SAHEL RESILIENCE LEARNING (SAREL)

Midterm Performance Assessment of USAID's "Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced" (RISE) Initiative in Burkina Faso and Niger

Phase II Efficacy Review (Approved)

August 2017

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Midterm Performance Assessment of USAID's "Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced" (RISE) Initiative in Burkina Faso and Niger

Page iii

Acknowledgements

SAHEL RESILIENCE LEARNING (SAREL)
Midterm Performance Assessment of USAID's "Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced" (RISE) Initiative in Burkina Faso and Niger

Page iv

Table of Contents

Table of Tables

Table of Figures

Acronyms

AID	Agency for International Development
CBO	Community Based Organization
COP	Chief of Party
CILSS	Comité permanent inter-État de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
CNFA	Cultivating New Frontiers in Africa
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DCA	Development Credit Authority
DFAP	Development Food Assistance Program
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Aid Office
Ecole des Maris	Husbands' Schools (Niger)
ECOWAS	The Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FASO	Families Achieving Sustainable Outcomes
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FFP	Food for Peace
FMNR	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
FY	Fiscal Year
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GoBF	Government of Burkina Faso
GoN	Government of Niger
HDI	Human Development Index
HKI	Helen Keller International
Initiative 3N	The Government of Niger's "Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens" Initiative
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
Lahia	Livelihoods, Agriculture and Health Interventions in Action
LOP	Life of Project
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	Mercy Corps
MCC	The Millennium Challenge Corporation
MSI/FP	Mary Stokes International / Family Planning
NCBA-CLUSA	National Cooperative Business Association-Cooperative League of the USA International.

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OFDA	The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
OASIS	Organizing to Advance Solutions in the Sahel (UCBerkeley)
PAM	Programme Alimentaire Mondial (WFP)
PASAM-TAI	Programme d'Appui à la Sécurité Alimentaire des Ménages-Tanadin Abincin Iyali
PD	Program Description
PDEV	Peace through Development Program
PNSR	Programme National du Secteur Rural (National Program for Rural Sector) (Burkina Faso)
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
REGIS-AG	Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel-Accelerated Growth
REGIS-ER	Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel-Enhanced Resilience
RISE	Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced Initiative
SAREL	Sahel Resilience Learning project
SAP	System d'Alert Précoce (Early Warning System)
Sawki	Mercy Corps' DFAP Project in Niger
SC	Save the Children
SCAP/RU	Système Communautaire d'Alerte Précoce et de Réponses Aux Urgences
SPRING	Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition
SRO	USAID's Sahel Regional Office
UEMOA	L'Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine (West African Economic and Monetary Union)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund / Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WA-WASH	Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Program
WFP	United Nations World Food Program

Executive Summary

RISE Background

Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) is a USAID-sponsored program designed to improve the resilience of households and communities in vulnerable areas of Burkina Faso and Niger. USAID defines resilience as: "*the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth*".[1] Niger and Burkina Faso are focus countries in USAID's broader efforts to build resilience to recurrent crises under the guidance of the Resilience Learning Council and with the support of Center for Resilience.

RISE is one of several USAID-supported resilience programs around the world. Centered in West Africa, it complements the EU-ECOWAS Global Alliance for Resilience in the Sahel and West Africa (AGIR). Both of these initiatives stem from a shared concern about the steady increase in humanitarian crises and the number of people affected by them, as well as the increasing length of time that affected populations remain in a humanitarian assistance-dependent status. This phenomenon underscores the "erosion of the population's resilience due to the succession of crises, extreme vulnerability and poverty and the lack of basic services."[2]

Program

In designing the RISE Initiative, USAID capitalized on existing activities and capacities on the ground, incorporating five Development Food Assistance Programs (DFAP), and introduced three new projects: Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Enhanced Resilience (REGIS-ER); Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Accelerated Growth (REGIS – AG); and the Sahel Resilience Learning Project (SAREL). Together, these projects are designed to strengthen the capacities of individuals and communities across a number of activities, including, but not limited to, sustainable livelihoods; natural resource management; health and nutrition; cowpea, poultry, and small ruminant value chains; opportunities for learning and dialogue through "Safe Spaces for Girls" and "Schools for Husbands;" adult literacy programs; hygiene and sanitation; and disaster risk management. "RISE I" is the term used to distinguish the ongoing program from an anticipated follow-on program: – "RISE II."

Assessment Purpose, Questions, and Methodology

USAID commissioned a two-phased assessment. Phase I consisted of a literature review that drew attention to key findings and current trends in the academic literature related to resilience enhancement. Phase II (this assessment) constitutes a field-oriented, qualitative assessment, with an emphasis on obtaining the perspective of key stakeholders, particularly participating beneficiaries, and providing a demonstrable analysis of what needs to be done and what can be done. It relies on field-level understandings and new insights, with precise recommendations supported by credible evidence.

The Phase I Desk Assessment highlights both the experience of resilience projects, such as

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[1] USAID:2012. Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis. p. 5

[2] 2017. ECHO SAHAL: Food & Nutrition March 2017" fact sheet

USAID's RAIN project in Ethiopia, and key findings from academic studies. It stresses the importance of iterative learning and adaptive management for successfully managing the multifaceted, dynamic circumstances of resilience activities and the need for periodic performance assessments. Its findings include the advisability of *"…target(ing) shocks and stresses in distinct, tailored ways…;" "…extend(ing) programs to add emphasis to transformative capacity…"* and *"…highlighting how "the role of iteration in qualitative data analysis... is key to sparking insight and developing meaning."*[3]

The assessment's qualitative methodology was designed to solicit not only opinions, but also explanatory, causal, and relational valuation rankings as seen by current or potential future stakeholders. This involved two- to three-day intensive engagements in six participating rural communities with eight stratified focus groups: group leaders, older women, married women, married men, young men, young women, project service personnel, and volunteers. Additionally, the evaluation team conducted an extensive review of documentation, site visits, and interviews with subject matter experts and government representatives.

An Iterative Process

A key to understanding RISE, and a focal point of this assessment, is an understanding, as expressed in the Agency's program and policy guidance, that: "Building resilience requires an iterative process in which development assistance and humanitarian assistance are well coordinated throughout planning, project design, procurement, and learning."[4] An iterative process is non-linear. Linear thinking puts things in sequential order and facilitates standardized ways of gathering quantitative information. Non-linear processes are multifaceted parts of a system that "iterates" or "feeds back into preceding steps", often changing the nature of future progressions to the extent of transforming previous behaviors and planned activities. This is the nature of resilience enhancement.

Critical Contextual Factors and Dynamics

Among a number of critical contextual factors, climate change and the increasing uncertainty of adequate rainfall seem paramount. However, in terms of helping Burkina Faso and Niger through a strengthened RISE Initiative, four factors are particularly relevant. First is the excessive level of need in the region (according to the Niger government, nearly 8 million people were at risk of starvation during the climate crisis of 2010), and second is the resulting dependence of the two countries on foreign assistance funds (fluctuating from 45-60% of their national budgets), and on the NGO sector as the major provider of social services to most citizens.

Two other important contextual factors are positive ones that are infrequently cited: 1) the growth of transformational governance structures that devolve substantial legal and financial autonomy to regions and communes to undertake activities for promoting local economic and social, development (along with legally established procedures that include the participation of local development committees); and 2) the presence in both countries of major non-governmental transformations. For example, urban animal husbandry expansion, with

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[3] USAID/SAHEL. 2017. P. 23 and p. 38.

[4] USAID: 2012. Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis. p. 18

ownership of pastoral herds passing to urban investors, and transhumance.[i] pastoralists selling fresh cow and camel milk from urban campgrounds represent important changes. The widespread availability of cell phone communications, often powered by solar energy, and the increasing freedom of unmarried young women to migrate for urban work, are additional examples.

The above examples illustrate changes in behaviors and mindsets that are reflected in discussions now taking place at the household level. In fact, the assessment raises the question as to whether the emphasis that the USAID resilience paradigm places on higher-level collaboration, especially government transformations, may result in overlooking some transformative changes at the local, group, and individual levels, which may eventually be some of RISE's most promising successes.

Field Survey Findings

Focus Group Perspectives on Resilience, Shocks and Stresses

As outlined by the focus groups, most households base their strategies for mitigating shocks on the diversification of separate sources of food and income that are not highly interdependent. Generally, decisions on specific strategies are made by the household working as a group to create a "portfolio" of possible solutions. People have a fairly consistent informal scale for measuring robustness and vulnerability by how long a household can remain in its normal state in the event of shocks or stresses. The difference between household strategies reflects the scope of their assets such as land, animals, and men available to migrate for work. Added to these are the critical role that social networks play. Regardless of assets, participants frequently noted that everyone is vulnerable. One reason they expressed this general feeling is the perception that resilience programming often relies more on "targeting" than on "tailoring" assistance, which could maximize participation and strengthen social networks. This also helps explain why there is often an informal redistribution of some project benefits by targeted beneficiaries to other parties.

Focus Group Perspectives on Priority Activities and Benefits

The assessment team found that, despite their diversity, the different focus groups generally tended to agree in their identification of priority project activities that best contribute to building resilience capacities. Those priority activities (along with the team's opinion of the principal resilience capacity that each one addresses) are:

- water – absorptive
- child and mother health/nutrition/family planning – absorptive
- micro-credit/finance – adaptive, transformative
- dry season /irrigated gardens – absorptive, adaptive
- conservation farming and farmer-managed natural regeneration – absorptive, adaptive
- access to services (i.e. health, agricultural inputs and variety of foods) – absorptive
- "husbands' schools" and "safe spaces" for adolescent girls – adaptive, transformative
- food (or cash) for work (or assets) – absorptive, adaptive

- veterinary services – absorptive

- adult and out-of-school literacy – adaptive, transformative

- value chain development and *warrantage* – adaptive

- community resource management conventions – too little information

- community-led total sanitation – uncertain

Some factors that can help explain this convergence of views regarding priorities are the shared experiences with climate change; a strong cultural value to give precedence to the needs of the corporate group (i.e. household, community) over individual interest; and the fact that projects are typically valued as much by the amount of resources they provide as by their specific outputs.

More general discussions, however, revealed how individual priorities seem closely aligned to economic and social needs and expectations related to a "sex-age-circumstances" triad. Thus, almost across-the-board, **young men** want skills they can use to earn income elsewhere. **Married men** emphasize immediate income. **Married women** want what contributes to household harmony and health; household status; reduced demands on their labor; and time for personal needs. **Mothers-in-law** strive to retain decision-making roles. **Male leaders** stress doing what maintains or increases their status and economic assets. **Adolescent girls** and **not yet or recently married women** are particularly concerned with gaining and exercising more freedom of choice across the spectrum of life choices and challenges they face. These include marriage; how to obtain reasonable economic independence; family planning; possibilities for migration and education; and their ability to secure social status and self-esteem.

Together, focus group findings strongly suggest that activities and beneficiaries would be better served if specific activities provided greater attention to the overarching life priorities of the participating demographic group(s).

Perplexing Contradictions in Activity Performance

The assessment found evidence that confirmed the benefits of program activities but also examples of incomplete, poorly-performing, or failed RISE and other donor-supported activities. For example, in one community, none of three wells, all recently drilled by two different projects, worked properly.

Observed Constraints on Efficacy and Efficiency

Most operational inefficiencies and deficiencies seemed traceable to one of two phenomena. One is the set of official requirements and constraints that hamper regular and sensible implementation. These include contractually-imposed inflexibilities; rigidly focused activities; narrow targets; an overemphasis on the collection of indictors; administrative constraints such as travel permissions, hiring delays, and excessively narrow interpretation of authorized project activities. The second involves a set of four overarching in-country donor assistance realities beyond any single donor's total control, but which adversely affect program success.

First is donor disarray, characterized by independent, non-harmonized organizational strategies, approaches, priorities, and methodologies that produce a cacophony of practices at the community level (i.e. three different donors with three different latrine models competing

in the same village). This encourages participants to follow short-term strategies for extracting assets from assistance activities rather than committing to long-term goals**.** **Second** is the operational irrelevance of the technical realities of resilience as a phenomenon, including widespread disregard for the cardinal characteristics of resiliency, namely: flexibility, learning, and internal capacity for recovery. **Third** is the lack of innovation, integration, and synergism across and between donor and government activities that almost precludes the likelihood of households and communities from systematically generating new and sustainable absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities. **Fourth** is a lack of attention to recovery from localized shocks, meaning an absence of activities that are designed to directly increase capacities for recovery from repeated, highly-localized shocks, even though, with each significant local shock, a percentage of the population never recovers to their previous level of well-being.

Among just a few of the debilitating consequences stemming from those realities are: 1) the failure of donors (including RISE) to truly integrate their activities within the structures and processes of national, regional, and local decentralized governments; 2) little attention to sustainability, institutionalization, and scale-up; 3) a narrow tailoring of collaboration, learning and adapting (CLA) to donors, partners and specific activity personnel, with little beneficiary participation; and 4) the use of overly generalized Theories of Change that impede instituting effective "adaptive management" across projects and programs.

Possible Emerging Synergisms

At the same time, the team found examples of potentially important benefits, beyond the intended and tracked results of any specific program. These seem to be the result of the unexpected commingling of discrete activities in the daily lives of the beneficiaries.

These include synergisms between the positive outcomes of activities around: 1) health, dialogue, and income; 2) conservation farming, farmer-managed natural regeneration, and male income support; 3) learning, action-research, and networking; and 4) targeted beneficiaries, community volunteers' time, and local mutual aid networks. A good example is that new, perhaps transformational associations seem to be developing in terms of how wives and husbands think about their household roles, as a function of prioritizing conversations over gender alongside discussions regarding income generation. Synergisms can, in fact, increase efficiencies. The assessment shows that not only synergisms but resource savings are possible if the Initiative would affect more integration between different activities. This includes integrating beneficiaries into the actual learning and monitoring process.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on its findings, the team's principal recommendations include the following:

1. Flexibility should be increased, and operational constraints need to be minimized.

2. Systematic operational verification of satisfactory execution, and rapid correction of problems, needs to be instituted.

3. The RISE Theories of Change should be refined and used in an iterative fashion for periodic activity assessments and adaptive project management.

4. The number of RISE activity indicators should be reduced and their collection made easier.

5. Solutions have to be adapted to the immediate context and, as possible, the particular beneficiaries' priorities.

6. Both implementers and beneficiaries need to be given sufficient freedom and authority to experiment and innovate with new solutions that can be adapted to local contexts.

7. Existing successful activities need to be reoriented towards establishing a solid foundation for sustainability, institutionalization, and scale-up.

8. Strategies need to reflect the distinction between robustness to absorb stresses and shocks, and recovery following dislocations from shocks.

9. Activities should be operationally nested in government programs, policies and practices

10. For each commune, there should be a diverse coalition of providers under one coordinating implementer.

11. Assorted activities need to be harmonized and coordinately in some joint fashion, so that they produce a critical mass of positively interacting solutions.

12. Through cooperative efforts, functional associations need to be made between secondary—often more individually-oriented—activities and the top project priorities of households and communities.

13. The implementation and evaluation of activities should be made more participatory and "demand-oriented", and they factor in sustainability at all times.

14. Substantial activities should be focused on the objective of building local capacities for recovery from localized shocks.

15. A RISE program coordinator position and a RISE national project steering committee, should be established.

16. USAID should become a champion of in-country donor-government harmonization, cooperation, and integration.

1.0   RISE Background

International humanitarian needs have approached a tipping point in recent years as a result of repeated food crises, principally traceable to progressively rising temperatures and increasingly uncertain rainfall, and exacerbated by increasing local insecurity. In 2010, the Niger government estimated that almost 8 million of its citizens were at risk of starvation. In reaction to this deteriorating situation, donors and African governments concluded that a more proactive approach was needed to directly address the "erosion of the population's resilience due to the succession of crises, extreme vulnerability and poverty, and the lack of basic services." [5] [ii]In 2012, the Alliance Globale pour la Résilience au Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest (AGIR) was created under the political and technical leadership of ECOWAS, UEMOA, and CILSS. In 2012, USAID published its first official resilience policy. Then, in 2014, USAID, building on "resilience-

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[5] European Commission for Humanitarian Assistance. Fact Sheet: Sahel: Food & Nutrition Crisis – March 2017.

related" activities developed in response to the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa, launched the RISE Initiative. The RISE Initiative is a five-year effort initially focusing on Burkina Faso and Niger that intends to build resilience to recurrent crises in West Africa's Sahel[6] [iii]with the overarching goal of "increasing the resilience of chronically vulnerable people, households, communities and systems in targeted agro-pastoral and marginal agricultural livelihood zone."

1.1.   Program

Under pressure for rapid action, the initial RISE I activities were built upon existing Office of Food for Peace (FFP) Development Food Aid Program Grantees (DFAP), followed by three additional activities: REGIS-ER (Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Enhanced); REGIS–AG (Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Accelerated Growth); and SAREL (Sahel Resilience Learning Project). While the aforementioned projects constitute the core of RISE, the program has included from its outset a larger associated set of complementary USAID projects, as well as activity associations with outside regional organizations, governments, the private sector, non-government organizations, and other donors. All RISE activities contribute to one or more of RISE's three interwoven strategic objectives: 1) increased and sustainable economic well-being; 2) strengthened institutions and governance; and 3) improved health and nutrition status. Current and past partners include FFP humanitarian and development programs, OFDA Humanitarian Assistance, SPRING, WA-WASH, PF Family Planning, and USGS PAPA, among others.

Because USAID closed its country missions in Burkina Faso in 1995 and in Niger in 1998, its remaining on-the-ground humanitarian and emergency activities became the foundation of the initial RISE developmental program. Most humanitarian NGOs do not see their activities as part of national development plans, and therefore their collaboration with governmental services are mainly transactional, with little attention to activity sustainability. However, in addition to its emergence programs through its Development Food Assistance Programs (DFAP), FFP does support multi-sectoral development activities. More generally, DFAP implementing organizations have significant capacity to implement longer-term development activities across a host of concerns related to food insecurity such as health, agriculture, disaster relief, and livelihood assistance. At the same time, DFAP-funded activities, which are found in many countries and regions, tend to be more problem- than program-focused. Thus, in terms of sustainability, FFP stresses the "sustainability of outcomes and necessary services"[7] rather than the institutionalization of particular DFAP activities themselves. Typically, REGIS-ER and REGIS-AG constitute RISE's first efforts to put on the ground longer-term programmatic and problem-oriented, activities.

1.2.   Partners and Activities

The RISE Program's activities span a range of practical concerns in line with USAID's definition of resilience as "the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic

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[6] USAID: Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis. USAID Policy and Program Guidance p. 13

[7] USAID 2017. Frequently Asked Questions", Food for Peace. Wash D.C. p.6

vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth."[8] Though commonly associated with its first-tier projects (REGIS-ER, REGIS-AG, SAREL, and the DFAPs), RISE includes all USAID projects implemented in the Sahel Resilience Strategy intervention zones that contribute to the transition from aid programs to integrated humanitarian and development assistance (HA/DA) in order to help countries in the Sahel address food crises and various recurrent shocks that have led to the chronic vulnerability of their populations, especially in Niger and Burkina Faso. RISE includes projects managed out of the regional USAID/Senegal office, regional projects managed out of USAID/West Africa, and regional projects managed out of USAID/Washington. These projects include: FFP Humanitarian Assistance, OFDA Humanitarian Assistance, PDEV, SPRING, WAWASH, AGIR PF Family Planning, USGS PAPA, and Development Credit Authority (DCA) projects managed out of Dakar.

In the first three years of execution, USAID broadened the scope of RISE and extended it to include other partners, most notably the World Food Program (WFP), while aligning the Initiative more closely with sectoral projects in Niger and Burkina Faso. USAID is working to better structure and formalize collaboration within RISE to capitalize on partners' comparative advantages and leverage investments.[9]

Perhaps because RISE is still evolving at this stage, there is no official RISE Initiative organigram or definitive list of all activities conducted under the initiative. Illustrative examples that the team was able to identify from "Tier 1" members (and identified by their commonly used acronyms) are: REGIS-ER - conservation farming, habbanayé (A traditional practice for a well-off party to provide animals for a needy party. Now a RISE activity that provides a similar function.), horticulture, access to financial services, natural resource management, disaster risk management, hygiene and sanitation, and community health and nutrition; REGIS-AG - cowpea, poultry and small ruminant value chains; SAREL - knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, promotion of collaboration, learning and adaptation (CLA) among RISE partners; Mercy Corps/Niger (Sawki) - Safe Spaces for Girls, Husbands Schools, improved livelihood opportunities; CRS/Niger (PASAM-TAI) - food security, village early warning committees, maternal/child health; Save the Children/Niger (LAHIA) - livelihoods, agriculture, health; CRS/ Burkina (FASO) - Mother-to-mother care-groups, nutrition, adult literacy, sanitation; ACDI/VOCA, Burkina (ViM): - gardening, poultry-raising and vaccinations, and latrines; WFP Niger - development of farm and pasturelands through cash-for-work assistance to vulnerable communities; WFP/Burkina - land restoration, connecting farmers to markets, dry season gardens; and SPRING - technologies and tools for social behavior change communications in health and nutrition. Other key RISE implementing past and present partners include: FFP/HA, OFDA/HA, WA-WASH, SPRING, AGIR-FP, MSI/FP, and DCA (see Table 1-1). [10]

Table 1-1: RISE Partners

Category 1 – Principal RISE Implementing Projects/Organizations							
1		REGIS-AG	DFAPS				
	REGIS-ER		PASAM-TAI	Sawki	LAHIA	ViM	FASO

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[8] USAID. 2016. Resilience at USAID Note. Center for Resilience Studies. Washington, D.C.

[9] Report: RISE Partners' Collaboration and Coordination Workshop, Ouagadougou, November 15, 2016, SAREL, December 2016, p. 2

[10] The examples given are intended to show the program's diversity and are not necessarily everything, or even the most important thing, the implementing group does. Space limitations prevent citing many other major activities.

	NCBA/CLUSA	CNFA	CRS	Mercy Corps	Save the Children	ACDI-VOCA	CRS
N/BF	N/BF	N/BF	N	N	N	BF	BF

Category 2 – Resilience Support Projects/Organizations

2	SAREL		SPRING		PAPA		
	TMG, Inc.		John Snow Int'l		US Geological Survey (USGS)		
N/BF	N/BF		N/BF		N/BF		

Category 3 – Food for Peace, Humanitarian Assistance Projects/Organizations

3	Developing Resilience and Fighting Malnutrition - Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO)		Saving Lives, Protecting Livelihoods and Enhancing Resilience of Chronically Vulnerable Populations – (PRRO)			
	World Food Program		World Food Program		UNICEF	
N/BF	BF		N		BF	

Category 4 – Office Foreign Disaster Assistance/Disaster Risk Reduction

4	FEWS NET	Projet activité: Paquet médical, nutritionnel et pédiatrique dans le District Sanitaire de Mirriah	Supporting the Recovery of Vulnerable Pastoralists and Agro-Pastoralists		Projet activité: Améliorer la sécurité alimentaire et diversifier les revenus pour les ménages durement affectés et vulnérables aux crises"	
	Chemonics, Inc.	ALIMA-BEFEN	Oxfam		GOAL	
N/BF	N/BF	N	N		N	

Category 5 – Sectorial Development Projects/Organizations Strengthening Resilience

5	Support for Vulnerable Pastoral Households (Projet TESO)	Youth Advocacy Women Work and Alliances (YAWWA)	Niger Education and Community Strengthening (NECS)	SIPFO-Expansion of mobile outreach operations and testing to reach the most underserved	Projet activité: Agir Pour la Planification Familiale (Agir PF)	Country Programme Static Clinic	Projet activité: Phare	Evidence to Action (E2A)
	Vétérinaires sans Frontières	SNV	Plan Int'l/Niger	Marie Stopes Int'l	Engender Health	Marie Stopes Int'l	PSI	Pathfinder
N/BF	N/BF	N	N	BF	N /BF	N	N	N

Category 6 – USAID Centrally Funded Feed the Future Innovation Labs

6	Sorghum-Millet Innovation Lab		Livestock Systems Innovation Lab		Horticulture Innovation Lab	
	Kansas State University		University of Florida		University of California, Davis	
N/BF	N/BF		N/BF		BF	

Category 7 – Projects/Organizations Working on Resilience Strengthening in Niger and Burkina outside of the RISE Intervention Zone

7	12/12: An alliance for year-round resilience in Tahoua and Maradi, Niger (from previous RISE list: Récouvrement Précoce et Résilience	Reducing vulnerability and building resilience for Nigeriens	Integrated Resilience Program, Tahoua Region, Niger	Diffa Community Management of Malnutrition/HKI	Projet activité: Appui à la résilience pour les communautés de Diffa/Samaritan's Purse
	Lutheran World Relief	International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Concern Worldwide	Helen Keller Int'l	Samaritan's Purse
N/BF	N	N	N	N	N

Category 8 – Regional Projects/Organizations Funded by USAID that Support Resilience

Strengthening in Niger and Burkina							
8	Projet activité: Programme régional d'accès aux marchés (PRA)	West Africa Fertilizer Program (WAFP)	Value Chain Development	West Africa Seed Program (WASP)	Food Across Borders Program (PROFAB)		WA-WASH
	CILSS	IFDC	West Africa Trade and Investment Hub, USAID	CORAF	CILSS	West and Central African Council for Agricultural R & D (CORAF/WECARD)	Florida International University
N/BF	N/BF	N/BF	N/BF	N/BF	N/BF	N/BF	N/BF

There are important distinctions to note in the implementation of the RISE projects. REGIS-ER has eight main programs: habbanayé (A traditional practice for a well-off party to provide animals for a needy party. Now a RISE activity that provides a similar function.) plus animal health and feed; horticulture; access to financial services; resilient production systems; disaster management and local institutions; water services, hygiene and sanitation; and community-based health and nutrition. It is facilitation-oriented and relies on sub-grants to local NGOs for many specific actions. REGIS-AG takes a business export-oriented, value chain approach and uses a "push and pull" model of business expansion. RISE's projects also differ significantly in terms of the scale and geographical focus of their activities. One DFAP partner has spread its interventions over 600 villages in 11 communes in two regions, while another works in 70 villages in five communes in a single region. These differences have implications for the concentration of efforts in each locality; each approach has benefits and costs. The assessment team observed that a "light touch" tends to limit the possibilities for layering and potential synergy across activities, while more intensely focused involvement helps to create a sense of participation and being part of a larger overall effort for resilience capacity building. The assessment team acknowledges the additional insights provided by RISE partners during a May 2017 DFAP Implementation Review in Niger concerning the many trade-offs between "deep" versus "broad" approaches. They include the observation that in-depth, multi-focus interventions tend to permit greater uptake of practices with corresponding production and income benefits, but they also have the unintended effect of increasing women's work loads. The light touch approach has the benefit of allowing more rational, selective decisions about how and where to attempt multi-focus interventions, although the greater number of beneficiary villages creates logistical and monitoring challenges.

