



Hot off the Presses: New Research from Nepal on Building Resilience

January 28, 2020



Latest Learning from Sabal: Social Capital and Resilience

Presented by Katherine Arnold Armeier, Save the Children

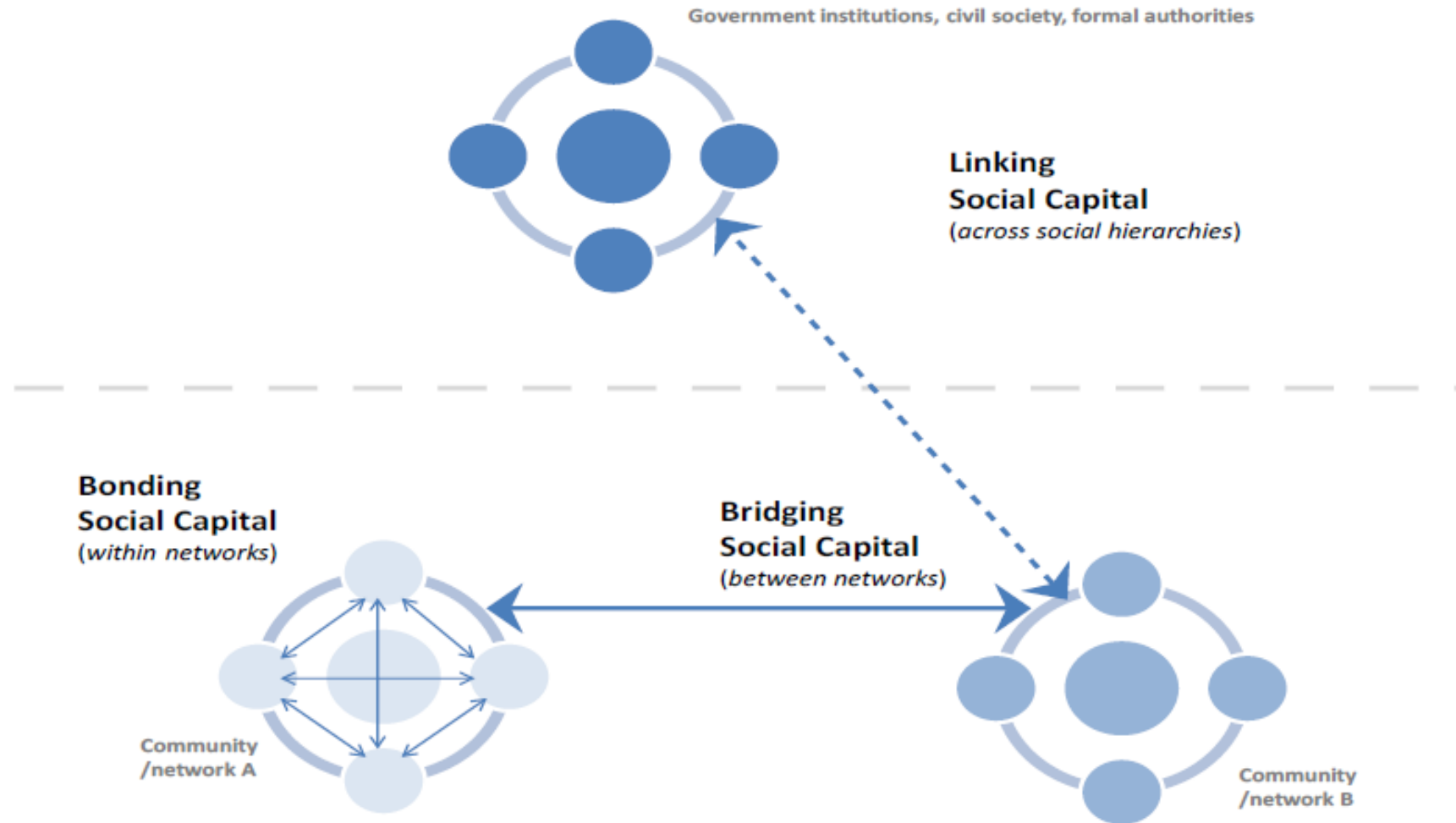




Overview

- **Program Background:** Sabal is a multi-sectoral resilience program, funded by USAID FFP and operating from 2015-2020. Save the Children is the consortium lead.
- **Social Capital Research:** Quantitative and qualitative data specific to social capital was collected and analyzed as part of Sabal's August 2019 Annual Monitoring Survey (AMS) with the support of TANGO.
- **Purpose:** Determine whether Sabal interventions strengthened social capital and, if so, how these changes influenced the resilience of participating households to shocks and stresses.

