LASER PULSE R4D Workshop, ETHIOPIA
September 20-21, 2022
"*Transforming the Paradigm in the Partnership Model for Research Translation-Derived Development Solutions*"

Inter Luxury Hotel; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

A System, Networks, and Human-Centered Design Approach to Assessing the Resilience of Ethiopian Communities Experiencing Recurring Violent Conflict Shocks

PI: Stacey Connaughton, Purdue University
Co-PIs: Zemelak Ayele, Addis Ababa University
          Ali Abdi, Aged and Children Pastoralists Association
          Seungyoon Lee, Purdue University
          Gary Burniske, Purdue University
          Livia Rohrbach, Search for Common Ground

LASER PULSE
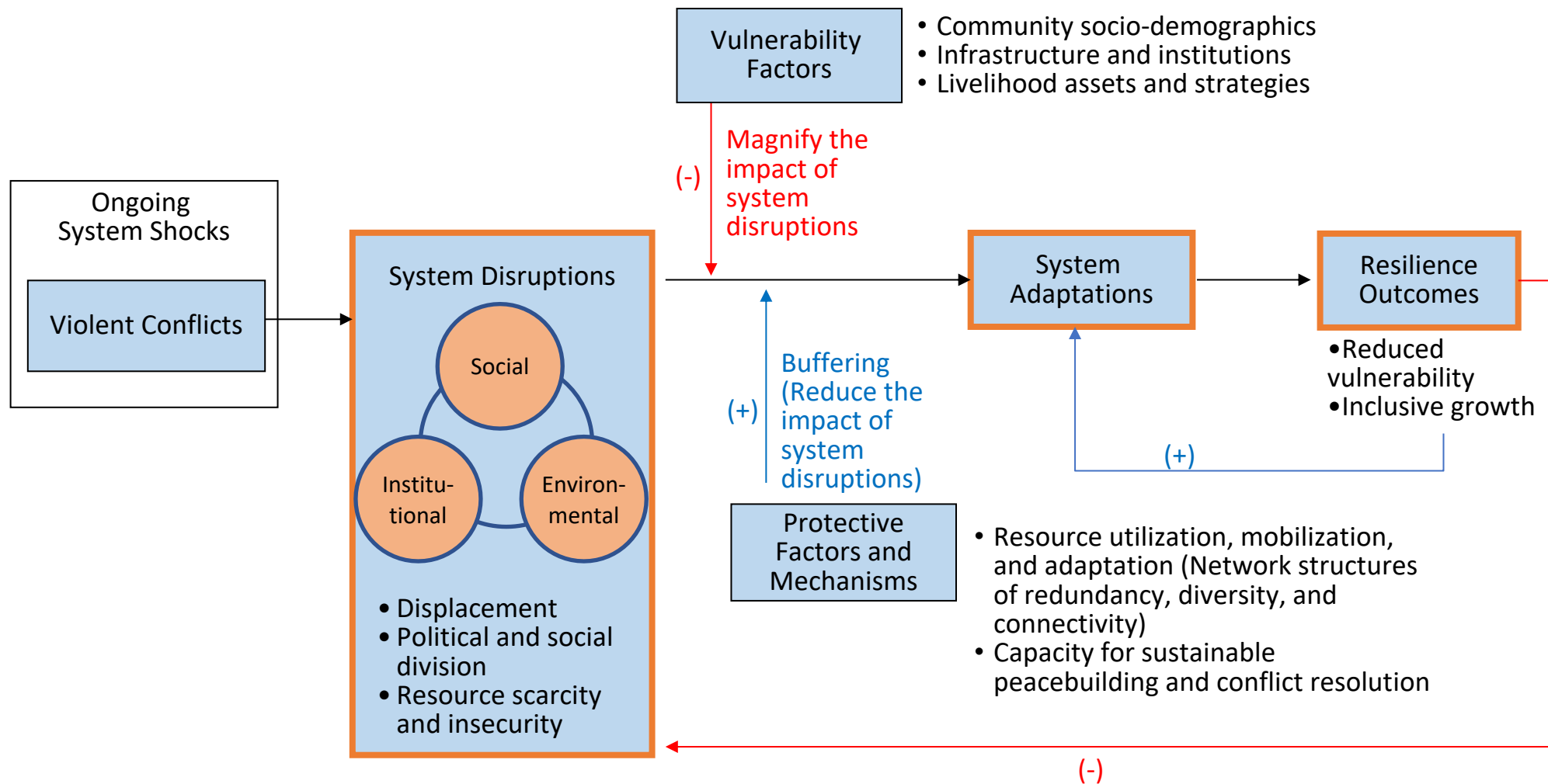
Objective and Need for Research

