Review For Niger, 2017, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/FFP-Niger-Food-Security-Desk-Review-Oct2017.pdf

8 The gender analysis included in the *Plan de Développement Economique et Social (PDES)* 2017–2021 reveals a gender disparity in all decision-making structures: 29 women out of 171 are in the National Assembly (16.9%), 8 out of 42 are in the government (19%), 2 out of 52 are among the prefects (3.8%), 6 out of 266 (2.3%) are mayors, and there are no female governors.

9 Agence Française de Développement, Profil Genre: Niger, 2016, https://www.afd.fr/fr/profil-genre-afrique

10 Republic of Niger, Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, Institut National de la Statistique, *Etude Nationale d'Evaluation d'Indicateurs Socio-Economiques et Démographiques (ENISED)*, February 2016, http://www.stat-niger.org/statistique/file/ENISED/Rapport_ENISED_.pdf

11 UNDP, Human Development Reports, Gender inequality Index, 2015, http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII

**⟩ CONTINUED**

The Government of Nepal's (GoN) new constitution and several acts passed since 2007 reflect a profound desire for a more equal society, but this change requires time. Meanwhile, disasters in Nepal continue affecting men and women in a deeply unbalanced way: 55% of the 22,300 casualties of the magnitude 7.6 and 6.8 earthquakes in 2015 were women. Gendered inequalities were also particularly prominent in the aftermath of the disaster. For instance, only 19% of women could demonstrate shared ownership of the houses that were destroyed in order to access recovery support through the government. For the remainder, in circumstances in which the male head of the household went missing or died during the earthquake, there was no possibility to claim any right or access any benefit related to the reconstruction of their houses. The situation was even more critical for marginalized groups (mainly Dalit caste and indigenous populations), who tend not to own land. In addition, after a natural or climate-related disaster, women's responsibilities around the household tend to increase: often water sources are disrupted, and women are forced to travel longer distances to collect water, facing an increased risk of SGBV. The GoN's Nepal Earthquake 2015: Post-Disaster Needs Assessment states that "The disadvantaged social groups in the poorer districts have suffered the largest damage and loss."[12]

In both Niger and Nepal, it is common for men to migrate in search of labor abroad (particularly to Nigeria and India, respectively). The duration of this migration varies, but the prolonged absence of men from the household affects gender dynamics at home in varying ways.

12 Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, Post Disaster Need Assessment, 2015, http://www.recoveryplatform.org/jp/pdf/Nepal_PDNA%20Volume%20A%20Final.pdf

# Summary of methodology

The methodology described below pertains to the primary research conducted in Nepal. For LEAP in Niger, secondary research was conducted by reviewing the fieldwork of Marthe Diarra Doka, a Nigerien anthropologist who conducted an "Anthropological Study on Female Economic Empowerment and Household Decision-Making"[13] on behalf of Mercy Corps' BRIGE program. Ms. Doka conducted qualitative action research in November 2016 (baseline) and August 2017 (endline) in the villages of Gao, Louma, Kania Tegui, and Kania Zeno in the Filingué Department of the Tillaberi Region of Southern Niger. For the full methodological details of the research conducted in Nepal and Indonesia, a research inception report is available upon request.

In Nepal, focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII) were the instruments for data collection. FGD enumerators were locally hired and participated in a two-day training and one-day pilot prior to fieldwork. The FGDs were all conducted among participants in resilience-focused parent program interventions (M-RED, ERP): some FGD participants received the main parent program intervention only (comparison groups/ non-BRIGE intervention), and some received the main parent program intervention and an additional layer of BRIGE intervention. Each FGD had between four and eight participants. Local languages were used, and conversations were transcribed and translated into English. KIIs were led by the two international research consultants and were conducted among a variety of stakeholders including Mercy Corps staff at country headquarters and in the field, implementing partners, community participants, and other relevant constituents (see Annex 1).

As qualitative research, it included purposive, non-probabilistic sampling. A four-tiered FGD methodology was developed to disaggregate by a) sex (men and women) and b) intervention treatment: BRIGE intervention communities (where community members had participated in the BRIGE gender-specific interventions) and BRIGE non-intervention (or comparison) communities. As a rule-of-thumb, communities that had received the BRIGE intervention the longest were selected to provide the greatest likelihood of observable, empirical change. In order to study additional differences among marginalized groups that contribute to the Nepali social make-up, FGDs also compared community members that are of the Dalit caste or of an indigenous group (janajati). After the data was collected and translated from both the FGDs and the KIIs (Table 1), the researchers coded it for emergent themes.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF FGDS AND KIIS IN NEPAL

| | # FGD in BRIGE areas | | # FGD in non-BRIGE areas | | # of KIIs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** | |
| **M-RED** | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 20 |
| **ERP** | 6 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 17 |

13 Marthe Diarra Doka, M., Etude anthropologique sur l'autonomisation économique des femmes et le pouvoir de décision au sein du ménage, Mercy Corps, Portland, 2017, available on request

# Priming resilience with household dialogue

The Mercy Corps definition of resilience operates at a community-level: "The capacity of communities in complex socio-ecological systems to learn, cope, adapt, and transform in the face of shocks and stresses." Indeed, many resilience programs are organized at the community and systems levels. Overall, the BRIGE research shows that improving women's empowerment at the individual and intra-household levels is an important primer that can, in turn, better catalyze resilient behaviors at both the household and community levels.

*Household dialogue participants from Kailali District, Nepal, with their son.* Renee Ho

**Why does participation matter for resilience?** Women's participation—in both household and community decision-making—can contribute to increased resilience at household and community levels. At the household level, increased participation can mean more informed or different perspectives on critical issues such as household finances, livelihoods, and nutrition, among other things. At the community level, programs that apply a resilience lens to their design frequently ask that individuals participate in collective trainings or information sessions where they receive critical skills and knowledge that support absorptive and adaptive strategies. Participation in community groups and activities can in turn provide the opportunity for individuals to build critical assets that can operate as resilience capacities at household and community levels. These include:

1. **Social capital:** Individuals have the opportunity to build **social capital.** By participating in these groups and activities, individuals develop social resources (e.g., networks, social relations, access to other institutions in society) that may help provide support in the case of a shock or stress.[14] For more information on the types of community groups in Nepal and their relationship to resilience, please see Box 3.
2. **Human capital:** Individuals acquire **knowledge and skills** that they use and share at the household level, and individuals can **share and access information** through broad community networks.

14 International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security: Resilience and Social Capital, May 2014, http://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/128152/filename/128363.pdf

As described in Joseph Mayunga's paper "Understanding and Applying the Concept of Community Disaster Resilience: A capital-based approach," knowledge, skills, and information-sharing comprise key components of human capital, which is "one of the most important determinants of resilience among other forms of capital." Knowledge and skills are used to understand community risks, and to develop and implement a risk-reduction strategy.[15]

3. **Decision-making:** Individuals contribute to **decision-making** at the household and community levels. Decision-making power is critical to the resilience response process. Assets become resilience capacities when an individual makes the decision to employ them in response to a shock or stress. In the words of Christophe Béné et al: "The decision is not simply about whether or not households should engage in a response, but about the choice (nature and intensity) between different types of coping strategies." Béné et al further recognize the role that inclusive community decision-making plays in contributing to the ability of the community to rebuild after a shock.[16]

**How do socio-cultural norms prevent women's meaningful participation?** Research has demonstrated that gender norms which limit women's mobility, available time, and decision-making power present barriers to building resilience capacities.[17] In a specific example, a recent mixed-methods study undertaken by USAID and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) found that gender norms in Nepal, particularly when limiting women's mobility, contributed to an increased likelihood of a household falling back into poverty in the face of shocks and stresses.[18]

**Because of socio-cultural norms that limit their mobility, available time, and decision-making power, women may not participate meaningfully** (e.g., voicing their opinions and having their opinions taken into consideration) or at all. Without women's participation, resilience programs fail to incorporate the potentially valuable knowledge and skills that women can contribute to household and community deliberation, capacities that can actually strengthen resilience.

In the research, we make a distinction between participation and meaningful participation. This is because we have seen how gender mainstreaming in development programs is often reduced to the mere counting of women's attendance to constitute participation. "Meaningful" suggests a greater level of engagement, including expression of opinions by women but also consideration of those opinions by others in the group, namely men.

The Mercy Corps-provided definition used for meaningful participation is as follows: "Women comprise at least 30% of membership, and multiple women contribute to group discussions. Women provide input into key decisions, and their opinions are recognized and taken into consideration. Women present in key leadership or leadership supporting roles. When a woman's decision goes well, she takes credit. When it goes poorly, she takes responsibility." The research did not strictly adhere to the 30% mark to determine meaningful participation (again, this is counting), but it was provided in the definition because, in the case of Nepal, this is a figure frequently used by the government as a quota.

