

# LASER PULSE

## Long-term Assistance and Services for Research (LASER) Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (PULSE)

### NETWORKS FOR RESILIENCE: HOW TO UTILIZE RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR PRACTICE

### TRAINING GUIDEBOOK

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## PROJECT INFORMATION

This training manual is produced by the project *A Systems, Networks, and Human-Centered Design Approach to Assessing the Resilience of Ethiopian Communities Experiencing Recurring Violent Conflict Shocks*. This project has been supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) via LASER PULSE. It has been implemented by Purdue University in partnership with Addis Ababa University, Aged and Children Pastoralists Association, and Search for Common Ground in selected agro-pastoral areas in the north-western part of the Somali regional state, bordering the Oromia state, Ethiopia. One of the objectives of this project has been to co-design a framework for assessing community resilience with participating communities that are facing recurring and potentially compounding shocks. More information about the project is available in the project webpage [here](#).

## ABOUT LASER PULSE

LASER (Long-term Assistance and Services for Research) PULSE (Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine) is a \$70M program funded through USAID's Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub, that delivers research-driven solutions to field-sourced development challenges in USAID partner countries.

A consortium led by Purdue University, with core partners Catholic Relief Services, Indiana University, Makerere University, and the University of Notre Dame, implements the LASER PULSE program through a growing network of 3,400+ researchers and development practitioners in 77 countries.

LASER PULSE collaborates with USAID missions, bureaus, and independent offices, and other local stakeholders to identify research needs for critical development challenges, and funds and strengthens the capacity of researcher-practitioner teams to co-design solutions that translate into policy and practice.

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Welcome to this guide on resilience to violent and interrelated shocks. The objective of this guide is to provide practical guidance to peacebuilding practitioners, community leaders, government officials, and funding agencies on how to design future training and/ or interventions that enhance community resilience to violent conflict shocks. The guide draws on academic literature as well as research conducted in two woredas of the Somali regional state of Ethiopia. The research provided insights into the components of the system that contribute to community resilience, the community's response to shocks, and capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

The guide includes three main modules, each addressing one of the key research questions guiding the overall project “Systems and Networks Approach to Examining Resilience in Ethiopian Communities Experiencing Violent Conflict and Interrelated Shocks”. Users may read through the guide from beginning to end or use the sections most relevant to their work. It is recommended that all users read the introductory sections to understand the guide’s approach.

[Module 1](#) focuses on the components of the system that contribute to community resilience. By the end of this section, users should be able to identify the components of the system that contribute to community resilience and understand how these components interact with one another.

[Module 2](#) examines how the community responds to violent conflict shocks. By the end of this section, users should be able to describe the community's response to violent conflict shocks and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the community's response.

[Module 3](#) addresses capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution. By the end of this section, users should be able to identify the capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution and understand how to design interventions that enhance these capacities.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Recurring violent conflict continues to plague Ethiopia and threaten the livelihood and well-being of communities. As those of you who work in conflict prone regions know, community resilience to violent conflict is fundamental to violence prevention and reconciliation processes. Determining the system properties, problem-solving processes, and peacebuilding tactics of communities which relate to a communities' ability to be resilient to recurring violent conflict shocks can give important insights to Ethiopians and implementing organizations worldwide to enhance individual and community well-being.

The violent conflict shocks experienced in Ethiopia should be understood as nestled in a system of different, ongoing shocks (i.e., drought, climate) and local conditions which together, contribute to the nature and severity of violent conflict shocks. The research project, on which this training guide is built, co-designed a framework for assessing community resilience that acknowledges the relationships between multiple components of the community including members, groups, and institutions. Through secondary data and a three-wave primary data collection with two woredas in the Somali regional state, we investigated (a) a complex system of conflict shocks and community-level vulnerability factors, differentiated by gender and age groups, (b) how community level components and connections demonstrated capacities for responding to shocks, and (c) the communities' current capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Throughout the research project, we intentionally considered how social groups (i.e., women, age, profession) perceive their connections and capacities differently.