Some people within USAID have questioned whether more expansive REGIS-type projects can supersede some of the independent DFAP grants, if only to reduce the number of activities USAID must manage. However, one of the benefits of direct grants to NGOs, at least in theory, is that recipients can be more flexible than under the restrictions of contract agreements because their organizations have dedicated purposes aligned to the grantors' overall program objectives. Unfortunately, the situation appears to be getting increasingly murky: some NGOs are now accepting contractual agreements; some of the DFAPs sub-contract to other NGOs; and while REGIS-AG is a contract, REGIS-ER is a cooperative agreement. Additionally, the difference between the two approaches gets blurred when, as seems the case, indicators are increasing treated as evaluation targets and all parties increasingly fear not meeting those targets regardless of the justification. While there seems to be no definitive answer to this challenge, the assessment team stresses the underlying imperative for

increasing the flexibility of resilience activity implementation, and that any further reduction in program and activity flexibility would be counterproductive.

1.3.   Organization and Internal Relations

Within USAID, RISE resilience programming appears to have very substantial and broad support. In terms of overall RISE programming, technical concerns, and administration, the SRO in Dakar exercises substantial oversight of both the program and the individual RISE projects. This includes the time, effort, and resources the SRO-Dakar expends encouraging interaction and cooperation between the partners, i.e., through periodic joint field missions and workshops. The SRO effectively uses SAREL, when tactically needed, as the "tip of the spear" to prod for more collaboration and joint work planning.

However, on the ground, the RISE program's daily operations have an amorphous organizational structure. It has no single official dedicated activity coordinator or steering group who can on a regular basis guide the harmonization of activities, nor a joint spokesperson who can convey a unified message and identity across the RISE portfolio, to the spectrum of potentially interested outside parties. USAID oversight for each independent project is distributed across several USAID Bureaus and Regional Offices. Individual activities are primarily held accountable for their own results without parallel accountability for overall program accomplishments. Nor is there shared accountability for results across separate activities. The RISE program's design on paper calls for substantial relations between its separate elements,[11] but without interdependence in implementation, such intent does not easily translate into daily coordination and engagement.[iv]

RISE, through SAREL and its partners, has an increasingly dynamic learning program that has helped to create a stronger sense of shared purpose and sparked greater collaboration. This includes Learning—Identity Building—Action Research—Program Coordination—Networking—Synergism. Regular "Collaboration and Coordination on Resilience (CCR) forums"—which bring RISE and non-RISE personnel together to share and analyze experiences, review evidence, and identify needs and opportunities for collaboration—appear to be building a wider resilience network. The evaluation team feels, however, that the learning agenda should be expanded significantly to include more on-site, in-activity, learning, conducted by implementing partners and with greater integration of other learning sources, including some RISE partners outside of RISE.) Annual RISE Partner Portfolio review meetings led by USAID, with facilitation from SAREL, have allowed USAID and RISE partners to jointly take stock of the Program's progress, identify obstacles, and make adjustments. However, the team believes that neither USAID's annual RISE review meetings nor the different CLA and program evaluation activities led by SAREL are adequate to address the coordination and harmonization needs of a program as large and complex as RISE. Ensuring an appropriate level of coherence and synergy within RISE would require an official full-time, on-the-ground RISE activity implementation coordinator.

1.4.   External Relations

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[11] The USAID (2016) Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) in Niger and Burkina Faso: Problem Statement, Goals and Theory of Change already does this in a very extensive manner.

Various key RISE program personnel have excellent relations with other donors, with whom they interact on an activity-related, "shared interest" basis. One high AGIR leadership-level donor official expressed the belief that RISE should actually be part of its initiative. WFP/PAM would like RISE and other donor resilience programs to contribute to their "communautés de convergence" program that they are trying to develop with Niger's 3N initiative (les Nigériens Nourrissent les Nigériens). In fact, organizations working on related goals are often open to having others join them on their agenda. Unfortunately, this generally proves difficult, partially because the strategic and programmatic agendas of different donor organizations often diverge significantly from one another and from the official agendas of the concerned host government units.

The RISE Initiative does interact extensively with other organizations, but it does not participate as a formal member in Government-led initiatives. This includes the resilience oriented 3N program in Niger, and the Comité National pour la Sécurité Alimentaire (CNSA) in Burkina Faso. Further, RISE does not officially coordinate with either country's AGIR plans, (e.g., the PRP –Priorités Résiliences Pays). However, the RISE program does provide support for some selective needs and activities of each of these entities. This includes special studies, study tours, and workshops and conferences.[v] In this regard, these various entities see RISE activities as valuable collaborators but not actual partners with shared ownership commitments to each other's programs and shared recognition of each other's specific activity successes.

The situation is somewhat less satisfactory regarding relations with rightfully interested host country authorities. Because specific RISE activities take place in specific in-country locations, government officials in both Burkina Faso and Niger suggest that these activities properly belong under their national frameworks and would benefit from having a national steering committee, as most bilateral projects have. On several occasions, government officials directly responsible for resilience activity coordination reported that they had either not heard of RISE, or noted that they had no idea what it was actually doing.

For the RISE program to more consistently and effectively generate engagement across the spectrum of interested and relevant parties, it would need a senior position entirely dedicated to external communication and coordination. The team found the RISE Initiative to be known and appreciated by the specific personnel in government ministries responsible for its particular endeavors. However, other "resilience program-relevant" government entities, from national departments to regional technical services, said they either did not know about the RISE Initiative or were dissatisfied with the lack of systematic contact and information sharing they feel they need to function soundly and to address their intra-governmental reporting requirements. It is important to note that many said this was true of other assistance programs, as well.

1.5.   RISE on the Local Level

There are neither explicit, overall RISE partner strategies nor instructions for implementers to engage with communal authorities. However, this engagement does occur with all partners and implementers in varying ways and to varying extents. For example, REGIS-ER's RFP specifically calls for the program to help improve government capacity for coordination of resilience-building efforts at and between local and national levels, particularly in achieving results related to natural resource management, conflict reduction, and disaster risk management.

In practice, the activities of the RISE implementing partners are predominantly community-(village) focused. RISE does help local authorities play their role in activities developed by the implementing partners. For example, REGIS-ER has developed a number of local natural resource conventions in Niger and Burkina Faso. Such collaboration affords practical opportunities for RISE partners to contribute to building the capacity of commune authorities and strengthening the viability of commune-level government. However, these collaborations are largely transactional for specific purposes. As is explained later, donors in general (RISE partners included) could do much more to systematically recognize and value the roles and authorities of mayors and communal councils; consult with them concerning proposed village- or inter-village interventions; ensure coherence of proposed interventions with existing commune-level plans; and provide regular information on the progress and results obtained.

2.0   Assessment Objectives, Methodology, and Limitations

The following is a synopsis of the assessment's qualitative methodology. An expanded discussion of the assessment methodology, as well as some of the instruments developed and used, is presented in an annex. The following constitutes an overview of its key aspects.

2.1.   Objective

The assessment's qualitative methodology was designed to solicit not only opinions but also explanatory, causal, and relational valuation rankings by different people and groups. The team did not try to judge the overall performance of any individual, activity or organization, but focused on discerning major issues, concerns, accomplishments, insights and representative examples. However, the team drew conclusions regarding the apparent match or mismatch between what it saw as accomplishments and the expectations, expressed in the assessment's Scope of Work.

Building on the associated Desk Assessment of academic and donor literature, the Field Team reviewed activity documents and an extensive number of additional reports and articles by other donors and academic specialists on resilience. The team also looked at some of the Requests for Proposals (RFP) for RISE services and a selection of the contract clauses to verify the claims that stakeholders made regarding contractual restrictions on flexibility.

2.2.   Methodology

The team toured sites and visited relevant on-the-ground activities. RISE partners identified the villages based on the presence of active RISE activities. The number – six survey villages, two test villages and a few rapid stops elsewhere to inquire about specific things – does not differ much from the range of villages (3-12) visited in other comparable studies and evaluations.[12] The sites were selected in such a way as to ensure a diversity of regions in each country, as well as a diversity of implemented RISE activities. The regions and implementing partners for Burkina Faso were: REGIS-ER, Sahel region; FASO, Centre-Nord region: REGIS-AG and REGIS-ER and ViM, East region. For Niger they were: REGIS-ER and REGIS-AG Tillabery region;

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[12] Bonkoungou 2015 and USAID TANGO Baseline IE 2015

DFAP/PASAM-TAI, Maradi region; and REGIS-AG and Sawki, Zinder region (see Annex H. RISE Partner Activities in Niger and Burkina Faso).

The focus group findings are central to the team's assessment and conclusions.[vi] In addition to their direct contributions, they led to broader follow-on meetings and steered the team to key observation visits, both of which led to a plethora of additional discoveries, understandings and insights. In each community, discussions were held with eight different groups categorized as leaders, adult men, older women, married women, male youth, female youth, activity participants, and activity agents. The size of the groups varied from eight to fourteen people per group. No one participated in more than one group. The team also held individual interviews, toured the sites and visited relevant activities. Approximately three days were spent in each of the six villages visited – three in Burkina Faso and three in Niger – and in the surrounding regions.

Triangulating the information, by confirming all major findings and conclusions with several independent sources and types of information, was fundamental to the methodology. Security concerns imposed some limitations on the assessment team's travel, particularly in terms of engaging in direct dialogue with pastoral transhumance groups. With the one exception of a village in the Dori region, which had a significant population of Fulbe families who had transhumance (long distance seasonal migration of grazing) herds, all interactions regarding animal husbandry refer to sedentary individuals and groups.[vii]

The assessment team was composed of one American team leader, two country national deputy team leaders, and two local focus group specialists for each of the two countries, for a total of seven team members. Together, the team members came to the evaluation with extensive multi-sectoral experience working within donor and NGO organizations in the Sahel on program design, evaluation and implementation. This accumulated experience was indispensable to the team's ability to spot what was "missing" in terms of normally expected conditions.

To get frank answers it was necessary to promise people that they would remain anonymous with regards to specific places, issues, concerns and expressed opinions.

2.3.   Questions

The basic framework that was used for the inquiries focused on: each group's experience with shocks and crises; the causes; how in their view different people and households responded; what the difference was between successful and unsuccessful responses; who were the most "vulnerable" and why; and what they saw as the best strategies for dealing with such shocks. The discussions subsequently progressed to a review of the current situation – the stresses and shocks they faced and their capacities to withstand them and to recover. Finally, the team delved into their current experiences with various assistance programs and how they assessed the efficacy of the assistance they received.

Only after establishing a shared understanding on these issues did the team specifically ask about the RISE program's activities. After the assessment team obtained their perspective about the RISE activities specifically, participants were asked to detail their priorities in terms of needs for development assistance. After much questioning, we opened the discussion to a freer flowing exchange of opinions, focusing on what seemed to be the specific concerns and

prevailing interest of the immediately engaged parties.

The last thing the team did was to ask participants to prioritize, from their perspective, the six most important RISE activities. Weighting and aggregating individual feelings and judgments can be difficult in qualitative research, especially across cultures. Absolute value comparison is difficult since people have various ways of measuring and reporting satisfaction. However, accuracy is enhanced if people are asked to prioritize things according to their own criteria, i.e., each group's first choice actually is their first choice.

2.4.   Two-Phased Process

As a complement to the Phase I literature review,[13] this Phase II assessment was designed as a field-oriented, specifically qualitative assessment, with an emphasis on obtaining the perspective of key stakeholders, particularly participating beneficiaries.

2.5.   An Iterative Process

A key to understanding the RISE program, the qualitative methodology of this assessment, the nature of its inquiries, the order of its presentation of data, and many of its final conclusions and recommendations, is an understanding, as expressed in the Agency's program and policy guidance, that: "*Building resilience requires an **iterative** process in which development assistance and humanitarian assistance, are well coordinated throughout planning, project design, procurement, and learning*".[14]

Linear thinking puts things in the sequential order in which they occur, like the laying of a railroad track, and is amenable to standardized ways of periodically gathering quantitative information which can be tallied-up at the end. This kind of approach can have "starts" and "finishes" and can follow an observable step-by-step progression - trackable by pre-established benchmarks, where a response to one step must occur before another step is taken. In contrast, non-linear processes can have multiple possible starting points for addressing the same problem and can move in multiple directions to reach often different solutions to similar problems. This is because the multifaceted parts of the systems are sensitive to each other and the output of one step "iterates" or "feeds back into preceding steps", often changing them and therefore affecting the nature of future progressions. Daily weather is a classic example; its non-linear status helps to explain why it is so difficult to predict accurately. In view of USAID's program and policy guidance, the evaluation team paid careful attention to how RISE activities iterate.

3.0   Critical Contexts and Dynamics

3.1.   Situational Imperatives

The assessment tried to identify the most germane contextual dimensions (tangible and

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[13] USAID/SAHEL. 2017. Resilience: A Literature Review and Assessment of Programs. Part I of RISE Midterm Performance Evaluation. Mitchell Group. Wash. D.C.

[14] USAID:2012. Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis. USAID Policy and Program Guidance. Wash D.C. p,. 18

intangible) that frame the RISE program writ large, meaning not only the activities but also the critical stakeholders and beneficiaries. We did this in an iterative fashion, starting with broad categories such as "environment", "government" and "social", and then, as we learned more, distilling these down to understand both the present and potential future possibilities for the RISE program.

3.1.1. Climate[viii]

The dominating phenomenon in the region is the increasing variability in the pattern of rainfall, e.g., where, when, and how often it falls and how much falls at any one time. Rural farming communities face a double threat of, first, inadequate rain due to shortened rainy seasons with long periods between rains, and second, occasional very heavy downpours resulting in flooding that destroys fields, crops, fences, and houses. The disruptive rainfall pattern and more frequent droughts often strike rural Sahelian households with new shocks while they are still in the process of recovering from a previous shock. Every year there are a substantial number of such highly localized crises.[ix]

3.1.2. Water

Access to adequate water is necessary for nationwide effective resilience capacity building. The labor required to fetch water keeps children out of school and women perpetually overtaxed. Poor quality water undermines health efforts. Many water tables are now too deep for rural communities themselves to install and maintain the needed infrastructure.

3.1.3. Economic Realities

GDP in West Africa is now growing, but primarily in the urban sectors. In 2016, both Burkina Faso's and Niger's GDP grew at 5.2 %.[15] Rural agriculture has an average 1%-2% yearly increase in production, but this is largely due to increased use of marginal lands, and the increase does not keep up with the region's average 2.7% population growth - let alone Niger's 3.9%. Food security and nutrition in the Sahel are characterized by fragile livelihoods, inadequate and deteriorating resources, and the recurrent onset of both local and regional shocks. Food crises have occurred in 2005, 2008, 2010, and 2012. To this is now added the cost of increasing insecurity from regional terrorism, **further exacerbating fragile economic livelihoods**.

3.2. Commanding Relations

3.2.1. Individuals, Households, Communities, and Networks

Burkina Faso and Niger rank 185th and 187th out of 188 nations on the 2016 UNDP Human Development Index (HDI), based on life expectancy, schooling and income.[x] Foreign assistance has a pervasive presence in both countries, comprising, as noted, between 49% and 66% of national budgets.[16] However, the two nations have many positive social, cultural, political, and

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[15] IMF. 2016. Sub-Saharan Africa Multispeed Growth. World Economic and Financial Surveys. Regional Economic Outlook Wash. D.C. p.92

[16] ActionAid. 2011. Real Aid 3: Ending Aid Dependency. London p. 20

behavioral strengths. People are generally hard-working, flexible, and tolerant in their beliefs, often living peacefully in mixed Christian and Muslim communities. Conflicts between ethnic groups are relatively rare, and when they do erupt they can usually be traced to acute issues of resource competition, such as between herders and farmers over land access, or Tuareg demands over mineral extraction. The two countries' low HDI rankings do not capture these critical human, community, and social assets that have allowed them to function and participate actively in the regional and world community, despite many challenges. Both have appreciable potential to respond to genuine development opportunities.

3.2.2. Importance of Links, Nodes, Networks, and Associations

Social capital and support networks are pervasive in the RISE zone and are the foundation for adaptive and survival strategies. Links are often forged in "voluntary associations of individuals" formed to exploit specific opportunities. Villages are often not communities per se, but geographic nodes where social links are forged through repetitive interactions. Linked nodes become dynamic networks. However, people in the RISE zone—and often women more than men—frequently say that the old community spirit of cooperation, which was an engrained and enduring aspect of the culture that created sustained bonds between people, is being replaced by more opportunistic and less permanent relations built around specific purposes (i.e. savings

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CASE EXAMPLE

Traditional Community Solidarity is Weakening

During a focus group meeting, several individuals suggested establishing a cereal bank in the village. Traditionally farmers would try to stock several years of cereal needs as insurance against crop failure for themselves, as well as others with whom they had informal arrangements for mutual assistance, during times of local food deficiencies. A modern version of this, called cereal banks, which several RISE partners supported with mixed success prior to the introduction of RISE, have villages store community supplies for use during hard times. This particular village had such a cereal bank in the past, but, without being specific, several people said "there were problems" but they still think it is needed and should be tried again. When we asked about the problems, the local chief whispered that he would discuss it with us later.

Later, alone, he said: "The problem is democracy," by which it seemed he meant individual choice based on individual interests. He suggested that in the past, "a village was really a village and a chief was really a chief…." He said, "In the past, what the chief said was to be done, was done." This apparently included how much grain to store in a community bank, and when and how special distributions were to be made. Today, he said, "Everybody thinks they are the chief. Everybody wants to decide for themselves when they participate, how they participate, and how much they

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associations, project committee) based on the immediate interest of the involved individuals.

3.2.3. Class, Age, Ethnicity, and Religion

Many types of identities play a role in peoples' lives in the Sahel. Age divisions are especially important in defining relations. Other social relationships, such as between wives and mothers-in-law, have major consequences for behavior in daily life, including the adoption and adaptation of new practices, i.e., regarding sanitation. Particularly important for many of the groups (such as the Mossi in Burkina Faso) is the traditional stress on social solidarity and sharing. Many people are concerned that this norm is deteriorating. However, as is clear in their public statement on priorities, the norm still has important sway in people's lives.

3.2.4. Social Services and Social Realities

Both nations suffer from poor social, educational and health services, inadequate infrastructure and limited economic opportunities. While there is a thin spectrum of government services in both countries, only health services and schools have a permanent presence across the rural landscape. Therefore, health projects have stronger continuing relations with the official system than do other sectors. For donor/NGO projects in agriculture, water, livelihoods, and informal education, relationships tend to be built on an immediate need. This presents a problem regarding those services, because they have established annual plans and obligations to fulfill. Government services distinguish between "operational supervision" and "benefit supervision", but in both cases actors only get credit if activities are fed into the government data system. Government personnel with whom the assessment team met repeatedly noted that they receive no "capitalization" from many donor projects. This word, which is heard repeatedly, is used to indicate that they get no credit, as they should, for assisting with other activities or having those activities under their area of responsibility, because the activities do not supply them with the needed financial data that is a required criterion for, and measure of, recognition and performance.

3.3.   Governance: Structures and Dynamics

While this report cannot go into detail on Niger's and Burkina Faso's decentralization structure, and how the Niger and Burkina government structures function on-the-ground, an overview is germane to any rethinking of how a RISE II program might best interface with the official governance system.

Governance, meaning the rules, policies and practices that determine the management of an entity, is an area of "resilience" concern for which the present RISE initiative does not have major national-to-communal-to-village level dedicated activities, even though many RISE partners engage in governance-strengthening activities at a village-level. In contrast, in the late 1980's and early 1990's, USAID played a key role in promoting local governance and decentralization in the Sahel. This advocacy was led by USAID country missions and through USAID's participation in regional and international bodies such as CILSS and the Club du Sahel. From 1990 to 1996, the Land Tenure Center of the University of Wisconsin worked closely with the Niger government, and in 1996 the Government of Niger redefined tenure and natural resource management policy through formulation of a comprehensive Rural Code. Burkina Faso had a parallel interest in decentralization in the 1990s, the foundations of which were laid by its constitution in 1991. Since 2004 Burkina Faso adopted a new general code of local government. Today, it is the World Bank, the EU and several bilateral donors, (i.e. Swiss, French and

Germans), who are providing assistance to Niger and Burkina Faso's decentralization efforts. (The World Bank has excellent orientation to Local Government for both countries, several tables from which are reproduced in Annex I, outlining the structured responsibilities, processes, authorities, divisions and capacities under each nation's Decentralization Laws).

3.3.1. Structures of Governance

In each country there are at least four separable, asymmetrical local governance strengthening pillars: 1) State administrative and geographic divisions in which national services (i.e. forestry, agriculture, etc.) are organized and operate (i.e. in Burkina Faso, region, province and department); 2) political elected entities and administrative structures (i.e. both Burkina Faso and Niger have elected, deliberative structures *(conseils)* at the regional level and at the commune/municipality level headed by *présidents* and mayors, respectively); 3) a supporting

Décentralisation et des Affaires Coutumières et Religieuses), and, lastly; 4) a host of involved associated organizations and individuals from traditional village chiefs, to cooperative groups to community-based organizations.

This system of decentralization is central not only to understanding governance today in each country, but also to achieving long term sustainable resilience development goals. This is because: 1) the system will likely continue to provide the framework of nationwide governance for years to come; 2) while many things work outside of it, if government-related scale-up and institutionalization is desired, one has to work not just "with it", but ""within" it; 3) it has many weaknesses and limited capacities that are not going to become stronger without significant repeated actual opportunities for practice and learning; and; 4)) the complexities of navigating the system require regular extensive networking. Many bi-lateral donor programs partially navigate these complexities by having a government-led national project support committee. Something RISE does not have.

3.3.2. Leadership

Presently, after a long history of military coups and strong man rule, both Burkina Faso and Niger are under the leadership of democratically chosen governments. In both countries that leadership itself is situated within a framework of decentralization wherein different levels of government have substantial autonomous management authority and work through collaboration ties, rather than a hierarchical relationship. However, there still exists a gap between official decentralization and an effective transfer of authority to municipalities and communes. One result of decentralization would be that donors, NGOs and local communities in both Burkina Faso and Niger are given broad discretion to operate as they wish. This situation suggests a need for some caution in extrapolating "best practices" from more authoritarian contexts, such as countries in the Horn of Africa.[17]. For example, REGIS – AG,

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[17] From an efficiency and sustainability perspective, having loans provided by a local truly agriculturally oriented financial institution, which takes direct responsibility for assuring inputs, such as seeds, might seem a very attractive model and was actually used in USAID's RAIN project in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia.   In contrast, REGIS – AG, works to obtain credit for cowpea producers through private urban oriented commercial bank (EcoBank), which is interested in earning a high interest rate, and which leaves all technical responsibilities to the project. The

expends substantial effort to obtain credit for cowpea producers through a private urban oriented commercial bank (EcoBank), which is interested in earning a high interest rate, and which leaves all technical responsibilities to the project. In contrast, during USAID's RAIN project in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia, the lending credit institution, attached to the local Pastoral Development Office, had the mandate to provide loans, and was directly monitored by the Ministry of Finance, which answered directly to the then Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, who was the driving force behind the country's climate adaptation and development strategy. [18]

3.3.3. Public Administration and Devolution of Authority

Burkina Faso is administratively divided into 13 regions, 45 provinces, and 351 communes. Niger is divided into 8 regions, 63 departments, and 265 communes. Both have over 10,000 villages. Each country has a national policy framework/ strategy for decentralization. Though the mechanisms for implementation differ, they follow a similar template. That template provides 1) the legal foundation for the local planning processes; 2) identifies the different levels for planning; 3) outlines the key processes to be followed, and 4) defines the supporting role of the national government. Both countries have decentralization planning tools which stress participation, climate change awareness, and gender. In both countries, regions and communes have substantial legal and financial autonomy to undertake activities for promoting local economic, social, and cultural development (while this is officially the decentralized structure, in reality, regions and communes may not yet have complete autonomy). Some ministry personnel say that a major problem is that the various government administrative and technical service units are, themselves, supply-driven. They say that government administrative and technical services at all levels plan their level and area of involvement to match the areas targeted by donor funds. This divides government capacities as different government administrative and technical services units chase alternative resource streams.

Both country governments have probably already done the potentially most important transformative policy action possible by putting in place their official systems of decentralization of authority for local development. The administrative codes of each of the countries already have outlined the procedures for development, beginning with the authorities on the local level and the establishment of local development communities, and working up to regional authorities and the national government. Though each countries' decentralization policy formulation was encouraged and supported by donors, as will be discussed later, many have yet to adhere to it in **daily practice.** This may be -attributed to the lack of complete autonomy at the region/province and commune level. The major missing element is budgetary devolution that would provide local governments with adequate financial resources to take meaningful

Ethiopian institution was monitored by the Ministry of Finance's Regional Cooperative Bureau, and its Pastoral Development Office, sub-division. The Ministry of Finance, itself, answered directly to the then Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, who was the driving (and imposing) force behind the country's climate adaptation and development strategy. In contrast, in1986, as part of a structural adjustment program, Niger actually liquidated it's Caisse Nationale de Crédit Agricole, the only source of finance dedicated to agriculture. Since then, EcoBank, and a few other banks with rural presence, have operated as private commercial banks only offering rural loans only to clients qualifying for a commercial credit line or in the context of activities backed by donor guarantees. (c.f. Mercy Corps. 2014. Final Evaluation Revitalizing Agricultural/Pastoral Incomes and New Markets Oromia and Somali Region, Ethiopia. P. 31

18 In 1986, as part of a structural adjustment program, Niger actually liquidated it's Caisse Nationale de Crédit Agricole, the only source of finance dedicated to agriculture. Since then, EcoBank, and a few other banks with rural presence, have operated as private commercial banks only offering rural loans only to clients qualifying for a commercial credit line or in the context of activities backed by donor guarantees. (c.f. Mercy Corps. 2014. Final Evaluation Revitalizing Agricultural/Pastoral Incomes and New Markets Oromia and Somali Region, Ethiopia. P. 31

action. A common reason given for the government to not ensure budgetary devolution, is the limited capacities and experiences of local governments to manage such resources. This may be a reason why donors may not observe decentralization processes. However, as will be discussed, as long as donors continue their generalized disregard of the official system and act as independent entities, it is difficult to see how the local government entities will ever build such capacities. It may seem to be a harsh message, but donors themselves may be partially to blame for the lack of more extensive national level transformation.