**How does the household dialogue address these barriers to participation?** In the Far Western and Central Regions of Nepal and the Tillaberi Region of Niger, BRIGE implemented a four-day intra-household gender norm

15 Mayunga, J. S., Understanding and applying the concept of community disaster resilience: A capital-based approach. Draft working paper prepared for the Summer Academy for Social Vulnerability and Resilience Building, 22—28 July 2007, Munich, Germany, 2007, https://www.u-cursos.cl/usuario/3b514b53bcb4025aaf9a6781047e4a66/mi_blog/r/11._Joseph_S._Mayunga.pdf

16 Béné et al. *The Influence of Subjective and Psycho-Social Factors on People's Resilience*, Technical Report Series No. 2: Strengthening the Evidence Base for Resilience in the Horn of Africa, ILRI, 2016, http://www.technicalconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Report-5-The-influence-of-subjective-and-psychosocial_18Feb2016.pdf

17 Oxfam Canada, 2013

18 Diwakar, V. and Ghimire, A. USAID and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Resilience and Sustainable Poverty Escapes in Nepal: Research Findings and Policy Implications, 2018.

intervention in the form of a facilitated household dialogue curriculum (Box 2) between men and women from the same household. In Niger, this activity was done through a mix of separate-gender and joint sessions and with the support of influential religious and community figures; in Nepal, a man and woman from the same household—often but not necessarily married—followed the curriculum together. The household dialogue presented couples with an opportunity to reflect on the gendered division of labor within their own households. Discussions followed, and participants designed plans for change within their household. Following the training, BRIGE staff followed up with participants through regular monitoring visits to track progress on the plans. It is important to note a few additional differences between the intervention in Nepal and Niger. In Nepal, financial literacy training and income-generating activity support, usually in the form of agricultural training or input subsidies, was provided to women so that they could actualize some of the plans (often related to finances/livelihoods). In Niger, there was, in addition to the household dialogue, a training for religious and traditional leaders in the communities and "learning days" where the couples that participated in the household dialogue shared their learning with the broader community. Both of these activities in Niger helped scale the learning to reach households beyond those that participated in the household dialogue curriculum.

Providing households with a facilitated household dialogue curriculum prior to implementing "resilience programming as usual" ensures greater impact. The household dialogue curriculum increases women's confidence, time, mobility, and respect; in doing so, it improves their participation in community groups where they can both access and contribute knowledge that can help households and communities better manage their exposure and sensitivity to shocks and stresses.

TABLE 2: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE HOUSEHOLD DIALOGUE ACTIVITY IN NEPAL AND NIGER

| | Nepal[19] | Niger |
|---|---|---|
| **Similarities** | 4-day training session led by trained facilitators with men and women from the same household.<br>Action plans and follow-up monitoring by facilitators. | |
| **Differences** | Combined gender sessions.<br>Bundled with financial literacy training.<br>Bundled with income-generating activity support. | Some gender-segregated sessions.<br>Some polygamous households.<br>Religious and traditional leader training.[20]<br>Community "learning days" for information sharing. |

The research found that it is helpful to approach resilience along a causal chain. That is, as development practitioners, we often assume that offering a training or an information session is sufficient. There is a pervasive "build it and they will come," supply-side mentality. However, if we meet potential participants where they are—embedded in all of the socio-cultural complexity and gender norms within their households—we are likely to improve inclusion and participation in such a way as to ultimately strengthen resilience.

We developed the graphic in Figure 2 to help illustrate what this causal chain appears to look like in the BRIGE research, starting with the household dialogue.

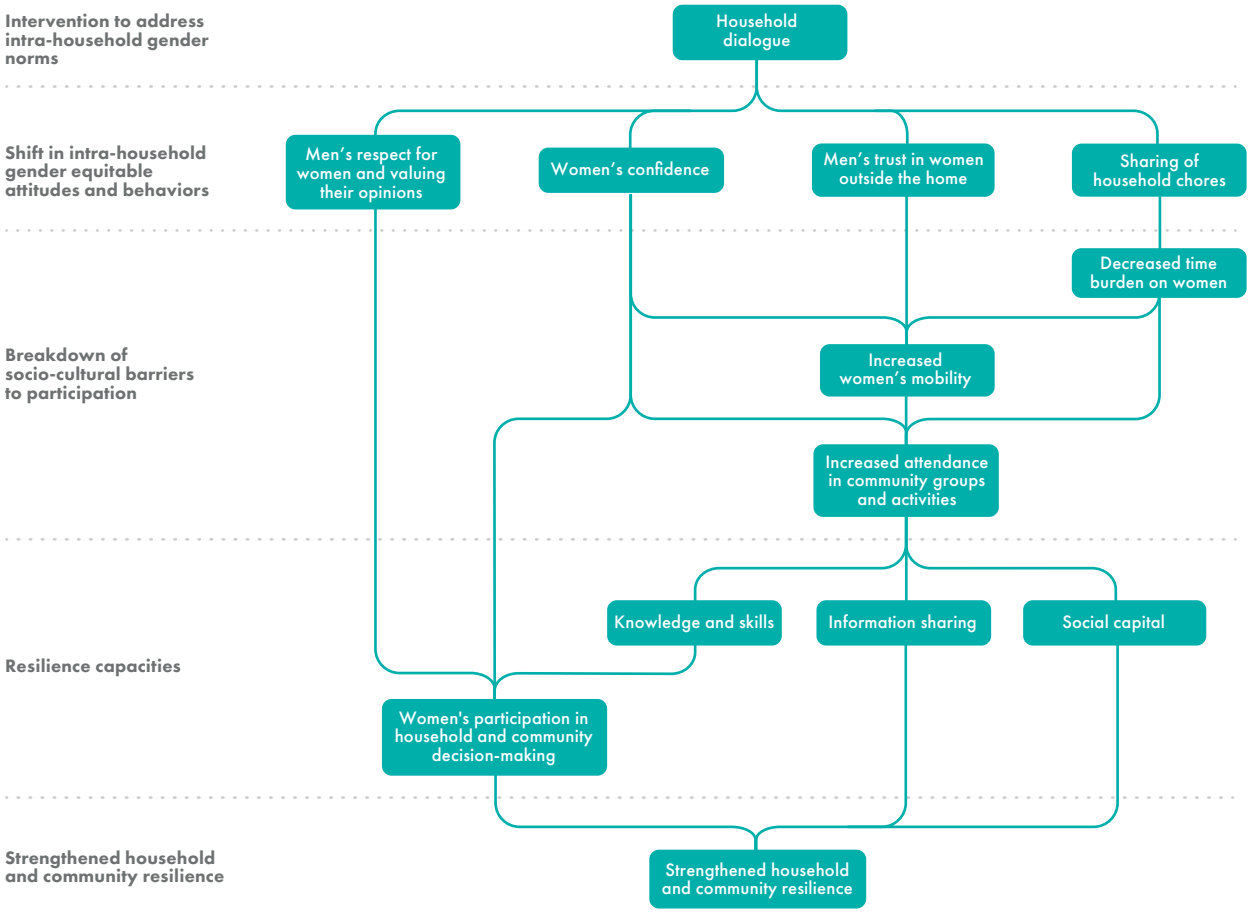
19 "Non-BRIGE" communities in Nepal also received two related gender-focused modules through their Financial Literacy Training: Shared Roles and Responsibilities and Joint Decision-Making.

20 Islamic religious leaders in Niger are important influencers and arbiters of socio-cultural norms.

FIGURE 2

## A RESILIENCE CAUSAL CHAIN

### HOW ADDRESSING HOUSEHOLD GENDER NORMS CAN LEAD TO STRENGTHENED RESILIENCE




Of course, this is just one of many potential causal chains that can lead to improved household and community resilience. In addition to gender norm interventions such as the household dialogue, programs should be complemented and bundled with other drivers of resilience, including information, resources, skills, etc. Also important to consider is the fact that Figure 2 is a schema and, as such, it is necessarily simplified and embeds various assumptions that are discussed further below. The "resilience capacities" section, for example, shows that social capital, information-sharing, women's knowledge and skills, and women's participation in household decision-making lead to increased household and community resilience. While existing research supports these linkages in certain cases, we recognize that those four capacities may not always lead to increased resilience to climate and ecological shocks. In the same way that most development logical frameworks ultimately care about "impact" but can only measure outcomes or at best outputs as proxies, this research could not actually measure resilience (given the short time-frame and the lack of a discrete climatic shock) and so instead predominantly assessed changes in participation in relevant community groups as a way to understand impact on resilience.

