

LOCALISATION: AN ESSENTIAL STEP TO RESILIENCE



Photo: TPO Uganda

Localisation and local leadership in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance aim to make development and humanitarian work more effective and relevant. Localisation ensures that those who are nearest to the crisis and those who are most affected, have the required prevention, preparedness and response capacity. This enables them to respond quickly and appropriately. **Localisation therefore refers to transformative, structural changes at the local, national and international level to change the ‘who is in the lead’.** It seeks to ensure that local and national actors, particularly those most at risk, have the necessary space, power, resources and capacities to contribute to decisions that touch them. It also secures that local and national actors are in the lead in addressing or responding to such issues.

This goes hand in hand with local ownership created through deep, sustained engagements between local and external actors. Localisation starts with local people and communities analysing their situation and recognising their capacity to make change, taking into account the multiple positions and diverse make up of each constituency. **“Local” here refers to affected people because they live in the specific geographic area in which development, humanitarian or peace challenges occur.**

General localisation and local leadership principles

- **Local analysis and building on what is there:** Local people analyse their situation and external actors identify operational, institutional, natural, social and human capital and capacities that are available locally to achieve sustainable transformation. External actors will only complement and, where needed, strengthen local approaches, processes, and systems, particularly through ‘South-South’ learning.
- **Partnership and trust:** (Crisis-)Affected people participate fully in decision-making processes. They have tangible influence on leadership and coordination mechanisms, and the kind of support provided to them. Equitable partnerships, accountable to local communities are fostered to promote mutual trust between local and external actors.
- **Amplifying local voices:** Local actors are visible and their legitimacy is publicly recognised. They participate structurally and actively in networks and policy discussions that affect them.
- **Better funding:** Quantity and quality of funding for local actors must increase. Greater percentage of international development aid, including equitable overhead costs, goes to the local actors directly. Their sustained capacities, financial autonomy and sustainability is a strategic objective in all partnering relationships.
- **Inclusion:** It ensures the participation of those most at risk of being left behind, also within communities; and promotes gender equality as well as youth participation.



Field monitoring Environmental Rehabilitation for flood protection project near Dire Dawa, Ethiopia by Cordaid's partner for the 'Partners for Resilience programme' Dire Dawa Administration Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction Association (DDACCDRMA).

Localisation and local leadership principles in resilience building: as applied by Cordaid

Disasters have been increasing dramatically over the past few decades, with climate change contributing to even more extreme and unpredictable weather. Degradation and loss of ecosystems intensify the hazards. Combined with the high vulnerability of communities in the global South, this leads to increased disaster risks. In order to enhance community resilience, the Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid (Cordaid) developed approaches to assist disaster-prone communities to become more resilient to hazards. As a member of the Partners for Resilience alliance, Cordaid uses Integrated Risk Management (IRM) approach to mitigate disaster risk and enhance resilient livelihoods, including climate change adaptation and ecosystem management and restoration. Key principle for resilience is local ownership. Localisation and local leadership are at the core of Cordaid's resilience approaches for Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR), District Resilience, Urban Resilience, Resilient Recovery, and its lobby & advocacy. CMDRR provides a concrete example of promoting localisation at the community level where the community plays a key catalyst role, managing and implementing their own development and contingency plans to cope with potential hazard events, as well as formulating policy asks for structural change.

In line with the Partners for Resilience's IRM approach, Cordaid applies the following principles in its work:

- **Putting people at the centre-stage**, building on local and traditional resources and knowledge while partnering with communities, CSOs, government, knowledge institutes, private sector, and media by using **multi-stakeholder approaches**.
- **Linking humanitarian and development** by focusing on sustainable livelihoods and **integrating disciplines and approaches** to encompass different risks.
- Addressing **risks at a landscape scale** and managing and restoring **ecosystems**.
- Working on **different time scales** to ensure adaptive planning.
- **Linking local realities with global processes**.*



Community members doing Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment at Hlang Thar Yar, an urban slums in industrial area of Yangon, Myanmar.