Three sets of research questions guided our study:

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

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

1b. What are the community-level vulnerability factors in facing violent conflict shocks? i.e., What do local stakeholders including households and community-based organizations identify as gender and age differentiated key challenges for villages and Woredas in resisting or responding to dysfunctions that result from violent conflict shocks?

RQ2. How do community level system components and connections, represented as multidimensional networks, show strengths and weaknesses in resilience capacities for protecting from or responding to violent conflict shocks and other compounding shocks? How are different demographic/geographic groups and community institutions positioned and connected in networks of information and resource sharing?

RQ3. What are the current capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution? Which policy suggestions, specific activities or processes are needed for resilience-building programs in Ethiopia to integrate conflict resolution and human-centered design approaches?

**UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY-LEVEL RESILIENCE**

We chose a networks, systems, and human-centered design approach to guide our research for a few reasons. First, this approach invited us to attend to the patterns of connectedness among human system components such as violent conflicts, and nonhuman system components such as natural resources. Second, examining recurring violent conflict through this approach helps us understand how some aspects of resilience capacities and processes may compete. For example, pastoralists migrating to other areas would be a process of resilience but can trigger shocks and conflicts; the same with internally displaced persons (IDPs) settling in a host community. Figure 1 below illustrates how violent conflict shocks and stressors affect a complex system and the communities living in it. Notice how the community is at the center.

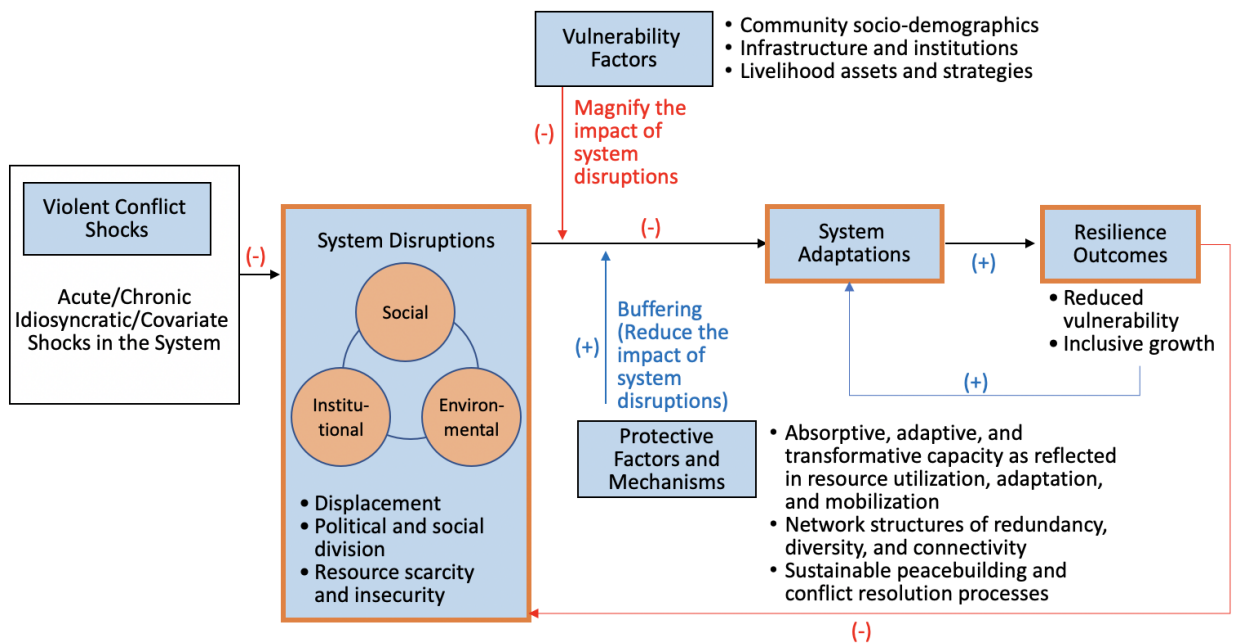


Figure 1. Framework for resilience processes in violent conflict shocks

It is important to note that while the findings from our research project are shaped by the characteristics of the two specific communities we investigated (communities that are predominantly pastoralist, rural, and Muslim), what we learned about community resilience to recurring violent conflict shocks can be considered across contexts. When doing so, please keep in mind that (1) the overarching framework of measuring vulnerability factors and resilient capacities, and (2) specific indicators of resilience need to be adapted to the unique community contexts and co-created with community members. Ultimately, the framework can be scaled up to various conflict contexts that require understanding and measuring community resilience and in other geographies around the world.

## CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Babile and Gursum are two woredas located in the north-western part of the Somali regional state, bordering the Oromia state. These two woredas are known to be prone to drought, with the population suffering from food and water insecurity.

The two woredas have historically served as traditional grazing areas for pastoralists, but as populations have grown, farmers from other woredas have migrated in and cleared grazing land, adding pressure on the remaining lands used by pastoralists. This competition for grazing land is further intensified by the fact that farmers also possess livestock. As a result, grazing lands are rapidly degrading, and water scarcity is increasing, leading to animal mortality and heightened tensions. Climate change-induced weather extremes exacerbate the declining productivity of grazing lands and farms, further contributing to competition that has led to violent conflicts and clashes.

Land allocation in the Somali regional state is carried out through various traditional and state-controlled mechanisms despite all land being officially owned by the State. Traditional land allocation was primarily managed by Sultans who controlled territories prior to the modernization of the State system, and this practice still exists to some extent in many areas. The research findings highlighted limited access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and clean water, as well as inadequate economic development and infrastructure as factors that impact community resilience. Gender and age inequalities continue to exist in these communities, with women and youth facing significant challenges in accessing resources and opportunities. The ethnic-based political system has also entrenched and politicized inter-ethnic competition. Based on the findings, some additional factors related to community-level resilience in Babile and Gursum woredas include:

- **Social networks and community cohesion:** Social networks and community cohesion played a crucial role in building resilience in the face of shocks and stresses. In particular, the study highlighted the importance of mutual financial support, information sharing, and trust among community members and organizations.
- **Access to and management of natural resources:** The woredas are characterized by limited and unpredictable rainfall, which contributes to frequent droughts and water scarcity. The study found that communities with better access to and management of natural resources, such as water and grazing land, were more resilient to shocks and stresses.
- **Livelihood diversity and innovation:** The study found that communities with diverse livelihoods and a willingness to experiment with new approaches were more resilient to shocks and stresses. For example, some communities had diversified their income sources by engaging in small-scale businesses or beekeeping, which helped them to cope with the impacts of droughts and other shocks.
- **Gender equity and social inclusion:** The study found that gender and social inequalities were significant barriers to building resilience in the woredas. In particular, women and marginalized groups were often excluded from decision-making processes and lacked access to resources such as education and healthcare. The study suggested that efforts to promote gender equity and social inclusion could help to build more resilient communities in the woredas.



## MODULE 1: EXPERIENCES OF SHOCKS

The learning objectives of this module are to

- Understand the various types of shocks and stressors that communities face, and how they interact with each other
- Identify the most vulnerable groups in a community and the particular challenges they face
- Identify key assets and resources that communities have to respond to shocks and stressors, and the strengths and weaknesses of these assets
- Understand how these factors contribute to the absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities of a community

### 1. Findings on the Types and Frequency of Shocks Experienced by Community Members

Communities in conflict-affected settings face a variety of interconnected shocks and stressors, including violent conflict, ecological crises, social factors, and economic factors. To build resilience, it is important to understand the frequency, types, and impact of these shocks on different social groups in the community.

Research findings from two woredas in Ethiopia highlight the interconnected nature of violent conflict shocks with ecological, social, and economic factors, all of which contribute to the occurrence and severity of violent conflict shocks.

- Ecological crises: drought, livestock loss, and declining yields and crop failure
- Social factors: population growth, internal displacement, and youth migration
- Economic factors such as inflation, unemployment, poverty, and responsibility to support families

The study also identified the most frequently experienced types of shocks in these communities, including inter-clan and territorial conflicts, drought, livestock loss, crop loss, and inflation. These shocks affect different social groups in different ways and are nested in broader and complex geo-spatial factors.