**Assumptions for understanding the role of gender in resilience programs:** It is important to consider that the "resilience causal chain" is long, and, consequently, for this study to measure resilience, a set of assumptions and proxies were used. The report highlights these assumptions and draws attention to specific areas for further consideration:

1. It is assumed that increased, more pluralistic participation in household and community decision-making is conducive to resilience. This is true to the extent that the individual, regardless of gender, has valuable knowledge and skills. Indeed, the research revealed instances when women's contribution to group decision-making resulted in better outcomes because they had information from their experiences. However, more equitable household and community decision-making by itself will not necessarily lead to more resilient decisions. Efforts to strengthen decision-making along with building knowledge and capacities of participants could lead to better outcomes.

2. Time, particularly that of women, seems to be extremely scarce. It is often assumed that the time women spend at community groups (e.g., for disaster risk management, agricultural training, or financial services) is more conducive to resilience than the time women spend in other household-related activities. When we assess the "resilience value" of attendance in community groups, we need to ask: what is the opportunity cost associated with attending this group meeting? Are we sufficiently aware of what that training is providing and replacing to say that it is better for resilience?

In the next section, we provide detail regarding the key learnings from Mercy Corps' intra-household gender norm intervention—the household dialogue. We discuss how the household dialogue catalyzed change at the individual and intra-household levels and how this, in turn, resulted in improved capacities for resilience. This change was brought about because the household dialogue 1) increased women's confidence, 2) increased men's trust in women outside the home, 3) increased sharing of household chores, and 4) increased men's respect for women and the value of their opinions.

### BOX 2: HOUSEHOLD DIALOGUE IN NEPAL AND NIGER

The household dialogue curriculum involved men and women from the same household, often but not necessarily husband and wife. Sometimes participants included, for example, a father-in-law and daughter-in-law, or mother and son. The participants attended an initial round of sessions together in Nepal and separately in Niger.

The training, conducted over four days by well-trained facilitators, presented couples with an opportunity to reflect on issues of gender equity and the gendered division of labor within their own households. In Niger, the training began with separate-gender sessions before bringing couples together; in Nepal, the full training was conducted as mixed-gender sessions. Discussions followed, and in both countries participants jointly designed action plans for their households, the implementation of which was subsequently monitored by BRIGE program staff through follow-up visits, and sometimes involved other family members.

Finally, in Niger, community events were organized to celebrate the end of the household dialogue with participating couples and generate broader community awareness. These events included community leaders and recognized local role-models who helped reinforce the gender messages. (See Annex 2 for a list of additional available resources related to the household dialogue.)

# Key learnings

**KEY LEARNING #1**

## Household dialogue increased women's confidence, thereby improving participation in household and community decision-making

Confidence is usually described as a "soft skill." It is thus mistaken as less vital than "hard skills" like technical knowledge. However, in their report, *The Influence of Subjective and Psycho-Social Factors on People's Resilience*, the authors write that "The emerging evidence...stresses the need to include psycho-social factors and subjective measures in theories of change alongside economic and other traditional variables to build our understanding of what factors contribute to resilience at different levels." Their research confirms that "...people's individual perception and self-confidence about their own ability to handle future events (what [they] refer to as subjective resilience), is key in the process of building household effective resilience."[21] If the intended constituents of the program interventions do not have confidence, a resilience-focused program may design and implement important activities for hard skills (e.g., farmer trainings, DRR technologies, income-generating activities, etc.), but the acquisition and use of these hard skills will be diminished due to lack of participation and low quality of participation. For historical and cultural reasons, confidence tends to accrue to men and not women in many societies.

This confidence (or lack thereof) is manifest at both the household and community levels, and so is its impact on capacities for resilience. In some households, lack of confidence prevents women from speaking up, making decisions or taking action related to household finances, including investments or spending. It is challenging for households to proactively adapt to risks and respond to shocks if these women actually have different, better, or more complete information than men, or if men are not available to make decisions and take action, as in Nepal and Niger where men frequently migrate for seasonal labor.

> *"The main changes we have seen are that at the initial period, women were so shy to speak in front of strangers, but now we are able to give our own introduction, which was very difficult for us before. There is positive transformation seen in the mindset of those people who thought that women were not allowed to go beyond their territory, cross their limit, or be involved in any kind of social events."*
>
> — Woman in a Dalit caste group in BRIGE intervention community, Dadeldhura District, Nepal

While this research found evidence supporting the hypothesis that more equitable household decision-making is a pathway toward resilience (e.g., in Niger when women's opinions were considered for household food purchases, more balanced and nutritious meals were cooked for their families), it has also uncovered that this pathway is only truly activated if individuals have the confidence to act and contribute. This is not necessarily new research: a 2013 Mercy Corps study found that during the 2010-2011 drought and famine in Southern Somalia, women with more power over decisions in their homes had the confidence to negotiate with elites to gain access to essential services and were thus better able to feed and care for their children.[22]

21 Bene et al. 2016.

22 Mercy Corps, What Really Matters for Resilience? Exploratory Evidence on the Determinants of Resilience to Food Security Shocks in Southern Somalia, October 2013, https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/WhatReallyMattersForResilienceSomaliaNov2013_0.pdf

We also find that confidence in household-level decision-making has spillover effects for confidence at the community-level. Women that participated in the household dialogue were better able to speak up at home and in the presence of community members in organized community groups. As one BRIGE supervisor in Nepal explained, "Decision-making is the first step to have confidence in yourself...it's important to have this confidence at home first."

In the M-RED program areas in Nepal, we can compare the quality of women's participation in community groups between those who received the full BRIGE household dialogue versus those who received BRIGE modules attached to an existing financial literacy training (two modules on Shared Roles and Responsibilities and Joint Decision-Making). Women who did **not** participate in the full household dialogue activity said, "There is participation [in the community groups] but very little. Women feel uncomfortable talking in front of people. We are afraid the things we say might be wrong. We feel like people might laugh at us..." and "We are unable to make decisions ourselves. We abide by men's decisions. Women are more hesitant, that is why" (women in mixed-caste group in non-BRIGE community, Baitadi).

In the ERP areas in Nepal, women from mixed-caste communities in BRIGE intervention areas who received the full household dialogue curriculum tended to report increased confidence in themselves and from their male family members: "In the past, if there were men and women in a meeting, then people would be suspicious about them. But now, men and women are involved in meetings where women also express their views. The men have also started agreeing with the views shared by women" (women in mixed-caste group in BRIGE intervention community, Ghumthang). Noticeably different, however, are women from Dalit groups who participated in BRIGE: they did not report any considerable change in their self-confidence, and men from the same background agreed with this lack of change. In non-BRIGE areas, women from mixed-caste groups reported increased self-confidence and enjoyed support by men from a similar background, but both men and women from marginalized groups presented a very somber picture of women's self-confidence and men's confidence in women: "There has been no change in women's participation in community groups in the last seven months. We do not feel any. The reasons are our own weakness, lack of education and income, belief in superstition, etc." (man in Dalit caste group in BRIGE intervention community, Sahare). It is not possible to explicitly gauge the difference between increased self-confidence in BRIGE and non-BRIGE areas among women from mixed-caste groups, but this instance shows that considering intersectionality (gender and caste, in this case) requires an even more intentional approach to reach the most vulnerable among an already-marginalized group.

*A household dialogue participant with her garden in the Far Western Region, Nepal.*

Audrey Anderson

In LEAP program areas in Niger, the study showed that, because of the household dialogue, women's opinions were increasingly valued regarding household food management, as women are recognized as the main actors responsible for food preparation. Women are trusted with balancing the nutritional value of food items, and husbands now inform their wives about their intention to buy certain foodstuffs. This information-sharing provides women with the opportunity to give their opinion on the type of food purchases that the household should prioritize. This represents an important change from the baseline study, where women in Kania Tegui reported that there was no consultation regarding the purchases of food items as "one could see the bag full of grains

leave for the marketplace with the head of the household and realize upon his return that condiments, millet, corn or other things were purchased at the market."[23]

### Recommendation

If a resilience program seeks strong participation of traditionally marginalized persons in community meetings or events, it needs to start by building self-confidence and confidence at home, at the individual and intra-household levels. When multiple layers of exclusion affect a group of people (e.g., caste and gender), building confidence requires an even more intensified effort given the low starting point. Participation in household dialogue activities clearly emerged as an important propeller for increased confidence. Increased confidence at the individual and intra-household levels was translated into increased participation in community groups and other program-supported activities. While it is important for women to have confidence in themselves, it is just as critical for men to have confidence in women and their capacities, too. This is addressed in Key Learning #4.