Various Forms of Social Capital



Social Capital in Rural Nepal

- Social capital in rural Nepal is based largely on caste and ethnicity.
- Higher castes such as Brahmins and Newar are often in prominent positions of power and these groups enjoy a much larger access to resources and information.
- “Lower” caste members, notably the Dalit, are often excluded and isolated from resources and social ties and live on the periphery of towns and villages.
- Rural communities regularly mobilize themselves and actively participate and manage local institutions in line with traditional social and cultural norms.
- Relatively little substantive research has been carried out on the drivers of (and constraints) to social capital in rural Nepal, and the extent to which it influences resilience to local shocks and stresses at the household and community levels.

Key Findings: Qualitative

- Sabal activities have improved bonding and linking social capital among participants, particularly as a result of the group formation approach.
- Inclusive group approach effectively integrated diverse community members. This created opportunities for individuals of different gender, castes and economic classes to work together to address context-specific challenges.
- Improvements in bonding social capital and social inclusion have enabled households and communities to respond to shocks and stresses in new ways (proactive planning through savings groups and disaster management committees).

Key Findings: Qualitative cont.

- Benefits of group participation include new linkages with local and municipal government institutions
- Through the observed bonding and increased trust and collaboration, participants' confidence and motivation also increased.
- However, improvement in bridging social capital – coordination and collaboration between different communities – was limited.

Key Findings: Quantitative

2019 Annual Monitoring Study (participant-based household survey)

Mean Score on
a scale of 0-100

BONDING CAPITAL	80.4
BRIDGING	68.8
LINKING	42.2

2016 Baseline Study (population-based household survey)

Mean Score on
a scale of 0-100

BONDING CAPITAL	71.1
BRIDGING	56.7
LINKING	18.9

Contributions of Social Capital to Resilience

Improved Access to Resources

- Establishment and use of emergency funds at the household and community levels.
- Micro-loans through savings groups enable household to diversify and fortify their livelihoods.
- Strengthened linkages and formal registration of Sabal groups has helped facilitate \$10 million in government investments.

Increased Access to Knowledge and Adoption of Improved Practices

- Increased bonding social capital among groups has created opportunities for diverse community members to collaborate and consult each other on issues affecting food and livelihood security.

Inclusive Information Systems

- Sharing of information and knowledge on best practices among expanded and strengthened social networks increased motivation to adopt improved child nutrition practices and increased use of pre- and post-natal care.
- Contributed to improved aspirations/livelihood diversification.

Recommendations: Research

- Operational research on how the layering of interventions affects social capital, as well as additional research on which specific activities best contribute to improvements in social capital and inclusion over the long term.
- More robust, context-specific research is needed to show correlations between improved social capital and higher-level resilience wellbeing outcomes (prevalence of poverty, child nutritional status, etc). The USAID final evaluation of Sabal and Pahal could contribute to this.
- More robust mixed-methods research to inform how current concepts of social capital (especially the breakdown of bonding, bridging, linking) should be tailored or adjusted to fit the unique context of rural Nepal.
- Additional programming and research to look at how social capital can improve household and community resilience to idiosyncratic shocks as compared to covariate shocks.