3.3.4. Official Development Strategies

Both countries also have a variety of development plans and procedures. Niger has its 3N Initiative which is responsible for implementing its Resilience Priorities Plan (PRP) approved in 2015. The Haut-Commissariat of 3N spends appreciable effort in the tracking of funds invested in different sectors, but also promotes different approaches such as a designed proposal to construct a development complex in each commune – *La Maison du Paysan*. Burkina Faso has its rural sector program plan, the PNSR (Programme National du Secteur Rural), as well as its resilience priorities plan (PRP) developed in the framework of AGIR. Burkina Faso tends to be more proactive in passing development-related legislation, such as free medical care for children up to 60 months.[19] Both countries want to promote the donor OECD Paris Agreement to harmonize donor assistance practices. Virtually across the assessment regions, government officials expressed dissatisfaction with assistance activities that fail to inform them about ongoing actions. In the Zinder Region in Niger, local authorities said that of almost 250 NGOs and CBOs operating in their region, only 40 provided written information on their activities. As noted, government services distinguish between "operational supervision" and "benefit supervision", and in most cases the higher-level government units would like the RISE Initiative to more actively participate in the "benefit supervision" activities.

3.3.5. The Functional Importance of Local Government

There is no question that national policies and practices can have dramatic effects on resilience. It should also be made clear that working at the local level under the structure of decentralization and devolution is not to be equated with simply working at the local level. In fact, decentralization and devolution still clearly tie all levels of government together and still nest the highest authority and responsibilities for national circumstances ultimately with the national government. What it does is reverse the order of the development and evolution of changes in practices and policies from top-down to bottom-up. Working with local government involves ensuring that, as precisely outlined in the governmental administrative codes of each nation, regional and national, as well as departmental/provincial authorities are kept fully informed, and efforts are made to coordinate between local activities and regional responsibilities, as well as to pass down to local authorities the national concerns, priorities and

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[19] Unfortunately, this mandate is not apparently adequately backed financially. In one focus with a community health facility that has run successfully for several years supported by user fees, they were told they would be reimbursed for now providing care free to children up to 60 months. For months they have done so but have not received any reimbursement. They are now in debt and cannot replenish their medical supplies.

directives.

The fact is that many decisions must be tailored to local realities. Some development issues that rural populations face can be addressed directly at the household or village level, but many others require action at an inter-village or commune level either because of the geographic dimensions of the problem (for example, management of transhumance or of watershed erosion), or for practical reasons of resource scarcity (i.e., not every village can have its own health center, veterinary clinic, or high school). There needs to be an authority who can help mediate the needs and requests of thousands of individual villages with the limited technical and development investment resources of the central government and help make rational decisions with regard to the building and staffing of health facilities, schools, etc. and the management of shocks, public security, etc. The need for such mediation warrants the efforts of commune authorities to prepare participatory commune development plans which can serve as a guide for rationalizing the allocation of government assistance, as well as ensure better coordination in donor and NGO interventions.

CASE EXAMPLE

The Village Clinic - Where Good Top-Down Policy is Not Always Good Local Practice

Recently the national government of Burkina Faso passed a law that mandated free medical treatment for children under five. This is a very good policy in theory. However, one of the villages where the assessment team went described how, for over 10 years, because of their distance from an official government health center, they have had a village medical clinic supported by small payments from the families of those treated. It was working very well. Now, because of the new law they have been unable to charge for treating children under five, which accounts for the majority of the patients to whom they provide services. They are now in debt and will probably have to close the clinic. In theory, the government is supposed to reimburse then for the free treatment, but in reality they receive no funds to reimburse their treatment costs.

3.3.6. Commune and Village Development

Communes, run by elected officials, are at the heart of decentralization. FAO considers Burkina Faso (#2 of 12 African nations) as having "strong", and Niger (#4 of 12) as having "average" decentralization and participation. However, CRS, in a study of local government, found "local development plans are often list of actions without any logical links between the assessments, defined objectives, expected outcomes, activities and ability to mobilize resources". They also noted "low citizen participation in the local governance in both countries.... due, in part, to the weak involvement of local governments in promoting economic development and oversight and instead being overly focused on promoting basic social services" They concluded that the process." could be enhanced with interventions that contribute to helping to developing the local economy'"

Officially, in Burkina Faso and Niger, commune councils exist. Burkina Faso also has officially recognized village-level development committees. (Niger has many village development committees as well, but their status is not formal). Local conventions, authorized by the laws,

and protocols also exist to establish agreements between both local and outside parties, such as between commune and donors. These seem effective, if adequately detailed and adhered to. They raise bad feelings if only ceremonial and ignored in action. Commune and donor agreements often carry some additional costs for both parties, if only in terms of additional staff time. At the same time, it is important to note that donors and NGOs activities regularly obtain substantial volunteer services at the village level.

3.3.7. The NGO Sector and Donor-Funded Activities

Goods and services are critical to everyday life, and most rural communities lack adequate amounts from either public or private sources. Donor funding and the NGO sector partially fill this gap. Donors provide the money, and many private firms, both national and international, implement activities, but it is the NGO sector, particularly those NGOs with semi-permanent facilities and operations which have become surrogate public-sector service providers. This is particularly true of health, and produces a conundrum. While integration produces meaningful and appreciated results to both associated government services and beneficiaries, it also dependency. Furthermore, while integration of NGO funded services meet immediate needs and appreciated results, the benefit of these appreciated benefits must be weighed against the need to pay attention to sustainability and the need to build capacity through institutionalization to ensure sustainability.

Even if an activity is ascribed to a donor organization, the implementation is often done by project-funded NGOs or NGO personnel. As such, NGOs are woven into the very fabric of the daily lives of rural people and communities in the study region. In the capital and other major cities, one can see numerous banks and advertising bulletin boards urging residents to take out loans for business development and personal consumption. In the rural areas, billboards identify which donors and NGOs are doing what and where, projecting an almost pervasive sense of donor dependency.

Because of their immersion in the donor-NGO world, residents of villages in the study region have a high degree of sophistication in discussing specific activities and the presumptions behind them. These include ideas about the criteria for vulnerability and the specifics of individual and household strategies for dealing with ongoing stresses and occasional major shocks. People are also well aware of what donors and NGOs want to hear in relation to providing goods and services. The same can be said of government representatives who shared similar thoughts, although if welcomed, the latter were also quick to express their honest disillusion at some donor practices.

3.4. Transformative Dynamics[xi]

To survive, people in the study region have always had to adopt new practices and adapt new solutions. On repeated occasions, the people of the Sahel have transformed key aspects of their lives. Presently Occurring Transformations

Today, many major transformations are underway in both Burkina Faso and Niger. These include: 1) widespread cell phone communications; 2) animal husbandry replacing crops in terms of importance to smallholder households; 3) land tenure modernization, with business people and foreigners buying large tracts; 4) an expanding class of landless rural laborers; 5)

dynamic new links between urban and rural areas; 6) schooling taking precedence over the retention of traditional agricultural knowledge; 7) young women increasingly migrating for urban work; and 8) the expansion of urban animal husbandry, with ownership of pastoral herds passing to urban investors, and **transhumance** pastoralists selling fresh cow and camel milk from urban campgrounds. Such transformations make the phenomenon of individual, household, and societal transformation a palpable issue in the minds of almost everyone in these two countries.

The above examples illustrate just a few of the transformations occurring or emerging on all levels, in both countries. As we later discuss, some of the behaviors and mindsets which the survey found reflected in discussions now taking place at the level of some RISE activity household, may also be emerging transformations. In fact, a legitimate question arises as to whether there is not a bias against seeing and crediting as transformational, lower level, less tangible behavioral transformations (i.e. the nature of discussions between spouses) in contrast to macro-level long term changes, ("(e.g., governance, laws, policies). Such a bias may result in both undercounting project and program assisted transformations that are occurring, and under-crediting small accomplishments that may have dramatic and consequential long-term effects when, and if, they are scaled-up to achieve a critical mass.

3.4.1. Presently Occurring Transformations

Presently occurring transformations include: 1) widespread cell phone communications; 2) animal husbandry replacing crops in terms of importance to smallholder households; 3) land tenure modernization, with business people and foreigners buying large tracts; 4) an expanding class of landless rural laborers; 5) dynamic new links between urban and rural areas; 6) schooling taking precedence over the retention of traditional agricultural knowledge; 7) young women increasingly migrating for urban work; and 8) the expansion of urban animal husbandry, with ownership of pastoral herds passing to urban investors, and transhumance pastoralists selling fresh cow and camel milk from urban campgrounds. Such transformations make the phenomenon of individual, household, and societal transformation a profound issue in the minds of almost everyone in these two countries.

3.4.2. Gender Concerns and the Role, Status, and Aspirations of Women

Today, major transformations are occurring in women's lives and in gender equity, though more in urban than rural areas. Generally, this corresponds to women acquiring new assets that empower them to play new roles. The more women are in control of the three most important factors economic assets, control over reproduction, and access to education, the more equitable the relations are between males and females. For rural women, access to credit, opportunities for livelihood earnings, and the availability of dry season gardening are avenues to greater parity between men and women. Secure tenure rights for women are critical for enabling women to invest time and labor in improving land.

3.4.3. Rural Versus Urban Realities

Local context and necessities have an enormous bearing on the everyday lives of women. In

rural areas, the time and energy spent hauling water is often the most important factor limiting a women's capacity to take on new productive opportunities. In urban areas, women have far more opportunities to take part in multiple networks and have more choices for engaging in social, religious, and entrepreneurial groups. Additionally, in urban areas, women have a greater array of alternative courses of action – in the market, in employment opportunities, and in services. In rural areas, women have fewer opportunities to weigh in on the changes they want, or to craft solutions to their needs and those of their families.

Traditionally, early marriage, characterized many of the groups in both these countries and is still a social problem in terms of education and health. It is seen by many to serve a double purpose of protecting a girl's reputation and also helping assure that the young men who went on migration would return to the community. However, increasing numbers of young women are going to urban areas before marriage. Besides the outright need for money, two contributing factors, revealed in the surveys, are: a) the search for reasonable economic independence and possibilities for education, and b) the desire for a good marriage in the face of an inability of the family (predominantly the mother) to afford the necessary marriage trousseau. It was said that a fair number of women now go to the cities to earn money to do this themselves.

4.0   Field Survey Findings

4.1.   Focus Group Perspectives on Resilience, Shocks, and Stresses

Everywhere the assessment team went, we found people with a high degree of sophistication in discussing assistance activities. They could easily articulate their criteria for vulnerability and the specifics of individual and household strategies for dealing with ongoing stresses and periodic major shocks. A major challenge for a donor trying to elicit peoples' opinions is getting beyond the "official" answers that community residents know donors and NGOs want to hear. The assessment team thus took considerable pains to get beyond platitudes and to develop a nuanced and accurate account of the RISE Initiative's performance at the midpoint. Spending appreciable time with the focus groups, doing follow-up in-depth interviews, and promising anonymity helped the assessment team to obtain frank answers.

4.1.1. Local Understandings of Vulnerability

Generally speaking, the residents of the localities base their strategies for mitigating shocks on the diversification of separate sources of food and income that are not highly-interdependent. Different households and different groups (such as the Fulbe in comparison to the Mossi) employ different combinations of solutions according to their specific group values and dynamics. The robustness of this strategy depends on how well activities are sequenced, layered, and integrated. Decisions on specific strategies are made by the household or extended unit level. By working as a group rather than as individuals, households and communities create a portfolio of possible solutions.

4.1.2. Local Criteria for Measuring Vulnerability

People seemed to have a fairly consistent scale for measuring robustness and vulnerability.

Their measures focused on how long a household can remain in its normal state in the event of shocks or stresses. Differences were generally expressed in three-month increments. Members of the focus groups outlined a fairly consistent path in the progression to vulnerability that different households experience during periods of stress. Their measures focused on how long a household can remain in its normal state in the event of shocks or stresses, measured in either months or years. **Stage 1** is being able to continue as normal based on food reserves, available money, and alternative income sources, such as temporary migration to work elsewhere. **Stage 2** is having to sell non-critical things to buy what the household needs. **Stage 3** is having to borrow money to buy what the household needs, again in order to sustain normal consumption and living standards over the coming three months. **Stage 4** is having to sell basic assets – tools or land – which will limit, perhaps permanently, the household's ability to recover. **Stage 5** is having to rely on the charity of others. **Stage 6** is leaving the community permanently in hopes of finding an alternative to the existing situation. These possibilities vary based on whether the household has someone who can migrate and earn money elsewhere or who already lives elsewhere with a job. Seasonal temporary migration for paid labor, and having animals to sell, stood out as the two most critical adaptations available for most households.

4.1.3. Household Crisis Survival Strategies

Based on discussions of vulnerability, the assessment team recognized four common survival strategies that households in the study region tend to employ. Households will try and use as many of them as possible.

<u>Diversification:</u> Alternative income streams include agriculture, livestock, labor, small business, salaried jobs, and government jobs.

<u>Alternative Assets:</u> This includes land with water, land dependent on rain, sheep/goats, cattle, tools/equipment, oxen/cart, jewelry, and miscellaneous goods.

<u>Relationships and Networks:</u> These include family, the household, relatives, friends, support networks, established credit, business links, and NGO and donor "partnerships".

<u>Flexibility and Mobility:</u> This means temporary migration, in-country, to neighboring countries, overseas, or going on transhumance. It also includes geographically-dispersed land holdings and leaving animals in the care of others elsewhere.

4.1.4. Beneficiary Perspectives on Addressing Vulnerability

Most of the villagers interviewed by the assessment team expressed views about vulnerability and targeting that differ significantly from USAID's. This is not simply a question of different factual understandings; instead, village residents in the study region tend to think in less binary terms than donors typically do.

First, focus group participants frequently noted that everyone is vulnerable. The difference in vulnerability is only a matter of degree and circumstances. Second, regarding vulnerability, it was common for interviewees and focus group participants to indicate that what matters is whether you have the necessary "assets" to participate in a given solution and the "means" to endure until a crisis is over. The emphasis, they think, should be neither on exclusive targeting

by donors of temporary assistance to those most in need, nor on exclusive criteria for acceptance into a program based on the recipient's possession of necessary assets required to participate in that activity.

Frequently, the assessment team heard that there should be ways to ensure the participation of those households and individuals that normally lack the necessary means and assets to participate in resilience activities, similar to school scholarships and school fee waivers. It was common for participants to note frustration at exclusive programming. They feel that a donor activity that provides inputs for participation, like food, cash, chickens, goats, or sheep, should not exclude the participation of people who already have those assets but who need to profit from other aspects of the activity, such as learning or marketing. Rather, they believe the emphasis should be on maximizing inclusiveness by allowing anyone who has the means or assets to participate to do so, while developing strategies to ensure that those lacking the necessary means and assets can acquire them and subsequently participate. Such broad participation is how support networks are built.

4.1.5. The Progression to Vulnerability in Times of Crisis

Participants in focus groups were able to classify individuals based on their susceptibility to survival risk in the event of shock or crisis.

<u>First</u> are the most vulnerable people, such as the old, the handicapped, and those who have virtually nothing and who perpetually rely on charity (Stage 6 above). **<u>Second</u>** are day laborers without land or other means of self-support. Individuals at this level typically cannot sustain themselves for longer than a month in Stage 1 (self-sufficiency) and can go rapidly to the stage of selling off assets (Stage 5 above). If they have a few goats and sheep, they may last three months in Stage 2, before moving to Stage 5. **<u>Third</u>** are people who have a small amount of land and a few reserves and who can stay in Stages 1 and 2 for a few months, but can end up in Stage 4, having to sell basic assets within six to nine months. **<u>Fourth</u>** is someone who has several pieces of land and perhaps five goats/sheep and a cow or two; such individuals may last six months in Stage 2. **<u>Fifth</u>** is an individual who owns perhaps ten cattle and can last 9-12 months or more in Stage 2. **<u>Sixth</u>** are residents with 10-30 cattle. They might last a year or more in Stages 1 and 2. **<u>Seventh</u>** is a person with 50-100 cattle or more. They may be able to enjoy self-sufficiency for several years, depending on the animal market and their ability to preserve their animals. The nature and the scale of the shocks that communities face naturally play a role in how members manage to sustain themselves. Even the better-off can collapse under extreme shocks. Moreover, since those individuals generally support more people and costs, the consequences may actually be more catastrophic when those households collapse.

Increasing Levels of Resilience

Descending Order of Responses to Shock and Increasing Vulnerability

Rich	AAAA DDD F* R N (100 + cattle)	Tap food reserves, available money, and alternative income sources,
Prospering	AAA DDD FF R N (goats/sheep / land with water/ 10-30 cattle)	
Doing OK	AA DD F R N (goats/sheep / some cows/ land with water)	Sell non-critical things to buy what household needs.
Getting By	A D F R N (several chicken/goats/sheep/ several pieces of land)	Borrow money to meet immediate needs & sustain household.
Struggling	A M R N (small amount land, tools; I goat or sheep)	Sell basic assets – tools or land which limits the household's ability to recover.
Day-to-Day	R M N (daily wage; labor for others)	Rely on the charity of others for daily survival needs.
Destitute	R M	Leave the community permanently in hopes of finding an alternative to the existing situation.

Time in Status ➡ NOW   I Month   3 Months   6 Months   I Year   2 Years   3 Years   4 Years+   Indefinite

Household Capacities for Coping with Shock

Assets: Includes land. water, land dependent on rain, sheep/goats, cattle, tools/equipment, oxen/cart, jewelry, and miscellaneous goods.

Diversification: Alternative income streams and multiply assets include agriculture, livestock, labor, small business, salaried jobs and government jobs.

Flexibility and **M**obility: This means temporary migration, in-country, to neighboring countries, overseas, or going on transhumance. It also includes geographically-dispersed land holdings and leaving animals in the care of others elsewhere.

Relationships and **N**etworks: These include family, the household, relatives, friends, support networks, established credit, business links, and NGO and donor "partnerships".

* Due to various management constraints (i.e., time, labor, location, etc.) large concentrations of assets can actually limit flexibility.

Figure 4-1: Levels of Resilience to Shock and Increasing Vulnerability

4.1.6. Adjusting to Donor Targeting

One contradiction that frequently arises in discussions about RISE's activities is between the Food for Peace's (FFP) humanitarian mandate to work with the "most vulnerable" and the classic development orientation to work with the "most productive". USAID's resilience strategy tries to solve the problem by calling for a flexible association between the two, e.g., some RISE activities focus primarily, although not exclusively, on saving lives, while others focus primarily on longer-term solutions. Many of the participants interviewed by the assessment team had a different way of handling this tension: managing such trade-offs, through mutual aid,

CASE EXAMPLE

Local Adjustments to Donor Targeting—Participant Repositioning of Project Assets

Food distributed in child feeding programs is often shared among all the family's children, and sometimes even with children of other families; a percentage of the cement for latrines is redirected to other construction needs; pumps installed for garden projects are put to use for other purposes once the original activity is over. Where donors look for outputs aligned with project purposes, people see projects as "resource availability" opportunities and see nothing wrong with reallocating such resources to alternative individual and group

established ties, and informal redistribution. In their opinion, rather than having specific programs targeted only to the vulnerable, they believe programs should be problem-oriented and then have within them as necessary specific targeted solutions that secure the full participation of the most vulnerable and assure that what are identified as indispensable needs are adequately addressed. They believe this would expand the benefits received and enhance mutual assistance while preserving critically needed social solidarity.

Traditional societies often reflect a belief in the "theory of the limited good", a commonly held assumption that there is a limited amount of "good" (land, money, etc.) to go around, so every time one person profits, another loses. Effective foreign assistance has always been primarily about "increasing the size of the pie" as well as improving the equity of its distribution. In this case, it appears villages may be ahead of donors in favoring "growing the pie". For USAID, accepting the village perspective would mean first doing a stakeholder analysis by looking at the overall problem, then subdividing its components as they relate to all the potentially concerned stakeholders. One could then identify the relative importance of an activity to each group and the ways of addressing their concerns, before identifying options for addressing each concern – including resources needed. Finally, strategies could be developed to maximize the desired benefits. In this sense every stakeholder could theoretically be "targeted".

4.2. Focus Group Perspectives on Priority Assistance Activities

RISE aims to address factors that are critical in peoples' daily lives. Most RISE zone inhabitants devote the bulk of their normal day to addressing immediate needs. Part of one's quotidian activities may include measures to accommodate ongoing stresses or to prepare for the inevitable occasional shocks. A part may be devoted to doing something to prepare for a better future, such as adult literacy training. None of these activities constitutes a simple "discretionary" choice based on individual preferences. Rather, people are seeking functional solutions to fundamental needs. It is within this context that RISE beneficiaries assess and weigh their priorities.

The following represents a synthesis of the responses the assessment team received during focus group discussions about peoples' assessments of the overall top six priorities for RISE resilience related activities. It should be recognized that these focus group priorities differ in rank from some of the more diverse choices individuals express regarding their own personal priorities. For example, almost everyone agreed that water is the number one priority for resilience to climate change shock. However, for the lucky individuals and households that happen to be situated near a good water source, this is not a problem, so naturally their personal preference would be for something else. The best way of addressing such diversities is through actively engaging would-be beneficiaries in participatory planning, the choice of precise activities, and the actual design and management of implementation modalities. The above differentiations are a key to both individual motivations and the scaling-up of individual adaptive and transformative capacities. This would mean some tailoring of project activities to the individual priorities of the participants. It would also require giving project implementers the necessary flexibility to make such adjustments and performance recognition when they successfully do so.

It is important to note that village respondents sometimes have difficulty knowing for sure which organization was doing what or had done what. We found that people often identified an

activity by the particular people implementing it, not the organization they work for, and even less by the donor that funds the activity. While we made it clear that we were looking at the RISE program, respondents' priorities were inevitably built on a mixture of experience with RISE and other donor projects. Thus, their priorities are best understood in terms of the type of activity they prefer, rather than as a judgement of a specific RISE activity or other donor activity.

4.2.1. Ranking of Focus Group Priorities for Resilience Assistance Activities

1 Water

Water is where sustainable village development either begins or ends. On a daily basis, women and children engaged in fetching water lose so much time that it whittles away at all other objectives. Sometimes the demand is so great that children are sent out at night with flashlights in order to have a chance at the pump. Good health and sanitation practices generally depend on sufficiently available potable water. Similarly, dry season agriculture such as a small home garden, which represents for some the greatest hope for increasing household wellbeing, can only be achieved with adequate water access.

2 Child and Mother Health–Nutrition, Family Planning

This includes feeding programs for malnourished children and programs for the nutrition of both mother and child. These RISE activities are very popular, especially because they do not discriminate against any particular group or class. RISE project beneficiaries noted how these activities have helped many mothers, not just the most vulnerable; since many appear to have less nutritional milk than previous generations, just sharing information and instruction can be beneficial. For many women we met during focus groups, having access to a variety of nutrition and health-related benefits encourages eventual group ownership in sustaining the activities, which thus ensures that the gains to households and the group are not lost after the official activity is ended.

Among younger people, including married couples, family planning seems to be gaining rapidly in popularity. The motivating reason is not to stop population growth. Rather, many beneficiaries perceive that family planning allows for greater investment in each child, hopefully giving that child a more productive adult life. Many women also cited the reduction in the burden of having multiple children just a year or two apart as a key benefit of family planning. Further, if they can space the birth of their children four years apart, their children are able to assist with the care of their younger siblings.

3 Micro-credit/Finance

Micro-credit activities are popular and appreciated. One shortcoming, however, is that the opportunities are often targeted to certain classes of individuals, especially women. We learned that credit activity beneficiaries often get around this by taking loans from several micro-credit lenders and then giving that money to others, such as family members, who also need credit but who do not qualify. The downside to this innovation, of course, is that the original borrower remains liable. In some instances, the assessment team learned that an original borrower might charge additional interest from the secondary borrower. Rather than having a clear preference

for one type of program over another (i.e. micro-credit over village savings), many women expressed that they benefit from the existence of numerous diverse programs, each of which tends to serve a different need and the totality of which maximizes the benefits they derive. They also noted that there are traditional forms of village savings groups, and it is possible for group-members to create more modern versions on their own once they understand the alternative possibilities.

4 Dry Season-Irrigated Gardens

Larger irrigated gardens stood out as an especially sought-after intervention, because they provide both food and income during the dry season, and potentially during a drought. However, people also realize that such gardens require a reliable, adequate, and accessible source of water that is often unavailable. This, as well as other factors such as land availability, limits the number of likely participants to have irrigated gardens. It is unclear at this midterm stage whether RISE partners are capable of expanding the number of large irrigated gardens in RISE zone villages. Smaller household watered gardens do not face the same constraints, but mainly only serve household consumption.

5 Conservation Farming And Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration

Many of the common practices and past solutions for agriculture have disappeared with climate change. Farmers with whom the assessment team met were, therefore, very open to new techniques from activities such as Conservation Agriculture (CA). Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) activities, which are supported by RISE projects as a complement to CA but which are seen as a distinct practice, not only increase the number of trees but also provide a sustainable source of firewood and improve soil fertility. Water-saving improvements on dry land, such as zai (catchment depressions dug around plants to capture and retain water) and "half-moon" water retention barriers, work well, although they require substantial labor to build and maintain. Some types of water and soil conservation projects, such as rock lines on contours, require substantial quantities of stone, which are not readily available in some parts of the RISE zone.[xii] Organic fertilizer is especially sought after but requires water, which is often a missing resource.[20]

6 Access to Services

Transformation is occurring through rural–urban links that support new opportunities in urban areas, such as urban livestock raising and developing local dairy products. However, this also means that some "old" rural services have migrated to local urban markets. Basic goods such as farm implements that local blacksmiths once crafted must now be bought in the urban marketplace. The same is true for fertilizer, seeds, and medicine. Burkina Faso's law now requires women to give birth in official health centers, but the centers can be 20-30 kilometers or more away. These challenges are exacerbated during the rainy season when catchments flood and paths turn into mud. As one cultivator told the assessment team: "We can't even get fresh fruit (plentiful in urban markets), even though we are the ones who grow things."

REGIS-ER considers one of its most successful and innovative contributions to be its development of "agents préstataires de service" (APS). These are private service providers

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[20] REGIS-ER. 2016. Conservation Farming –Guide de Formation. Niamey

whose role is to market agricultural services and supplies from secondary towns to rural villages. They only come to villages periodically and the team did not encounter any during its field visits. However, REGIS-AG said an internal evaluation of the approach was in preparation. The survey groups' concern focused on the inaccessibility of these services for reasons of distance, poor roads, and rainy season inaccessibly. Not surprisingly, location is a key criteria in determining priority needs:[21] the greater a community's distance from a health facility, the greater access to health becomes their first priority. There is also a trade–off of benefits. For example, pastoralist groups typically find themselves far from health facilities because their first priority is access to adequate pasturage for their herds. Other than access to water, which is generally everyone's first priority, prioritizing specific needs has to be done in the specific context of each community and household.

4.2.2. Complementary Participant Priorities

"Husbands' Schools" and "Safe Spaces for Girls" for Adolescent Girls:

These interventions provide "open dialogue spaces" framed around specific issues. Participants express great appreciation for these programs, not only because of the relevance of the subjects covered, such as family planning, but also because they provide a venue for an expanded exchange of ideas and dialogue. One example was how, in connection with family planning sessions, Husband School participants were able to arrange a face-to-face discussion between wives and their mothers-in-law, something that traditionally is taboo.

