

Understanding Communities' Coping Strategies

Insights from Somalia



Presenters



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Resilience Population-level
Measurement (RPM)



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Session Agenda

- 1 Welcome & Introductions
- 2 Session Structure
- 3 RPM & SomRep
Background
- 4 Setting the Scene
- 5 Deep Dive: Outlier
Households
- 6 Group Discussion: What's
Next, What Changes?
- 7 Wrap Up

RPM's Goal and Objectives



Somalia Resilience Population-level Measurement Activity

Goal

RPM works to inform and improve stakeholders' activities that contribute to resilience capacities that matter most for populations in the USAID/Somalia CDCS Focal Zone

Objective 1

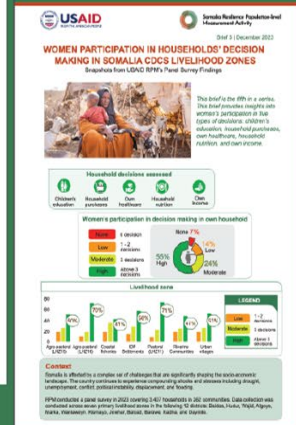
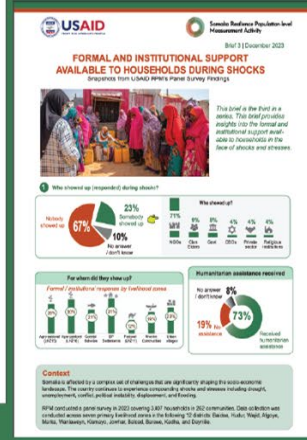
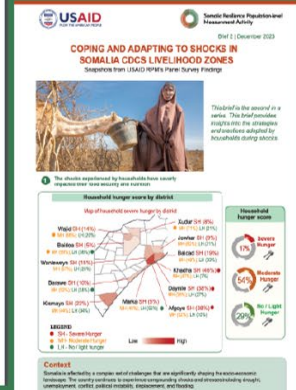
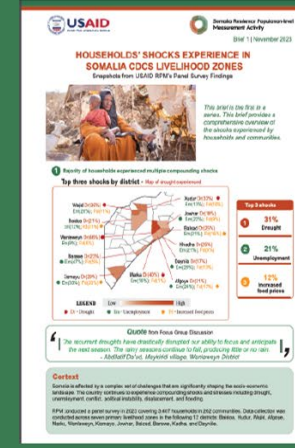
Resilience Learning Journey

Participating stakeholders have the ability to estimate their individual contributions to collective resilience outcomes.