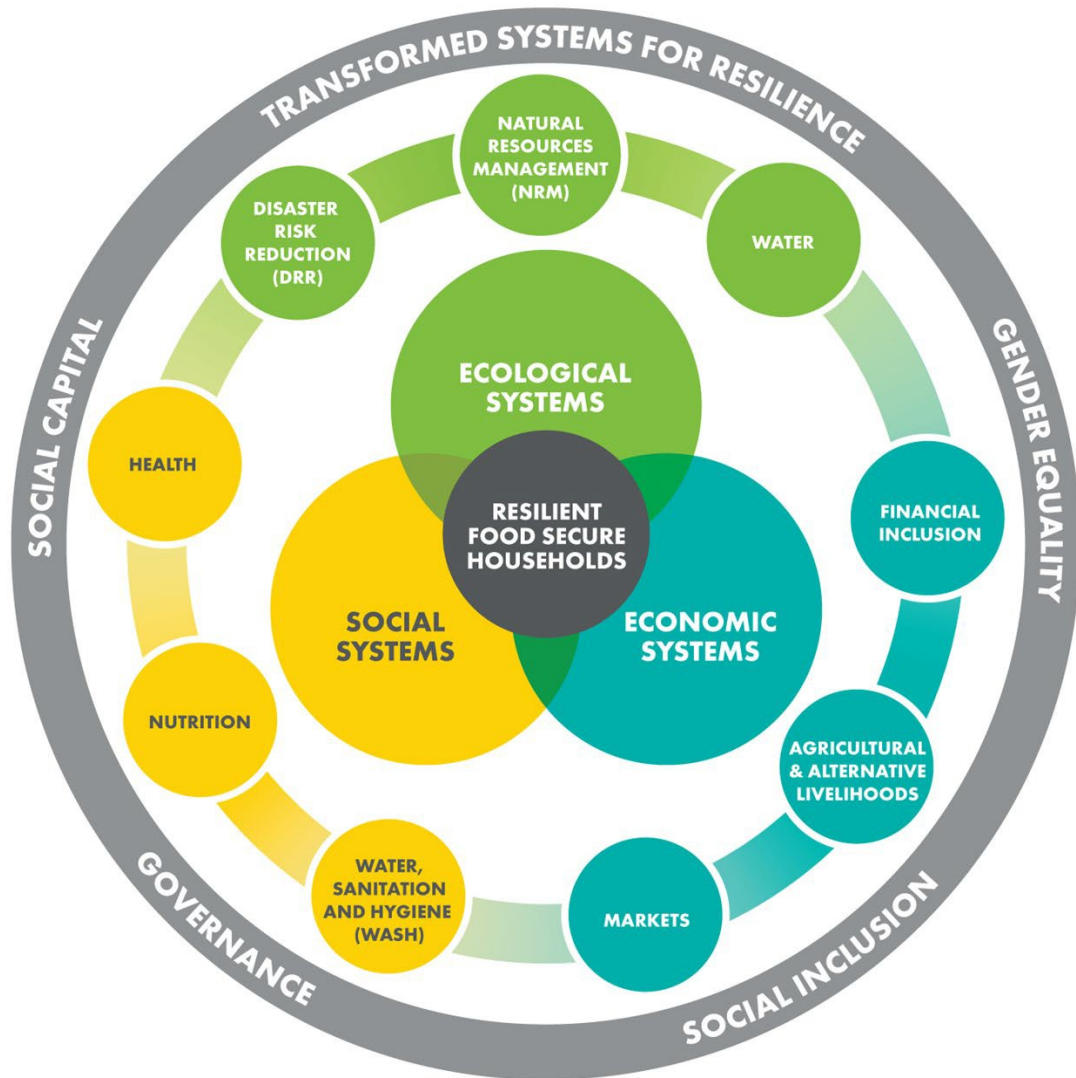
Recommendations: Programming

- Sabal's community group approach and facilitating government linkages led to improvements in bonding and linking social capital. We recommend for other programs to use these approaches, and especially to conduct group capacity assessments to link and register high-performing groups with the local government.
- We also recommend that from the outset, future resilience programming in Nepal and elsewhere should develop explicit strategies for strengthening each individual type of social capital – bonding, bridging, and linking.

Promoting Agriculture, Health and Alternative Livelihoods (PAHAL)

Presented by Kristen Schubert, Causal Design

Overview of PAHAL



Building Resilient Food Security



Strengthening Resilience Capacities for People and Households



Strengthening Social, Economic, and Ecological Systems

Evaluation Questions

- 1 To what extent have program interventions **directly contributed to resilience outcomes** for vulnerable populations, or the ability of households to better cope and recover from difficult seasons and/or shocks and stresses?
- 2 Which **combinations of interventions** have the greatest effect on resilience outcomes?
- 3 What was the **cost value of investments** relative to resilience outcomes?

Evaluation Tools

- **Recurrent monitoring surveys (RMS):** 1,350 households interviewed on three separate occasions. Surveys timed with end of difficult seasons to try and evaluate responses to shocks that are likely in these periods:
 - Monsoon season shocks (landslides, flooding, river cutting)
 - Dry season shocks (drought)
 - Idiosyncratic shocks (illness/death, crop failure, weather, animals)
- **Cost-benefit analysis (CBA):** Using impact data from the RMS
- **Panel in-depth interviews (IDIs)**
- **Focus group discussions (FGDs)**

Combinations of Interventions

4 Combinations



Water



Financial
Services



NRM/
DRR/
GOV



Fully
Integrated



Comparison

Measures of Resilience

Resilience Strategies

Improved water,
Linked to a financial cooperative,
Social capital
DRR practices,
Use of NRM or GOV resources

Shock Exposure

Types of shock
Shock losses

Positive Coping Strategies

Use of kitchen garden, use of MUS, take out a loan from a cooperative, improved agricultural production, reliance on local government, community forest participation and reliance