- Project Objective: To co-design a framework for assessing community resilience with communities that are facing recurring and compounding shocks
  - With focus on assessing
    - A complex system of conflict shocks and community-level vulnerability factors, differentiated by gender and age groups (RQ1)
    - How community level components and connections show resilience capacities (RQ2)
    - Current capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution (RQ3)
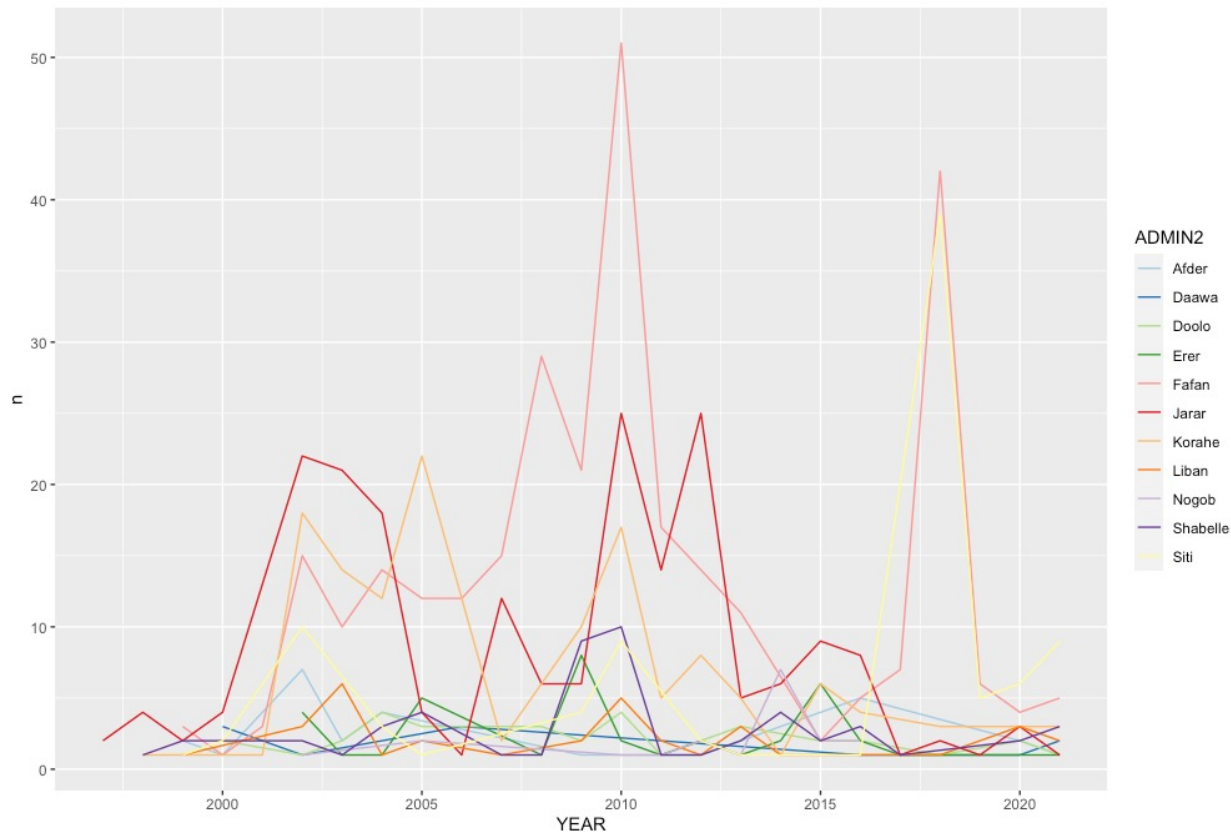
Overview of Research Context and Implementation