**KEY LEARNING #2**

## Household dialogue increased men's trust in women outside the home, thereby improving women's mobility

According to anthropologist Diarra Doka, there has been little evidence of women's increased mobility outside household compounds in BRIGE intervention communities in Niger, except for more women attending Quranic schools and, to a limited extent, some community meetings, which could increase their social bonding capital (see Box 3 for links between social capital and resilience). Diarra Doka attributes this change to household dialogue activities that have increased shared decision-making over women's mobility. However, in Nepal—also due to the different social context (see Box 1)—the household dialogue curriculum was central to increased men's trust in women's mobility, including women's participation in capacity-building initiatives and community groups. The capacity of women to attend meetings and community groups that resulted from their increased mobility translated into greater social capital, which, according to several researchers, is an important safety net for women in times of shocks and stresses.[24] Agarwal writes, "Women have a greater need to build up social capital through localized networks, since women's avenues for accumulating economic resources and their physical mobility is typically more restricted than men's."[25] Shean finds this pattern also in the Sahel, across women within the same extended families who will often spend most of their day together, supporting each other with household tasks and sharing information.[26] In Nepal's BRIGE areas, women's presence in community meetings increased in terms of both quantity and quality, also thanks to their participation in the household dialogue sessions; both men and women reported greater appreciation of women's contributions, and some members of group steering committees—often men—became more aware of the limited role that women were playing before.

> *"Before, villagers used to mock me, when I used to go to market for selling vegetables. I felt bad. At that time, I was the only woman, later we started going in groups. Then, they stopped mocking. Nowadays, villagers appreciate me. I am very busy in my vegetable farming."*
>
> — Woman from a mixed-caste group in BRIGE intervention community, Sindhupalchowk District, Nepal

23 Diarra Doka, M. p.17
24 Bernier, Q., and Meinzen-Dick, R., Resilience and Social Capital, IFPRI, May 2014, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2020resilienceconfpaper04.pdf
25 Agarwal, B., Gender and forest conservation: the impact of women's participation in community forest governance. Ecological Economics, 68, 2009, pp. 2785–2799
26 Shean, A., "If the drumbeat changes, the dance must also change": Using a gender-integrated approach to enhance household and community resilience to food insecurity in the Sahel," Policy Analysis Exercise, 2014

In Nepal, women participating in community groups reported increased access to information (e.g., saving schemes, governmental reconstruction grants opportunities), participation in disaster preparedness trainings, early warning systems committees, and new activities that went beyond their "traditional" roles and responsibilities. The benefits that come from participating in community groups help build their capacity to absorb, adapt to, or respond to a future shock or stress. Having more savings, for example, can allow an agricultural household to access more options when a drought destroys a season's harvest. Learning about early warning systems can help households better gather family members and critical assets during a sudden flood. A woman from a mixed-caste group in a BRIGE intervention area said, "By being involved and taking many trainings in many organizations, I started to talk with people in the community, and I learned many things." When women gained knowledge and skills about disaster risk management (DRM), took part in relevant livelihood opportunities that responded to clear market needs, and increased confidence in expressing their opinions, they were often able to 1) transmit that knowledge and skill back to their household and 2) advocate effectively for resilient measures at home and in the community. Key to making this work was having the confidence that many had built as a consequence of the household dialogue. As part of this process, resilience capacity was also strengthened in that women (and men) were able to contribute more to tasks and decision-making responsibilities that were not in line with traditional gender roles; this was particularly true in the case of migration.

In M-RED program areas in Nepal, there were clear instances where participation in the household dialogue increased men's trust in women, particularly such that it would allow women to leave their homes to participate in community groups. For example, a BRIGE supervisor explained that among two couples, the men discovered that their wives were going to trainings and were upset. They thought trainings were a place where the women would go to flirt or become "morally corrupt." Toward the end of household dialogue, however, they were accepting of women going to the trainings. With these same two couples, a business plan was developed to help them promote the agricultural products that the women learned about at the trainings. Moreover, in addition to increasing men's trust of women's participation in community groups and activities, men's increased trust meant that women gained more mobility in general. In a BRIGE community, participants said, "When women used to work away from the home [the men] used to think it was not good. But they don't think this anymore," and "[The women] can go to the market alone and sell [these] vegetables." The independent ability to sell vegetables suggests that some women have greater capacity to access new income streams, cash that may prove critical in the case of future climatic or ecological shocks.

*A woman from Kavrepalanchowk District in Nepal works in her garden. She and her husband, pictured together on the cover, participated in the household dialogue in their community.*

Ezra Millstein

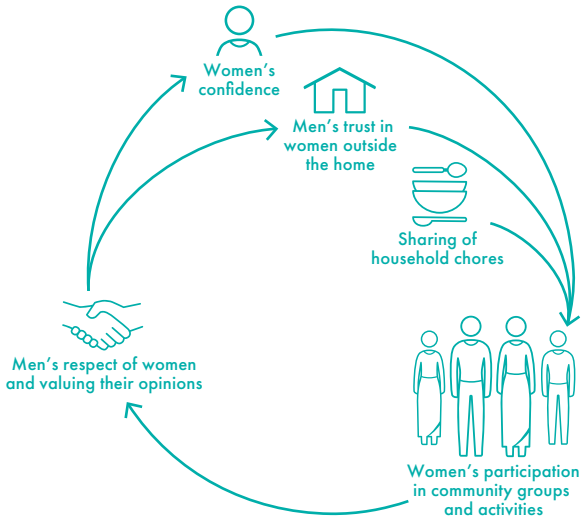
There is some evidence, even among men who participated in the household dialogue, that trust in women is incomplete and that, consequently, their mobility outside of the home is similarly limited. One man explained how, "...if there is work for the community group that requires travelling to Dadeldhura or Dhangadi (towns), she cannot travel alone, and we must send a guardian with her. They also have difficulties doing bank-related work. They have this constant fear when doing banking transactions and traveling back with the money." Notably, in this case, the man does not trust his wife outside the home, but probably not because she is ill-intentioned

(e.g., going to flirt or get "morally corrupt") but because he does not believe her to have the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence. In this case, we see how "Key Learning #2: trust in women outside the home" is linked to "Key Learning #4: respect for women and their opinions": in the latter, the research finds that increasing women's knowledge and skills (often through community groups and trainings) increases respect for women and their opinions; this, in turn, might increase men's trust in women outside the home (Figure 3). It is important to note, however, that in the quote above, there may be legitimate concerns related to women's safety outside of the home. **The argument is not that household dialogue is a gender-problem-solving panacea: it is one intervention that is best bundled with other gender-sensitive programming strategies.** Programs should simultaneously consider activities that women can safely access.

In ERP areas in Nepal, both men and women in mixed-caste groups in BRIGE intervention areas reported increased men's trust in women's participation in community groups and meetings. Women felt they could negotiate more time and mobility to participate in community-based activities. However, they reported a considerably shrinking time availability even though men were taking on some household chores to allow for their increased activities outside of the home—which should be carefully considered when designing resilience-related programs (see below, Key Learning #3 and Assumptions for Understanding the Role of Gender in Resilience Programs). Thanks to their attendance at community groups and trainings, women report increased exposure to information, knowledge, and skills especially around household financial management. While this is an early step in the "resilience causal chain," we can see how improved financial management may allow households to save and invest in different forms of human and physical capital that increase resilience to the next shock or stress. In community groups, women learned behaviors that directly link to strengthened resilience: they came to understand the importance of saving in formal cooperatives (whose importance for resilience is also shown in external research[27]), the possibility to access loans (which also emerged as central for resilience in other studies[28]), and the conditions to benefit from government grants; this knowledge could lead to further investment toward household resilience. As a woman from a BRIGE intervention community stated, "We have also started savings and that is a change. We got knowledge through the trainings that we should do savings and it will help us in the future from the shock/stress." Particularly as members of cooperatives and saving groups, they feel greater connections with other women, building social capital that is critical for household and community resilience.[29] Men from mixed-caste groups declare that women's participation in trainings increases the household capacity to prepare for and respond to future shocks and stresses—and for this reason they trust their wives to attend these events and also take on household chores to help increase women's time availability.

FIGURE 3

**REINFORCEMENT IN THE CAUSAL CHAIN**




27 Karlan, D., Savonitto, B., Thuysbaert, B., and Udry, C., Impact of Saving Groups on the Lives of the Poor, PNAS, 2017, http://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/114/12/3079.full.pdf
28 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Agricultural Cooperatives and Gender Equality, 2012, http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/ap669e/ap669e.pdf
29 Frankenberger, T., Mueller M., Spangler T., and Alexander S., Community Resilience: Conceptual Framework and Measurement Feed the Future Learning Agenda. Rockville, MD: Westat, October 2013, https://agrilinks.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/FTF%20Learning_Agenda_Community_Resilience_Oct%202013.pdf

> *"Yes, it is better than before [the household dialogue]. I feel very happy. My husband encourages me to attend meetings and then he asks me to share what I have learned at the meeting."*
>
> — Woman from mixed-caste group in BRIGE intervention community, Sindhupalchowk District, Nepal

Men from mixed-caste and marginalized groups also report being open to women engaging in activities that differ from traditional gender roles, such as building houses. Worth noting, when women from Dalit caste groups were intentionally targeted in activities, they displayed interest in participating also thanks to their general greater mobility compared to women from upper castes. For instance, the participation of women from Dalit caste groups in mason trainings resulted not only in safer houses, but also in their employment as skilled laborers.