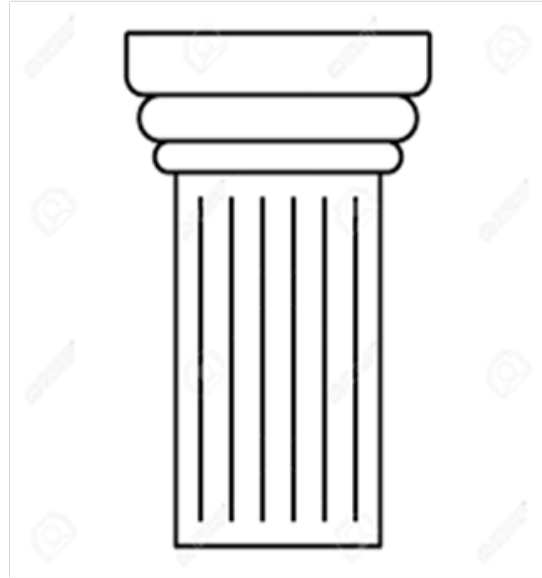
Objective 2

Population Level Research

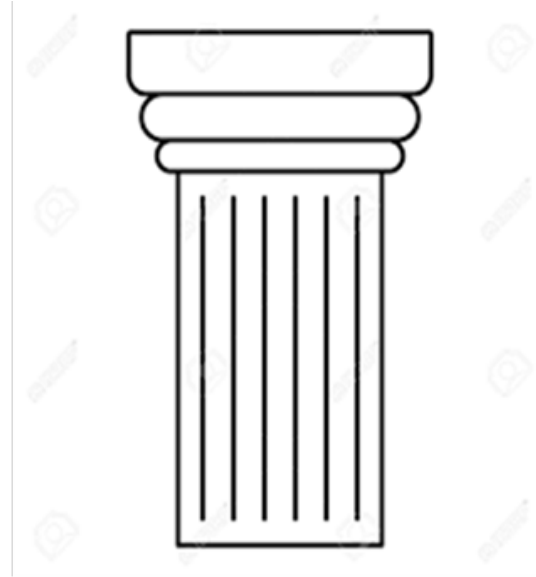
Population-level change in resilience is assessed through an innovative mixed-methods measurement system.



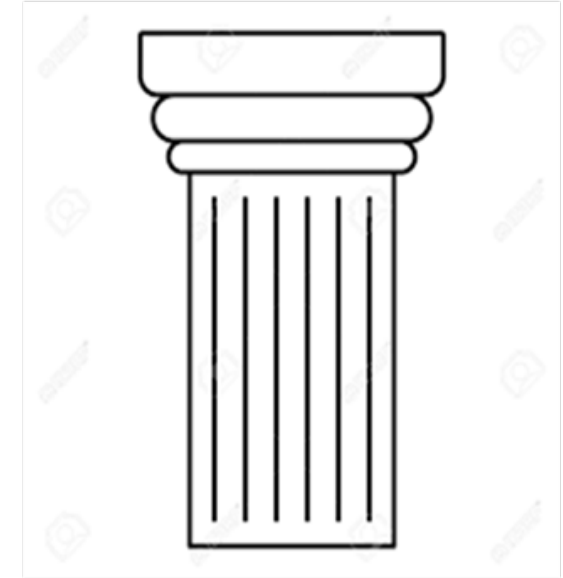
Scope and how RPM will achieve its goal



Building **foundational**
understandings of
resilience



Promoting the use of
actionable evidence
through research



Supporting **communications**
& storytelling of learning
progress

Drought Context



COMPOUNDING SHOCKS AND STRESSES



SEASON 1

Households rely on savings, grain stores, water sources and livestock herds to cope

SEASON 2

Households have begun borrowing and taking out credit from local businesses, engaging in casual labor, turning to their social connections, migrating to nearby urban towns or IDP camps, and/or reducing their food consumption

SEASON 3

Widespread food insecurity and increased household reliance on external assistance

SEASON 4

SomReP

- Formed after the 2011 famine as an **area-based, multi-sector, multi-actor, multi-year** program.
- NGOs came together to explore ways of being proactive in building resilience and protecting gains so people can overcome shocks.
- 8 members NGOs – **Action Against Hunger (ACF); ADRA; CARE; COOPI; DRC; Oxfam; Shaqodoon; World Vision.**



RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

- Hosts the **Response Innovation Lab (RIL)**
 - Brokering innovation and new ways of working.