### 2. Impact of Shocks on Different Social Groups

The impact of shocks on different social groups is a complex and varied issue that must be carefully considered in any peacebuilding or community resilience intervention. Shocks can take many forms, including violent conflict, economic instability, environmental disasters, and more, and their impact can be felt differently across different social groups, as suggested by the research findings from Gursum and Babile.

Women in the community are more likely to experience violent conflict shocks than men, except for conflicts around resource access. Additionally, women face unique challenges and vulnerabilities during times of shock, including the potential to be seen as a resource to be exchanged in marriage to prevent or resolve conflicts. However, women can also play an important role in locally-driven processes for preventing or resolving conflicts, such as through participating in women's cooperatives and informal organizing. Intersectional analysis is



important to recognize the varying experiences of women, depending on other social identities such as age, ethnicity, religion, and economic status.

Youth can also experience and respond to shocks in distinct ways. Economic challenges can lead to youth migration, resulting in a loss of human capital for the community. However, youth can also play an important role in responding to shocks by sending resources back to the community and providing valuable insights for resilience-building interventions. It is important to recognize that the impact of shocks on youth varies depending on their intersectional identities, such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

In conclusion, understanding the impact of shocks on different social groups is essential. By taking into account the unique challenges and perspectives of different social groups, practitioners can work towards creating more equitable and sustainable communities.

### 3. Coping Mechanisms Used by Community Members

Coping mechanisms are strategies used by individuals and communities to manage and adapt to the challenges and stressors they face. In many cases, these challenges come in the form of sudden shocks or long-term stressors, such as economic instability, environmental degradation, and conflict. In response, community members in Babile and Gursum woredas have developed various coping mechanisms that have been identified through focus groups and surveys. These coping mechanisms are essential for building community resilience, and can include:

- **Social networks:** Community members rely on social networks for support during shocks, such as relying on relatives or friends for food or shelter.
- **Informal savings mechanisms:** Participants mentioned using informal savings mechanisms, such as rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) and accumulating small amounts of money in a box or jar, to deal with economic shocks.
- **Migration:** Youth participants reported that they cope with economic challenges by migrating to urban areas in search of work.
- **Marriage:** Women participants discussed marriage as a coping mechanism for interclan conflict, as it can help prevent or resolve conflicts.
- **Natural resource management:** Some participants discussed the importance of managing natural resources, such as water and grazing land, to cope with ecological shocks like drought and livestock loss.
- **Distrust in institutions:** Some participants expressed distrust in institutions like the justice system and kebele administration, and discussed relying on traditional conflict resolution mechanisms or resolving conflicts within the community.
- **Elders:** Elder participants highlighted the importance of having fair elders and a fair justice system in dealing with conflicts and shocks.

Despite these coping mechanisms, there are also challenges to their effectiveness, such as limited resources and lack of trust in institutions, which can exacerbate vulnerability. The case of Babile and Gursum woredas highlights the importance of understanding and supporting the coping mechanisms that communities develop in response to shocks and stressors, while also addressing the underlying vulnerabilities that may prevent them from being effective.

**Key considerations**

- Intersectional analysis is crucial in understanding the impact of shocks on different social groups and developing effective resilience-building interventions.
- Different social groups experience and respond to shocks differently, and these differences must be carefully considered in any resilience-building intervention.
- Coping mechanisms are essential for building community resilience, and practitioners must understand and support the coping mechanisms that communities develop in response to shocks and stressors.
- Despite coping mechanisms, there are underlying vulnerabilities that must be addressed to build effective resilience.

**4. Intervention Strategies**

- **Strengthening community-level coping mechanisms:** Communities use a variety of coping mechanisms to deal with the various types of shocks they experience. These mechanisms include social support networks, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, and community-based organizations. Interventions that strengthen these existing coping mechanisms can help communities better adapt to and recover from shocks.
- **Addressing underlying social inequalities:** The impact of shocks is not felt equally across different social groups, with women and youth often experiencing greater vulnerability. Interventions that address underlying social inequalities, such as gender and age discrimination, can help to create a more equitable society where all members have equal access to resources and support.
- **Strengthening institutional capacity:** Participants noted a perceived lack of trust in institutions and actors, such as elders and the justice system. Interventions that work to strengthen the capacity and accountability of these institutions can help to rebuild trust and create a more resilient society. This could involve training programs for local administrators and elders, as well as measures to improve transparency and accountability in the justice system.