In LEAP program areas in Niger, there was limited focus on women's participation in community groups and trainings, and therefore the field research did not highlight any relevant change in increased men's trust in women and their mobility outside the household. However, men's accrued trust in women resulted in women's greater access to mobile phones that, in the future, could be used to link to information and financial services that would increase their resilience.

## Recommendation

To allow women to improve household and community resilience, it is necessary for them to have the agency and mobility to meaningfully contribute. Men need to be supportive of this shift in gender roles and trust women more both inside and outside the home; this change starts through interventions that target intra-household gender norms. It is also the case that men are more likely to trust women's participation in community groups and trainings if they are aware of the scope of these events that are intended (also) for women. Rather than solely thinking of women's empowerment, an integrated gender approach that includes men at the beginning of activities, is also a more balanced and effective strategy to gain men's trust. In certain contexts, especially where gender norms are stricter, it is also recommended that programs seek, again from the beginning, the support of gatekeepers and influential figures (including religious leaders as actors of change) to shift attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors.

### BOX 3: THE ROLE OF MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY GROUPS FOR STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE

Mercy Corps understands "women's meaningful participation in community groups" to be achieved when: "Women comprise at least 30% of membership, and multiple women contribute to group discussions. Women provide input into key decisions, and their opinions are recognized and taken into consideration. Women present in key leadership or leadership supporting roles. When a woman's decision goes well, she takes credit. When it goes poorly, she takes responsibility." With the caveat that the percentage should be context-specific and may be perceived as a mere quota, the research found that meaningful participation in community groups is important for strengthening resilience in three critical ways: 1) access to information and resources, 2) contribution of knowledge and skills, and 3) social capital building. This validates what is found in prior research, that social capital is an important resilience

MORE

**⟩ CONTINUED**

capacity.[30] The types of social capital most observed in the Nepal research include social bonding and social bridging: by bonding social capital, we see rather demographically similar members of a community convening at a community group meeting and developing regular interactions that arguably strengthen relationships that may be helpful during an emergency; by bridging social capital, we see the participants of these community groups being introduced to other useful actors in society (e.g., private agricultural market actors, government service providers, etc.).

In Nepal, within BRIGE communities, women were mainly attending **financial services groups**, where they strengthened their knowledge and ability to make informed decisions around savings, loans, governmental grants, and other services; **disaster management groups**, where they reinforced their understanding of preparedness and often conveyed the messages back to their households, allowing for some resilient measures to be put in place at the household level and advocating for some actions at community level; **agricultural training groups**, where they learned more resilient agricultural techniques that are environmentally sustainable and that provide potential for increased income; and **mother groups**, where they reinforced their social capital and increased their knowledge related to positive nutritional practices. In Nepal, the financial services groups and the disaster management groups were central channels through which the parent programs were implementing their resilience-focused activities.

**KEY LEARNING #3**

## Household dialogue increased sharing of household chores, thereby reducing the time burden on women so that they could participate in activities that built their ability to better absorb, adapt to, or respond to a future shock or stress

The household dialogue led to increased sharing of household chores between men and women. After an initial introduction to develop a conceptual understanding of gender, the couples participated in a session on the division of roles and responsibilities in the household. Inevitably, this discussion encouraged deep reflection on chores and the realization, on the part of men, that women do a lot more than they initially thought. In both Nepal and Niger, men increasingly began to help with household chores, thus freeing time for women to engage in different activities, such as participating in community trainings in Nepal or preparing more nutritious food in Niger.

As described earlier, participation in community groups can lead to resilience in several ways: 1) participation often increases social capital: by participating in these groups, women develop social resources (e.g., networks, social relations, access to other institutions in society) that may, down the road, help provide support in the case of a shock or stress; 2) women acquire knowledge and skills that they use and share at the household-level and can share and access information at the community-level; and 3) women contribute to decision-making at the household and community levels.

30 Frankenberger et al 2013.

> *"My husband is in India so my father-in-law and I participated in the program. Earlier he used to scold all the time telling me that you are the daughter-in-law, so you should do all the work in the house. And he used to wake up early and go straight to the shop to have a chat and drink tea. But after participating in the program, he wakes up early, boils milk, and delivers it to people's houses. He also looks after feeding the cattle and taking them to the field. If I go to the jungle to fetch grass, then he feeds and prepares the children for the school."*
>
> — Woman from mixed-caste group in BRIGE intervention community, Dadeldhura District, Nepal

In M-RED program areas in Nepal, participants in the household dialogue expressed how men help more with chores and women use their free time to 1) attend farmer group meetings where they typically learn a new agricultural technology (e.g., how to plant sugarcane) that can lead to increased incomes and reinforce flood-prone lands and 2) attend community disaster management committee (CDMC) meetings where a variety of DRR topics are discussed (e.g., early warning systems). One BRIGE supervisor explained, "The women were busy with housework. Now, with more time (the men helping out), they can be at the whole meeting. Before, if there was a meeting, they would leave early to prepare dinner." One woman, expressing a common theme heard throughout the research, explained, "Before we were just involved with household chores, but now we participate in meetings, discussion, and trainings to learn new things" (woman in a Dalit caste group in BRIGE intervention community, Dadeldhura). To a lesser degree, the free time also meant that women could implement what they learned in the farmer group meetings (e.g., grow new types of vegetables), do other chores (e.g., collect wood from the forest, go to the market), or do leisure activities (e.g., fishing).

While women acquired knowledge and skills in these meetings, it is also critical to note that their participation resulted in their increased contribution to community information and capacity. Especially with the added value of self-confidence (see Key Learning #1), women spoke up in community groups and provided knowledge derived from their own experience. In one CDMC meeting, participants decided that they wanted to plant potatoes (subsidized by M-RED) and were discussing how much to plant. Men said they should plant 10 kilograms each; the women, on the other hand, said that they wanted to plant 25 kilograms. As it turns out, the women are the ones typically responsible for planting and working the fields, not the men. The men, without knowing, had suggested a much smaller amount because they thought that the women would not be able to manage more. This is an example in which explicitly having women's opinions in community decision-making makes a difference in agricultural production, whether the potatoes are used ultimately for subsistence or cash, and broadly leads to better decisions that affect the whole community. Improved agricultural production is important for household resilience in that it provides food and income. At the community level, some of the crops promoted, like sugarcane, actually serve to reinforce the flood-prone lands where they are planted. In an example from another district, men wanted to conduct group farming for corn. Women explained that the plots of land are separate, and therefore not appropriate for group farming, plus there may be disagreements if the corn is planted communally. As a result of the women's participation, they decided to plant at the individual household level.

In ERP areas in Nepal, female participants in the household dialogue from mixed-caste groups reported important shifts in gender roles also due to the structure of the gender sessions "...[which] employ a different method where both men and women are kept together in the training. Previously, other programs only focused on women. Keeping both men and women gives a better output" (woman from mixed-caste group in BRIGE intervention community, Kavrepalanchowk). Among these shifts, there is greater sharing of household chores by men, with women having more time to attend trainings, community groups, and productive activities (e.g., agriculture,

small businesses); on the other hand, the change was less prominent among women from Dalit and indigenous groups. The less prominent change observed among marginalized groups could be explained by the fact that women from these groups already did not abide by strict rules that kept them inside the house, since they were relied upon to economically contribute to the family income. Women and men from these groups were already more open to women's mobility. However, especially for these groups, there was a very limited-to-non-existent increase in meaningful participation in community groups, which could be explained by the fact that greater intentionality is needed to address marginalized social groups. Men from both mixed-caste and marginalized groups who attended the household dialogue training reported considerable increased support for their female family members in household chores. Generally, according to men from mixed-caste groups, women use the accrued time to participate in community groups, often resulting in women having more knowledge than men on disaster preparedness. However, men reported that the key positions in community groups are kept by men, who are the final decision-makers. In non-BRIGE areas, communities where only the gender-inclusive financial literacy training was given and not the full household dialogue curriculum, only women from mixed-caste groups reported increased time availability to participate in community groups thanks to their husbands' support. However, men from the same background mentioned "changing times" as the main reason for increased women's participation in household and community discussions.