Resilience
Nexus Learning
Action Network

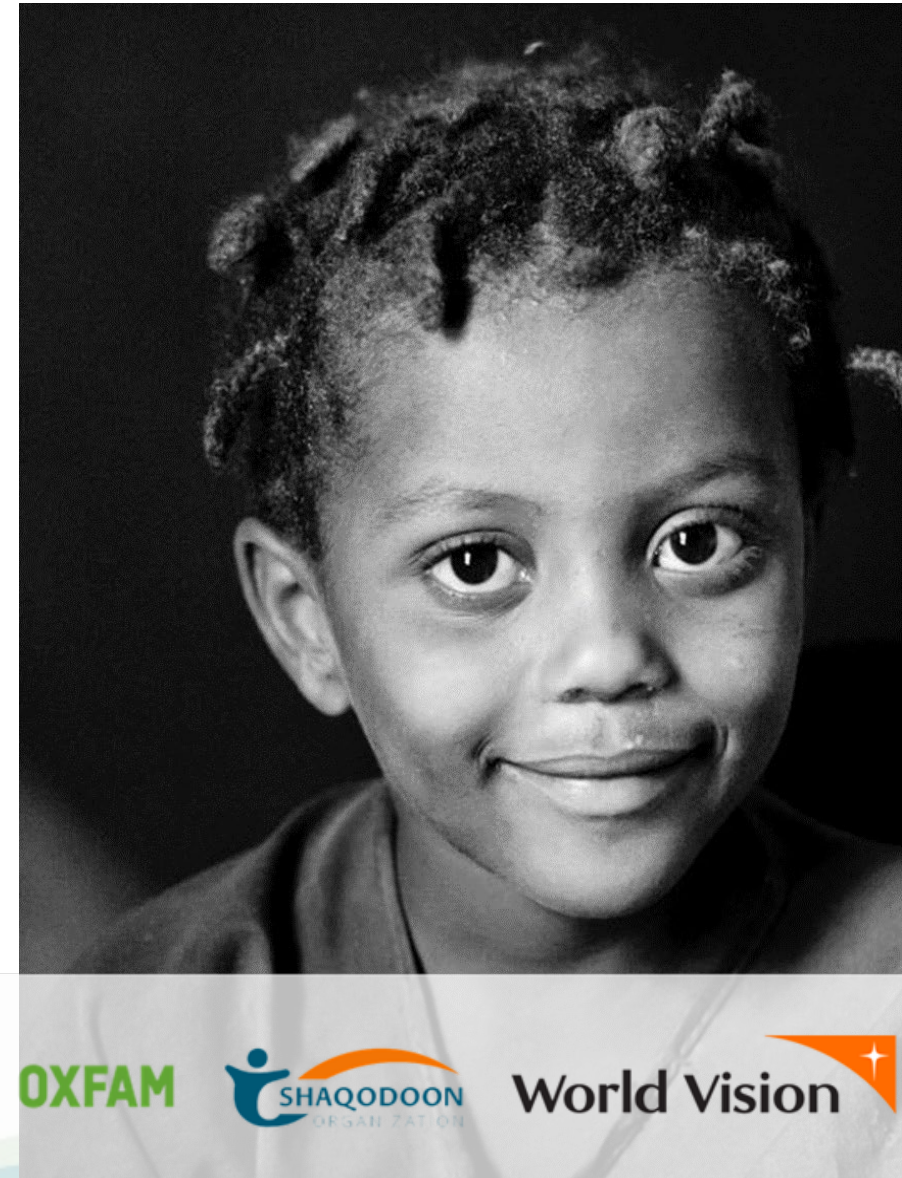
- Hosts the **Resilience Nexus Learning Action Network (RNLAN)**
 - Promoting capacity strengthening and localization across Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan.



OXFAM



World Vision



Measuring Resilience : Analytical Framework

OUTCOMES

- Improved Income
- Household dietary diversity
- Household hunger scale
- Coping strategies index.
- Diversified Income



IMPACT IN:



Food security



Health



Living standards



Absorptive Capacity

- Household education
- Productive assets
- Social networks



Adaptive Capacity

- Livelihood diversity
- Women's participation
- Mobility
- Aspirations/risk tolerance



Transformative Capacity:-

- Access to natural resources
- Local ecological health
- Access to basic services
- Social support and protection
- Government performance

Context

- **Demographic focus:** We center our analysis on three distinct groups - Agro-pastoral, Peri-urban, and Pastoral households in SomReP locations. Each has unique livelihoods, vulnerabilities, and coping mechanisms.
- **Scope:** We conduct in-depth research based on the observations and data collected from ARM. Combined with ARM data from multiple years, we can observe trends and potential shifts in communal behaviors and attitudes regarding coping strategies.
- **Outcome of Interest:** Our main metric was to characterize the attributes of households classified as 'positive deviants' – those demonstrating better coping strategies or increased well-being indicators, beyond those of the general community.