**Interactive activities for Module 1**

- **Group Discussion:** Facilitate a group discussion on the different types of shocks experienced by community members and their impact on different social groups. Encourage participants to share their own experiences and perspectives, and work together to identify the most vulnerable groups in the community and the particular challenges they face.
- **Mapping Coping Mechanisms:** Create a community map that identifies the various coping mechanisms used by community members. Encourage participants to share their own coping mechanisms and work together to identify strengths and weaknesses in the community's resilience capacities.
- **Community Asset Mapping:** Conduct a community asset mapping exercise that identifies the key assets and resources that communities have to respond to shocks and stressors. Encourage participants to work together to identify strengths and weaknesses in the community's resilience capacities, and develop interventions that build on these strengths while addressing weaknesses.

## MODULE 2: COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO SHOCKS

The learning objectives of this module are to

- Understand the importance of trust and social relations in building resilience to shocks and resolving conflicts
- Identify key social groups and institutions that are trusted or distrusted in a community, and why
- Understand the gendered and age-related differences in trust and social networks
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of formal and informal institutions for conflict resolution in a community

### 1. Findings on the Local Relationships and Strategies Utilized by Community Members to Respond to Shocks

Local relationships and strategies play a crucial role in building community resilience to shocks. The findings from Babile and Gursum woredas highlight the importance of these strategies and relationships in helping communities respond to and recover from shocks. The utilization of social capital and traditional systems such as Hagbad have been shown to build resilience capacities within these communities. Strong social relations and social networks can provide a buffer against shocks by allowing community members to draw on their relationships to access resources and support.

In Babile and Gursum, communal support and informal support mechanisms within social networks are heavily relied upon by community members to manage and respond to shocks. For example, the Hagbad system is a traditional money-saving system that allows community members to save money on a regular basis and use it to support those in need. This system has been used to support poor community members during times of economic instability, such as drought or crop failure. Additionally, the survey revealed that community members rely on social networks for support during shocks, such as relying on relatives or friends for food or shelter.

In terms of conflict resolution, traditional and informal institutions are highly trusted in these communities. The elders were often cited as the first and most important trusted actor, followed by religious leaders, kebele administrators, and institutions. In contrast, formal institutions are less trusted. The utilization of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as the involvement of elders or religious leaders, has been identified as a key strategy for resolving conflicts in these communities.

It is important to consider the intersectionality of identities and social groups within communities, as this can influence the utilization of these local relationships and strategies. For example, women in the Babile and Gursum communities often rely on informal organizing and networks to manage and respond to shocks. Youth, on the other hand, may cope with shocks by migrating to urban areas in search of work and sending resources back to the community. Additionally, the importance of having fair elders and a fair justice system in dealing with conflicts and shocks was highlighted.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Ethiopia, elders are often co-opted by the government and used for their own political purpose, which is undermining their legitimacy in the eyes of the community. During FGDs, participants discussed what they call

## 2. Strengths and Weaknesses of these Responses

Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of local responses to shocks is crucial in building community-level resilience capacities. The research findings from Gursum and Babile suggest that one strength of local responses is the traditional money-saving system called "Hagbad," which is used to support poor people in the community. This system relies on the contributions of community members who save money on a regular basis and then use it to support those in need. This strategy demonstrates the community's strength in caring for each other and the importance of communal support.

Another strength of local responses is the role of trusted actors such as elders, religious leaders, and kebele administrators in resolving conflicts. An interdependent web of these actors is activated to resolve conflicts in the community. This highlights the importance of informal institutions, which are trusted more strongly than formal institutions in the woredas. Sultans, Ugases, and religious leaders were the most highly trusted groups, followed by community leaders and the court/legal system.