RESILIENCE PROCESS- STEPS & TOOLS

PROCESS STEPS	Joint disaster risk analysis	Setting a common agenda	Establishing Disaster Risk Reduction Structures	Realisation of resilience measures	Knowledge development & Advocacy
SUPPORT & TOOLS	Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment, at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ community level ■ administrative level (district/country) ■ water catchment/landscape level ■ urban neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Facilitation of multi-stakeholder participatory risk reduction planning ■ Formulation of an integrated intervention strategy (DRR, CCA, EMR; with different key stakeholders) 	Establishment/ reinforcement of Disaster Risk Reduction Management structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ at community level ■ at admin. level (county, district) ■ at water catchment/landscape level ■ at urban level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Process facilitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation • Coordination • Participatory Monitoring ■ Intermediary: community <-> district <-> national <-> regional <-> global ■ Knowledge provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participatory monitoring & evaluation ■ Documentation ■ (capacity strengthening for) engagement in local/national policy dialogue ■ Expert sessions & conferences (Advocacy) ■ Research & Innovation
RESULTS	Risk & Potential maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community ■ District/ ■ Catchment ■ Baseline data 	Integrated intervention strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development plan ■ Contingency plan 	Local ownership Engaged network Resources	Increased resilience = Reduced disaster risk	Upscaling sustainable resilience building process

* For relevant tools and resources visit <https://www.partnersforresilience.nl/en/publications>

FOSTERING RESILIENCE THROUGH LOCALISATION

Examples from Cordaid's work within the "Partners for Resilience" programme

In Eastern Uganda the Teso sub-region has been repeatedly affected by floods and droughts and has suffered from cattle-rustling, rebel activities and, most recently, desert locust invasion and Covid-19. This has had significant impact on the livelihoods of Teso communities, making it one of the poorest regions of the country. To help increase community resilience in this sub-region, Cordaid supported its partners, TPO Uganda and Socadido, in their work with the existing 'Teso disaster risk reduction platform' composed of CSOs and local governments. Using a participatory disaster risk approach (PDRA), they jointly developed a deeper understanding of existing community capacities and critical gaps for disaster responses. This was seen as an essential step to determine common actions and unique roles of different actors, including Cordaid. It became apparent that, with a focus on emergency responses, attention for risk and impact reduction was missing. With the support of the Partners for Resilience programme, the platform underwent a profound change towards upstream work, such as disseminating

weather forecast information, and training of communities, and relevant district actors on risk reduction and resilience. This was accompanied by training on IRM and advocacy which enabled the platform to increase their lobby activities at local, regional and national levels to increase budgets towards natural resources management. This has led to more effective planning of crop planting/harvesting by farmers. Each district now has a contingency plan for responding to emerging disasters. Crucially, communities themselves have initiated their own hazard mitigation and adaptation strategies and actions, using resources and skills they acquired. The platform has also become a partner to the government in policy processes to facilitate community consultation and participation. They are also leading the advocacy for a climate change bill at regional levels, with support from Cordaid. Currently, it is the only platform represented in the national disaster management platform and it is recognised nationally as a key knowledge holder on disaster risk reduction.



CMDRR committee member facilitating a community meeting in a PfR project village in Magoro Sub-County of Katakwi District – Uganda.

"We simply have the capacity to act and respond. We have always had it. It is inherent to the community structure."