- Research team composition
  - University partners: Purdue University, Addis Ababa University
  - Translation partners: Aged and Children Pastoralists Association (ACPA), Search for Common Ground
- Research implementation
  - Collected, organized, and analyzed secondary data
  - Fieldwork and engagement of local stakeholders
    - Wave 1 Co-construction Focus Groups (May, 2022)
    - Key Informant Interviews (ongoing, 2022)
    - Wave 2 Data Collection from/Inductive Thematic Analyses of Focus Groups (June, 2022)
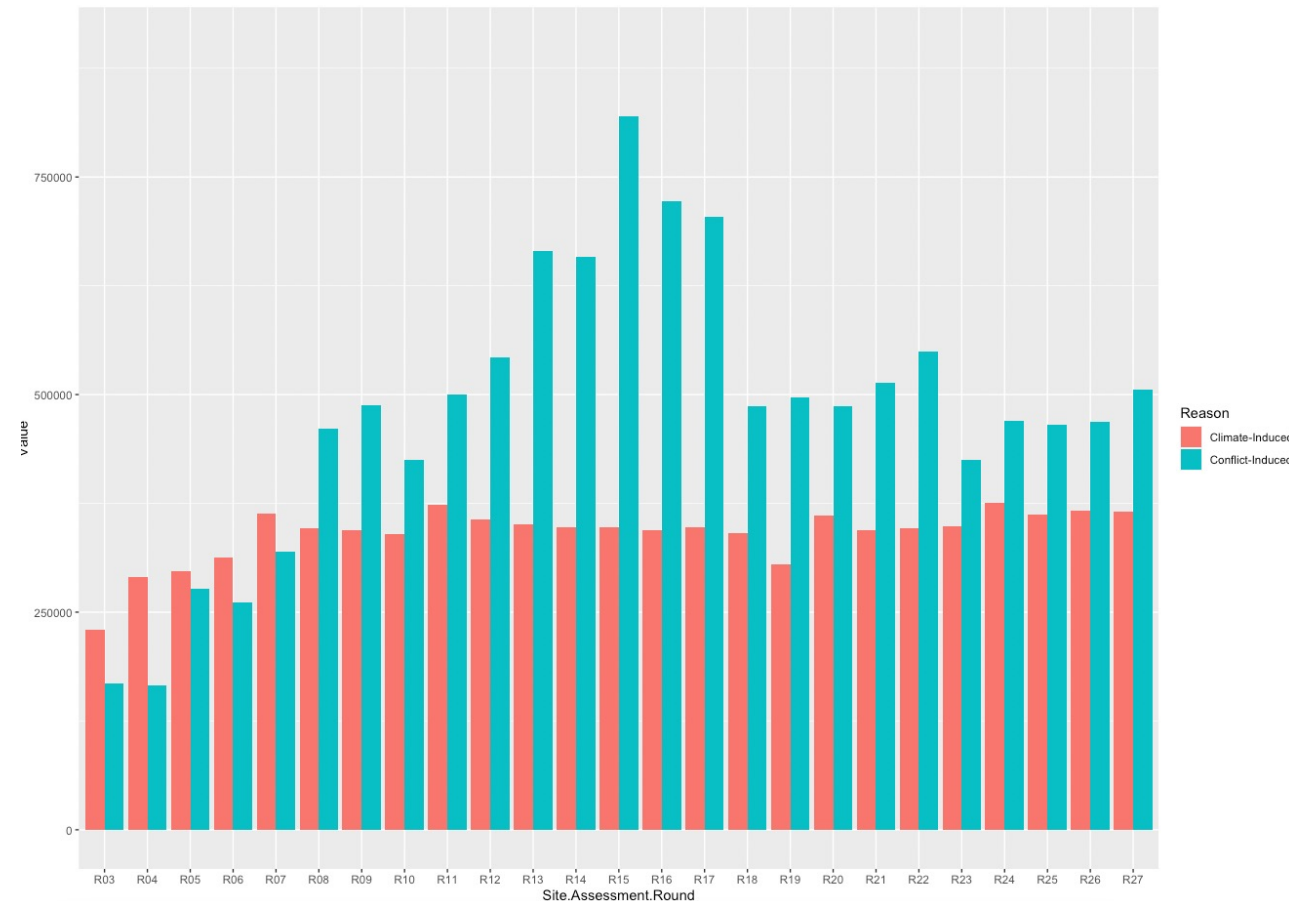
Examples of Secondary Data