However, weaknesses exist in these local responses as well. For instance, the community seems to have low levels of trust in government institutions, and the allocation of resources is perceived as guided by political and preferential treatment of certain groups rather than actual need. Although government support can provide short-term fixes, there are limits to the sustainability of institutional support.

## 3. Importance of Trust and Social Connections

Trust plays a critical role in community-level resilience by enabling individuals and groups to work together to respond to shocks and stressors. Trust is a critical component of social capital, which refers to the networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate cooperation and coordination among individuals and groups in a community. However, building trust is a complex and challenging process, particularly in contexts with high levels of conflict and competition for resources.

Research findings highlight the importance of trust in building community-level resilience capacities. Trust levels in different social groups vary greatly, with Gursum generally exhibiting a higher level of trust than Babile. In Babile, only traditional and religious leaders were highly trusted, while IDPs and the federal government were the least trusted. The differences in trust levels can be attributed to various contextual factors, such as the presence of IDP settlements and frequent conflict shocks experienced.

Gender, age, and social status also influence trust levels in social groups. For example, farmers tend to be the most distrusted group and also distrust other groups, while traders, who are mostly women, are the most trusting. Moreover, the findings revealed low levels of trust in government institutions, with the allocation of resources seen as a conflict trigger and guided by political and

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'government elders' and 'true elders' - the ones co-opted and installed by the government vs. the elders selected by the government.

preferential treatment of certain groups instead of actual need. Although government support can provide short-term fixes, institutional support has limits to sustainability.

The research findings in Ethiopia also demonstrate that trust is a key theme in both section 1 and 2 of this module. In section 1, it was found that trust in local level social relations is a key strength for communities. However, economic realities compete with communal values, making it difficult for community members to fully rely on each other, even when they value caring for each other and try to support the poor through traditional money-saving systems like ‘Hagbad.’

In section 2, the research showed that trust levels vary greatly between social groups, institutions, and kebeles. Informal institutions such as Sultans and Ugases are highly trusted, followed by community leaders and the court/legal system. However, IDPs and farmers are the least trusted groups, and the higher the level of government, the less trusted it is. These findings highlight the importance of context-specific analyses of community-level resilience.

#### Key considerations

- Local relationships and strategies are crucial in building community resilience to shocks.
- The level of trust in different social groups varies greatly and is influenced by contextual factors, gender, age, and social status.
- Informal institutions, such as elders and religious leaders, are highly trusted in these communities, while formal institutions are less trusted.
- The intersectionality of identities and social groups within communities can influence the utilization of these local relationships and strategies.

#### 4. Intervention Strategies

- **Support and work with local strategies and relationships** that already exist
- **Address underlying vulnerabilities** that may prevent these local strategies and relationships from being effective.
- **Leverage the strengths of local responses**, such as the importance of communal support and the role of trusted actors, while addressing the weaknesses.
- Engage with local communities, **identify trusted actors**, and work with them to develop community-led solutions that are context-specific and inclusive of all social groups.
- Address the **underlying factors that contribute to a lack of trust**, such as perceived unfairness and lack of justice, and work with institutions to improve their accountability and responsiveness to community needs.

**Interactive activities**

- **Trust-building exercises:** To emphasize the importance of trust in building resilience, facilitators can lead activities that promote trust-building among participants. This can include group activities that foster communication and cooperation, such as team-building exercises or role-playing scenarios that involve conflict resolution.
- **Community mapping:** Participants can work together to create a map of their community that highlights social networks, support systems, and trusted actors. This activity can help identify gaps in the community's resilience capacities and foster discussion on ways to improve support systems.
- **Case studies:** Facilitators can provide case studies that showcase successful examples of local resilience strategies and discuss how they can be adapted to the participants' communities. This can include examples of traditional coping mechanisms or community-led initiatives that have proven effective in responding to shocks.
- **Community-led action planning:** Facilitators can guide participants in developing community-led action plans that identify local priorities, strengths, and weaknesses in resilience capacities. This activity can foster ownership and empowerment among participants /lead to sustainable community-led initiatives.