**Setting the Scene:
Highlights from Recent
Data**

RPM: VSLA as a mechanism to build cash resources so households can make their own choices



Prevalence and Residency

28% of sampled households are PD; 58% of these are in urban areas.



IDP Settlement Comparison

16% of PD households vs. 29% of non-PD households reside in IDP settlements.



Savings and Resilience

PD households rely on savings, are members of savings groups, and use savings for preventive measures and additional livelihood activities.



Women in IDP Camps

Highlight the importance of savings and small side businesses for long-term resilience.

RPM: Other coping strategies employed by PD households to cope with the drought.



Access to credit

37% of PD households report access to credit/borrowing vs. 8% of non-PD households.



Business and social networks

Strong business connections and social networks (family, clan, local government, NGOs) that provide support and opportunities.



Diverse income sources

Engage in varied activities such as poultry raising, small businesses, vegetable gardening, and money exchange.



Psychosocial resilience

Maintain long-term plans for sustaining their livelihoods.

RPM: Timing of cash assistance linked to debt cycles or creditworthiness



Critical access to credit

37% of PD households report access to loans and credit, compared to 8% of non-PD households.



External assistance

Households utilize loans and credit to purchase food and for debt repayment.



Creditworthiness

Timely debt repayment helps establish creditworthiness with local businesses.



Strategic aid timing

Aid actors should time activities and allocate assistance based on households' debt cycles.

RPM: Nature/composition of livelihood diversity (labor, small business vs agriculture)



Critical capacity

Livelihood diversification is crucial for households during drought.

Experience driven choices

Households affected by past famines / droughts diversified into small businesses alongside agriculture.

Savings participation

Households joined savings groups and VSLA programs, contributing small savings.

Diverse income activities

Engaged in casual labor, poultry raising, small businesses, vegetable gardening, and money exchange.

RPM: Highlight findings from most recent data (post-drought coping strategies)



- **Borrowing and credit:** 44.2% of households borrow money or purchase food on credit, primarily for food.
- **Less common strategies:** Selling non-productive animals (3.4%), spending savings (1.3%), and selling/exchanging food rations (1.3%).
- **Anticipatory actions:** 78% of households have not prepared for future difficulties due to prolonged drought depleting assets and support networks. 12% (mostly women) store grains, save, adapt livestock/crops, or shift to agricultural livelihoods.
- **Savings habits:** 96% of households do not save regularly; mobile banking (57%) and home savings (24%) are preferred methods.

SomReP findings from Annual Resilience Measurement

- **Multiple Activity Participation:** Households that engage in multiple livelihood activities demonstrate significantly better resilience compared to those involved in only one activity ($r=0.4971$).
- **VSLA Participation and Resilience:** There is a moderately positive correlation ($r=0.453$) between resilience index scores and participation in VSLAs.
- **Social Networks and Empowerment:** Participation in VSLAs significantly broadens and strengthens social networks.
- **High-Impact Interventions:** VSLAs are high-impact interventions that finance livelihood diversification and drought mitigation. (75% of loans were accessed through VSLA during drought).



Crisis Modifiers

- **Resilience Preservation:** Crisis Modifiers reduced Shock exposure intensity by 50% on average crucial in enabling households to navigate shocks without losing their resilience gains.
- **Livestock Preservation:** Crisis Modifiers have helped avert the loss of livestock, a critical asset for many households.
- **Community Asset Support:** Cash for Work programs support the development and maintenance of community assets.
 - **Case Study Example:** A water reservoir constructed with crisis modifier support during a drought prevented village flooding by capturing excess water during flood.



Household Coping Mechanisms and Food Security

- **Positive Coping Mechanisms:** There has been a two-fold increase in households adopting positive coping mechanisms due to support from crisis modifiers.
- **Food Consumption:** Households showed a four-fold increase in achieving an acceptable food consumption score through support from crisis modifiers.