In LEAP program areas, perhaps due to the cultural context of Niger, the impact of the household dialogue curriculum on shared household chores followed gender lines more strictly, with men directly supporting women with more labor-intensive tasks (e.g., water collection) or paying somebody to help. Very few men engaged in indoor household tasks or supported childcare, as these were perceived to still be within the domain of women's responsibility. Women took advantage of the increased time availability to prepare food with greater care, starting from healthier preparation of food to increased number of meals per day.[31] Women also used the increased free time to attend the Quranic schools that could arguably also strengthen social capital. A woman in Kania said, "Yes, men are more engaged. They perform some household chores. The sensitization campaigns and the messages during the Friday prayer allowed for an increased awareness [of the need to support household chores]."[32] Another woman in Gao reported that as a result of shared household chores, "We eat better, our children are better looked after and healthier, our husbands are happier as we give them more attention."[33]

*A man in Kania, Niger, helps with household chores by fetching wood.*

Marthe Diarra Doka

Across all the programs, and in general, social capital is not something easily measurable. It is based on perceptions of local embeddedness, moral convention and the norms, reciprocity, and trust within a community. Prior research does show, however, that social capital is important in determining the nature of resilience at the community level.[34] The types of social capital most observed in the Nepal research include social bonding and

31 Diarra Doka, p. 5
32 Ibidem, p. 37
33 Ibidem, p. 35
34 Frankenberger et al, 2013

social bridging (See Box 3). In Nepal, this social capital, qualitatively measured through community group participation, was noted in both BRIGE and non-BRIGE communities. However, in BRIGE communities, because more women are participating and participating more meaningfully, the social capital appeared to be greater.

## Recommendation

If the programmatic approach to improving resilience is done through information sessions and trainings, it is important to consider who the supporting organization wants to be participating in these meetings and if they have the time to attend given other competing priorities such as household chores. Should women's time availability be limited, it is important to favor actions to increase men's support of women's participation, such as taking on household chores to allow women to attend meetings. In the same way that development programs have gotten better about scheduling intervention activities when it is convenient for participants, given their schedule and workload, resilience-focused programs need to better strategize to reduce the time burden on desired participants. To get women to participate, this may require targeting change at the individual and intra-household level, reducing women's household chores by encouraging men to share the responsibility.

### BOX 4: DECISION-MAKING IN POLYGAMOUS HOUSEHOLDS—NIGER

In southern Niger, traditional polygamy excludes potential for shared decision-making as bigger decisions are made solely by the head of the household (man).

When it comes to the division of tasks related to agricultural production for household consumption, the decision lies with the first wife, while the subsequent co-wives do not participate in the discussion. The research in Niger considered the effect of the household dialogue also in polygamous families and highlighted some interesting shifts in terms of decision-making. As a result of their participation in the household dialogue training and the support of influential community figures, there were some instances of men being supportive of their wives co-planning according to the needs of their household: "The last harvest was profitable. My husband, his other wife, and I pulled money together to buy a sheep. For the Tabaski celebration, our husband informed us of the need to sell it as it was fat enough. We agreed with him. After having sold it, we discussed together about possible investments. The money earned was used to buy a goat, a male and a female sheep. With that money, we buy children's clothes and we provide for our daughter's wedding. This is the result of a shared decision-making among three persons" (polygamous family in BRIGE intervention area).[35]

However, the action research also shows a general resistance toward a shared household budget; still, it is important to note that, in some cases, separate budgeting may support resilience. For instance, having an independent budget would prevent the husband from using the women's funds to marry an additional woman, safeguarding income for other household needs. As a man in Gao says: "I do not agree with the idea of a shared budget, as men and women have different needs. For example, wife and husband could agree to use the common budget to marry a daughter, but a wife would never agree to use the common budget for me to get a second wife."[36]

35 Diarra Doka, p. 31
36 Ibidem, p. 30

**KEY LEARNING #4**

## Household dialogue increased men's respect for women and the value of their opinions, thereby improving women's participation in household decision-making

The initial reflection around gender roles and responsibilities offered in the household dialogue was considered an important awareness-raising driver for men and women in both Niger and Nepal. During the exercises, women realized the wealth of knowledge that they had in traditional female domains (e.g., food preparation and nutritional balancing, children care) and—especially in Nepal—they reflected on the possibility to contribute to non-gender specific areas (e.g., financial management, savings and loans) thanks to the knowledge gained in trainings and capacity-building experiences. Food and nutrition are critical dimensions to human capital, which allows an individual, household, or even community to better absorb, adapt to, or respond to shocks and stresses. Again, in this study it was not possible to measure the direct impacts of improved food and nutrition on resilience; however, other research has shown how human capital is key to resilience with some arguing that "human capital is among the most important determinants of resilience because it can increase or decrease the efficiency of other types of capital in resilience-building efforts."[37, 38]

In Niger, both women and men report increased awareness over the expertise of women related to diversification and utilization of food items, a traditionally female domain. The household dialogue facilitated this realization, enabling women to feel more confident about their knowledge and skills and giving men the opportunity to acknowledge this capacity. According to Diarra Doka, the action research in Niger showed that women's opinions are increasingly considered when it comes to supplying the house with food; this results from men and women listening more to each other, as was promoted by the household dialogue training. The engagement of community leaders in the post-household-dialogue behavior-change campaign further supported this process with positive examples.

In ERP program areas in Nepal, men increased respect for women and their opinions because of the household dialogue and the increased exposure that women had to trainings (e.g., in disaster preparedness, financial skills, etc.). As a woman in a BRIGE intervention area said, "Yes, there has been change. Previously, I could not talk in front of people. I also did not know about interest rates, products, and other information relating to the cooperative. Previously I was a member, but now I am involved as a secretary. Now I can conduct any program and also respond to questions confidently" (woman from a mixed-caste group in BRIGE intervention area, Kavrepalanchowk). In Nepal, despite the shift toward increased respect of women's opinions in BRIGE intervention, the key positions in executive committees often remain dominated by men. This trend is consistent with what was highlighted by other bodies of research on women's participation in decision-making and the need to focus on the quality and nature of participation (including capacity-building) and not only on the outcome (increased numbers).[39]

*A husband and wife who participated in the household dialogue in Dadeldhura district in Nepal farm tomatoes together.*

Sangita Adhikari/Mercy Corps

37 Frankenberger et al, 2013

38 See also Mayunga, 2007

39 O'Neil, T., and Domingo, P., The Power to Decide. Women, Decision-Making and Gender Equality, ODI, London, 2015, https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9848.pdf

In M-RED program areas in Nepal, both BRIGE and non-BRIGE communities self-report that there have been changes in how men respect women and value their opinions. One M-RED District Coordinator explained that now men will say, "When I think of selling cow/buffalo, I didn't ask for her opinion; now I will talk to her" (Kanchanpur District). Community members from a non-BRIGE community also shared, "We [the men] listen to women more" and "[The men] also asked for our opinions when selling the sugarcane." While these examples do not point to a household being necessarily more resilient, when we consider the hypothesized "resilience causal chain," we can see how increased consultation with multiple stakeholders, particularly those with more or different knowledge about household capacities and needs, can lead to better financial decisions that in turn might lead to more resilient behaviors. In the aforementioned examples, part of the lack of differentiation between BRIGE and non-BRIGE communities may, again, have to do with the fact that the non-BRIGE communities also received partial gender equity training via financial literacy modules on Shared Roles and Responsibilities and Joint Decision-Making.

> *"[The men] also listen to women [with respect to] what to plant, where to plant."*
>
> — Woman in indigenous group in BRIGE intervention community, Kailali District, Nepal

Because women are participating more in community groups and activities, men are valuing their opinions more, as they perceive women to be more informed and educated. For example, one man explained how they will prepare for the next disaster by saying, "...women have participation in community groups these days and are more knowledgeable... hence, it may help" (man in a Dalit caste group in BRIGE intervention, Dadeldhura). What is interesting is how the "resilience causal chain" is not perfectly linear (see Figure 2). That is, men's trust in women and increased sharing of household chores contributes to increased women's participation in community groups and activities; at the same time, that participation in community groups and activities, in turn by virtue of the knowledge and skills women acquire, increases men's respect for women and value of their opinions (Figure 3).

It is important to note that in M-RED communities there was not yet a complete change of gender norms. There are multiple instances in which men expressed doubt about women's opinions. For example, even where men expressed overall support for women in a focus group, one further detailed, "So now they speak, but sometimes they speak too much, even more than men, but they are weaker in other areas. [We think] that women tend to speak more but are not accountable" and another explained, "Some of [the women] don't have enough information. They haven't been outside the house, so they don't know" (men in BRIGE intervention community, Dadeldhura). These examples demonstrate that while there are definite shifts to include women's opinions, there remain some reservations about the value of those opinions and some differences between women contributing to decision-making and women making their own independent decisions. Given the short nature of the BRIGE intervention, it should be expected that changing the deeply-entrenched cultural norms about gender roles is a continued work in progress.