Food (or Cash) for Work (or Assets)

Food/Cash for work programs are important sources of support for households during the dry season. At one time or another all of the DFAPs have participated in Food for Cash programs.[xiii] Participation in the restoration of public/community land and pasture is generally improved with the provision of some form of payment, as this supplies necessary income for men to remain at home during the dry season. It often has the added benefit that they can sometimes find time for engaging in conservation agriculture activities on their own land, as well as related FMNR activities. Without such paid programs, they would likely continue conservation agriculture and some FMNR as possible, but individual incentives for restoration of public land would generally be lacking. People complained that after working to restore such lands, the land and its resources (trees, grass, water) are controlled by government authorities who attempt to deny them access, and even fine them, if exploit the resources for their personal benefit.

Veterinary Services

RISE's project participants are virtually all sedentary agriculturalists who have traditionally done some associated animal raising. In general, RISE activities do not work with predominantly transhumance communities. Those RISE participants who raise sedentary livestock, small ruminants, and poultry expressed much appreciation for the veterinary services that RISE activities provide, especially for small ruminants and poultry. Somewhat similar to child-mother

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[21] At the time of the assessment REGIS-ER was about to conduct an evaluation of the APS. No "APS" were encountered in the 4 sites visited that had REGIS-ER interventions. The team was able to visit two villages on a market day.

health-nutrition, this type of assistance to livestock is especially appreciated because its benefits can be widely spread rather than just narrowly targeted.

<u>Community Early Warning and Response to Emergencies System (SCAP/RU)</u>

Village surveillance committees that monitor conditions and provide warning about coming crises have been established as part of the national disaster prevention and management system in many locations in Niger and Burkina Faso. The surveillance committees are composed of a broad spectrum of community members but, based on the assessment team's interactions, the trained youth stood out in terms of their capacity to systematically identify problems and suggest activities that might solve them. Unfortunately, it appears that SCAP/RUs reports rarely receive either a donor or government response. Local authorities are very clear that they lack the resources to actually respond to most requests. Local projects typically have agendas that are already set. Officially established early warning systems, such as FEWS and AGRHYMET, have been largely indifferent to the prospect of formally incorporating local actions and actors, such as the SCAP/RUs, into their standard operations. The local support for these initiatives appears closely tied to the sense of potential value, relevance, capacity, and empowerment they give to their young members. What is missing is consistent, actionable and sustainable integration of the SCAP/RU in both donor and local government processes, which would help to ensure local operational monitoring of outputs.

4.2.3. RISE Partner-Promoted Activities

Other activities stand out as greater priorities for the RISE partners—based on their own assessments—than for the local beneficiaries who took part in focus group discussions.

<u>Habbanayé</u>—The special tactic of assisting vulnerable women by giving them some animals for their use, with the condition that they give offspring to other vulnerable women.

Habbanayé is a specific approach wherein, as currently implemented, vulnerable women receive a small number of animals, either goats or sheep, which they raise, and from which they draw milk. When the animals give birth, a new cycle of gifts to other women occurs. The concerns of focus group participants are twofold. First, the activity is represented as a targeted way of increasing the resilience of the most vulnerable. In fact, most people would generally agree this is a good livelihood activity and does provide minimal resources to meet an unexpected need or short–term shock. However, there is a fairly general consensus that such assistance does not provide a long-term solution to vulnerability, since almost inevitably most of the animals provided will be sold by their owners when some new crisis strikes. This leads to the second challenge, namely that the activity has no clearly built-in mechanism for replenishing depleted stock. Traditional habbanayé did function as an assistance mechanism between specific parties but probably most importantly because it created an enduring relationship between the parties. Such solidarity between group members serves as a critical form of insurance at times of need. This seems to be lacking in the present RISE activity. If the program were more expansive and diversified, mixed vulnerable and less vulnerable participants, and established links between groups in different areas and circumstances, it could possibly develop into a group mutual aid mechanism for helping individual households reconstitute their lost production assets, thereby recovering and restarting after a crisis.

<u>Adult and Out-of-School Literacy</u>

The opinion about adult and out-of-school literacy seems to be that, while much appreciated by those participating, the literacy activities do not directly produce specific, rapid, and tangible benefits to participant households, which seems to be a major participant priority.[xiv] Nevertheless, the literacy classes are successful enough for their teachers to have formed a "union" to try and ensure that they, not outsiders, are hired for all such programs in the areas.

Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS)

Of all witnessed activities, CLTS seems to be the activity area most in need of further objective study and clarification. There is significant dissonance between what most community members interviewed told the assessment team about latrine projects and what the donors and NGOs, who promote such projects, generally describe as the benefits.[22] [xv] From the expressed perspective of interviewed community members, community members often build latrines as a tactic to maintain good relations with the providers, and not with the intent of actually using them - even if they tell the promoters they do use them. The problem in not a lack of appreciation of improved sanitation per se but the way most such activities are actually carried out. For example, some women working on a RISE-partner irrigated garden project complained that the women participants wanted latrines in the field, so as not to have to return to their houses or go elsewhere in the field. At the time of the assessment they had not received any assistance to build the field latrines.[23]

4.2.4. Activities Conspicuously Not Mentioned in Focus Group Discussions

Some important RISE activities received no mention at all in focus group discussions, even though participants said they were aware of them when directly asked.

Value Chain Development and "warrantage"

For REGIS-AG, niébé (cowpea) value chain development constitutes one of the project's major activities. As part of that program, REGIS-AG's provides an opportunity for warrantage, seasonal crop storage that can be used to obtain credit for immediate expenses while holding the crop for future marketing at a better price. In theory, this constitutes a quite valuable service. One possible explanation for the lack of mention is that it is a relatively new activity. However, though people did not mention it, they knew about it when asked. Respondents said the activity benefited only a limited number of well-off households. Apparently for most small producers, cowpea production is a secondary, intercropped, food security crop, and a source of occasional income for women through the sale of processed forms in local markets. Large domestic markets and export markets inevitably require a reliable source of supply adequate to meet demand and cover additional transportation and transaction costs. This means participant producers have to provide a minimum quantity and quality of the crop, which, in most cases, exceeds what most rural small house producers either have to offer or can afford to divert from household consumption.

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[22] Engel, S. and Susilo, A. Shaming and Sanitation in Indonesia – a return to colonial public health practices? Development & Change 45(1) 2014: 157–178. p158

[23] This may reflect gender differences over the desirability of latrines but our information is insufficient to answer this. The example is one of the activity not responding to the need for sanitary facilities where potential beneficiaries want them.

Moreover, as an export commodity, it is highly susceptible to currency fluctuation problems (such as the current devaluation of the Nigeria Naira). In both Niger, reportedly the world's largest exporter of cowpeas,[24] and Burkina Faso, increased cowpea production has come almost exclusively from the expansion of cultivated land. This process is now reaching its limits in terms of overall land availability, with the result that individual holdings are generally decreasing in size. The question seems not to be the efficacy of the cowpea value chain activity per se but how its large scale commercial focus limits its feasibility as a resilience strategy for small household producers, who focus primarily on local markets and household food security.

On several occasions, villages brought up their interest in establishing "cereal bank" storage for food security, rather than warrantage for sales. Cereal banks existed traditionally, and donor programs have supported them with mixed success. RISE zone inhabitants are familiar with the method and with the problems associated with those efforts, but they feel that such storage opportunities would still address an important need, and they feel that an effort should be made to make them work.[xvi]

Community Resource Management Conventions

Despite making an effort, security concerns made it impossible to visit actual communities where Community Resource Management Conventions have been used. However, in discussion with local authorities and some other projects, such as the World Bank livestock activity PRAP, many expressed the opinion that these were very positive in terms of their practicality and value. One great challenge they face, however, is obtaining the full participation of stakeholders. Most specifically, transhumance pastoral groups, who make only occasional but critical use of many such resources, are generally not included in agreements governing local area grazing conventions. Unfortunately, conflict between transhumance and sedentary populations is increasing over the use of such resources.

4.3.   The Importance of Capacities

The concept of capacity plays an important role in USAID's conception of resilience. As defined and explained in one USAID guidance document:

"Resilience capacities represent the potential for proactive measures to be taken in order to deal with shocks or stresses. In a resilience Theory of Change (TOC), capacities can be represented at the output level...Capacities can be developed, supported or strengthened by program activities, and then contribute to effective responses to shocks and stresses. If the TOC holds true, then these responses enable people and institutions to achieve and maintain gains in well-being, despite exposure to shocks and stresses."[25]

In terms of capacities, USAID generally categorizes household resilience capacities as: *absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity, and transformative capacity*. One expression of this defines the three as follows: 1) "absorptive capacity at the community and household levels, (is) helping them (people, households and communities) to both reduce disaster risk and absorb the impacts of shocks without suffering permanent, negative impacts on their longer-term

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[24] ACB. 2015. GM and Seed Industry Eye Africa's Lucrative Seed Market. African Center for Biodiversity. South Africa p. 15

[25] USAID.2017. Resilience Measurement Practical Guidance Series: Guidance Note No. 3 –Resilience Capacity Measurement. Center for Resilience. Wash. D.C. p.3

livelihood security; 2) adaptive capacity of communities and households…(is) improving their flexibility to respond to longer-term social, economic and environmental change; and (3) transformative capacity (is)…. enabling conditions….innovations, institutional reforms, behavior shifts, and cultural changes among relevant stakeholders at the international, regional, national, and sub-national levels.[26]

These understandings can be simplified as abilities which make people, household and systems: 1) robust, prepared and equipped (absorptive capacity), 2) willing and able to modify and adjust practices to changing circumstances (adaptive capacity), and 3) capable of significantly reconfiguring relationships and goals (transformative capacity).[xvii]

As noted below, many assessment respondents believe that they, and many of RISE's other beneficiaries, already have substantial absorptive, adaptive, and even transformational capacities. For them, what outsiders see as opportunities to develop capacities they themselves tend to view through the lens of "assets" that permit them to exercise their existing capacity.

Rather than getting caught up in semantic differentiation, the assessment team found it best to just keep these different nuances in mind. In fact, in most "real world" situations, the different perceptions usually seem to work and converge on-the-ground.

4.3.1. Relations between Priorities and Capacities

The priorities expressed by the groups seem to be well-dispersed among the three identified capacities. Thus, to associate some of the key program activities with their associated capacities:

- water – absorptive

- child and mother health/nutrition /family planning–absorptive

- micro-credit/finance – adaptive, transformative

- dry season /irrigated gardens - absorptive, adaptive

- conservation farming and farmer-managed natural regeneration –absorptive

- adaptive access to services – absorptive

- "husbands' schools" and "safe spaces" for adolescent girls – adapted, transformational,

- food (or cash) for work (or assets) – absorptive, adaptive

- veterinary services–absorptive

- adult and out-of-school literacy – adaptive, transformative

- community-led total sanitation (clts) – uncertain

- value chain development and warrantage – adaptive,

- community resource management conventions–adaptive

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[26] USAID-DFID. (2012). Enhancing Resilience to Food Security Shocks in Africa. Discussion Paper. TANGO. Wash. p.8-9

Looking at the above associations, two observations seem particularly important. First, top priority goes to those activities, capacities, and assets that support absorptive capacity. Second, a select group of people clearly value activities that they think can help transform their lives. The first observation makes classic sense in terms of basic survival. The second observation, if true, may be the most consequential for the RISE Initiative. The USAID resilience paradigm stresses the importance of transformation at higher system levels, not necessarily at the personal level, nor in terms of single occurrences. If the second observation is true, this suggests that USAID may be underestimating the role and importance of individual and single transformations, and perhaps the accomplishments of some of its activities. While it may seem logical that grand transitions would occur at the highest levels, when people in Africa are asked what has most transformed life in the study region, they almost always say "the cell phone".

4.3.2. Aggregation vs Disaggregation of Priorities and Capacities

The evaluation team was surprised at the apparent lack of differentiation between the priorities of the different groups. By splitting engaged community members into qualitatively different demographic groups, the assessment team expected to find substantial differences in the priorities that the groups expressed. Surprisingly, the opposite was true. The different groups, even across the two countries, expressed a general consensus in terms of ranking which activities they thought were most important for providing individuals and households the capacity to endure and to recover from stress and shock.

In reflection, the potential reasons for convergence in priorities across quite distinct demographic groups are the following:

1) The local cultures generally treat households as a corporate group, with a corporate interest, to which the individuals therein contribute in the most appropriate way they can.

2) People are experienced in reaching just such a "group" agreement, because, at times of stress and shock, the functioning household comes together to seek to agree based on what is in the best interest of the corporate group.

3) While there is no doubt that some individuals do place their individual interests first, this generally requires creating a significant separation between oneself and the household, such as occurs when young girls decide, independently, to migrate to the city.

4) There are important differences in how different households (not individuals) see each of the priority areas. Looking back, iteratively, it appears that these differences in households create distinct local understandings of and experiences with vulnerability (c.f. "Progression to Vulnerability in Times of Crisis").

5) Lastly, The RISE Initiative, as with most donor resilience projects, is closely aligned with the problems of climate change that, especially in rural areas, affect everyone in fairly the same fashion. This is probably why most proposed solutions are, in fact, fairly standardized.

4.3.3. Life Stage Interest: An Alternative Explanation

Aside from the major priorities that were relatively common across groups, members of different demographic groups also expressed interests consistent with their social status. For example:

- Young men want associated skills training that they can use to earn income elsewhere - in the cities or as migrants to other countries.

- Married men put the emphasis on immediate income.

- Married women put an emphasis on what contributes to: 1) household harmony and well-being; 2) their status within their household; and 3) anything that reduces demands on their labor and gives them some time for attending to their own personal needs.

- Mothers-in-law, a very important group across a spectrum of concerns, are particularly troubled about losing their customary status and strive to retain decision making roles.

- Traditional male leaders stress doing what maintains or increases their status – which is a combination of exercising their political/administrative/social/economic powers. This particularly means fulfilling the expectations that flow from their social roles and protecting or growing their economic assets.

- Adolescent girls, and not yet married women, are particularly concerned with gaining and exercising more freedom of choice across the spectrum of life choices and challenges they face. These include marriage, how to obtain reasonable economic independence, family planning, possibilities for migration and education, and their ability to secure social and self-esteem.

These differences in priorities regarding desired benefits can have clear impacts on activities and performance. Thus, for example, on irrigated garden areas, one can often see how men will generally make the maximum investment that will render the maximum cash profit. Women will ration their time and investment, regardless of profit, when it begins to compete with other activities they have to perform. Mothers-in-law will complain that the garden activities are taking away from their daughters-in-law's responsibilities in the household. Young men will put in time to gain skills that they might use to earn wages elsewhere but not a high level of commitment into actually working their plots. Traditional leaders and authorities make decisions behind the scenes in terms of access to needed land and water. Young girls will avoid getting involved as this activity generally does not fit with their immediate life needs.

It would appear that, to a large extent, what donors see as project outputs, many participants see as basically generalizable "assets". Conversely, what the donors may see as "absorptive" and "adaptive" capacity, many participants see as a chance, however slim, for effecting some transformational change in their lives or the lives of their households.

Finding out why this may be was another surprise for the assessment team.

4.3.4. Substantial but Fraying Human/Institutional Capacities

We found substantial capacity in national, regional and local governments, in academic institutions, in the private, public and NGO sectors, and in the villages we visited.[27] What concerned the evaluation team greatly was that many NGO personnel described an apparent fraying of systematic, technically-disciplined, sustainable, and participatory development. They said top-down, imposed procedures, frameworks, and disproportional demands for reporting - compared to action - were marginalizing their own and their organizations' applied skills. At the village level, people also spoke of how, due to the massive loss of local biological diversity and changing weather, the new generation lacked old skills, such as the exploitation of no longer available forest products like honey; while the older generation could no longer practice what in the past were common capacities, such as regular experimentation with new or exogenous varieties of crops and seeds.

5.0   Team Observations and Discoveries

The assessment team used village observations and in-depth interviews with implementing partners, government staff, and other key stakeholders to verify and complement results from the focus group discussions. Based on these inputs, the team made its own independent observations and findings regarding issues that merit greater emphasis and those that call for attention and improvement.

5.1.   Perplexing Contradictions in Activity Performance

While the assessment team found evidence that confirmed the benefits of the priority activities as reported by focus groups, it also found examples of incomplete, poorly-performing, or failed RISE and other donor-supported activities. These existed concurrently with ongoing successes, and occasionally almost side-by-side. They included garden demonstration plots in far poorer condition than the productive, non-activity plots next to them, or with a gradient of sub-areas ranging from well-tended to disastrous. In one community, we observed three wells, all recently drilled by two different projects, none of which worked. In each case, the drilling had stopped short of the minimum depth known by villagers as necessary to reach the water table. In all cases the implementers had a proven track record for successful implementation, sometimes within the same community where the failed activities were found.

When we spoke to members of the implementing partner teams to get their perspective, in most cases their explanations involved one or more of the following reasons: it was an interim situation; taking the proper remedial action was outside their authorized scope of work; the appropriate solutions were hampered or prohibited by funding and scope of work restrictions; they did not have the necessary skills because of recruitment difficulties related to obtaining hiring or salary approval; or they were overwhelmed by other tasks.

However, after extensively discussing the situation with numerous parties, both across the spectrum of RISE stakeholders and with other donors and other well-informed individuals, an

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[27] The team greatly benefitted from the awareness, insight, and frankness of the RISE program and partner staff as well as the staff of USAID, and other donors, as well as government, private, public and NGO personnel. They are not the problem.

unexpected understanding emerged. Namely, a series of broad macro-challenges related to donor activity implementation created a context hampering the effective implementation and sustainability of many resilience activities, including RISE. We outline those challenges in the following section.

5.2. Unexpected Macro-Contextual Challenges: The "Elephants in the Room"

The team identified a set of four overarching development assistance realities that pervade most of the donor assistance sector in Burkina Faso and Niger, and which may be neutralizing even the best efforts to successfully implement a sustainable resilience program. Taken individually, none may have a significant debilitating effect. Taken together, however, their effects can undermine the coherence and efficacy of even the best-intended assistance. Many on-the-ground project personnel are aware of these challenges but feel powerless to change them, so their presence is ignored or denied. Thus, the assessment team came to see these concerns as true secrets de Polichinelle, or "elephants in the room."

While the RISE Initiative and partners are not the cause of this dynamic, they are negatively affected by it. And, while this counterproductive environment precedes RISE's entry into the two countries, the assessment team believes USAID is one of the few donors that might be able to take a leadership role in remedying the situation in concert with other key players.

The four challenges, described below, are: 1) donor domination and disarray; 2) the operational irrelevance of the technical realities of resilience as a phenomenon; 3) the absence of integration, innovation, and synergisms; and 4) a vacuum of attention to "recovery" from shock.

5.2.1. Donor Domination and Disarray -The First "Elephant"

The assessment team found that, in the localities observed in Burkina Faso and Niger, organizations in general (donors, NGOs and CBOs, etc.) are basically free to follow their own organizationally determined development orientations and implementation styles. As a result, the different assistance providers each have their own priorities, strategies, programs, methodologies, activities, technologies, and indicators. With little or no coordination, they initiate development activities with communities as they wish. In some cases, several of the donors operate in the same communities at the same time – but with conflicting approaches, all chasing after the same recipients. Recipients find themselves faced with a cacophony of often incompatible, sometimes conflicting proposals, presented by parties that they know will disappear after a relatively short period of time, leaving behind unsolved problems which the beneficiaries will have to address. Because of donor disarray, local residents do not receive well-crafted, cohesive solutions, but instead non-harmonized, donor-conceived "responses" that the beneficiaries often are forced to "disassemble" into their basic elements and then find something of value to do with them.

The assessment team heard donor personnel say that villagers have to learn to adapt to new ways, but in fact the villagers are already adapting their everyday lives to the overwhelming reality of donor disarray. This adaptation is now a major part of their strategy to mitigate risk and remain resilient. Each party has its own adaptive behavior, which it plays against the other. The funders/providers try to tactically provide benefits in ways that they think will most

influence beneficiaries to change their behavior in ways that conform to intended activity results. The beneficiaries ostensibly agree with whatever is offered them without criticism, so that they can acquire some asset such as cement, a pump, agricultural supplies, free food, seeds, training, etc. – which they hope to adapt to some useful purpose from which they can actually derive some value.

CASE EXAMPLE

The Fruits of Non-Harmonization—Conflicting Solutions Cancel Each Other Out

In one village, at almost the same time, three different projects came with three different latrine designs; all with the same expressed purpose of creating sanitary households and communities. According to an interviewee in the village, one project brought a prefabricated model – a one-size-fits-all solution. Another came with the idea of providing free cement and rebar, but left it to the villagers to actually construct the latrine. The third supplied the masons, but wanted the villagers to provide the materials.

All three projects were attempted, but none were successful.

The assessment team could not find the prefabricated model anywhere. There were, however, examples of the free cement and rebar model that looked more like a silo than a latrine and had no evidence of ever being used. The assessment team also found remnants of the model that required the villages to pay for the materials. However, it was totally dysfunctional, with an opening too small for any practical use.

We reiterate that this is not a RISE-induced problem or a RISE problem per se. Rather, it is a challenge that RISE faces in operating in a context of many other donors and little overarching coordination.

5.2.2. Operational Irrelevance of Resilience—The Second Elephant

As noted in the Resilience Desk Assessment, when resilience is achieved, both in ecosystems and in systems that integrate people with natural resources, three characteristics are evident (c.f. USAID's Concepts and Practices of Resilience); these are:[28] [xviii] 1) flexibility, 2) learning/memory, and 3) self-empowered capacity to recover. Flexibility is the amount of change a system can undergo while retaining the same structure and function. Learning is the ability to return to, or determine a new "point of return" after dislocation. Self-empowerment is the degree to which the system is itself capable of repeated self-organizing recovery.[xix]

Unfortunately, as presently structured and authorized, many RISE activities, as well as those of other donors, are incompatible with these fundamental resilience characteristics. Their activities and operations are characterized by inflexible processes and predetermined targeted results. Learning is organized around the donor's understandings, processes, objectives and strategies rather than those of the beneficiaries. Participants have little authority for self-determining almost any aspect of project activities. Power and approval rests in donor hands, and often it is the hands of distant, higher-level administrative authorities with little knowledge

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[28] USAID. 2016. Concepts and Practices of "Resilience": A Compilation from Various Secondary Sources. Ahmed, A.K., Coastal Community Resilience (CCR) Program. IRG-Tetra Tech. US IOTWS Program Document No. 05-IOTWS-06.

of local conditions.

This often restricts implementing partners and local stakeholders and beneficiaries from developing and exercising the three resilience characteristics of flexibility, learning and self-determination, thereby preventing them from actually being resilient.[xx] Occasionally, however, village participants actually do succeed and exercise these characteristics in non-formal or hidden ways.

CASE EXAMPLE

Avoiding Activity Restraints—Using Targeted Assets to Build Longer Term Relations

In various RISE promotional documents, the habbanayé (small ruminants) activity is frequently cited as an illustrative RISE activity. In habbanayé, the project provides sheep or goats to women in vulnerable households. These women are supposed to raise them for their needs (milk and potential sale when necessary), while passing-on the first offspring to another vulnerable woman. The project seeks to promote women's rights of choice. In this case a mixed community committee selects the recipients, according to vulnerability criteria established by the project. In contrast, the traditional habbanayé practice creates an enduring relational link between the more prosperous giver and the more needful recipient. The assessment team discovered cases in which, in the project's absence, the animals were redistributed by what appeared to be a decision of both the committee and the "targeted" recipients to other people, not among the neediest, but with whom the recipients want to reinforce a good relationship. (Since in the cases the team observed found it appears that the "targeted" recipients were first in line to get the next offspring, the situation is really an adaptation that delays, but also increases, the eventual benefits to the most vulnerable. In the end, the originally intended "vulnerable" recipient gets both the animals –which people say mitigate stress – and stronger network ties, which people say are needed to endure to recovery from crisis level shock.)

5.2.3. Absence of Integration, Innovation, and Synergism - The Third Elephant

Synergism emerges from the integration or interaction of discrete things, which produces unpredictable effects greater than the sum of their separate effects (e.g.: H + O = H2O). Cooperation and coordination can increase efficiencies, but they do not cause synergistic transformations. It is when things are truly integrated that they create new interdependencies which result in new transformed phenomenon.[xxi] One can encourage synergies, but one cannot predetermine the outcome of any particular effort to do so. Synergistic transformations often occur when there is a systematic change resulting from a new reorganization of the relationship between interdependent factors.[xxii]

In this regard, there is an important distinction to be made between a "system" and a "systems of systems" (SoS). When people think of systems analysis and development, they are often most concerned about intervening in a complex structure with many interdependencies, e.g., an airplane. Major market value chains, such as those for cowpeas for export, are a "system". Their component parts—from the way the cow peas are produced, to how they are stored, to

how they are processed, to how they are transported, to how they are marketed—all depend on each other to achieve the intended benefit. One cannot ignore any single one of these components without disrupting the entire activity. As a result, participants do not have the freedom to change the accepted and expected performance criteria of each element simply to conform to their specific needs.

This, however, is not the standard situation regarding resilience programming and activities in Niger and Burkina Faso. Most RISE activities are working on what is more properly called a "system of systems" level. An SoS is a collection of systems that have weak or "soft" links to each other, in ways that benefit them all, without creating absolutely critical dependencies,[29] e.g., an airport. Changes in the soft links that characterize an SoS can improve and enrich individual components, but are slower to transform the actual systems. The advantages to working at the SoS level are flexibility and reduced risks. Transformation can occur when different elements or links regularly meet and crisscross, and dynamically interact at a nexus. Many RISE Initiative activities are either parts of a "healthy household" or a "livelihood" system of systems.

If present RISE activities such as nutritional education, livestock raising, schools for husbands and all season gardens were linked, they could substantially reinforce each other. At the same time, they can still succeed on their own. They are not critically interdependent. They are part

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CASE EXAMPLE

Innovating To Compensate For Deficient Assistance—Mosquito Nets For Home Gardens

One village that visited by the assessment team visited had several different activities in agriculture and health, supported by different donors, in operation at the same time. Among the activities were household gardens that, if done well, could supply appreciable amounts of fresh food for the household. Apparently, however, little had been done to assure that they are properly done other than the creation of a raised 6-foot x 2-foot x 2-foot solid mud brick model of such a garden. Because the villagers perceived the gardens as valuable, various women tried to replicate the model based on what they saw. In fact, the technology involves specific ways of preparing the soil, including having a plastic layer to retain water.

The women made sustained efforts to extract production from their gardens. However, in addition to not having clear knowledge of the technology, their gardens all suffered from insect infestations, for which they did not have access to pesticides or screening material. They innovated by covering their gardens with mosquito nets. The mosquito nets, which came from a previous health project, partially responded to their needs, but also most likely detracted from the results of the past health project. Neither the net providers, who were no longer present, nor the garden model builders, whose organization actually was involved in another activity in the same village, seemed to monitor their past activities for potential problems or needed remedial assistance.