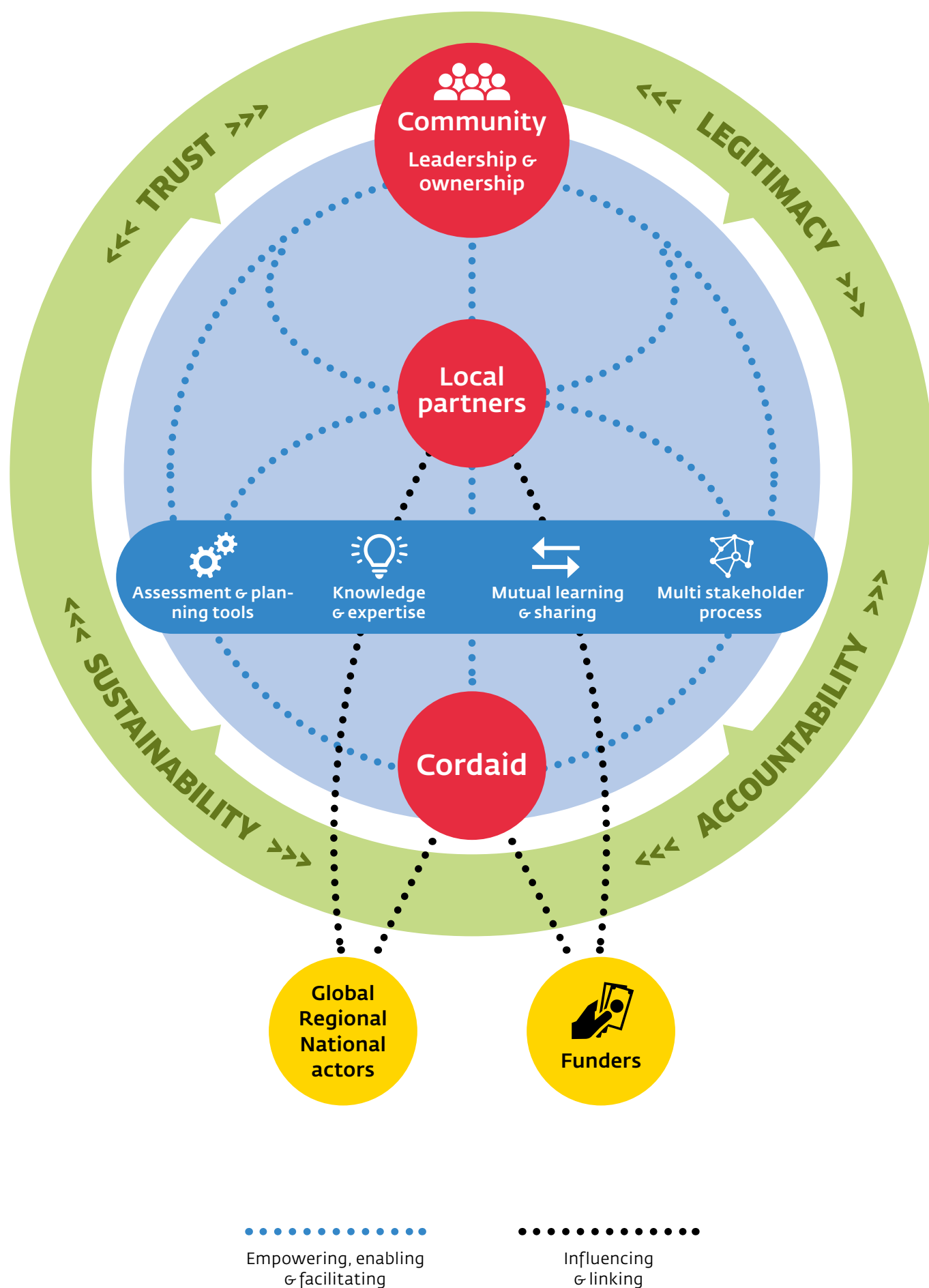
Patrick Onyango Mangen, CEO of TPO Uganda

In the Philippines community members and local officials of the coastal and island municipality of Guiuan drew up a common integrated risk management strategy through the work of a multi-sector and -stakeholder cooperation platform. Cordaid supported them in establishing this platform, which has become the central planning, implementation and resource mobilizing space for building resilience under the leadership and drive of the Local Government Unit of Guiuan Municipality. Having previously witnessed the impact of a super typhoon, the community used this platform to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Framework (CCAF) in 2017-19, which tackles climate, disaster and environmental risks while building on local capacities, resources and vulnerabilities; This was done through a participatory process that led to a longer-term (8-10 year) strategy. Local government mainstreamed the strategy in various municipal plans by aligning programs and investments with this framework; the Government also established and funded a specific local government unit on resilience action. With the support of Cordaid and the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC) a National NGO partner working to advocate local actor access to climate

financing, Guiuan came up with a resource mobilisation plan reflecting investment strategies at local and national levels, and engaged in high level advocacy. ICSC was able to play a critical advisory role to the national government on Climate Change Adaptation solutions based on the efforts and experiences from Guiuan. Cordaid and ICSC also played a crucial role in linking local actors from Guiuan to outside (in country and global) donors, such as the National Climate Financing window and the GCF or Green Climate Fund. Advocacy and building confidence on both sides were required to get to a point where Guiuan is ready to partner directly with national and global donors. The CCAF developed jointly by Cordaid, the Guiuan community and local partners has taught Cordaid how to support locally-driven climate actions. In particular, the case shows that putting multi-stakeholder cooperation as the driving force behind planning, data gathering and analysis, and using integrated risk management approaches are essential for evidence-based and comprehensive development. This approach is replicated in other municipalities and cities in the Philippines and forms the basis of national advocacy to support local actors in participatory IRM analysis and strategy building.