In ERP areas in Nepal, women and men from mixed-caste groups in BRIGE intervention areas report an increase in the value attributed to women's opinions. According to them, some of the programmatic activities promoted are central to this shift. For instance, they both mentioned the exposure visit that women had to an agricultural market fair as an excellent opportunity to gain knowledge and to propose innovative ideas that were adopted in the household. Two men from a mixed-caste group in a BRIGE intervention area in Sindhupalchowk, a BRIGE intervention area, affirmed to have adopted ideas proposed by women after the exposure visit: "Women made a decision to start peas cultivation. Before, we never cultivated peas. They got this knowledge through an exchange

visit. [...] Ginger farming is also a new decision brought by women." However, in non-BRIGE areas—that is, where the full household dialogue training was not offered—men and women of all social backgrounds do not report a significant improvement in their consideration of women's opinions.

In LEAP program areas in Niger, Diarra Doka affirms that women's opinions are increasingly valued by men as long as they are related to their specific gendered domains; food and nutrition, for example, have historically been considered the responsibility of women. As one woman in Gao said, before the BRIGE intervention, "The husband would allocate a quantity of grains to the wife and tell her to make the most of it,"[40] while, after the intervention, a man in Gao spoke about the renewed cooperation between spouses, "Our wives have always helped us in terms of food security, but now they are doing it more eagerly, they are more engaged."[41] According to Diarra Doka, it is possible that the increased value given to women's opinions could be translated to other domains outside their traditional gender roles, beyond food and nutrition, such as financial decision-making. She says that this could happen only if programs increase women's knowledge and skills in other areas like financial management and the LEAP program teams keep seeking the support of influential community leaders and gatekeepers to help shift social norms.[42] As a woman in Kania said, there is a need to first educate women before expecting men to value their opinion: "[Mobile money] is a good thing, but if one doesn't know the process, there is the risk to lose money. We are illiterate, and we need more capacity-building on this aspect."[43]

## Recommendation

Future programming that aims to increase women's empowerment, such that their opinions are included in household and community decision-making, needs to seek the support of men, especially those who are influential and respected community leaders. This support is more likely to happen if both men and women are first aware of and value their respective capacities—which are often along traditional gender lines. From there, it will likely be more palatable to broaden men's value of women's opinions in less traditional, non-gendered (or opposite-gendered) areas. Of course, to increase men's value of women's opinions, those opinions need to be educated and informed; therefore, program interventions need to include training to increase the knowledge and skills of women. This kind of social change inevitably takes time; while the household dialogue did change men's attitudes and perceptions of women, it is likely that further social change may require additional facilitated training or refresher modules.

40 Diarra Doka, p.17
41 Ibidem, p.35
42 Diarra Doka, p.24
43 Ibidem, p.25

# Other recommendations

## Bundle interventions to be more effective

In resilience-focused programming, and in development generally, active and meaningful participation of community members is crucial. While this may seem an obvious statement, in practice we find that participation is prescribed or limited by existing social norms. This is particularly the case for gendered and other socially-constructed groups such as castes. Community members participate within the social identities defined by their households and communities. They are not perfectly context-free agents acting on individual free will.

Women, in particular, may not have the license to participate at all. In Nepal, for example, some men disapproved of their wives' participation in group meetings outside of the home prior to the BRIGE intervention. These men had perceived the meetings as places where women would flirt or become "morally corrupt" (see Key Learning #2, above). Therefore, if a resilience-focused program relies upon community groups as the core means of transmitting information, as was the case in both programs in Nepal, it is important to consider not only the organizing of group activities but also how to encourage participation from all segments of the population. The research shows how this kind of social change may need to begin with changes at the individual and intra-household levels.

Furthermore, if women have the license to participate, they may not engage meaningfully. By this we mean that meaningful participation—measured in speaking up, sharing opinions, having opinions seriously considered, leading—may be limited by social norms around how women should participate (see Key Learning #1, above). Women in Nepal expressed reservation in community groups—particularly mixed-gender ones—due to established gender norms. Said one woman, "I think we have information [to contribute to a group meeting], but we don't talk. Today we are able to talk a bit because we are all women here [in the focus group]; if there were men here we would feel afraid and worried. This is the weakness of women" (woman in non-BRIGE community, Baitadi).

If a resilience approach claims that women's participation will enhance collective knowledge about vulnerabilities and opportunities, this fundamentally assumes that women will speak up to share this information. By comparing BRIGE intervention to non-intervention groups, we see that this assumption is often false and that additional support to change gender norms, starting within the household, is needed.

To maximize both the quantity and quality of community member participation in programs that aim to strengthen resilience, such programs should apply a foundational layer that primes individuals so that they can better participate. This should start at the individual and intra-household levels and be adapted to each context. For instance, it is important to consider if the household dialogue's impact would be maximized by engaging men and women in the same venue (e.g., in Nepal) or if beginning with sex-disaggregated sessions would be more effective (e.g., in Niger). When sex-disaggregated sessions are preferred, it is important to still ensure that women's views are represented to men; this can potentially be done through representatives from women's groups or respected women at the community level.

The usual resilience interventions should be bundled with other activities designed to build empowerment. Frequently, these "soft skills" need to be developed at the individual and household levels before expecting them to manifest at the community level. In Nepal, the household dialogue bundled with the other programmatic interventions was what actually improved women's participation in community groups. Seemingly distant from the program's disaster risk reduction and market systems development activities, the household dialogue was a crucial

activity that made those activities—which were strategically designed to strengthen household and community resilience to climate and ecological shocks and stresses—much more impactful. If issues around decision-making at the household level come up during initial gender or risk/resilience assessments, it is advisable to consider integrating the household dialogue intervention at the beginning of the program implementation. As the experience in Niger demonstrated, to bring the intervention to scale with limited resources, the buy-in and engagement of respected community leaders is a key component.

## A gender lens means considering men too

When practitioners say, "We need to think about gender," this is often simplistically understood as "We need to include more women." Although this is often true, sometimes better inclusion of women requires better inclusion of men, too (see Key Learning #2 and 4). Integrating gender means addressing the norms, beliefs, roles, and expectations that are attributed to both men and women, often starting within the household. Indeed, women's roles are usually defined in counterposition to those of men. Changing the norms and expectations for men has the potential to open new spaces for women to participate. Failure to consider men means that these spaces remain closed and competitive, and therefore difficult for women to access. The household dialogue's core premise is to shift social norms for both men and women and develop better dialogue within the household. This is why men and women are ultimately brought together in dialogue, and why women are encouraged to try to understand men's worldview in the same way men are encouraged to try to understand women's worldview.

Confidence is a critical primer for resilience (see above, Key Learning #1). Although women-only empowerment approaches can build women's confidence in important ways, we argue that it is often insufficient—there is a need to build men's confidence in women as well so that women have new spaces in which to confidently participate. The research shows that the household dialogue, with its focus on engaging both men and women together, did shift social norms related to gender in many households, including increased confidence of men in women and their opinions.

# Conclusion

This cross-program and cross-country research contributed to showing how programs aiming to strengthen household and community resilience can be more effective if gender barriers starting at the individual and intra-household levels are taken into account. This means understanding the existing gender norms within a context and accepting that change—particularly that which has to start at the individual and intra-household levels first—will inevitably be more gradual than initially envisioned by programs operating mainly at the community level.

Resilience programming should not overlook the underlying importance of confidence that clearly emerged as a necessary primer for improved participation in program activities. Women's self-confidence and men's confidence in women can lay the groundwork for better engagement of both men and women. The focus on intra-household gender norm change, facilitated through the household dialogue, brought about this confidence and developed more gender equitable attitudes. Often these attitudes became more equitable behaviors, with men demonstrating more respect for women and the value of their opinions in household decisions important for building resilience capacities. While seemingly distant to resilience, some of these new behaviors also included men taking on household chores, which allowed women more time to attend community groups where they gained skills and knowledge, contributed to community information-sharing, and strengthened their social capital. These human and social capitals, in turn, comprise resilience capacities that may prove critical for the next shock or stress that households and communities face. What is further notable about this intra-household-level intervention is that it has achieved multiple results that seem to reinforce each other in such a way to strengthen resilience capacities: changing gender norms at the household level led to increased women's confidence and thus participation in groups that build resilience capacities; participation in these groups led to the acquisition of new skills, which led to increased men's confidence in women; and increased men's confidence in women led to greater consideration of women's opinions in household decision-making.

As resilience discourse continues to influence how development policies and practices are framed, it is important to consider that the desired community- and systems-level change often first requires change at the individual and intra-household levels. Gender norms are deeply embedded at the intra-household level and often determine who is participating in the decisions and activities that build resilience capacities. Better inclusion of women and other marginalized groups can mean bringing more informed opinions or different perspectives to the discussion. It can also mean building the knowledge and skills of people who are uniquely positioned to help their households and communities better absorb, adapt to, and respond to climatic or ecological shocks or stresses. Inclusion must be an active process—it will not happen by itself—and for that reason resilience strategies should incorporate intra-household-level interventions that will make their other strategic activities more effective in the long run.