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of a "SOS" that is a "healthy household". In contrast, the cowpea value chain is a system. Each element is adapted to the overall process. That system is engineered for each producer to have

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[29] An airport is an SoS and can be very complex. However, in fact, only the runway is absolutely necessary for a plane to land.

a certain minimum production to be commercially viable. One cannot just change, as a policy, the requirements to encourage the participation of very small producers and think the system will work efficiently.

Unfortunately, there is a general absence of dynamic links between RISE's own discrete activities, let alone between those of other providers. Most of its activities are "supply side" answers that reflect what the proponents think are the best solutions. Emphasis on the demonstration of existing technologies and processes almost precludes local innovation and new discoveries. Villagers claim that they have virtually no say in the activities they receive or how the activities will be implemented. Their only initial choice is whether to participate or not. Ironically, to make many donor-initiated activities actually work in some fashion, it is villagers who, after-the-fact (i.e. when the donor is no longer present or the project is over), both innovate and create their own adaptation of donor-provided solutions. However, as the example below shows, when they do this alone, because of limited knowledge or resources, the results are often mixed.[30]

5.2.4. A Vacuum of Attention to "Recovery" From Shock - The Fourth Elephant

Periodic localized shocks, common in the Sahel, erode the success of efforts to build robustness during normal times. With each significant local shock, a certain percentage of the community population never fully recovers to their previous status. Such households are often reduced to

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CASE EXAMPLE

Inability to Adapt and Activity Extinction—A Non-Resilient Feeding Program

A village that the assessment team visited had an assortment of ongoing, regular development projects, and the village was actually in the throes of what its inhabitants said was the worst drought in their history. Some residents noted that they had not harvested a single stalk of food during the harvest season, and many of the village's young people had already migrated out of the village in search of wage labor. Still, ongoing development activities were operating in the village, but in apparent disregard to the crisis situation engulfing the village. Each activity was pursuing its own authorized actions, and none seemed to have adjusted to the unforeseen food crisis that was now threatening the village and its inhabitants. The disconnect between robust activities and what may be needed for shock recovery was exemplified by a three-year, successful feeding program for malnourished children that had been operating until recently in the community. The model the activity used was for the mothers to regularly come together and cook a meal from food they had contributed for that month. Unfortunately, because of the drought, the mothers had no food to contribute. The program's response was to close down, despite the fact that the children, to avoid slipping back into malnutrition, now needed a feeding program more than ever.

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[30] This is not a recent phenomenon. In a 1988 USAID study on farmer innovation in Niger, farmers repeatedly complained that donor solutions in agriculture almost never worked as claimed and required substantial investment of their time to adapt to their needs. (c.f. McCorkle et al. 1988)

selling their assets, including animals acquired during better times or those acquired through participation in development activities. The ultimate recourse is to sell their land, which reduces their members to the permanent status of manual laborers.

Over a period of years, the impacts of these smaller, localized shocks add up to produce significant damage. However, the international community does not usually respond to the smaller shocks because they result in what is seen only as small, incremental damage.

Currently, USAID is considering the development of a shock response strategy (called a "crisis modifier") for RISE in consultation with RISE partners. This would equip the RISE projects with "a practical operational strategy for actions to respond rapidly to shocks and to efficiently link those actions to an early warning system."[31]

However, as the assessment team understands it, the activity is designed to enable beneficiary communities to mitigate the early effects of shocks and to preserve development assets pending the onset of a full-scale crisis that would necessitate the mobilization of humanitarian resources or expertise.

The assessment team understands the activity is designed to enable beneficiary communities to mitigate the early effects of shocks and to preserve development assets pending the onset of a full-scale crisis that would necessitate the mobilization of humanitarian resources or expertise. This capacity could have an appreciable effect on reducing the consequences of a shock. Unfortunately, if treated as an independent, additional responsibility for RISE, it could also drain already stretched resources and, while reducing the severity of the consequences of a shock, it still does not address the need to have an additional approach for shock recovery when mitigation is insufficient to prevent total loss of resilience. However, conversely, if it were strategically and operationally integrated with a "recovery from local shock" activity, in planning and actual implementation, new synergisms might well result.

5.3. Missing Links and Implementation Inefficiencies

In addition to these "macro-challenges" the assessment team repeatedly saw a set of deficiencies in a fair number of on-going implementation operations. These were:

1) Inadequate cooperation, collaboration and integration among different RISE projects. Most RISE partners establish and work with their own village activity management committee, a practice that complicates any efforts at coordination for both the activities and the community participants.

2) Incomplete solutions: activities often lack all the needed factors for success. These factors include assets, space, timing, support from authorities, agreements and commitments, opportunities, and long-term motivation. There are garden plots without pest control solutions, irrigated gardens with insufficient access to fertilizer, credit without accompanying business training, and conservation farming plots without access to sufficient water to make organic fertilizer.

3) Indicator frenzy, fatigue, and burnout. There are far too many indicators, apparently

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[31] Operational Strategy for the Shock Responsive RISE Portfolio, USAID, May 2017

responding to different funding sources, different technical oversight authorities, and too many levels of supposed causality. Those requesting the indicators seem unaware of the cumulative demands being made, and they severely underestimate the costs involved in terms of resources consumed and results foregone. Partners themselves impose indicators on sub-grantees and sub-contractors with similar effects.

4) Lack of stakeholder empowerment. Participants constantly note that they have no say in what activities are offered – they only have the option to participate or not. Virtually all activity inputs and outputs are supply-driven and inflexible. Participant obedience is not the same as recipients being given the freedom to actually develop absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities.

5) Little active learning between activities and regional and village participants. While RISE's learning activities are significant and notable, they are designed to address needs determined by USAID and the program implementers. For example, people say that one of the serious consequences of climate change has been the loss of biological diversity on which, in the past, much local agricultural innovation was dependent. Consequently, there is an enormous opportunity to support new opportunities for local innovative thinking and for meaningful inclusion of all stakeholders in knowledge co-production.[32]

6) Lack of attention to sustainability, institutionalization, or scale-up. The problem is not simply that activities supported by implementers may not be financially, economically, and technically sustainable when project funding ends. There are programs like the "Safe Spaces for Girls" and "Schools for Husbands" that have been operating for years as "temporary, time-limited activities" under alternating donor sponsorship without consistent efforts to institutionalize them, i.e., by establishing ongoing curriculum development and continuing instructor education processes or developing plans for systematic scaling-up.

7) Lack of activity implementation flexibility. In general, there seems to be a far too rigid and exclusive focus on the activity as originally designed, and an inadequate allocation of resources and authorities to flexibly integrate all the necessary components to successfully resolve the targeted problem. Often implementing partners and stakeholders do not have the freedom to make adjustments on the tactical level. Time sensitive operations are hampered by the need to get permission for ordinary travel, and several important staff positions are unfilled because proposed candidates have gone elsewhere due to delays in getting timely approval. While much of this problem is generated by USAID requirements, it is exacerbated by the common reluctance among implementing partners to "bite the hand that feeds them". A major lesson from the USAID RAIN project was that obtaining indispensably needed budget, program, and activity management flexibility required determined, persistent, unfailing efforts on the part of USAID and implementing organization staff.[xxiii]

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[32] McCorkle, C.et al. 1988. A Case Study on Farmer Innovations and Communication in Niger. CTTA. (A.I.D 35&T 936-5826) AED. Washington, D.C.

CASE EXAMPLE

Only Authorized To Do TV—Inability to Exploit Opportunities for Sustainability

One RISE partner is an international NGO highly competent in video and radio communication for health education. Its success is closely tied to its ability to accurately represent the targeted group in the videos it produces, because for people to quickly identify with the message, everything has to be true – their lives, the buildings, the clothes, and of course the cooking utensils used to prepare the nutritional meals. To produce the videos, the NGO needed an in-country partner. In the absence of local television stations, it partnered with a local radio station. Radio can also be a highly effective for education, but it requires capacities for effective programming different from television. For local sustainability, the communication activity would have to be institutionalized within the radio station. But the NGO is not authorized to build "radio" capacity" in a local radio station. It is only authorized to produce the required videos and build "video" capacity. Thus, a partner whose very expertise and success is anchored in its capacity for continuous adaptation to local context, does not have the flexibility to adapt to the local context, so that the substantial investments made and successes achieved can be part of a sustainable program of education for mother-child health. In fact, the NGO seems to have accepted without questioning the limitations on its work. However, the government plans to prioritize the establishment of a local, commune-level, development-oriented radio station.

5.4. Possibly Emerging RISE-Related Synergisms

While the four macro factors and the seven identified "missing links" above all impede the successes of RISE and other donor activities, the evaluation team was also surprised to find examples of interactions between activities, providing benefits that went beyond the intended and tracked results. Rather, these benefits seemed to be the result of the commingling, in peoples' immediate lives, of the effects of the separate activities in ways that are potentially producing synergistic change that may actually represent the early emergence of behavioral transformations.

In systems thinking, emergence is "the appearance of novel characteristics exhibited on the level of the whole system, but not by the components in isolation". Synergy is "the process by which a system generates emergent properties more and different from the sum of its parts".[33] Synergism occurs when independent entities or phenomena are integrated in ways that create new interdependencies, often with results that are unintended and sometimes even initially unrecognized.

5.4.1. Synergisms between Activities

While the interactions that the team observed should best be referred to as "possible early indicators" of synergistic transformation, it is important that the opportunity not be lost, in order to encourage and possibly replicate what is taking place in some villages in the study area.

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[33] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_systems_theory accessed April 5, 2017

Moreover, the noted combinations could represent "benefit packages" or "purposely encouraged overlaps or coalitions". The five noted possibilities are:

1) Health, Dialogue and Household Income Synergisms: the "Husbands' School" and the "Safe Spaces for Girls", both of which provide opportunities for open dialogue, have become venues for both advocating and reflecting on the positive benefits from health activities, such as mother-child nutrition, adult literacy, and mobile family planning services, which provide contraceptives every three months. In terms of synergistic benefits, a major factor explaining the enthusiastic support we heard from men appears to be that these activities are clearly reducing the overall costs of illness to the household – normally a financial responsibility borne by the husband. Together, these activities appear to be actively changing attitudes on marriage relations, family planning, the roles of household members, and health expectations and behaviors.

2) Conservation Farming with synergisms between Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), land reclamation/restoration, migration-assets, and income. Finding time and resources to build rural community infrastructure, such as the development of lowland areas for irrigation or the recovery of degraded agricultural lands and pastures, constitutes one of the great challenges to increasing community resilience capacities.[xxiv] During the rainy season, almost all labor is directed to cultivation. As already noted, male cultivators specifically cite how "Food for Work"/ "Food for Assets" programs, such as land reclamation activities, as critical sources of income support that also allow them to remain in their villages and work on improving their own lands through conservation farming. Moreover, households which have both "Food for Work"/ "Food for Assets" income and income from migrating members sometimes have some surplus to invest in improving their own land or acquiring livestock. Lastly, though sometimes a bone of contention between officials and local people, locals often do have access to improved public resources for their private benefits. This includes the most vulnerable and landless, for whom the increased demand for fodder for urban livestock has created an opportunity. They cut the grasses on rural, often public lands, and then transport and sell the grasses in urban markets as a major source of income.

3) Synergisms between learning, identity building, action research, program coordination, and networking. RISE, now through SAREL and its partners, has a dynamic learning program that is also providing a major source of shared identity and collaboration for the entire RISE program.[xxv] Deep studies, like its ethnography of "Safe Spaces for Girls", push and pull people to move beyond their circle of comfort in terms of their understandings and practices. Its quarterly "Collaboration and Coordination on Resilience (CCR) forums", which bring RISE and non-RISE personnel together to share experiences, appear to be building a wider resilience network. Ironically, one repeated criticism was from parties who sincerely resented not being invited to SAREL learning forums because they see this as indicating their having "second class citizenship" in RISE.[xxvi]

4) Synergisms between targeting beneficiaries, community volunteers, and sustaining and institutionalizing mutual aid. From the perspective of focus group respondents, targeting is effective when it is "community friendly" and done in an inclusive manner, meaning that anyone interested can also receive appropriate assistance and participate in

learning, e.g., when any child can profit from a feeding program, regardless of family economic status. They feel that when targeting is exclusive – when only people judged "vulnerable" receive help – this can cause discontent and even damage to existing social relations.

5) Sustainability of activities that rely on continuous and substantial community volunteer implementation. Very few rural inhabitants and households have an excess of permanently available time and labor. As already mentioned, the traditional practice of habbanayé was specifically intended to create permanent assistance bonds between needful and better-off parties. Sharing food has always been a mechanism for group solidarity. The team became aware, from several creditable sources, that the goods received from donors by targeted vulnerable households were often partially redistributed to others, both because they need it and because it acknowledges a bond of mutual aid. Another less obvious reason may be that it helps make it possible for others to offer their time and labor as volunteers. Many donor activities rely on volunteers without really considering the limits of the time and effort they can really afford to offer or if such volunteerism is sustainable. A community generated solution is something to be desired. This needs to be carefully and sensitively researched, perhaps by an ethnographic study. If true, activities might be reformulated to encourage this added purpose in a more open fashion.

It should be emphasized that the above synergistic possibilities are arising because the contributing factors are integrated in dynamic, interactive, continuing relationships between community members in the course of their everyday lives. If RISE wants to encourage these synergisms within the RISE program itself, it will have to create more such conditions as part of normal RISE activity implementation.

5.4.2. Observable Gender Transformations

5.4.2.1. RISE Activity Increasing the Roles and Status of Women

Ultimately, the transformation of rural women's lives is tied to the possibility of invigorating, expanding, and diversifying the dynamics of rural communities themselves and assuring women maximum opportunity to participate. The team repeatedly observed how RISE activities seemed to be helping effect transformational changes in women's lives. Women's participation is substantial across the RISE portfolio of activities and many activities are directly targeted at women. In our interactions, the difference between women who participate in RISE programs and those who do not was observable in terms of their higher confidence, their comportment, the clearer expression of their ideas, and their handling of immediate life situations. This was particularly evident in discussions about family planning, marriage and education.

5.4.2.2. RISE's Contributions to Changing Male Attitudes

An equally important observation was how RISE activities seemed to be transforming associated male perceptions and behaviors. A recurring theme of cultures in both countries is the importance of the "group" and how if the group is prospering its members also prosper. The

converse is that they do not believe that if an individual or individual household prospers the group necessarily prospers. This helps to explain why they will prioritize activities—such as those above—that they see as having extended group as well as individual participant benefits over other activities, such as those below, which they do not see as having as many benefits accruing to the group.

CASE EXAMPLE

Adapting Donor Solutions—Women Micro-Finance Clients Become Family Bankers

Women especially said that micro-credit activities are popular. These include activities and or dependent on outside parties or institutions as well as) and village savings groups that are based on traditional practices, that often only rotates distribution among members of a pot of commonly saved money. These adhere to generally accepted rules and are not particularly concerned with the specific use by the recipient. However, they specifically noted that often neither of these activities respond to the full family or community demands for credit, and that the outside micro-credit activities are often limited not only to women but also to certain groups of individuals or activities. But they also say this has an upside for many women, when, in an example of successful " adaptive" behavior, both women credit beneficiaries and unserved parities, get around this limitation by having the qualifying borrower take loans from several micro-credit lenders for the same activity and then give that money to others, such as family members, who also need credit but who do not qualify.

There were perceivable differences in the way men who participated in "Husbands' Schools" (Écoles des Maris) related to their wives' concerns in contrast to non-participating men. The men who participated in the Husbands' Schools would become engaged in discussing and thinking out their positions about what constitutes traditional "women's concerns," such as child nutrition and even the wife's relations with the husband's mother. Wives' who took part in our focus groups reported that their husbands became more positive and openly cooperative in regards to issues such as family planning and medical care, or more accepting after having participated in the schools, and the wives noted that they themselves became more engaged in small commerce outside the home. It was also clear that women usually put the highest value on family, and generally have as their primary ambition a healthy, cooperative household and a caring spouse. For women, participation in economic opportunities is valued because it is helpful to achieving this goal. One already sees transformation in many women's expectations that they should and can have equal rights to determine how best to make their expectations come true in their lives. The RISE micro-credit activities have had an especially liberating effect, although sometimes in a different way than the projects assumed or intended.

6.0 Organizational Opportunities for more Adaptive and Transformation Resilience Programing and Implementation

6.1. Theory of Change

The failure of almost all donors to make adequate technical use of the understanding of resilience as an actual phenomenon has led to the question of whether the RISE Theory of

Change (TOC) is valid and supportable. As presently stated, the TOCs are valid but neither adequately used nor very functional.

USAID, like many other organizations, has adapted TOC methodology to help better frame and structure activities. USAID's Resilience Policy Guidelines explicitly state the resilience operational TOC to be:

"By layering, integrating, and sequencing humanitarian and development assistance, we can further the objectives of each to a greater extent than by programming in isolation."

However, when we asked an appreciable sample of RISE program and project staff if they could tell us what the RISE Theory of Change was, only one literally knew the operational TOC, while one other knew it functionally. In fact, obtaining any clear statement of the TOC proved difficult. Differently worded expressions of the TOC are found in different USAID documents and PowerPoint presentations, with almost none identified as being specifically "operational" or "technical". Simply put, for on-the-ground implementation purposes, the TOCs are largely sidelined.

Unfortunately, USAID's excellent expanded discussion of the spectrum of problems, goals, and related theories of change related to RISE's strategic objectives[34] seems too detailed for people to use in actual operation. This may be because the TOCs are highly generalized statements that seem to presume a pathway to resilience.[xxvii] Unfortunately, this is not necessarily true. The TOCs fail to take into account all of the specific factors that can influence activities and their sustainability, such as social positions, power relations, and the institutional and political-economic environment, not to mention climate change itself.[xxviii] A true TOC has to be able to explain causality in the context of competing pressures and a shifting landscape. It should also demonstrate how the initiative uses its resources in the most effective way to achieve that causality.[35] Additionally, the TOC should be succinct and clear enough so that people will use it as a regular tool for explanation and assessment.[36]

USAID's Resilience Guidance says: "Building resilience requires an iterative process in which development assistance and humanitarian assistance are well coordinated throughout planning, project design, procurement, and learning"

After extensive discussions with stakeholders on the ground, the assessment team is of the opinion that the Guidance's conceptual framework, "specifically intended to guide work", is the obvious foundation on which to begin to craft a more specific set of succinct RISE technical and operational TOCs. The TOCs would identify the specific causal links, necessary conditions, required quantities and qualities of inputs and outputs, and an articulated range, from minimum to maximum, of expectations for ascertainable activity results.

There seem to be several good USAID resilience-oriented models from Asia and Africa available that are simple enough to be used for ongoing resilience activity assessment and

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[34] USAID 2016. Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) in Niger and Burkina Faso Problem Statement, Goals and Theory of Change (original version 2012, revised version March, 2015) (revised version with updated Results Framework, Jan 2016)

[35] A true theory of change has to be able to explain causality. A strategic theory of change not only has to explained causality but also has to show that you are using your resources in the most effective way to achieve that causality.

[36] USAID 2016 Mekong Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Chang : Final Report(USAID Mekong ARCC)P.88

implementation.[37] A set of operational guidelines could further strengthen the TOC process. These would address "assets", "space", "time" and "pulling it all together".

Assets are the "useful things" (goods and services) that people control and which they can actually use to obtain desired results. Space is the identifiable, bounded and safe context where these assets can be put to work and the results sustained. Time is the measurable period needed to carry out all required actions and to have the necessary factors properly sequenced according to how they affect and depend on each other. "Actions for pulling it all together" means taking the specific necessary steps to assure that separate factors are mutually supportive and sufficiently integrated so as to produce the desired results. These four factors largely correspond to the USAID RISE operational TOC, which stresses, "layering (assets in space), sequencing (time) and integrating (pulling it all together)".

These four factors can be identified, evaluated and measured separately and in relationship to each other. By doing this, or something equivalent, the conceptual guidance of the TOC could be transformed into actionable criteria for program implementation and assessment. The same might be said of the resilience characteristics of flexibility, learning/memory and self-determined recovery. These are also measurable and could serve as partial surrogate indicators to determine whether something is, or is in the process of becoming, actually "resilient".[xxix]

6.2.   Learning, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The need for having a truly functioning iterative TOC relates to the question of effective learning, monitoring and evaluation in RISE. In this regard, care needs to be taken to distinguish between the above described four factors, which are necessary means and conditions for effective resilience strengthening, and the three general characteristics of resilience that distinguish resilient from non-resilience processes (absorptive, adaptive, and transformational capacities). The later represent the actual abilities that people and communities must possess and exercise if they are to be able to better withstand and recovery from crisis and shocks;[38] that is, to become resilient. In this sense, engendering and empowering these capacities through continuous learning is one of the keys to the ultimate success and sustainability of RISE.

6.2.1. Learning

The RISE Initiative's learning activities surrounding the SAREL project are among its most distinct features. A wide array of learning actions and methods exist within the program, including ethnographic and baseline studies, case studies, and shared lessons learned. (The RISE portal, which is just becoming accessible, has interactive opinion exchange capacities and a present repository for an estimated 500 documents. Unfortunately, from the Assessment Team's perspective, the existing formats rarely effectively capture, promote, or actively engage local knowledge, local best practices[39] and local innovations. The fact sheets, produced to

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[37] USAID Mekong ARC's (Adaption and Resilience to Climate Change) Theory of Change is an illustrative example of a simple diagrammed theory of change against which one can actually match and measure plans, performance and results.

[38] These abilities and their central role in resilience building are extensively dealt with in the TANGO discussion paper on Enhancing Resilience for Food Security Shocks in Africa, USAID-DFID 2012.

[39] Diobass 210. Plan Straegique 2011-2015 Ouagadougou. Diobass is a Burkina Faso Ngo that is dedicated to enhancing the results and dissemination of farmer innovations. http://www.diobass-bf.org/

promote project implementation experiences and learning and which are placed on the larger Agency website, provide a valuable function for explaining RISE to USAID's domestic and international audience, but they are not effective for addressing the needs of most RISE in-country stakeholders.

Certainly, RISE partners are learning about resilience program implementation, but it is unclear whether the actual intended beneficiaries are learning or improving their resilience capacities for absorption, adaptation and transformation. This is important because, to generate truly adaptive solutions, there is a need to go beyond simple training to include local stakeholders in program knowledge co-production. A number of methodologies can be adopted for this purpose, from well-honed Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs), for which there are local specialists in both countries, to more recent and robust approaches such as "translational research" that would probably require American university participation.[xxx] The specific approach, which can fairly easily be designed, is not the problem. The problem is that the present approach to learning is insufficiently broad, lacks adequate local and beneficiary participation, and is excessively supply driven, with too little attention given to experimentation, discovery, and innovation.

6.2.2. Monitoring

Expansive action learning is largely dependent on recognizing and correcting failures and building on proven successes. Honing this process should be a major objective of RISE II. Unfortunately, at the moment, the situation in terms of recognizing and correcting failures seems particularly deficient and non-iterative. There is a serious need to rethink RISE's activity monitoring systems and practices to make them more streamlined and effective. The situation appears to the assessment team to be approaching dysfunctionality. Among the most disturbing things the team witnessed during its site visits were the number of poorly-functioning activities with no evident solutions in progress. As noted in the "case examples", sometimes normal operational performance monitoring and problem correction seems totally absent.

Both activity beneficiaries and implementing partner agents told the team that consultants would sometimes come to look at a problem, ask questions, and then leave – with no follow-up. In one case, a project village representative told the assessment team that on three separate occasions, project consultants came out to look at the possibilities of delivering water from a river only 200 feet away to a small garden tended by "vulnerable" women. To date, however, the problem has not been solved and no one has told the project representative what is happening, or if anything is planned.

In this last case, the assessment team actually went back to the project leadership and asked about the situation. They said the problem was that their agreement had environmental compliance stipulations against setting up river water sourced irrigation schemes. The assessment team checked the project agreement and found that it did contain a stipulation requiring an environmental assessment and waiver to do this; something potentially time consuming and uncertain, but not prohibited for the type of small operation that RISE was doing.

In summary, the assessment team repeatedly found: 1) poor operational monitoring, verification and problem correction processes; 2) a lack of agreed-upon performance standards; 3) little

consultation with project beneficiaries regarding indicators of "success" and "failure"; and 4) missed opportunities for using village representatives as quality control monitors across a host of needs. One possible solution might be for RISE activities in general to actively use the Community Early Warning and Response to Emergencies System (SCAP/RU) committees found in many villages. These committees are typically attached to CARE's program for Community Adaption Action Planning (CAAP) or some other projects that also trying to harness their potential. Committee membership is broad, but in our interactions it was the trained young people who stood out. What we saw of their work was impressive. Yet, to this point, they say they are not receiving any responses to their efforts.[xxxi]

6.2.3. Evaluation

There is no question of the importance of documenting results. However, the assessment team found evaluation conditions that are untenable in terms of the enormous demands for indicators for project evaluation. "Accounting" has seemingly displaced "accountability." Many project staff report that between 25 and 50% of their actual project time is consumed by collecting and reporting indicator data.

CASE EXAMPLE

Excessive Counting Deposes Real Results—Technical Assistance without Tools or Time

At one RISE project field support office, the team found, in the entire office, the two project technical people, two small tables, four chairs, two laptops and, on the table, stacked folders filled with indicator recording sheets. These supposedly "polyvalent" technical advisors are responsible for supporting approximately 10 villages each, across a wide spectrum of activities, many of which they say are outside their true areas of specialization. Yet there was no evidence of one book, one manual, one tool, one video, or even a poster on the wall. In short, nothing was visibly available that a technical person might use to facilitate their work. Only piles of indicator collection sheets, which they say is how they spend most of their time.[xxxii]

One RISE project reports having 185 indicators. Some have 70 indicators per activity. In one project, reportedly, 11 out of 74 employees (15%) are totally dedicated to M&E. Many other staff assist part-time. In discussing with USAID personnel, it was clear that they do not see their unit requests or perceived needs as excessive.

The SRO-Dakar uses seven indicators, which is not unreasonable. However, higher indicators depend on lower indicator information also being collected. This and the cumulative effect of different funding and oversight sources asking for what they consider to be a reasonable number of indicators is the equivalent of many local shocks, eventually adding up to a major crisis. The problem, however, is not just the number but also the type of indicators and the failure to make ease of collection a condition for their acceptance as appropriate.

6.2.4. Tracking the Quality of Project Performance

Overall, the assessment team found several indicators and the associated methodologies for their collection to be very weak. It is clear that many are just "inputs" and "outputs" rather than "results" measures. People point out that they do need to account for inputs and outputs.