Negative Coping Strategies

Asset shedding
Forced migration
Interrupted schooling
Household hunger

Subjective Resilience

Confidence in recovery from future shocks

Food Security

Coping Strategies Index
Food Consumption Score

1. Did PAHAL impact resilience outcomes?

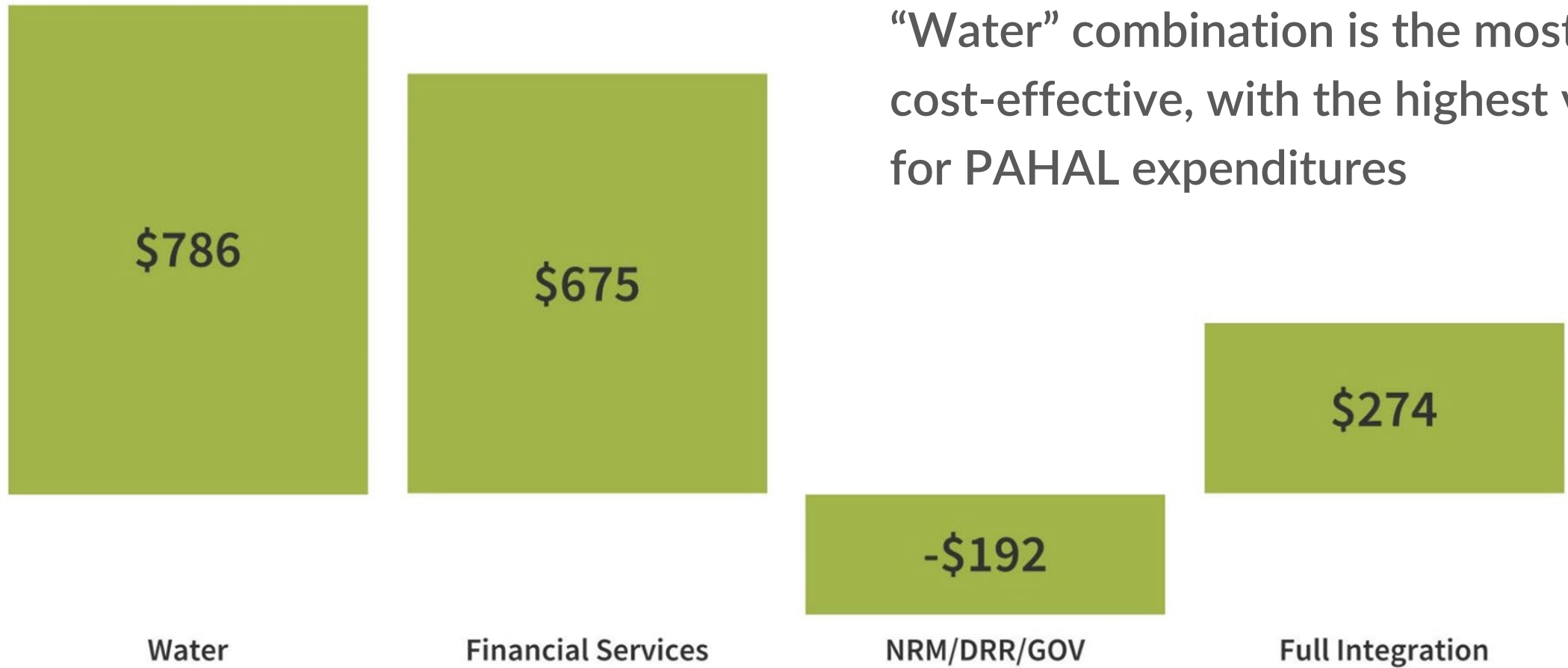
- “Full Integration” approach leads to improvement in households’ ability to manage shocks
 - Deeper reliance on positive coping mechanisms following shocks
 - Report feeling less vulnerable to future shocks
- Qualitative data also suggest that households saw increases in their agricultural incomes because of PAHAL
- Most vulnerable households did not seem to benefit

2. Which combinations of interventions had the greatest effect on resilience?

“Water” combination leads to greatest number of positive resilience outcomes

Resilience Outcomes	Water	Full Integration	NRM/DRR/GOV	Financial Services
Deeper reliance on positive coping strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Decreased feeling of vulnerability in the future	✓	✓		
Improved ability to cope and recover from actual shocks	✓	✗	✗	✗
Higher Food Consumption Scores	✓		✗	
Prevent or mitigate actual exposure to shock				

3. What was the cost value of investments relative to resilience outcomes?



“Water” combination is the most cost-effective, with the highest value for PAHAL expenditures

Project Implications



- Water was both effective and cost-effective in the PAHAL context.
- Some evidence that very vulnerable households might not benefit the way the average PAHAL participant has.
- NRM/DRR/GOV interventions had disappointing results, which could be a program issue or a resilience measurement issue.
- Cost-effectiveness research in resilience is a new frontier (especially at the project level).



Q&A Session

We welcome in-person and online attendees to participate

Thank You!

Please take our brief evaluation:

www.ideal.events/eval



This presentation is 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 Implementer-led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) Activity and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.