Number of political violence, protests, and conflict events in Somali region

Source: Ethiopia Peace Observatory https://epo.acleddata.com

Number of conflict-induced and climate-induced IDPs in Somali region

Source: Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Somali Region, Ethiopia

Preliminary Findings from Wave 2 Focus Groups:

- How we "hear" our participants talking about "community"

- RQ1. What shapes Oromia-Somali communities' response to violent conflict shocks?

  - 1a. In what way are violent conflict shocks interwoven with other shocks in the community? How are these shocks and interdependencies perceived and experienced by different gender and demographic groups?

  - 1b. What are the community-level vulnerability factors in facing violent conflict shocks?

- RQ2. How do community level system components and connections show strengths and weaknesses in resilience capacities for responding to violent conflict and other compounding shocks?

- RQ3. What are the current capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution?

In our proposal: A community includes a combination of ethnicity, gender and age subgroups who are exposed to both common and differing shocks and stressors (Bujones et al., 2013).

How we "hear" our participants talking about "community"

- Community is made up of *different* groups: men & women; youth & elders; multiple social groups

- Community has an element of *sameness*: common faith, common values (i.e., tolerance and patience), common social services (administrative, law and justice, education, and health)

- Community is talked about as a web of relationships, which are activated during conflict.
  - "We are not a people that can live without each other. " (FGD 5 participant)
  - Perceptions of "brotherhood" and "sisterhood" (said in multiple focus groups)
  - When relationships are not activated, conflict ensues (i.e., "private" feelings toward land ownership vs. "communal" ones)

LASER PULSE

RQ1a. Violent conflict shocks are interwoven with:

- Ecological crises

- Social factors
    - Population growth, IDPs

- Land ownership
    - Competing perceptions: shared/communal vs. individual/private
    - Sudden changes in land ownership
    - History – who owns it/who has owned it?

- Changes to land borders (competition between Oromia and Somali)

- Diaspora (both in country and out of country)

- Tribalism

RQ1a. Violent conflict shocks are interwoven with these complex interdependencies (USAID, 2020):

- Drought, lack of farming, and conflict

- Water and conflict

- Drought, inflation, and ecological crises (livestock loss)

- Building physical infrastructure and (reduced) access to natural resources

- Poverty, social support, and exchange of financial resources

- Ecological (drought), social (unemployment, loss of education, responsibility for supporting families, resources needed for marriage), and migration of youth

RQ1a. These shocks and interdependencies perceived and experienced differently by:

- Women:
  - Women are agents/actors in locally driven processes for preventing or resolving conflict (i.e., women exchange resources with each other; women's cooperatives and informal organizing with each other)
  - Women are a resource that is exchanged to prevent or resolve conflict (i.e., marriages)
- Youth:
  - Youth migrate and leave the community to send resources back

RQ1b. Community-level vulnerability factors

- (Perceived Lack of) Fairness and Justice
- (Perceived) Distrust in Institutions and Elders/Actors
- (Sudden) Limited Resources (that threaten local ways of doing)
- Economic Resources
- Natural Resources

Variation by gender and age:

Women – Marriage

Youth – Economic challenges that lead to migration

Elders – Lack of fair elders, kebele administration, and justice system

RQ2. Community-level systems and resilience capacities

- Through Local Level Social Relations (e.g., Bekele et al., 2020)
  - Strength
    - Value of caring for each and do it, to the extent they can.
    - "we have traditional money saving system like 'Hagbad' and we try to support the poor people in the community."
  - Weaknesses
    - All are trying to survive themselves; economic realities can be at odds with their communal values.