This is true, but this is accounting for "operational performance", not development performance. For some indicators, it is unclear whether they are "leading" or "lagging" indicators. There is also the ever-present bias for quantity over quality, i.e., "how much" rather than "for what purpose". In terms of actual data, on the indicator tables that the team observed, many of the boxes are empty or, just say: TBD ("To Be Determined"). From the team's perspective, it seems unclear whether there will be enough meaningful information from the IPTT to make significant conclusions by the end of project.

As a general rule, the good indicators that the team observed are S.M.A.R.T, meaning "Specific, Measurable, Attainable, (or Agreed upon), Realistic and Time-Related". Most concern health outcomes and serve a clear purpose for the user, i.e., child weight in a feeding program. For example, GAM (Global Acute Malnutrition rate in children 6 to 59 months), an indicator for Objective 3, improved health and nutrition status, is an example of a good indicator, if applied correctly. Its measurement involves a disciplined, standardized, quality controlled methodology that has applicability at all levels. If a specific activity is having significant positive effects on its target population according to the GAM measurement methodology, and its population is properly counted, then it contributes to national and global GAM improvement. If the local population is progressing, but the national GAM is not, that is a separate issue that has to be examined at a higher level.

The bad indicators tend to be idiosyncratic and contrived. For example, an implementing partner suggested calculating the number of beneficiaries of a poultry vaccination campaign by dividing the total number of vaccinated chickens by the average number of chickens per household, and then multiplying that number by the average number of people in a household. That seems to the evaluation team as too general an understanding of what a "benefit" is, and it is subject to gross distortion given that household size varies greatly according to social practice.

The team also questions indicators that report numbers of persons trained without clear indications and follow-up as to the effectiveness of the training in relation to successfully achieving the expected final results and the long-term benefits derived by participants.

The reality is that fixed indicators, like those found in the RISE project, are really designed for linear processes, like building roads or tracking a vaccination campaign. Many social and ecological processes are iterative. Resilience projects, like USAID's RAIN project in Ethiopia and various USAID and other donor resilience programs in Asia, have demonstrated the value and feasibility of iterative assessment and evaluation to replace all but the most critical and functional indicators.[xxxii] Iterative assessment is a basic tool of "Adaptive Management." Materials to assist in the application of iterative assessment include a new USAID *How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model and its Associated Theory of Change*.

The evaluation team believes that RISE could substantially streamline its IPTT processes and follow the example of USAID's RAIN project in Ethiopia, by developing an operative, iterative Theory of Change. This TOC should be aligned to USAID resilience guidelines and periodically adjusted based on both evolving program results and lessons learned from the most effective resilience programming and implementation. The TOC should be useable in operations, for strategizing and action planning - not just analysis. If the TOC is expressed accurately and the "how" of the expected casual relationships is expressed precisely, then USAID's contributions could be placed within the larger context of other similar sector activities. Then USAID could

estimate the realistic minimal and maximal dimensions of any activity's expected contribution. This could then be used for periodic assessment, review, and adjustment.

6.2.5. Revised ADS 201 and CLA Toolkit

Since the assessment was conducted (January–March 2017), USAID has significantly amended ADS 201 on program cycle operational policy. In June 2017, the USAID Learning Lab put on the Internet a major new resource in the form of a CLA (Cooperating, Learning, and Adapting) "tool kit".[40] The team believes its findings and recommendations correspond closely to the orientation, guidance, and requirements of both the new ADS 201 and the CLA Toolkit.

The new policy makes clear that monitoring serves two important functions. One is accountability. The other is to "...support adaptive management....and inform decisions during implementation (c.f. sec. 201.3.1.3). It also highlights the fact that "tacit, experiential, and contextual knowledge are crucial complements to research and evidence-based knowledge" (c.f. sec. 201.3.5.2); and that "missions should integrate CLA throughout strategy, project, and activity planning and implementation" (c.f. sec. 201.3.5.22). In addition, it makes clear the Agency's commitment to donor harmonization and collaboration, consistent with the Paris Declaration and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (201.3.4.7). These two, as already discussed (c.f. 3.3.4.), constitute the basic foundations for donor cooperation policy of both Burkina Faso and Niger.

ADS 201 also specifically calls for implementation of the understandings expressed in USAID Local Systems: A Framework For Supporting Sustained Development. The Local Systems Framework specifically notes that "attention to annual targets and results often comes at the expense of attention to the capacities, relationships, and resource flows that are crucial components of lasting local systems." Meanwhile, the Learning Lab Tool Kit provides vital support for this with an array of guidance materials, including specifically detailed guidance on CLA Monitoring and Evaluation processes.

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[40] https://usaidlearninglab.org/cla-toolkit

CASE EXAMPLE

Young Men's Garden—Training Without Opportunity

Six young men sat on the fringe of a focus group discussion. Afterward, they asked if the team could look at their garden. There is some ground water, and the area looks good because of a large mango grove nearby that was planted over 25 years ago. They have watering cans, marked with the logo of the donor that they use to scoop up water from a hand-dug mud hole. Yet the garden is barely functioning, because insects are destroying the vegetables. These young men constitute a "group" that was formed by another donor activity. They were sent to Benin for two weeks' training at a well-known agricultural training center. According to the young men, neither their initial activity donors, nor those presently working in the village, have shown interest in their garden nor have they provided continued support for their activities.

Two older men are listening and ask for us to see their gardens. They are experiencing the same pest problems. Later the problem is seen in the small household gardens of the women. They all would like us to help but it is not in the scope of our work nor apparently in the scope of any project now working in the village. However, if the problem were solved, it could potentially positively affect the outcome of many of these other efforts. . In the faces of the older men, one can see a question to the effect: "Can't donor projects better adapt to pressing local needs?"

7.0   Recommendations and Supporting Conclusions

7.1.   Specific Recommendations and Conclusions to Strengthen and Realign Initiative Activities

1) <u>Flexibility should be Increased Wherever Possible</u>: Increasing program and activity flexibility is the single most important factor for improving RISE's on-the-ground activity efficiency. Given climate variability, year-to-year and location-to-location, there are no common solutions. To make people more resilient, assisted activities have to give people solutions that are flexible and the implementers have to be capable, within approved authorities and resources, of rapid experimentation and innovation.

2) <u>Operational Constraints need to be Minimized and Insufficiencies Rectified.</u> In particular, attention is needed regarding: A) rigidly interpreted restrictions in USAID agreements; B) burdensome indicator reporting requirements; C) inexact attention to technical requirements; D) insufficiently standardized operations monitoring and problem correction; and E) an emphasis on donor-generated priorities and solutions that do not pay adequate attention to beneficiary priorities, unforeseen but promising new circumstances, or unique stakeholder inputs.

3) <u>Programming and operations need to more specifically adhere to technical understandings of the phenomenon of resilience.</u> There is both 1) excess attribution of "resilience" to almost any beneficial development, and a 2) failure to fully adhere to the best technical understandings of resilience as a real phenomenon, including undervaluing the three generally accepted characteristics of all resilient systems: flexibility, learning,

and self-determination. (c.f.: USAID[41] (Asia) *Concepts and Practices of Resilience: A Compilation from Various Secondary Sources*") and OECD[42] *Risk and Resilience: From Good Idea to Good Practices.*)

4) <u>Strategies Need to Reflect the Divergence Between "Robustness" to Absorb Stress and Shock and "Recovery" after Dislocations from Shock.</u> Robustness, the ability to absorb and withstand disturbances from crisis require investing in building, reinforcing, and improving critical factors for sustainable success. Recovery involves rapidly recognizing that failure has occurred and having already in place adequate responses to reestablish stability, and, through successful adaptation and innovation under unpredictable circumstances, to begin the reconstitution or replacement of past solutions.

5) <u>Key Programmatic Deficiencies Need to be Addressed and Remedied</u>: These are: A) the failure to anchor activities and strategies in established host government programs, policies, practices, and structures; B) the inadequate integration of, and poor connectivity between, complementary activities and capacities; C) an excessive focus on, and the overly burdensome monitoring of, indicators of short-term results; and D) inadequate attention given to sustainability and institutionalization.

7.2.   Sequencing, layering and Integrating in RISE I and RISE II

1) <u>Implementers should be Given Sufficient Freedom and Authority to Experiment and Innovate with New Solutions that can be adapted to local contexts</u>. This can be done by following examples from RAIN and introducing "adaptive management" through CLA (Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation).

2) <u>Systematic Verification of Satisfactory Execution, and more Rapid Correction of Problems, Needs to Be Instituted.</u> Simple, standardized, disciplined, but non-burdensome problem detection and correction must become an integral part of all activities. "Check lists" and "cell-phone check-in" should be used for updating situations. These can be done cost effectively through participatory monitoring by beneficiaries or by different projects cost-sharing monitoring resources.

3) <u>The TOCs Should be Reformulated and Integrated into Actual Operations</u>: The present TOCs s are 1) too general and fail to account for many specific necessary factors; and 2) not applied with adequate precision and adaptation to each appropriate circumstance. While they lay out many of the necessary actions, they inadequately address having the right asset package; in the right space (layering); within the right timeframe (sequencing); and pulling everything together (integrate). We think correcting these deficiencies and creating an iterative TOC approach would dramatically change the dynamics of implementation and better engage the spirit, as well as the capacities, of stakeholders for absorption, adaptation, and transformation. Most importantly, the specific TOC process needs to be done twice; once to build up the capacity of beneficiaries to withstand stress, and once to build up the capacity for recovery after shock.[xxxiii]

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[41] USAID. 2016. Concepts and Practices of "Resilience": A Compilation from Various Secondary Sources. Ahmed, A.K., Coastal Community Resilience (CCR) Program. IRG-Tetra Tech. US IOTWS Program

[42] OECD. 2013. Risk and Resilience: From Good Idea to Good Practices. Working Paper 13. Mitchell, A. OECD Paris

4) <u>Greater Concentration and Interaction between Activities is Needed</u>. The existing TOCs require integration of efforts in order to maximize efficiencies and results. However, the examples of possible emerging synergisms from RISE activities attest to a strategic need for integration that specifically increases dynamic multidimensional interactions between different activities and different beneficiaries to encourage synergism and, perhaps, transformations. This means creating a nexus of activities that bring separate actions together within a shared space, creating key interaction points (i.e., learning events and commune development planning).

5) <u>Directly Connect Secondary Activities to Beneficiary Priorities</u>. The focus groups identified a set of secondary activities that require a clearer connection to and integration with the identified beneficiary priorities: A) the "Husbands Schools" and "Safe Spaces for Girls; B) Community Early Warning and Response to Emergencies Systems (SCAP/RU); and C) adult functional literacy. All of these offer generally needed benefits (i.e. dialoging, monitoring, and access to information) which, in direct connection to priority areas, would strengthen overall benefits.

6) <u>Give Program and Partner Staff Enhanced Performance Opportunities:</u> RISE's capable and dedicated program and partner staff need empowerment in order to focus on getting results on-the-ground rather than on paper. RISE should encourage synergisms within the RISE Program Initiative itself by creating conditions for dynamic interactions between the staff of its different activities, perhaps by creating an ongoing "specialist exchange practice" between projects. Joint workshops and activity planning can help but real synergism requires the energy and unexpected results that come from actual joint problem-solving and solution discovery in action. Perhaps this could be encouraged by earmarking some funds in each activity to be used exclusively for providing requested assistance to another project activity; or by creating an inter-project "exchanged services time bank".

7) <u>Incorporate More Demand-Driven Responses in the Implementation of Activities and the Determination of Deliverables:</u> The focus group discussions represent an appropriate "demand" driven agenda. While rural water needs, which is people's first priority, may require a massive multi-donor effort, the other five focus group priorities, i.e., mother-child nutrition, dry season gardens, conservation farming and farmer-managed natural regeneration, and micro-credit and access to services, could all be given increased RISE attention in a way that actually allows the beneficiaries to specifically experiment, craft them to their land rehabilitation/reclamation circumstances, and "discover" new priorities as matters progress.

8) <u>Sustainability must be an Integral Concern for all RISE Activities from the Beginning</u>: Non-sustainable resilience is almost a contradiction in terms. Yet without attention to long-term concerns, such as recovery from local shock, the full participation of commune-level governments, and scale-up of successful resilience capacities at the individual, household, and community levels, it is difficult to see how resilience capacities adequate to addressing the likely severe stresses and shocks to come can be established. The key point is that these "foundational" orientations must be built upon from the start. Rarely can they be successfully retrofitted as add-ons.

9) <u>Scale-up Successes by Expanding Activities in Ways That Increase the Diversity of</u>

Beneficiaries. Synergisms that increase efficiency and productivity can help to overcome the resource limitations often seen as an impediment to scaling. But synergism only arises unexpectedly when different elements are connected. While targeting is needed to assure the participation of specific groups, it should not automatically exclude efforts to incorporate others in appropriate ways. Among the immediate possibilities for RISE might be for its cowpea value chain activity to also serve as a pathfinder for other potential value chains. In response, niche markets within the evolving local region's economy, which are more amenable to participation from small producers rather than larger export markets, may emerge.[43] Similarly, given the value placed on small animal production, RISE-targeted small animal production assistance and habbanayé activities—if constituted with the full participation of beneficiaries at different levels of vulnerability and community status—might help to incorporate additional beneficiaries in ways beyond their original focus yet within the means and mandate of the projects.

10) Provide Village and Community Beneficiaries and Stakeholders Opportunities to Directly Contribute to Discovering Solutions. RISE should promote dynamic learning and experimentation activities at the village level. Some learning needs to move from the conference room to the "field clinic". Concomitantly, RISE's learning agenda should expand to include more of its own field staff, locally-based NGO partner staff, and participating rural beneficiaries. This also means that when beneficiaries identify missing factors that need to be addressed, RISE's partners need the flexibility to respond.

11) Coalesce Independent Activities Around Overlapping Concerns, Objectives, Results, and Locations. As repeatedly emphasized, synergism comes from the integration of previous separate factors. While most RISE activities are not critically interdependent, they would benefit from dynamic links of mutual support and enrichment. To satisfy the needs of a community requires a diversity of approaches and solutions to fit the circumstances of the community's different households. There would be tremendous efficiency gains if various activities pooled some of their resources to address similar problems, shared results, and filled-in for each other's missing skills.

12) Officially Integrate RISE Activities into The Responsibilities and Operations of Local Commune Governments and Regional Technical Services. On the ground activities in planning and implementation need to be commingled with local governments and to follow the official structures and processes for local development. While there is much that higher level government can do to address many of their nation's problems and policies, the greater the separation of capacities and responsibilities from the targeted beneficiaries, the more dependent the beneficiaries become, and the greater the concentration of risk and the wider negative consequences if government fails to perform. This is especially true when the administrative structure has been officially decentralized, as in Burkina Faso and Niger.

13) Concentrate activities around specific communes in direct collaboration with the concerned local government. Anchoring activities in local communes does not mean

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[43] The work of Thomas Readon sets the bar for understanding the new African urban-rural food dynamic. c.f. Reardon, T. et al. 2013. The Emerging "Quiet Revolution" in African Agrifood Systems. Michigan State University.

simply having them agree or sign off or even assist as mutually possible. It means adapting to and integrating with the formal structures and actual "local system". "Local system" does not mean only working at the local level; it reverses the order of the development of practices and policies from top-down to bottom-up.

14) <u>Create a diverse coalition of providers under one lead implementer for each commune.</u>

15) Local governments lack the capacity to effectively choreograph a swathe of different donor practices and personnel. The simpler and more consistent the interface, the easier the coordination. The more activities that are consistent with each other, the more likely they can eventually be adopted by the commune as its own way of doing things.

16) <u>Establish a substantial focused set of activities around the objective of building local capacities for recovery from localized shocks</u>. As discussed, localized shocks are endemic to life in the Sahel and can undermine normal development activities unless adequately addressed. Local government has the first line of responsibility to plan for and respond to local shocks. However, each layer of government has its role under the decentralization codes for emergency and disaster response. As a result, as an area of focus for resilience activities, having a successful strategy and program for recovery from localized shocks is not only indispensable for the sustainability of community resilience efforts, but an ideal nexus for capturing all the critical dimensions of an effective solution in a way that is pragmatically focused and applied.

17) <u>Create A Unifying Message and A Common Voice for The RISE Initiative at the National and Regional Levels</u>. Working at the local level does not mean avoiding higher level authorities but rather working with them in a different way for different objectives. Noble prize winning Elinor Ostrom, based on years of work partially funded by USAID, identified a correlation between the success of devolution of power to local governments and the championship and protection of such programs by those with higher power above the operating parties. Successfully working with local government involves ensuring that, as precisely outlined in the governmental administrative codes of each nation, regional and national authorities be kept fully informed, and efforts be made to coordinate between local activities and regional responsibilities.

18) <u>Establish a RISE Initiative Coordinator Position.</u> This would ensure that one person could devote full-time, every day to helping the RISE program create a shared face to the world and to circulating between the respective levels of government and other donors in order to maintain a flow of understanding and information in terms of the activities of the program itself. A coordinator would not be an overriding authority for all program activities. Rather what is needed is a "representative". One who could sit on an overall RISE program Steering Committee with higher level government officials. The RISE Initiative is large and still growing. Yet, if only represented by fragmented activities, and without a unified message and common voice, it may at best be poorly heard and likely under-rated.

19) <u>Establish a national project committee.</u> It would be advisable for the RISE Initiative to follow the practices of many other donor programs and have a national project committee to track the various components of the program to conform to the official

reporting practices established by the respective national governments. This might seem like an added burden, but if it were done at the broad program level, rather than by each activity separately, the possible creation of an atmosphere of co-ownership and co-production of results could greatly increase productivity and efficiency.

20) <u>Make USAID a champion of donor government harmonization, cooperation and integration.</u> USAID ADS 201 (sec. **201.3.4.7)** specifically "highlights the Agency's commitment to donor harmonization and collaboration, consistent with and in furtherance of the commitments and guidance in the...Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Accra Agenda for Action, (and the) Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation." As already described, unless the donors end what is now a situation of substantial donor disarray in terms of actual policies and practices, it is unlikely that adequate coherent sustainable development will emerge in these two RISE countries. The challenge is immense but USAID is one of only a few donor organizations with substantial convening power in the donor community and that can, at the same time, lead by example.

7.3. Sequencing of Some Proposed Specific Actions for Implementing Recommendations

Three possible variations of national project committees for sequencing, layering, and integrating the reformulation of RISE I and II activities are presented in Annex B to this assessment.

Overall for both RISE I and RISE II

1) Establish operational monitoring and problem correction standards for each activity and a "report card" system in order to have a verifiable record of visits and final activity functioning status.

2) Adjust activities to the priorities and strategies identified by focus group participants.

3) Develop iterative TOCs adequate for use in periodic operational assessment of activities. (Use the USAID Learning Lab CLA Tool kit and draw on USAID's RAIN and Mekong Delta resilience project experiences.) Adjust TOCs for precise use in iterative periodic activity assessments.

4) Create a mechanism that both permits and incentivizes technical and programmatic "mutual aid" between different RISE member staff. For example, make an earmarked sum of funds useable only for inter-activity assistance.

5) Concentrate activities within shared, recognized development areas for which unified planning and coordination between separate activities can be required in pursuit of a shared goals.

6) Begin to openly champion donor-government local program harmonization.

For RISE I

1) USAID should initiate a process of simplification of activities and a consolidation of solutions.

2) Consolidate existing activities and assistance, as possible, so that different complementary activities are actually working together to provide a package of necessary solutions to address an overarching problem, for which they take shared responsibilities and credit.

3) Focus both implementation and performance monitoring on the benefits of these packages, not on the number of outputs of their assorted sub-elements.

4) Use these packages to establish new collaborations between RISE activities specifically to develop a small set of innovative solutions, which integrate local skills and knowledge while providing demonstrable sustainable results.

5) Conduct a feasibility study on scaling-up and institutionalizing the "Husbands' Schools" and "Safe Spaces for Girls" activities.

6) Conduct an analysis to determine which results packages should be considered time limited and project specific, and which merit institutionalization and/or scale-up during a RISE II. For the latter, divide RISE I activities into those needed to generate LOP results and those needed to establish a solid foundation for a scalable, sustainability oriented RISE II.

7) The local commune, as much as possible, should become more involved in RISE I activities as preparation for the possibility of commune-level governments becoming an anchor for RISE II.

For RISE II

1) Create, between RISE and those local commune governments where it will have substantial repetitive interventions, a mutually developed relationship that is compatible with the official structures and responsibilities of the commune-level local government as defined by the Rural Code.

2) Work in direct partnership with local commune governments.

3) Use the "eight guidelines" developed by Elinor Ostrom for locating and determining the proper level for nesting a cooperative governance activity, and her "eight management rules" for determining the precise governance structure of such activities (see Annex E).

4) Create a diverse coalition of providers under one lead implementer for each commune. Operationally, consider having for each commune a different NGO or contract leader who is the direct coordinator with the local government. Have associated members as part of a supporting coalition, and consider funding one coalition for each commune.

5) Develop with stakeholders a "co-production" model for building local capacities to assist in local activity design, implementation, and evaluation.

6) Focus a substantial portion of activities on the shared objective of building local capacities and developing systems for recovery from localized shocks.

7) Institutionalize the "Safe Space for Girls" and "Husbands' Schools" models as permanent but flexible community and commune dialogue centers.

8) Place a strong emphasis on building sustainability and scale-up into all new activities that are seeking to address long-term solutions to enduring problems.

9) For existing projects, establish a RISE country steering committee. Work with it to decide which RISE activities, offer long-term solutions of enduring problems, and build in amenable and appropriate for scale-up in RISE II. For those included in RISE II, have sustainability designed into their activities from the beginning of the new phase.

10) Consider supporting the development of a detailed portfolio of long-term commune level infrastructure plans which, during periods of local crisis, could be quickly operationalized as part of cash for work assistance could be used to rapidly develop.

11) Develop activities that support value chains flexible enough to respond to the changes that are occurring in local rural-urban linkages. Particularly focus on improving and developing new, non-export oriented, rural livelihood enhancing value chains, both for expanding the local regional economy and for local food security.

12) Consider developing activities that support husband-wife cooperative ventures, such as family businesses.

Annexes

Annex A. Endnotes

Annex B. Possible Options for Layering, Sequencing and Integrating of Present and Future RISE activities for a transition from RISE I to RISE II

Annex C. Bibliography of Works Cited

Annex D. Individuals and Organizations Met

Annex E. Elinor Ostrom's Rules for Designing and Locating Common Governance Activities

Annex F. Expanded Discussion of Assessment Methodology and Limitations

Annex G. Working Research Protocol and Instruments (in Original French or English)

Annex H. RISE Partner Activities in Niger and Burkina Faso

Annex I: World Bank Diagrams of the Structures, Relationships, Processes, and Areas of Concern of the Different Units of Government under Burkina Faso and Niger Decentralization

Annex A. Endnotes

[i] Transhumance refers to seasonal and alternating movement of livestock, together with the persons who tend the herds, between two or more regions, It difference from nomadism as transhumance population also have settled locations where much of the family, especially the very young and the old, remain all year round.

[ii] "An estimated 42 million people are currently food insecure in the Sahel. This situation is expected to deteriorate further in the coming lean season - from June to August 2017 - with a total of 53 million people estimated to be food insecure. An estimated 42 million people are currently food insecure in the Sahel. This situation is expected to deteriorate further in the coming lean season - from June to August 2017 - with a total of 53 million people estimated to be food insecure.

—European Commission for Humanitarian Assistance. Fact Sheet: Sahel: Food & Nutrition Crisis – March 2017.

[iii] "We also recognize the need to develop a "proof of concept" for the approach presented in this guidance and are aware of the significant investments of time, human, and financial resources and attention from leaders at all levels that achieving success will require. Therefore, we will intentionally focus the initial application of this guidance on a limited number of countries and regions, allowing us to fully and systematically develop an evidence base. A small but diverse set of focus countries will allow us to be informed by a variety of circumstances that will contribute to this evidence base."

—USAID: Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis. USAID Policy and Program Guidance p. 13

[iv] In fact, the team had hoped to produce a process diagram of the relationship between interventions and results in order to assess the theory of change as currently constructed and, within its parameters, identify potential opportunities for new interventions that improve the link between interventions and results. This proved elusive because the present Theories of Change are too general and, in actual operation, RISE activities lack clearly identifiable causal connectivity between their outputs and what can be justifiable called resilience results. In fact, some of the program's most enticing apparent effects are the seeming results of serendipitous interactions outside its arenas of intervention. It is for this reason this assessment uses the word "associated" rather than "correlated" to describe many of the relations it found between RISE activities and related observable phenomenon.

[v] USAID has provided a variety of assistance to both structures. This has included: for Niger – financing of an institutional assessment/mapping of 3N (2013); study tour for 3N to Ethiopia (2015); contribution to validation of Niger's PRP. SAREL co-organized a major CLA workshop with 3N in 2015, and already one in 2017. In Burkina, USAID financed the final regional consultations that allowed the resilience coordinating structure (SP-CPSA) to achieve the validation of the country's PRP in 2016. In 2015 and 2016, USAID/Burkina organized missions with SP-CPSA to visit RISE projects in the field. SAREL has organized two national workshops with the GoBF as co-organizer.

[vi] In fact, for our general inquires on shock, climate and vulnerability, there are other surveys that have asked similar questions and who's findings we found are all generally consistent. The difference for this survey was that the questions posed were scene setter's behind which we delved deeper into people's personnel priorities and their assessment of RISE. Only as things develop did the important of the dynamics and consequences of their interfaces with development assistance in general become clear.

[vii] The World Bank $248 million dollar six year Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS) is clearly where the action is on pastoralism. After reviewing documents, visiting its' Niamey Office and speaking with regional office personnel, the activity stood out in terms of the clarity, disciplined consistency, and empirical support of its' presentation of purpose, program, organization and activities. It is clearly designed to support the major sector transformation that is occurring as the ownership of pastoral herds pass to business people, many classic pastoral households are now permanently settling down, actual herding is becoming an occupation and the long underestimated value of the pastoral livestock sector is clearly being recognized.

[viii] The Sahel is what has been called a "rainfall reservoir". It recycles water within the region through evaporation and precipitation. Both processes are highly sensitive to local micro-conditions such as vegetation, tree cover, elevation, soil composition, existing bodies of water, etc. For the last few decades there has been a rise in temperatures and wind velocity.

[ix] A major impediment to farmer adaptation has been the lack of local meteorological information so that farmers can plan and adapt to immediate climate conditions. For decades there has been resistance on the part of donor supported regional weather activities to seriously take up the challenge of providing the same level of local weather service that is taken for granted elsewhere in the world. In fact, both the feasibility of providing local weather information that rural producers find valuable and the usefulness of many traditional ways of interpreting local weather patterns to guide seasonal decision making has been demonstrated. This is a major gap in terms of timely disaster warning. Melding traditional understandings with modern science and effective real time communication is now the priority.