In Indonesia, multi-stakeholder platforms such as the Watershed Forum in Sikka strengthened capacities of villages to perform their own risk appraisals, set resilience measures and advocate for resilience strengthening. This forum, with the support and facilitation of the Maumere Diocesan Caritas (CKM), built on and strengthened local leadership and ensured longer term sustainability. Initiated in 2013, this particular forum developed integrated watershed management plans in 20 villages by 2020. As an inclusive, locally led multi-stakeholder platform, it undertook its own resilience assessments, developed responses for which it helped secure financing and influenced local and national policies. It also turned into a hub/ facility to engage other actors, becoming a strategic partner for both village and local government. Working with the forum, villages developed their own resilience plans with village governments deciding to allocate between on average 27% of their annual village budget towards resilience measures in 2019. While CKM lead those engagements, Cordaid provided long term technical support and accompaniment to CKM for it to be in the best position to work with multi-stakeholder platforms, develop comprehensive resilience measures and undertake advocacy.





HOW RESILIENCE APPROACHES STIMULATE LOCALISATION

Cordaid's overall approach to localisation for resilience focuses on ownership by and dialogue with communities in analysing their situation, developing actions and in realisation. This is done with and through existing structures and local partners. Cordaid's localisation approach is two-pronged:

The main aim is to foster **ownership and leadership by the communities themselves**. Cordaid ensures participation, collaboration and decision-making by the communities at each stage of the project, from analysis to implementation and policymaking. Beyond this, as in the example from the Philippines, communities provide feedback into strategy development and fundraising. Essential elements to achieve such sustainable behavioural changes, are longer term support and active accompaniment. As Cordaid Program officer Ahmad Wali Kosha put it – *“For local leadership and localisation to take shape, we need to work with communities for the long term – it needs to work according to their real needs”*.

To achieve such community leadership and ownership, **Cordaid strengthens local organisations that have key qualities to drive localisation**. They need to have the necessary legitimacy with relevant (community and government) actors and contextual knowledge to support multi-stakeholder processes. They are instrumental in accessing communities and maintaining long-lasting relationships. And they play a key role in generating enabling environments (cultures, structures and policies) and when needed, upscaling. Cordaid accompanies and supports those local partners to lead resilience projects, including project design, implementation and resource mobilisation, gradually reducing its own role.

Taking sustainability and resilience as the point of departure and end-aim, Cordaid plays a more supportive, facilitative role. This includes longer term accompaniment and support on multi-stakeholder engagements and assisting community coordination. It also includes creating access to knowledge

and innovation and providing technical and advocacy support such as establishing connections with government and international actors to ensure sustainability of community resilience initiatives beyond its own projects. In a number of cases Cordaid has explicitly envisaged local partners and networks taking over the project leadership in a next stage. To achieve this Cordaid plays a crucial liaison and confidence building role between donors and local actors to mediate expectation and ensure both are ready to engage in fruitful direct funding partnerships in the future. This is part of an advocacy and networking 'chain' in which communities link up to and influence local actors and funding, local partners bring community voice to national and regional actors, while Cordaid represents the communities' voice in global dialogues. This further increases local leadership, with local partners and communities determining own strategies and projects. They can then consider approaching outsiders like Cordaid for technical advice and other support based on their needs.



Early Warning System training in Wipolo village, Orom Sub-County, Kitgum District

KEY CHALLENGES TO LOCALISATION

Prevalent challenges such as poverty, tense political settings, insecurity as well as the recent Covid-19 pandemic limit participation (particularly of women), coordination with government (e.g. when they were not present or unable to work or access certain areas), and space and support for local actors. At the same time, local organisation and communities were often able to continue their work during Covid-19 lockdowns when outsiders could not travel.

Moreover, structural and political limitations pose challenges to local communities and implementing organisations alike. Government bureaucracy and systems slow down movement and energies created by participatory processes. They also limit possibilities to make localised resilience planning a cross-cutting issue. Limited funding for and knowledge about resilience programming and local, multi-stakeholder collaboration and uneven mutual trust (further weakened by regular transfer of local officials) also hamper the forceful implementation of prevention strategies.