RQ2. Community-level systems and resilience capacities

- Through Institutions
  - Strengths
    - Government gives financial support (short-term fix)
  - Weaknesses
    - Local people tend not to trust institutions
    - "many NGOs who used to come here to help both the host and the IDP community. But, now those efforts have been declined and we need help for both for the host and for the IDP communities in the area. "

- Through Trusted Actors in Resolving Conflict
  - An interdependent web that is activated to resolve conflict: Elders (often said first), religious leaders, kebele administrators, fair and just people and institutions

RQ3. Capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution

- What do we mean by "local"?
  - What people came up with (organic) and not top-down administrative (prescribed)
  - Rooted in traditional practices
  - Informal (maybe not documented) but reached consensus by community members involved
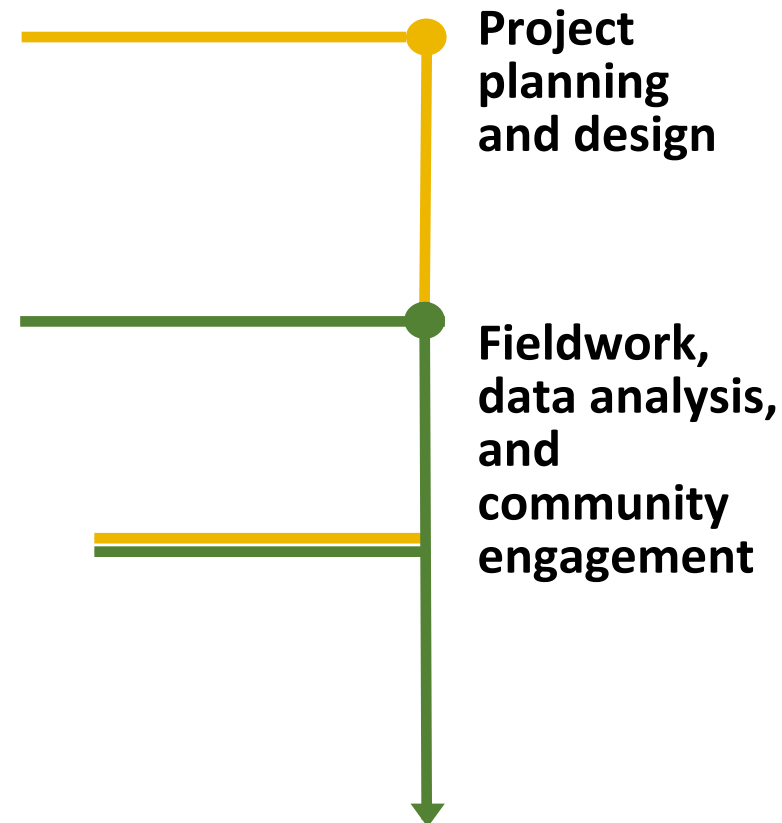 - Specific to a relatively small geographical unit

RQ3. Capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution

- Local processes for preventing conflict; for addressing resource shortage
    - Host community and IDPs' processes for accessing water resources
    - Household help each other – women drive this
    - Community processes for protecting most vulnerable
    - "Xeer" (local conflict resolution process)
- Local Ways of Enforcing Rules (Punishment)
    - Social exclusion, cutting social support, excluding from community membership
    - Named process: "Hagaan Ku Goya" [Social relation cutting]
- These local capacities could be challenged by external factors (drought, irregular migration, economic issues)