[x] UNDP. 2016 Human Development Report. Human Development Index (HDI). UNDP. New York. Pp 198-202: "long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of Living calculated by…life expectancy at birth…mean years of schooling…. (and) gross national income (GNI) per capita."

[xi] USAID'S resilience guidelines call for strategically coordinating humanitarian and development assistance in a way that catalyzes sustainable, transformational change. Transformation plays a critical role in the anticipated needs for change in West Africa. "Case studies of SESs (Social Environmental Systems) suggest that transformations consist of three phases: 1) being prepared for or even preparing the social–ecological systems for change, 2) navigating the transition by making use of a crisis as a window of opportunity for change, and 3) building resilience of the new social–ecological regime". (Olsson et al. 2004, Chapin et al. 2010).

[xii] Rock barrier construction can also be an example of often seen activity rigidity. Women told us of projects promoting such barriers that tell them to gather and haul stones on carts from miles away rather than providing them adequate quantities of stones and allowing them to save their strength for actual construction.

[xiii] All of the DFAPs have used FFW in their RISE programs. Burkina's DFAPs had to stop their FFW distributions in 2015 following the looting of food stock warehouses that accompanied the fall of the Compaoré regime. However, in Niger, LAHIA and Sawki are still using FFW. Food for Assets (FFA) versus Food for Work (FFW) is not a formally recognized distinction. Some partners prefer using the term FFA to highlight the objective of developing community assets - lowlands for agriculture, degraded land, pasturelands. WFP now refers to its program as "Cash for Assets".

[xiv] It is imperative to remember that these priorities represent focus group respondents' perspectives and experiences. Certainly there is much evidence that literacy (and for that matter all relevant education) is a foundational skill/capacity that ultimately pays concrete dividends. However, there is also much literature on how quickly adults lose literacy if it is not used. The focal group participant priorities reflect what is most germane to their immediate lives, not the overall life or development value of any activity or concern per se.

[xv] "The CLTS is a supposedly participatory process with two main stages. In the first stage communities are taken through a 'walk of shame' to identify and raise consciousness regarding the extent of faecal matter in the village; they then participate in a defecation mapping exercise which is supported by technical data in the form of core faecal counts. The second stage is household latrine construction, backed by technical advice and further action with those unable or unwilling to construct latrines without financial support from the state. While some proponents posit that the triggering process is not supposed to 'shame, insult or embarrass the community in any way' (Harvey 2011: 100) and others note that it is about collective consciousness-raising of the severe impacts of open defecation (Kar and Pasteur 2005), the reality is that in a range of countries using the technique, it involves system of 'fines, taunting or social sanctions to punish those who continue to defecate in the open."

—Engel, S. and Susilo, A. Shaming and Sanitation in Indonesia – a return to colonial public health practices? Development & Change 45(1) 2014: 157–178. p158

[xvi] One of the problems cited by some was "democracy". It was claimed that in the past the village chief had the authority to tell everyone what they had to contribute and how things were to be distributed. "Now everyone wants to be the chief or make their own decisions", one village elder said, so "there is no discipline".

[xvii] The general USAID resilience paradigm emphasizes the role of higher level processes and government action to achieving wide spread transformation. We find this too restricting an understanding for analysis of the actual situations and somewhat contrary to many resilience study findings, including those precisely focused on the Sahel. Transformation is a systems phenomenon and systems exist on all levels. Moreover, social and economic transformation can be both top-down and bottom-up. In fact, when people are asked what single factor has most changed life as it is today, the overwhelming reply is "the cell phone". C.f. Reji. C, Tappan, G. & Smale, M. 2009. Agroenvironmental Transformation in the Sahel: Another Kind of Green Revolution. Discussion Paper 00914. IFPRI.

[xviii] "For resilience, we adopt Holling's (1973) original meaning, .in this sense, resilience has three defining characteristics: The amount of change a system can undergo and still retain the same controls on function and structure ....The degree to which the system is capable of self-organization....(and) The degree to which the system expresses capacity for learning and

adaptation.

— USAID. 2016. Concepts and Practices of "Resilience": A Compilation from Various Secondary Sources. Ahmed, A.K., Coastal Community Resilience (CCR) Program. IRG-Tetra Tech. US IOTWS Program Document No. 05-IOTWS-06.

xix It should be noted that the three characteristics of resilience have not gone totally unnoticed in the RISE Initiative. The RISE baseline study by Tango identifies: "absence of fatalism, belief in individual power to enact change, and exposure to alternatives to the status quo" as three key "psychosocial capabilities … thought to be important for fostering resilience in the face of shocks". This assessment suggests that three "psychosocial capacity" need also to be understood as the specific human mental and behavioral manifestations of the more generalized and universal characteristic of resilient systems, generally recognized as: 1) flexibility, 2) learning/memory and 3) internal capacity to effect the restoration or rectification of their condition(agency).

xx A "capacity" and a "characteristic" are two different things. A capacity is a "potential" to effect or accomplish something. Thus if I am good at "adaptation", if I need a hammer to nail a plank on my wall, and I don't have one and I have the ability to find something else to substitute for it, like a rock. "Adaptation" is a key capacity that can be used for increasing resilience. However, just because someone is good at adaptation does not mean they have actually become resilient. A "characteristic" is a trait(s) that distinguishes and identifies something for what it actually is. Flexibility is a characteristic of things that actually are resilient. If I am flexible and cannot find a hammer to nail the plank to the wall, I can just decide to do another chore today and fix the roof tomorrow. The problem with so many present resilience activities is that their rigid requirements and predetermined solutions are preventing the intended beneficiaries from acquiring or exercising the characteristics of actually being resilient. It is like saying you are teaching someone to paint many different things but in reality you are only teaching them one thing –how to paint by matching pre-arranged numbered boxes with similarly numbered colors. Resilience projects would do well to heed the words of Mahatma Gandhi: "You have to be the change you want to see."

xxi A SAREL project concept note on The Integration of Humanitarian Assistance and Development Support identifies why such integration is indispensable. Yet, many donor programs when they say they want to cooperate really mean they invite others to support their ideas. RISE is struggling to effect minimal cooperation among some of its own activities.

xxii "The architecture of a building is the way the components of the building are put together so that the desired overall properties emerge: Shelter, room, appearance, cost, safety, etc. The architecture of a software system is the way the components of the software are put together so that the desired overall properties emerge: Services, behavior, interfaces, reliability, usability, etc. So architecture is structure plus synergy. To describe an architecture of a system, you describe its components, the way they are put together, and the way this yields the desired emergent properties of the system." http://graal.ewi.utwente.nl/WhitePapers/Architecture/architecture.htm accessed April 5, 2017

xxiii "The solution took two months to push through. Procurement was involved, and because of compliance, finance was involved. We succeeded because program was unwilling to compromise on strategy…the key was not letting the issue die when people said "this is too

different, it won't work."

—Mercy Corps. 2013. Lessons for Effective Resilience Programming. Portland. P. 15

[xxiv] Food for Assets is used by Sawki, to do recuperation of pasture lands and to provide dry season income for needy households, and by ViM, for developing low lands for irrigated agriculture. Food for Assets funding appears to be reserved for work on "community land" rather than individual fields. The large-scale "Cash for Assets" programs developed and implemented by WFP in Niger and Burkina Faso is strategically used for bioreclamation of degraded lands (BDL) in watersheds in both countries, to be used to improve food production.

[xxv] Note: While this assessment is conducted under the auspices of SAREL, it is worth noting the following: 1) the team was comprised of independent contractors, not regular SAREL or TMG employees; 2) the observation addresses cross-activity "synergisms", not specifically SAREL's performance; 3) the team firmly believes that the observations are true and immediately germane; and 4) two major conclusions (noted below in the conclusion section) are that: a) the learning agenda should be expanded to include more on-site, in-activity, learning, probably to be conducted by implementing partners, not SAREL; and b) there should be greater recognition and integration of other learning sources, including some already employed by RISE partners outside of RISE.

[xxvi] We heard several times from local groups that have assisted RISE projects that they feel they are only appreciated for their operational help and not as true substantive partners with ideas to contribute. Participation in SAREL events seems to be a major litmus test for them of the true nature of their relationship to RISE.

[xxvii] We did find a forty-three page JPC document with three different technical TOCs, one for each RISE strategic objective: A) increased and sustainable economic well-being, B) strengthened institutions and governance, and C) improved health and nutrition status. Very informative but probably not practical for regular implementation use.

[xxviii] In what is often referred to as "The Paradox of Sikasso" (Mali), the Sikasso region, a center of successful cotton production, also has the country's highest malnutrition and lowest school attendance. Among the explanations given are that the pursuit of cotton means the kids are working not learning and that as cotton replaces crops, processed foods are displacing the healthier traditional diet. (An example of an unexpected transformation)

[xxix] Among the reasons cited for concern related to continued donor ability to meet growing humanitarian needs is that there are not only increasing numbers of people needing help but also the average time they spend in dependency status growing. This is actually measuring resilience by measuring how long it takes the disturbed situation to return to its normal state. In the USA the average time it takes for the US employment rate to return to normal after an economic downturn has been steadily increasing. This measurement is often cited to say that the US workforce is becoming less resilient.

[xxx] The translational research approach, identified by the NSF as potentially restructuring American science, creates a common effort among all parties to co-produce, first an understanding of the dissonances between their individual understandings, such as why 50% of patience does not take drugs as prescribed, and then mutually accepted solution that fits the particular practice context. In 2011 DFID sponsored a study by RAND on Translational

Research in Development with a particular focus on its use in agricultural value chain development.

—Waimea, Watu et al. 2011 Translational Research and Knowledge in Agriculture and Food Production. RAND Europe.

[xxxi] Technical people seem prone to find reasons not to pass control over to local people or to valorize their knowledge, while local political people and government services lack the resources to act. One of the great challenges in the Sahel is how to predict pending difficulties in the context of the region's great diversity and variability of microenvironments. The failure to use these committees constitutes a missed opportunity.

[xxxii] "Managing complex resilience programs requires that managers adapt quickly to changing circumstances over the life of the program. During the three-year program, RAIN shifted away from linear management in which work plans were treated as an operation manual, to iterative management, frequently revisiting strategies and methods to achieve program goals. RAIN leadership worked to improve program effectiveness through two main strategies: (1) measuring progress and recognizing failure, and (2) adapting internal support systems to match program strategies.

—Mercy Corps. 2013. Lessons for Effective Resilience Programs: A case study of the rain program in Ethiopia. Portland. p.7

[xxxiii] This need reflects the repeated calls of focus group participants, who differentiate between the assets that build strength to withstand stress and the assets that allow a household to recovery from shock. This is also consistent with findings from the Resilience Desk Assessment which suggests that stresses and shocks should be conceptualized distinctly in order to better address their complementary impacts.

Annex B. Possible Options for Layering, Sequencing, and Integrating Present and Future RISE Activities for a Transition from RISE I to RISE II

FOR BOTH RISE I AND RISE II

Revise operational and programmatic "theories of change" so that they meet a criterion of:

1) Being specific as to links and causalities

2) Being realistic as to dimension of changes an activity can effect

3) Recognizing and building upon the extensive corpus of information, understanding and critical thinking generated by USAID's own activities, including the corpus of work done by and through the SAREL project, which have received both technical review and stakeholder vetting.

4) Being better aligned- iteratively-with USAID policy, specific Learning Center generated knowledge and practices and host government processes and priorities

5) Being empirically justified, in terms of analysis and solutions proposed, and based on accumulated global experience and understandings.

6) Reform the program's monitoring and evaluation process

7) Redo the results framework.

8) Reduce the number of indicators

9) Establish and create a scorecard on agreed upon standards and practices for operational monitoring and reporting. When people visit a community they should fill out the scorecard.

10) Create an independent means for the determination and presentation of "peer reviewed" "technical lessons learned" and "best practices". Differentiate this type of documentation from more generalized project information presentations. (E.g. create a peer reviewed Program Technical Handbook)

11) Fund a senior dedicated communications-liaison person with significant implementation experience in both countries to establish and maintain communications and human relations links with other stakeholders, especially all levels of government, and to be at the table of all resilience related reflection, report-outs, and synthesizing forums.

FOR RISE I

Possibilities: We see three options for current project/ program/activities.   The options and suggested specific corresponding revisions are:

Option 1: Make minimal necessary changes.

Quality Control: Institute rigorous operational monitoring –performance-verification-problem resolution practices.

Option 2: Make changes to maximize RISE I activity results

Do all the above, plus:

Simplification: Simplify program elements, especially indicator tracking and document preparation

Sustainability: Modify projects as possible to provide for the institutionalization of sustainable support for successful activities

Option 3: Make changes to create a solid foundation for and affect best transition to RISE II

Do all the above, plus:

Integration: Create mechanisms for mutual technical assistance across portfolio activities, and projects

Consolidate achievements: Triage activities according to actual proven capacities and results: Group 1 - phase-out by end of project; Group 2 - emphasis sustainable preservation of results; Group 3 - reorient to establish the foundations for actual scale-up in RISE II

Scale-up: Identify and begin to nurture capacities for both horizontal scale-up (expansion of outreach and services) and vertical scale-up (make more efficacious and more efficiency)

If option three is chosen, any and all of the following is possible to begin under RISE I:

Quality control

1) Establish a systematic operational monitoring, performance certification and problem resolution process

2) Establish agreed upon performance standards.

3) Schedule and record actual monitoring of ongoing activity progress.

4) Certify adequate productivity and sustainability of operation or achieved benefits before activity closure.

Simplification

1) Replace complicated data collection and analysis with more generally understood and effective quality assurance procedures.

2) Institutionalize knowledge in easily accessible forms.

3) Reduce IPTT indicators and replace as possible non-S.M.A.R.T. Indicators with indicators that meet the S.M.A.R.T. criteria.

4) Sustainability: Begin activities to achieve sustainability through effective institutionalization. Support selective integration of separate program activities and achievements.

5) Expand concept of "Husbands' School" and "SAFE Space for Girls" to be a multi-dimensional village learning center

6) Integrate adult functional literacy training into other activities

7) Support and obtain services of an organization that can develop very simple standardized document/ pamphlets of permanent value for the joint purposes of

8) Use in activity planning, implementation and evaluation. Possible candidates would be REGIS and DFAP activities in health, nutrition, family planning, and conservation

agriculture practices.

9) Providing functional material for literacy education. The CRS Literacy activity could be the center for this.

10) Developing and widely distributing specific subject matter for use in conservation agriculture extension.

11) Mobilizing and supporting the village SCAP RUs for multiply purposes

12) Identifying needs

13) Monitoring performance

14) Providing early warning on shock

15) Translating between community and outside perspectives

16) Integration: Create overarching inter-activity support capacities

17) Identify cross-project available expertise (based on actual skills not limited orientations)

18) Sub-divide assets and expertise into functional categories that can be flexibly integrated into other activities according to client needs

19) Consolidation: Strategically triage and integrate achievements

20) Integrate separate components into identifiable solution packages that are response to specific client demands

Objectively separate existing activities into those that:

1) Still need piloting

2) Emphasis should be either making them work or phasing them out

3) Ready to develop a prototype

4) Emphasis on creating core standards and practices, beginning institutionalization and assuring sustainability

5) Ready for market development and scale-up. Emphasize:

6) Scaling-up

7) Quality control

8) Product/ practice improvement

9) Scale-up: Establish foundations for scaling-up of successful activities

10) Create a robust curriculum for use in "L'Ecole" type activities

11) Adapt a proven functioning model, such as   Escuela Nueva, for combining functional literacy, task training, and specific problem solving

12) Create a permanent training program for initial and continuing education, for an expanding number of "L'Ecole" type instructors and centers

FOR RISE II: Possibilities identified and potential choices to be made for a new RISE II program are many.

1) Integrate project and local governance to build family and community resilience for recovery from local crises shocks, while supporting soft links of mutual aid between stakeholders.

2) Develop a partnership convention for each commune

3) Develop common criteria for project selection

4) Create a "USAID –commune" co-managed small project budget

5) Offer a selection of major activities that villages can chose from as they prefer

6) Build on proven sustainable and scalable approaches

7) Use successful sustainable and scalable activities from RISE I as starting point but look wider, in Niger and Burkina Faso first, then beyond.

8) Use Ostrom's Rules for location of activities and determination of local user responsibilities and authorities

9) Draw on global experience for determination of best practices

10) Nest resilience programs for shock recovery in an open, inclusive, welcoming alliance at the commune level. One, which works in an integrated fashion.

11) One lead NGO for each commune – provides focused responsibility and manageable relations with commune

12) Each commune has a different lead NGO – allows for diversity of approaches and competencies

13) Other providers welcomed to join as coordinated alliance members. Allows for responsibilities for specific activities to be based on best capacity - expertise to implement. Also allows more adequately staffed coverage.

14) All members work as a coalition or alliance with shared objectives – agreed to on the commune level through the local governance processes

15) All others having an interest and wanting to provide needed capacities can either join the alliance, if they accept the agreed upon commune development program convention, and if the commune feels they are germane to its plans; or work to set-up a "sister" activity in another commune with direct mentoring by the existing commune program.

Focus on building a capacity for recovery from local shocks in all community resilience strengthening activities through:

1) Early warning systems

2) Community based monitoring

3) Community based reserves (i.e. cereal banks)

4) Commune specific disaster plans and practices

5) Region based "local disaster" mutual aid conventions and capacities

6) Link national and local weather services

7) Mutually develop action plans

8) Emphasizing flexibility, shared learning and beneficiary empowerment

9) Building horizontal and vertical "soft" links by information and solution sharing between villages and communes

10) Community and commune members rigorously monitor and continuously improve results

11) A simple interactive theory of change, built with community members, is developed and used to guide and evaluate operative strategy

12) Create collaborative "solution packages"

13) Only support activities that can, in alliance with others, provide the full requisite package necessary for acceptable performance and sustainability

14) Have preauthorized mechanisms for different service providers under different agreements to provide assistance to each other

15) Develop actual operational plans, objectives and monitoring criteria with the concerned stakeholders

16) Make operational monitoring, performance verification and problem corrections an integral element of all activities

Learning, Experimentation and Innovation

1) Promote local experimentation and cross-communities learning

2) Develop a series of on-site learning experiments

3) Capture learning through joint reviews and incorporation in a progressively updated lessons learned and recommended practices handbooks, available in "loose leaf" hard copy, as well as on-line.

4) Develop very simple literacy training materials that support the activities of the commune and village development plans

5) Try to use the local school as a community resource and learning center

6) Establish regular information exchanges and visits with other communities, donor, NGO, government and private activities

Monitoring and Evaluation

1) Establish a set of common indicators with all stakeholders

2) All indicators must be "S.M.A.R.T." for the particular program being implemented

3) Iteratively use simply "theories of change" to monitor and analyze progress

4) Set reasonable proportional limits to resources of time, money and personnel that can be devoted to Monitoring and Evaluation

5) Require expenses for independent requests for information gathering, which is not directly needed for activity management activities, to be approved by the activity participants, paid for by requesters, and predetermined to be doable without adverse effect on the activity's cost or success.

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Annex E. Elinor Ostrom's Rules for Designing and Locating Common Governance Activities

In 2009, Elinor Ostrom became the first woman to receive the prestigious noble prize. Ostrom believed that most powerful social science analytical tools are well suited for studying static situations. Static and mechanistic analysis however, is not adequate to understand the changing world in which we live. In order to adequately address the most pressing social and environmental challenges looming ahead, she believed we need to develop analytical tools for analyzing dynamic situations - particularly institutional change

SIMPLIFIED VERSION:

Ostrom identified eight "design principles" of stable local common pool resource management.

- Decentralize each task to lowest able level

- All necessary actors must be represented at that level.

- Assure sufficient access to all needed capacities

- Maximize lower level links and access to higher level capacities

- Given adequate time for capacities to be developed.

- Capacity building succeeds if participants benefit long-term from the capacities developed.

- Let unit's assigned tasks decide how to conduct those tasks.

- A higher-level champion bandwagon is needed to overcome vested interests resisting devolution of authority, capacities and approaches.

- Ostrom Eight Rules for Local User Management

- Define clear group boundaries.

- Match governing rules to local needs and conditions.

- Ensure that those affected by the rules can participate in modifying the rules.

- Make sure the rule-making rights of community members are respected by outside authorities.

- Develop a system, carried out by community members, for monitoring members' behavior.

- Use graduated sanctions for rule violators.

- Provide accessible, low-cost means for dispute resolution.

- Build responsibility for governing in nested tiers - from the lowest level up

ALTERNATIVE VERSION:

- Allocate tasks across levels in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity

- Decentralize each task to the lowest level with capacity to conduct it satisfactorily.

- The capacity at a given level to conduct a task satisfactorily depends partly on whether all actors with an interest in the task are represented at that level.

- The capacity to perform a task satisfactorily at a given level depends on whether there is sufficient access at that level to all the capacities needed to achieve that standard of performance.

- The capacity at a given level to perform a task satisfactorily can often be enhanced through strategies seeking to strengthen access to the requisite capacities. Subsidiarity obliges actors at higher levels to explore such opportunities before ruling out the possibility of decentralizing tasks to lower levels.

- Must be cautions against over-optimistic expectations of how quickly lower-level capacities to cope with decentralization can be developed.

- Actors tend to participate in activities designed to build their capacities only when they expect participation to help further their goals. Capacity-building efforts are therefore unlikely to succeed unless the target population has secure rights to benefit from the capacities developed.

- Units assigned tasks in accordance with the subsidiarity principle should be allowed as much autonomy as possible in how they decide to conduct those tasks.

Despite any rhetoric to the contrary, government actors often perceive a vested interest in resisting authentic application of the subsidiarity principle. Their success in resisting derives just as much from fiscal dominance and cognitive hegemony as it does from formalized powers. When authentic subsidiarity does occur, this is often due to strategic bottom-up efforts to overcome this resistance by mobilizing a bandwagon of support from higher levels.[44]

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Annex F. Expanded Discussion of Assessment Methodology and Limitations

1. Team Composition

The assessment team was composed of one American team leader, and two country national deputy team leaders and two local focus group specialists for each of the two countries, for a total of seven team members. All of the team members had extensive experiences working within donor and NGO organizations in the Sahel in program design, evaluation and implementation in such sectors as health, agriculture, pastoralism, natural resource management, public administration, micro-credit, integrated rural development, participatory community development, local governance and land tenure. This accumulated experience was indispensable to the team's ability to spot what was "missing" in terms of normally expected conditions and to encouraging interviewees to move beyond rote presentations toward more practical concerns and realities.

2. Qualitative Analysis

The assessment's qualitative methodology was designed to solicit not only opinions, but also explanatory, causal, and relational valuation rankings by different people and groups. The team did not try to judge the overall performance of any individual, activity or organization, but focused on discerning major issues, concerns, accomplishments, insights and representative examples. However, the team has drawn conclusions as to the apparent match or mismatch between what it saw as accomplishments and the expectations, expressed in the assessment's Scope of Work. A fundamental tenet of the inquiry was to always try to clarify the difference between 1) what people say about a situation, 2) what people say they do in reference to that situation, and 3) what people actually do in relation to that situation. Triangulation of information sources was fundamental to our methodology. We tried as much as possible to have all major findings and conclusions confirmed by several independent sources and types of information. This included meeting with a wide spectrum of RISE Initiative partners, as well as associated institutions and individual experts. The specific examples we cite in this assessment are thumbnails of actual mini-case studies generated by this polyvalent approach.

3. Document Review

Building on the associated Desk Assessment of academic and donor literature, the Field Team reviewed activity documents as well as performance indicators and an extensive number of additional reports and articles by other donors and academic specialists on resilience. This included looking at some of the Requests for Proposals (RFP) for RISE services. The team also examined a selection of some agreements' contract clauses of some to verify claims regarding significant restrictions on flexibility and activity adaptations that respondents said hobbled their ability to implement activities effectively and efficiently.

4. Individual Interviews

Program participants were asked to share their genuine thoughts as to how things could be done better, what problems need to be addressed - now and in the future – and lessons learned. To get frank answers it was necessary to promise people that they would remain anonymous with regards to specific places, issues, concerns and expressed opinions. Accordingly, there is a general absence of specific attribution to sources of information

presented in this assessment. However a list of the many people and organizations who graciously shared their time and thoughts with the team is presented as an Annex.

5. Focus Groups

The focus group findings are at the core of the team's assessment and conclusions. In each community, discussions were held with eight different groups categorized as leaders, adult men, older women, married women, male youth, female youth, activity participants and activity agents. The size of the groups varied from eight to fourteen people per group. No one participated in more than one group. The team also held individual interviews, toured the sites and visited relevant activities. Approximately three days were spent in each of the six villages visited - three in Burkina Faso and three in Niger - and the surrounding region.

The team spent significant time refining its survey instruments to establish a common basis for open conversations, which were tested in a separate "test" community before the official focus group exercise. This resulted in a methodology and a framework that was used for the inquiries into each group's experience with shocks and crises: the causes; how in their view the different people and households responded; what was the difference between successful and unsuccessful responses; who were the most "vulnerable" and why; and what did they see as the best strategies for dealing with such shocks. The discussions subsequently progressed to a review of the current situation – the stresses and shocks they faced and their capacities to withstand them and to recover. Finally, the team delved into their current experiences with various assistance programs and how they assessed the efficacy of the assistance they received.

Only after establishing a shared understanding on these issues did the team specifically ask about the RISE Initiative's activities. After obtaining their perspective about the RISE activities specifically, participants were asked to detail their priorities in terms of needs for development assistance. After much questioning, we opened the discussion to a freer flowing exchange of opinions, focusing on what seemed to be the specific concerns and prevailing interest of the immediately engaged parties.

The last thing the team did was to ask participants to prioritize, from their perspective, the six most important RISE activities. Weighting and aggregating individual feelings and judgments can be difficult in qualitative research, especially across cultures. Absolute value comparison is difficult since people have various ways of measuring and reporting satisfaction. However, in general there is an acceptable accuracy if people are asked to prioritize things according to their own criteria, i.e., each group's first choice actually is their first choice.

Annex G. Working Research Protocol and Instruments (in Original French or English Form)

"L'AXÉE PRINCIPALEMENT DE L'EVALUATION A MI PARCOURS DU PROGRAMME RISE

L'évaluation est divisée en 2 phases distinctes a) l'examen stratégique de RISE en tant que promoteur de la résilience et b) l'efficacité de la performance RISE jusqu'à mi-parcours.