# Definitions

**Access**
With respect to products and services, accessibility refers to two dominant factors—1) availability (supply-side) and 2) affordability (demand-side). Availability of a product/service means that it is present, and affordability means that it can be procured within reasonable means (of financial/physical, human, and socio/political capital).

**Access to market linkages**
Women can access the full set of various market linkage points (input and output) in a defined market, allowing them to participate and receive fair prices for their goods. Full and equitable market access encompasses location of linkage points (e.g., not too far), absence of discriminatory or unfair laws/policies or social practices and access to required knowledge and skills (e.g., financial literacy).

**Attitudes**
Mental predisposition toward an entity (often another person, object, event or institution) that is shaped by past and present experiences and social norms. Attitudes often influence decisions and behavior (e.g., What is this person's attitude toward risk? She is risk-averse).

**Behaviors**
A decision or observable activity usually in a particular situation or in response to stimulus (e.g., Because she is risk-averse and perceives this infrastructure as risky, she buys additional insurance).

**Community participation tool**
As conceived by BRIGE, it assesses the level of participation of women and marginalized persons in select community groups related to resilience. The spectrum goes beyond the numerical participation to consider input into group discussions and decisions.

**Community resilience**
"The general capacity of a community to absorb change, seize opportunity to improve living standards, and to transform livelihood systems while sustaining the natural resource base. It is determined by community capacity for collective action as well as its ability for problem solving and consensus building to negotiate coordinated response." (Walker, Sayer, Andrew, and Campbell 2010).

**Disadvantaged groups**
(Nepal) Groups of people that have less financial/physical, human, socio/political capital relative to others in their society. In the case of Nepal, disadvantaged groups refer to caste-system based groups: Dalits ("lowest" caste) and Janajati (indigenous nationalities).

**Equitable household decision-making**
Women and men both exhibit agency in the decision-making process. They are empowered to participate in the decision, and they see their views as legitimate and heard. They have access to the knowledge that allows them to inform the decision, and they ultimately agree on how the decision should be made. Should they choose, they can actively delegate the decision to another household member (or each other) and trust that the household member will make the best decision for the good of the entire household.

**Gender Equality**
Women, men, boys, and girls enjoy the same status in society and are afforded the same rights and opportunities, regardless of their sex.

**Gender Norms**
Beliefs and expectations that shape the social relations and roles and responsibilities of women, men, girls and boys. Because gender is learned, it can be "re-learned," and damaging notions of masculinity and femininity can be reshaped by actively cultivating and adopting positive alternatives.

**Household and caregiving responsibilities**
Tasks related to the day-to-day maintenance of a household and its members including, but not limited to, cooking and cleaning, care for the elderly, the sick, and children, and care for small livestock/agriculture.

**Household decision-making tool**
As conceived by BRIGE, it assesses equity in household decision-making, particularly in areas directly related to resilience to natural disasters. The spectrum consists of five levels, ranging from "secrecy" to "joint planning."

**Market linkages tool**
As conceived by BRIGE, it assesses the linkage type and quality for men, women, and marginalized groups operating within a specific market in order to facilitate a detailed analysis of women's and marginalized groups' access to markets, while communicating progress in a simple and streamlined fashion.

**Meaningful participation in community groups**
Women comprise at least 30% of membership, and multiple women contribute to group discussions. Women provide input into key decisions, and their opinions are recognized and taken into consideration. Women are present in key leadership or leadership-supporting roles. When a woman's decision goes well, she takes credit. When it goes poorly, she takes responsibility.

**Perceptions**
The identification/recognition and interpretation of stimuli in the environment. Perceptions can influence decisions and behavior. (e.g., What is this person's perception of this risk? She does not think it is a risk).

**Risk**
The probability of exceeding a specific level of social, environmental and/or economic damages, over a predetermined period of time. R= f (H, V). Risk is a function of the hazard (H) and the level of vulnerability (V).

**Sexual and Gender Based Violence**
Physical, sexual, psychological, and economic acts of violence that are committed against a person because of his/her gender.

**Shock**
Discrete, rapid-onset events that tend to be relatively short-term and easy to identify.

**Stress**
Conditions or pressures that grow more slowly, eroding development progress over time. Stresses should not be confused with broader systemic constraints (e.g., poverty, weak governance, thin markets, gender inequality) that also inhibit people's well-being, but are a more permanent feature of the development context.

**Vulnerability**
The conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards. V=f (I, C). Vulnerability is a function of potential impact (I) of the hazard and the adaptive capacity (C) of the household or community. The potential impact is, in turn, a function of exposure (E) and sensitivity (S) to the hazard. I= f (E, S).

**Women's empowerment**
Women's capacity to control their lives, developing self-reliance also through the acquisition of new skill-sets.

**Women's autonomy**
The possibility for women to self-govern and self-direct the course of their lives, acting on motives and values that are their own.

**Annex 1**

# List of key informant interviews (KIIs)

## Indonesia

Abu Sairi—Krobokan KSB (DRM group) leader
Ahmadin—Syngenta Staff
Andi Ikhwan—AgriFin Mobile Program Manager
Atik Ambarwati—BRIGE Sr. Program Officer
Agustina—Samangawa Group Leader
Danielle de Knocke van der Meulen—Mercy Corps Director of Programs
Eko Utomo—BRIGE Program Manager
Erlina Adnan—Krobokan youth participant
I Prayoga—ZFRP Program Manager
Indah Ikowati—Bulu Lor PKK (women's group) leader
Kusmiyati Budi Nartoyo—Krobokan PKK secretary (leader)
Mega Anggraeni—Program Manager of IUCCE (joined by Retno Sari U and Sri Febriharjati, community development coordinators)
Nuraeni—Morisama Group Leader
Partimah Kusyanto—Krobokan female KSB member
Rian Habonaran—BRIGE M&E Officer
Rina—BRIGE Field Consultant
Selina Haeny—AgriFin Gender Researcher
Solia Munce—BRIGE Field Consultant
Sukadar—Bulu Lor KSB leader
Sadijo—Manyaran KSB leader
Sutijiaryani Pribadi—Manyaran PKK leader
Trey Waters—AgriFin Mobile Program Director
Yudha Kurniasari—Krobokan Solid Waste Management leader
Zas'ari Zainudin—BPR Rural Bank Director

## Nepal

Binod Thapa—Program Coordinator, CDECF
Bishnu Bdr. Khatri—Household Dialogue consultant
Bishnu Prasad Dahal—Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization chairman
Dambar Bohara—M-RED Program Manager
Dhan Singh Maal—CDMC chairperson, Kuiyadaha, Baitadi
Ganesh Bhatta—District Coordinator, M-RED, Dadeldhura
Ganesh Bista—ERP Component Manager
Giriraj Adhikari—ERP Sr. Program Officer
Himalay Ojha—ERP Component Manager
Julie Koehler—Mercy Corps Director of Programs
Kamala Kami—Women's Initiative Fund (WIF) member, Dadeldhura
Kumar Ram Luhar—Elected ward member, Kuiyadaha, Baitadi
Madhav Mainali—Program Coordinator, ARSOW
Mahesh Ghimire—M-RED Program Officer, Kanchanpur
Maya Chaudhary—WIF leader, Kanchanpur
Nagendra Bhatta—Program Officer M-RED, Baitadi
Naresh Chaudhary—Household Dialogue participant, Kailali
Nikunja Nepal—BRIGE Program Manager
Nirmala Chaudhary—FFS chairperson, Kanchanpur
Parbati Khadka—BRIGE Nepal Sr. Program Officer
Prasanna Pradhan—ERP Component Manager
Pratima Moktan—BRIGE supervisor
Punam Chaudhary—Household Dialogue participant, Kailali
Rekha Darji—Financial technical supervisor
Sabita—BRIGE Supervisor, Kanchanpur
Sangita Adhikari—BRIGE Nepal Sr. Program Officer
Sanjay Karki—Mercy Corps Country Director
Saroj Thakur—District Coordinator, M-RED, Kanchanpur
Sima Chaudhary—BRIGE supervisor, Kailali
Suman Uprety—Program Coordinator, REDC
Sumitra Phuyal—President of Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation
Suni Bhandari—BRIGE supervisor, Dadeldhura
Surendra Tagguna—M-RED Program Officer, Dadeldhura
Tulsi Khati—Woman Champion Farmer, Dadeldhura
Urmila Khadka—Deputy Chairperson, Tamakoshi Rural Municipality

**Annex 2**

# Additional resources

The following related Mercy Corps resources are available upon request:

- Gender and Resilience Assessment Report for MRED and ERP—Nepal
- Gender and Resilience Assessment Report for LEAP—Niger
- Gender and Resilience Assessment Toolkit
- Gender and Resilience Measurement Toolkit for a) household decision-making, b) community group participation, and c) market linkage access
- Household Dialogue Activity Implementation Toolkit

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**About Mercy Corps**

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Now, and for the future.

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