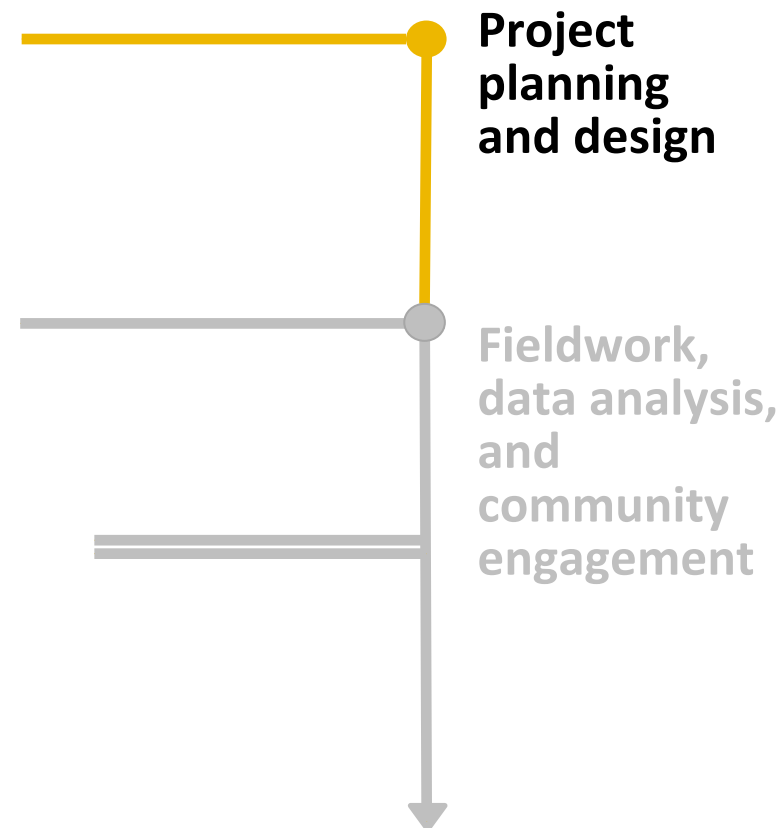# Lessons from Researcher-Practitioner Collaboration
involving members from 3 countries who represent 6 organizations

- Cultivating positive relationships among team members

- Situated and adaptive knowledge

- Communication across difference & need

Project planning and design

Fieldwork, data analysis, and community engagement

Lessons from Researcher-Practitioner Collaboration

- **Cultivating positive relationships among team members**
  - An **initial mapping** of different skills and assets every partner bring helps best use the synergies.
  - Carefully select team members **who share goals but whom have different strengths** including research expertise and practitioner experiences.
  - Engage in a sufficient amount of **communication at the early stage of the project** to collaboratively form research and ERT goals and processes.

Project planning and design

Fieldwork, data analysis, and community engagement

Lessons from Researcher-Practitioner Collaboration

- Situated and adaptive knowledge
  - Some steps which researchers might skip over are **critical for translation partners when working with communities**.
  - There is a need to **constantly question one's own assumptions**. Fieldwork planning tools had to be adapted to meet emerging needs and trends during fieldwork.
  - Carefully incorporate **translation partners' insights** on practitioners' literature and lessons learned.
  - Understanding **the relationships between the practitioners and the stakeholder communities** and their ability to effectively communicate their values and needs.

Project planning and design

Fieldwork, data analysis, and community engagement

Source: ACPA, June 2022

Lessons from Researcher-Practitioner Collaboration

- Communication across difference & need
  - As researchers and translation partners operate in different working contexts, **regular check ins and alignment** on expectations and aims is key.
  - **Accessibility and accommodation** are needed while navigating different time zones, work-life orientations, seasonality of work schedules from different employment types, regional holidays, customs, and preferred styles of communication.
  - **Multiple channels** (e.g., video calls, email, phone calls, messaging apps, and collaborative document editing platforms) help communicate across distance, time, and environments.

Project planning and design

Fieldwork, data analysis, and community engagement

Source: Dr. Livia Rohrbach, June 2022

References

- Bekele, M., et al. (2020). Building resilience to climate change in Ethiopia: What do we know so far? Development Economics Research Group Working Paper Series, 01-2020. University of Copenhagen. https://www.econ.ku.dk/derg/wps/01-2020.pdf

- Bujones, A.K., Jaskiewicz, K., Linakis, L., McGirr, M. (2013). *A Framework for Resilience in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations*. Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs Workshop in Development Practice, Final report. https://www.sipa.columbia.edu/academics/capstone-projects/framework-analyzing-resilience-fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations

- USAID (2020). Pathways to peace: Addressing conflict and strengthening stability in a changing climate – Lessons learned from resilience and peacebuilding programs in the Horn of Africa. Washington, DC: adelphi Research/Chemonics International Inc.

Thank You!