Revue de la stratégie de résilience

1. L'évaluation de la première dimension de performance concernant la stratégie de résilience au sens plus large que RISE emploie est réalisée à travers cinq activités principales :

    a. Examen théorique de la littérature disponible sur les activités de pointe dans le domaine de la résilience dans le monde entier, en accordant une attention particulière à la documentation disponible sur le Sahel.
    b. Catégorisation des pratiques de résilience des partenaires RISE par type d'activité, type de chocs ou les facteurs de stress auxquels ils sont destinés et le type de résilience ;
    c. Identification des lacunes potentielles dans les activités de résilience des partenaires RISE, ainsi que les domaines de travail qui pourraient être réduits ou éliminés ;
    d. Exercice de « traçage des processus » afin d'évaluer la relation entre les interventions et les résultats et l'évaluer si la théorie du changement telle qu'elle est actuellement élaborée aborde de façon appropriée les résultats de résilience souhaités

Revue de l'efficacité de RISE

2. La deuxième phase de l'évaluation portera sur l'efficacité de RISE dans la réalisation de ses objectifs. Cette phase comportera quatre composantes spécifiques :

    a. Examen du Tableau de suivi des indicateurs de performance (PITT) pour les activités RISE, pour comparer les données de référence et les cibles avec les résultats publiés, en faisant un recoupement entre les résultats et les rapports d'étape et les évaluations à ce jour ;
    b. Organisation d'interviews auprès des informateurs clés et des parties prenantes des organisations partenaires de RISE, de l'USAID, des ministères technique et des universitaires locaux.
    c. Collecte des données ciblée au niveau des communautés avec les bénéficiaires du programme. Les données sont de nature qualitative recueillies auprès de 12 groupes de discussion dans trois (3) communautés sélectionnées

3. Observation de la mise en œuvre du programme dans un maximum de trois (3) endroits distincts dans la zone RISE

Collecte des données sur le terrain

Choix des villages

Le processus d'échantillonnage a permis de retenir 3 communautés dans la zone d'intervention de RISE au Niger. Les critères qui ont présidé aux choix des communautés sont les suivants a) La diversité des responsables de la mise en œuvre b) Expérience de collaboration c) Diversité des activités. Ainsi il a été déterminé une commune dans laquelle a) REGIS-ER est le principal exécutant, b) une communauté dans laquelle l'un des DFAP est le principal exécutant, et c) REGIS ER et REGIS AG. Les communes et villages suivants ont été retenus :

Région	Commune	Villages	Intervenants
Maradi	Mayahi	Dibaga	DFAP/PASAM TAI
Zinder	Droum	Banima I	SAWKI/REGIS AG
Tillaberi	Kourteye	Faria Haoussa	REGIS-ER /REGIS AG

Formation des enquêteurs

La formation des enquêteurs a porté sur a) la revue du programme RISE b) les techniques de conduite des entretiens de focus group   c) échanges sur l'opérationnalisation de l'animation des différents focus group et des entretiens individuels dans les villages et de la répartition des rôles (conduite des entretiens, prise de notes) d) échanges sur le contenu des synthèses journalières et sur le canevas des informations et des questionnements émergents ainsi les synthèses régionales e) Enquête test dans un village de la région de Mayahi.

Déroulement de l'enquête au niveau village

En prélude aux entretiens, une assemblée générale est organisée au niveau du village. Cette assemblée générale a pour objet de présenter les objectifs de la mission et de procéder à la constitution des différents groupes.

Choix des membres des focus group

Groupes	Critères de choix
Leaders	Leaders d'opinion et leaders communautaires, élus locaux Bénéficiaires et non bénéficiaires
Hommes	Bénéficiaires depuis au moins 6 mois Chefs de familles (Mariés) avec actifs en dépendance
Femmes	Femmes allaitantes Femmes ayant des ayants des enfants de 2 à 5 ans

	Femmes âgées
	Femmes bénéficiaires des actions du Projet
Jeunes adultes et adolescents	Non marié
	18-30 ans
	Bénéficiaires ou non des actions du Projet
	personnes (1 ou 2) ayant effectué l'exode au moins une fois
Jeunes femmes et adolescentes	Non encore marié / ou divorcée
	16-25 ans
	Bénéficiaires ou non des actions du Projet
	Personnes (1 ou 2) ayant effectué l'exode au moins une fois
Auxiliaires	Impliqués dans la mise d'une ou plusieurs activités du projet au niveau village services

Conduite des focus group et interviews

Les opérations de collecte des données sur le terrain et leur analyse se sont déroulées entre le 28 Février et le 17 Mars 2017

Outils administrés au Niger

Bilan des Focus Group et interviews					
	Village test	Dibaga	Banima 1	Farie Haoussa	Total
Assemblée générale	1	1	1	1	4
FG Groupe leaders	1	1	1	1	4
FG Groupe Hommes	0	1	1	1	3
FG groupe femmes	1	1	1	1	4
FG groupe jeunes femmes	0	1	1	1	3
FG jeunes et adolescents	1	1	1	1	4
FG prestataires	0	1	1	1	3
Entretien individuel		1	1	1	3
Total	4	8	8	8	28

Pour le contenu des questionnaires cf annexe ….

Les limites de la méthodologie

L'interaction du groupe enrichit la quantité et la qualité des informations et les discussions permettent d'aborder tous les sujets aussi bien que les esquisses de solutions

Comme toute étude qualitative, celle-ci présente des insuffisances notamment

- Le choix des villages a été fait sur la base d'un échantillon raisonné ;

- Une quantité importante d'information est obtenue mais leur extraction et analyse peut s'avérer fastidieuse

- Le facilitateur a un contrôle limité sur le flux de la discussion au cours du focus group en comparaison avec les discussions individuelle ; les Focus groups ne peuvent pas vous informer sur la fréquence ou la distribution des croyances et comportement dans la population, et les résultats sont plus difficiles à analyser que dans interviews individuels et les commentaires des participants doivent aussi être interprétés dans le contexte social et environnemental créé (une discussion dans un endroit neutre avec des étrangers et il est n'est pas prudent de sortir les idées de leur contexte.

- L'objet et la nature du focus group ne permet pas un approfondissement sur une thématique spécifique ;

- La conduite des focus group nécessite expertise et expérience.

GUIDANCE QUESTIONS FOR THEORY OF CHANGE:

R 1. Tasks: Compare interventions from other experiences compared to RISE Partners Actions

Make a list of interventions from other experiences compared to RISE Partners Actions

ACTION: Identify Documents+ desk review

       Team Members

       Chose 6

       Make list of interventions

       Survey yes or no among RISE partners

Immediate Action : 5-10 nominees

R.2   (Also an E question)   Is present RISE balance of Activities in terms of level of interventions correct

       Identify levels

Determine relative importance

Consequences (basis of judgement)

Tasks: What is happening now? Project and on-the ground

What and why are priorities of different parties?

What are links –where ? Why not?

Ask projects interviews / requests for information

Ask people: Focal groups, individual interview, surveys

Answered: What can be scaled back? (added?)

R.3 Is the Technical TOC Embedded in the Results Framework

Clarify the actual vs expressed theory of change

Interviews

Documents

(Implicit form analysis)

Compare to Results Framework

Compare if CLEAR in Results Framework)

Compare if links are clear

If not what are they?

Validity: Redo on the ground in terms of links

What are the basis of setting the targets?

Two sided question : Compare framework with ground realities

R.4   Is RISE theory of Change Valid?

Clarify difference Operational and Technical TOC

Clarify the actual vs expressed theory of change

Interviews

Documents

(Implicit form analysis)

Is the de facto Theory of change : if you strengthen the individual components the whole will change.

Three key questions: what else is necessary for your success, is there an necessary order, do they have to be linked and collaborate and why and how

Questions for Village Coordinators. Suggested questions for serving activity coordinators in the village

QUESTION 1:   ON THEIR PROJECT

QUESTION 2:   ON RISE

QUESTION 3:   ON THE COMMUNITY – how do different parties sees their activities –their needs – their priorities

QUESTION 4: What are we missing? What is the project missing: Focus, activities, resources, needs?

QUESTION 5:   On the value or costs of collaborating – what works, what does not should there be more, if so on what and how.

EXPANDED QUESTION COLLABORATION:

One: How important – useful would it be for the activities to work together.

Two: – what would be the benefits.

Four – where is it needed.

Five -do the projects in the village worked together? If so precisely how?

Six. – If it would be beneficial for them to work together and they don't, why not?

Seven -how do you think they could be helpful to each other?

Eight what suggestions can you make in your area about making the activity better in terms of accomplishment and people's perception of the.

DISCUSS ONE or MORE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

What is more important:

Layering: Have all the necessary needs addressed

Sequencing: Knowing which has to be done when – i.e. first –middle -last

Integrating: Combining the different activities within a single effort.
So are these three concerns really important?

CADRES DE SYNTHESE DES FOCUS GROUP AU NIVEAU DU VILLAGE

Objet : destinée à établir les synthèses de chaque Focus group dans les villages, en faisant ressortir les éléments clés, au fur et à mesure que les questions sont posées

FG / Interview/ Site Visité : Autorités villages, Hommes, Femmes, Jeunes Hommes, Jeunes Femmes, Agents villageois du Projet

Qui le remplit : la personne qui est chargé de prendre des notes pendant l'entretien ; il est utile que le DTL le fasse aussi lorsqu'il assiste à l'entretien, vu que celui-ci est traduit. De cette façon on aura 2 cadres remplis qui feront ensuite l'objet de vérification de l'information collectée

Quand le remplir : pendant et le FG et juste après le FG entre membres ayant conduit le FG y compris le traducteur

Avec qui le partager : le soir entre membres de l'équipe pour vérifier que toutes les informations sont collectées ; ??????

Comment procéder à la vérification : après la conduite des enquêtes de terrain et à la rédaction des leçons et pistes de recommandations, procéder à l'écoute du dictaphone attentivement, pour réviser, compléter, préciser les données collectées.-

Nombre de cadre de synthèse : 6

Cadre de synthèse 1 : relevés des réponses aux questions du guide

Cadre de synthèse 2 : description principales réponses au choc

Cadre de synthèse 3: classement des activités par ordre de priorité

Cadre de synthèse 4 : analyse de chaque activité (succès, faiblesses)

Cadre de synthèse 5: bilan global du Projet (ciblage, choix activités, intégration, séquençage, durabilité, partenariats

Cadre de synthese 6 : Local knowledge and innovation to adapt to changing climate

Cadre de synthèse 1 : relevés des réponses aux questions du guide

VILLAGE :   DATE :

INTERVIEWER :   GROUPE
INTERVIEWEE

QUESTION (N°)	RESPONSE	OBSERVATIONS
1		
2		
3		
4		
7		
8 9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
17		
18		
19		
20		

Cadre de synthèse 2 : description principales réponses au choc

VILLAGE :   DATE :

INTERVIEWER :   GROUPE   INTERVIEWEE :

Au cours du dernier choc identifié par le groupe Quelles sont les réponses utilisées pour y faire face ? Comment ?

Description Réponse	Niveau village	Niveau ménage	Niveau individu

Cadre de synthèse 3: classement des activités par ordre de priorité

Village :   DATE :

INTERVIEWER :   GROUPE   INTERVIEWEE :

	Pourquoi a – t - il ce rang de priorité ?
1ere priorité	
2e priorité	
3e priorité	
4e priorité	
5e priorité	
6e priorité	

Cadre de synthèse 4 : analyse de chaque activité (succès, faiblesses)

VILLAGE :   DATE :

INTERVIEWER :   GROUPE
INTERVIEWEE :

Activité/service/innovation	Niveau de succès (+,++,+++)	Faiblesses (-,--,---)	Commentaires (facteurs de succès, facteurs de faiblesse)

Cadre de synthèse 5: bilan global du Projet (ciblage, choix activités, intégration, séquençage, durabilité, partenariats

VILLAGE :   DATE :

INTERVIEWER :   GROUPE
INTERVIEWEE :

	Points forts du Projet	**Points faibles du Projet**	**Leçons, recommandations**
Offre des services et activités /besoins et priorités			
Ciblage des bénéficiaires			
collaborations avec communautés (agents endogènes, comités villageois, groupes de travail),			
collaboration avec autres intervenants (ONG, autres Projets), Niveau de Commune			
Séquence de mise en œuvre des activités			
Synergie & intégration entre actions du Projet			
effets sur le renforcement de vos capacités de résilience			
Durabilité			

Cadre de synthese 6 : connaissances locales et innovations (adaptations aux changements climatiques)

VILLAGE :   DATE :

 INTERVIEWER :   GROUPE   INTERVIEWEE :

Action Concernée	
But	
Description de comment ça marche	
Bénéfices actuels	
Observations	

Coding sheet

Code		Meaning	
A-		Negative accomplishment	
A+		Positive accomplishment	
ADA		Adaption	
ADO		Adoption	
AN		Answer	
B		Blockage	
BEN		Benefit	
C		Collaboration	
C-		Negative change	
C+		Positive change	
CF		Critical Factor	
CN		Connection	
COS		Costs	
D		Discovery	
FED		Feedback	
G		Gap	
GN		GN	
I		Innovation	
INT		Interdependent	
ITG		Integration	
LA		Layering	
M		Missing	
O		Opportunity	
P		Priority	
P#		Ranking	
PR0B		Problem	
R		Request	
S		Synergism	
SEQ		Sequence	
SUG		Suggestion	
SUP		Supply	
T		Training	
TR		Transformation	

Annex H. RISE Partner Activities in Niger and Burkina Faso

Objective	Niger			Niger and Burkina Faso		Burkina Faso		Niger & BF
	Sawki	LAHIA	PASAM-TAI	REGIS-ER	REGIS-AG	FASO	VIM	SAREL
Objective 1: Increased and sustainable economic well-being (income, food access, assets, adaptive capacity)								
Dry land agriculture support								
Improved seeds	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Rainwater harvesting	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Borehoes and wells	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Conservation agriculture	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Small-scale irrigation, drip irrigation	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Soil fixation, enrichment			X	X		X	X	
Agriculture diversification	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Natural regeneration, agroforestry	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Pest management	X		X	X		X		
Livestock/pastoralism								
Fodder bank	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Grasslands improvement	X			X		X	X	
Community animal health workers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Livestock fattening	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Vaccination	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Improved cattle marketing					X			
Pastoral livelihood diversification				X		X	X	
Safety nets, assets building and microfiance								
Cash transfer (WFP, safety net programs)								
Cash for work (WFP)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Saving groups (women saving groups, microfinance institutions)	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Grain storage system (cereals banks)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Seed banks, fertilizers, animal feed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Objective	Niger			Niger and Burkina Faso		Burkina Faso		Niger & BF
	Sawki	LAHIA	PASAM-TAI	REGIS-ER	REGIS-AG	FASO	VIM	SAREL
Micro credit (women saving groups, tontine, VSLA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Other specific activities								
Warrantage	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Support to communes for preparation of PDC	X		X	X				
Land tenure and NRM conflict management				X				
Cereals banks	X	X	X	X				
Farmer field school	X	X						
Habbanaye	X	X	X	X				
Economic growth								
Value chain (cowpea, small animals, fairs)		X			X	X	X	
Market linkages					X	X		
Entrepreneur business loans					X	X	X	
Expanded market access					X	X	X	
Private sector enabling					X	X	X	
Objective 2: Strengthened Institutions and Governance								
Natural resources, land tenure and conflict management				X			X	
Establishing local early warning system	X	X	X	X				
Promoting community-based health services	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Support to communes for preparation of PDC	X			X				
Improve local governance by community structures	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Promoting community based services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Community early warning systems (SCAP/RU)	X	X	X	X				
Objective 3: Improved health and nutrition status (MCH, family planning, WASH, nutrition)								
Use of iodized salt	X					X	X	
Exclusive breastfeeding	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Vitamin A administration						X	X	
Complementary feeding	X	X	X	X		X	X	

| Objective	Niger			Niger and Burkina Faso		Burkina Faso		Niger & BF
	Sawki	LAHIA	PASAM-TAI	REGIS-ER	REGIS-AG	FASO	VIM	SAREL
WASH, CLTS	X	X	X	X		X	X	
ENA practices promotion	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Other specific activities								
Safe spaces								
Home garden	X	X	X	X				
Mother-to-mother group/Care group/Maman Lumière	X	X	X			X	X	
Husbands' schools	X	X	X	X				
Cross cutting theme								
Literacy	X	X	X	X	X			
Integrating gender	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Better identification of vulnerable zones and households	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Evaluation of impact of resiliency intervention, best practices	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation								X

Annex I: World Bank Diagrams of the Structures, Relationships, Processes, and Areas of Concern of the Different Units of Government under Burkina Faso and Niger Decentralization

Annex 1, Figure 2 : Institutional Structure of Decentralization and Devolution in Burkina Faso
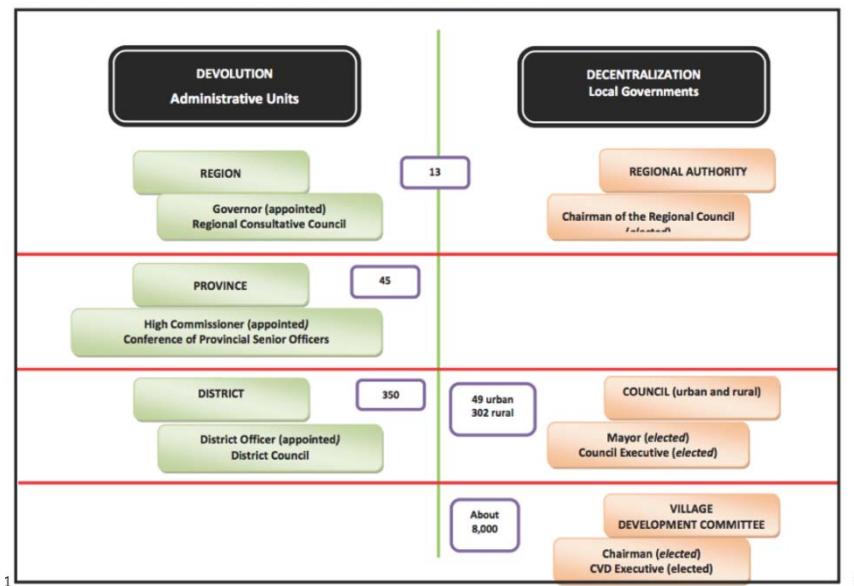
Annex 1 , Figure 1: Presentation of the diagram of Institutional Framework for Support to Local development in Burkina Faso
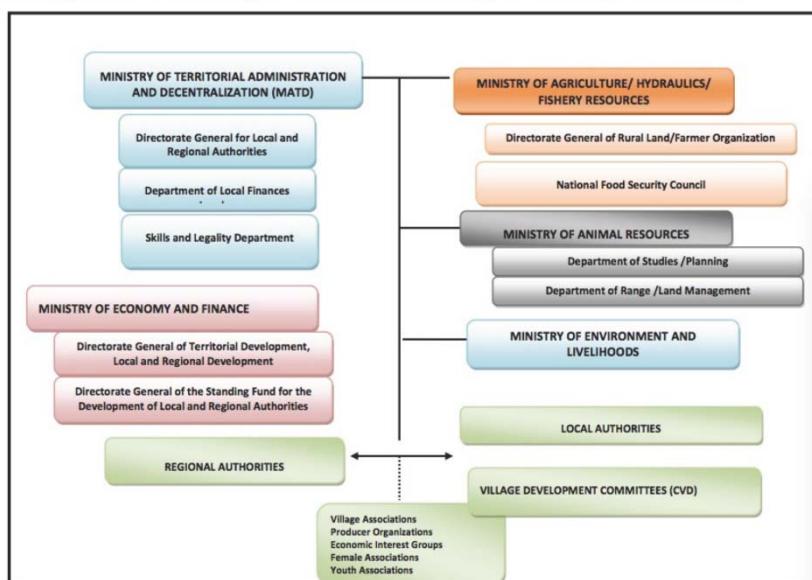
Annex 3: Planning cycle of local development initiatives at council level
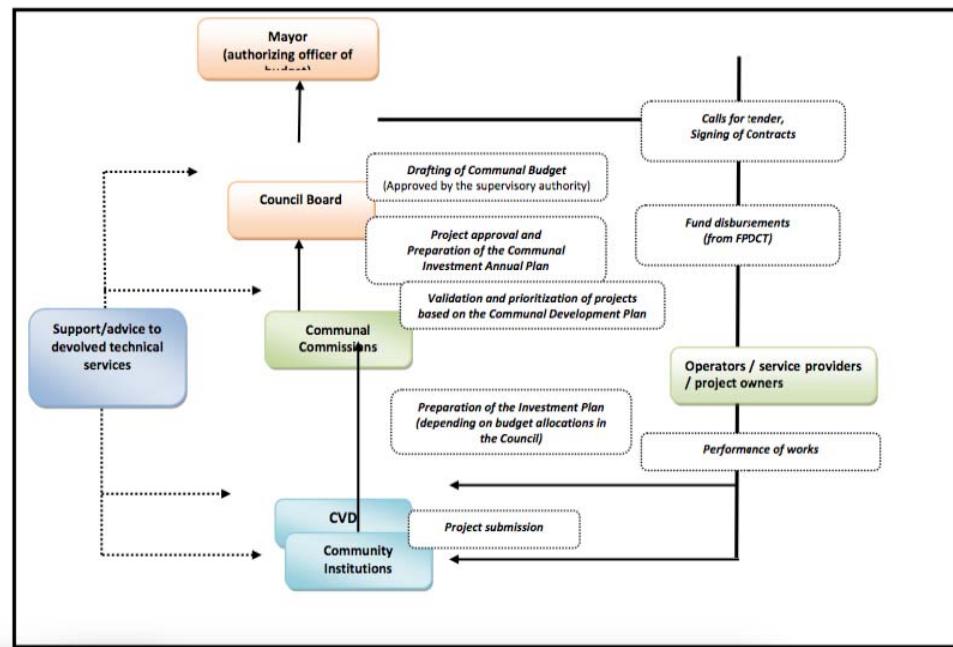
Annex 2, Figure 2: Cycle of Local development planning initiatives (at council level)
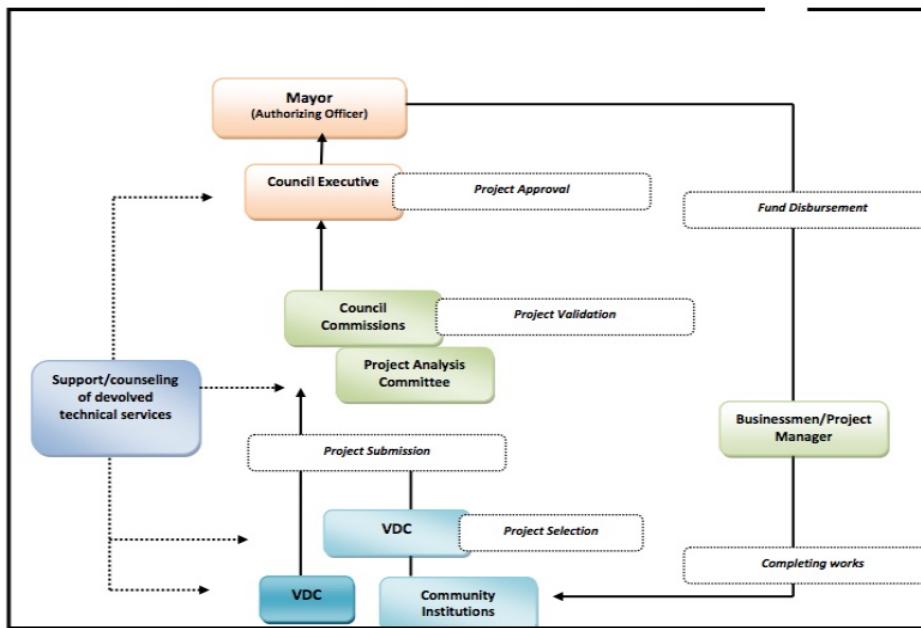
ANNEX 4: *Distribution of a few skills between the different levels of decentralization*

AREA OF EXPERTISE	COUNCIL	REGION
Territorial development, land tenure and town planning	• Opinion on the urban development scheme • Drafting and implementation of subdivision plans • Participation in the management of the national estate in land	• Preparation of the provincial territorial development scheme with the State • Building and maintenance of country roads
Environment and natural resource management	• Preparation of action plans on the environment • Participation in the protection of water and fishery resources • Creation of woods and forests • Opinion on the setting up of polluting industries	• Creation of woods and forests • Management and protection of classified and protected forests, and water courses • Defining cultivation areas and building cattle paths • Protection of the fauna and fishery resources
Economic development and planning	• Formulation of the communal development plan consistent with the national development plan	• Formulation of the regional development plan consistent with the national development plan
Health and hygiene	• Pre-emptive medicine and pharmaceutical supply • Hygiene, sanitation and quality of water	• Building and management of primary health centers in non-communalized localities, and developed health centers • Organization of pharmaceutical supply • Hygiene, sanitation
Education, vocational training and literacy	• Literacy, pre-school and primary school teaching, building and management of secondary schools • Vocational training	• Literacy, pre-school and primary school teaching in non-communalized areas • Building and management of non-national secondary schools
Culture, sports and leisure	• Equipment, management and promotion at council level	• Equipment, management and promotion at regional level

Civil protection, assistance and rescue	• Promotion and social protection • Prevention, disaster control and emergency relief to victims and the underprivileged	• Promotion and social protection • Prevention, disaster control and emergency relief to victims and the underprivileged

[Source: Law 055-2004/AN to define a General Code for regional and local authorities in Burkina Faso (December 2004)
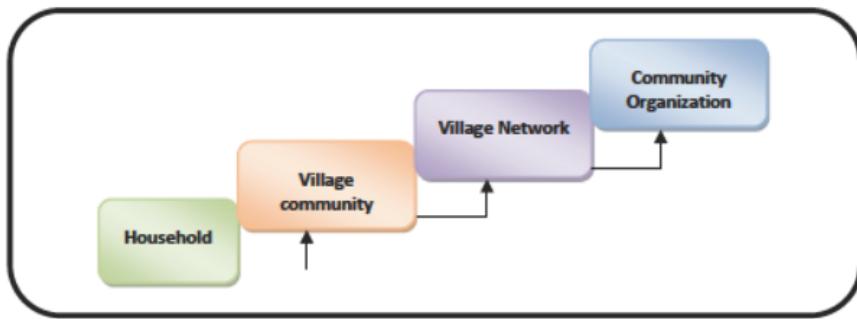
Annex 1, Table 2: **Present day administrative units and local authorities in Niger** (regional authorities have not yet been set up)

Territorial Division	Number	Institution	Official	Deliberative Bodies
REGION	8	• Administrative Unit [Local Authority]	Governor	Regional Council
DISTRICT	36	• Administrative Unit [Local Authority]	District Officer	District Council
CITY COUNCIL	4	• Administrative Unit	Governor	City Council Executive
SUB-DISTRICT			Sub-District Officer	
COUNCIL (rural and urban)	265	Local Authority	Mayor	Municipal Council

Each local authority has its own powers, autonomous management, specific budget and organs. In other words, there is no hierarchy among local authorities, either at the same level or at a different level. There only exist cooperation ties among them.

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[i] 2010 World Bank. Local Government, Institutions and Climate Change in Burkina Faso. Wash D.C.
2010 World Bank Local Government, Institutions and Climate Change in Niger. Wash D.C.

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