Income and Savings Improvement

- **Income Diversification:** Crisis Modifiers (CM), along with drought response and resilience interventions, have led to a 40% increase in household income diversification and improvements in income and savings
- **Shock Exposure:** Households receiving crisis modifier support experienced a 50% reduction in the intensity of shocks compared to those without support





Q&A



Deep Dive: Outlier Households

RPM: Livelihood diversification risks taken by different households



- **Establishing small businesses:** Shifted to small businesses alongside agricultural activities.
- **Casual labor:** Engaged in casual labor as an additional income source.
- **Poultry raising:** Adopted poultry raising for diversified income.
- **Vegetable Gardening:** Established small vegetable gardens.
- **Money exchange:** Participated in money exchange activities.

RPM: Anticipatory actions, community actions/decisions to mitigate shocks/stresses

- **Enhanced Coping:** Households with preparatory strategies coped better with initial failed rains.
- **Grain Reserves:** Built up and relied on grain reserves.
- **Increased Savings:** Increased contributions to household savings.
- **Water Infrastructure:** Improved access to and invested in water sources.



RPM: Psychosocial factors in how a HH might adapt or respond to a shock

- **Impact of drought:** Prolonged drought and compounded shocks affected households psychosocial wellbeing.
- **Mental health issues:** Increased sadness, depression, disturbed sleep, anxiety, and future worries.
- **Psychosocial resilience:** Optimism and hard work are crucial for coping.
- **Role of religion:** Strong religious beliefs help individuals understand and endure their circumstances.



RPM: Coping strategies association with HH hunger, women's empowerment

Higher Food Security in PD Households

PD households have better food security. PD households show higher household hunger scores.



Reduced food consumption

Households average two meals per day. In areas like Baidoa, households often eat one meal or less per day.

SomRep: Definition of Positive Deviant Households

Households who were able to cope longer than others during the drought. By the end of the third failed rainy season (or the drought's 6-month mark), there was a divergence between those who were managing to cope with drought conditions and those who could not cope.



Key Highlights: Positive Deviance Report (2018)

- **Savings Group and Cash for Work Participation:** Individuals with better food security and well-being outcomes were more likely to belong to Savings Groups and participate in Cash for Work (CfW) activities.
- **Bridging Social Capital:** Regular communication with someone outside the village was common among those with better outcomes, highlighting the importance of bridging social capital.



Characteristics of Positive Deviants

- **Access to Savings:** Positive deviants typically had access to savings.
- **Utilization of Savings/Loans:** Used savings or loans to initiate or improve small businesses and income-generating activities.
- **Avoiding Asset Loss:** Profits from businesses were used to avoid asset loss and to maintain family well-being.
- **Strategic Planning:** Strategically planned based on experience from previous seasons or droughts.
- **Multiple Activity Participation:** Participation in more than one project activity was common among positive deviants.
- **Overall Better Performance:** Positive deviants were viewed by their peers as having done better overall during the drought.



Key Insights

- **VSLA Importance and Limitations:** VSLAs are beneficial but need to be paired with CfW/cash transfers for optimal impact.
- **Psychosocial Factors:** Optimism, entrepreneurialism, resilience to asset loss, strong family/social networks, and a culture of preparedness and saving were crucial factors.



Household Response to Shocks

- **Improved Resilience:** Comparative analysis between 2021 and 2023 shows significant improvements in households' capacity to withstand shocks.
- **Correlation with Program Intensity:** There is a positive and statistically significant correlation between shock exposure and program intensity.



Effective Responses and Strategies

- **Humanitarian Assistance:** Households receiving humanitarian assistance were better able to cope with shocks.
- **Utilization of Loans:** Effective utilization of loans contributed to improved household resilience.
- **Reduced Use of Negative Coping Strategies:** There was a lower use of negative/high-risk coping strategies among households, suggesting access to life-saving support and diversification of livelihood strategies.



**Group Discussion:
What's Next?
What Changes?**

Thank you!

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Disclaimer: This presentation was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the PRO-WASH and SCALE Award and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.