Within Cordaid itself developing equal partnerships with local organisations has a mixed record. Within the resilience work, Cordaid actively collaborates with local partners and supports them in their efforts to enhance multi-stakeholder partnership and strengthen community resilience. Power-analysis within existing partnerships on other thematic areas has at the same time shown that, Cordaid, as contract holder wields more power with a centralised governance model and partner-selection and budget allocation. At organisational level, internal processes often favour risk averseness and greater control by Cordaid. This is, in parts, due to donor demands and national regulations as well as Cordaid's own accountability. While Cordaid is committed to support greater local leadership and localisation, it is still exploring the adequate balance in meeting both internal and external requirements and expectations, and putting this ambition in practice, while serving the most marginalised populations in conflict affected and fragile settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW TO STRENGTHEN LOCALISATION AND RESILIENCE

Resilience and localisation both focus on having local communities and actors recognised as best placed to analyse and develop their responses to challenges they face. The two approaches could benefit from closer analytical and practical linkages:

- **Undertake a mapping of actors within communities** at the start of all programs - to ensure identification of structures, movements, individuals and existing relationships as well as secure participation of the most marginalised (using CMDRR and related frameworks).
- **Undertake participatory capacity need/gap assessments** and planning to ensure that resilience interventions build on existing capacities, context, and constituencies within communities, social movements, civil societies and government; and complement those where this is needed most.
- **Develop and support systemic analysis and learning for and from local partners and communities.** Analysis of the local situation and mutual learning should take place in a sustained, systematic and jointly identified/agreed way, favouring 'learning by doing' and 'south-south' approaches.
- **Pay great attention to local coordination and networking** with relevant actors by using trusted entities that have close, long-term relationships with all stakeholders as 'go-betweens'. This greatly facilitates multi-stakeholder processes and fosters trust needed for local ownership.
- **Ensure greater local accountability** of programmes by/towards communities (i.e. ensuring primary stakeholders equally sit on programme steering committees deciding on strategies and budgets).
- **Make time, listen and create flexibility in your programmes.** For community-led resilience and localisation to take shape, a supportive, listening attitude is required. This needs a long term horizon, commitments and resources and support for this from implementing and donor institutions.
- **Stop successfully.** Develop concrete steps from the start of your engagements to ensure local actors and partners have the necessary capacities, systems and structures to take full ownership and lead as well as fundraise and implement resilience initiatives and work with outside agencies and donors (e.g. by ensuring necessary financial and narrative reporting capacities, working with local partners on developing, submitting and managing proposals as well as engaging with donors or involving new actors such as private sector).
- **Build confidence and linkages with donors** Mutual confidence building can be achieved by fostering a track record between donors and local actors, jointly developing risk assessments and strategies, showcasing the legitimacy of local actors (e.g. through their recognition by local governments) and ensuring financial transparency and accountability of projects.
- **International NGOs must review their own roles, structures and systems to strengthen localisation.** This includes a.o. reviewing contracts, risk assessments and program governance set ups to allow for shared decision making power and scaling up local partners through adequate direct funding and supporting them in their own community resource mobilisation.
- **Scale up localisation advocacy towards donors** for them to enter into direct financing partnerships with local organisations. Donor advocacy must focus on adaption of their requirements and processes to make it accessible to local actors.

ABOUT PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE

Partners for Resilience is a global alliance of actors working on resilience. Partners for Resilience promotes the systematic integration of Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Ecosystems Management and Restoration for sustainable resilience. <https://www.partnersforresilience.nl/en/>

ABOUT CORDAID

Cordaid works to end poverty and exclusion. We do this in the world's most fragile and conflict-affected areas as well as in the Netherlands. We engage communities to rebuild trust and resilience and increase people's self-reliance.

Our professionals provide humanitarian assistance and create opportunities to improve security, health care and education and stimulate inclusive economic growth. We are supported by nearly 300,000 private donors in the Netherlands and by a worldwide partner network. Cordaid is a founding member of Caritas Internationalis and CIDSE.

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Cover photo: Project officer facilitating a coaching session with VSLA group in a PfR project village in Magoro Sub-County of Katakwi District – Uganda.