## **MODULE 3: CAPACITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

The learning objectives of this module are to

- Understand the importance of locally driven resilience systems and mechanisms for conflict resolution
- Identify key local processes for preventing conflict
- Understand the gendered and age-related differences in access to support networks
- Identify the absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities of a community, and how they can be strengthened

### **1. Findings on the Local Capacities for Sustainable Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution**

Local capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution are critical for building community-level resilience. This is particularly important in contexts with high levels of conflict and competition for resources. The research findings from Babile and Gursum woredas in Ethiopia emphasize the importance of locally driven processes and informal support networks for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

One of the local ways that community members in Babile and Gursum woredas enforce rules is through punishment and social exclusion. The practice of "Hagaan Ku Goya" is an example of this, where cutting social relations is used as a way of addressing conflict. These local practices are rooted in traditional customs and are often reached by a consensus among community members involved.

Another example of a local practice utilized by community members is the traditional money-saving system called "Hagbad." This system allows community members to save money on a regular basis and use it to support those in need during times of economic instability, such as drought or crop failure. This system demonstrates the community's strength in caring for each other and the importance of communal support.

The study also found that informal connections, including family, relatives, friends, neighbors, elders, religious leaders, and local administrators, were the most frequently mentioned category of support networks in both woredas. These informal support networks play a crucial role in promoting sustainable peace and resolving conflicts within communities. For instance, in terms of conflict resolution, participants mentioned the role of trusted actors such as elders, religious leaders, and kebele administrators in resolving disputes. An interdependent web of these actors is activated to resolve conflicts in the community.

### **2. Role of Support Networks in Building Resilience and Addressing Shocks**

The importance of support networks in building resilience and addressing shocks in communities cannot be overstated. Findings from the two woredas show that the composition of these support networks varies by gender, age, profession, and woreda location.

Gender is a critical factor that affects the composition of support networks. Women often receive more support from other women, while men tend to receive more support from other men. Moreover, women's groups such as co-ops and informal networks were found to be important



sources of support in addressing shocks and building resilience. This highlights the significance of gender-specific support mechanisms within each gender group.

Age is another intersectional aspect that affects the composition of support networks. Youth tend to rely more on women, while the elderly tend to rely more on men as sources of support. Additionally, agropastoralists and traders across regions were found to have more women in their support networks, while within Gursum - across a variety of social groups- it was more frequently reported that men were their sources of support.

Profession and woreda location were also found to affect the composition of support networks. For instance, traders, who are mostly women, were found to have more women in their support networks. This highlights the significance of the specific roles people play in shaping the support networks they have access to.

### **3. Absorptive, Adaptive, and Transformative Capacities for Resilience**

To understand the resilience of communities in the face of shocks and stressors, it is essential to recognize and build absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities. Absorptive capacity measures the community's ability to keep assets stable during shocks. In contrast, adaptive capacity measures the ability to adapt and respond to changes resulting from shocks, while transformative capacity measures the ability to create new systems, policies, and governance to strengthen assets.

The research conducted in Ethiopia highlights the importance of these capacities for building resilience. The absorptive capacity was found to be slightly lower for females compared to males, while the transformative capacity was perceived as higher than the other two capacities. This suggests that the communities have developed a locally driven resilience system that is grounded in a web of local relationships and has the potential to create new systems.

In addition to the importance of absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities, the research also identified the critical role of support networks in building resilience and addressing shocks in the two communities. These support networks consist of both formal and informal institutions, such as family, friends, neighbors, elders, religious leaders, and local administrators. For example, in the Babile woreda, community members have established the traditional money-saving system called "Hagbad" to support those in need during times of economic instability, such as drought or crop failure. This demonstrates the community's ability to adapt and develop local solutions to respond to shocks.

The study also found that the composition of these support networks is influenced by factors such as gender, age, profession, and location. For example, women reported receiving more support from other women, while men received more support from other men. Youth tend to rely more on women, while the elderly tend to rely more on men as sources of support. Agropastoralists and traders were found to have more women in their support networks, while participants in Gursum more frequently reported men being their sources of support.

**Table 1.** Examples of resilience capacity per Woreda

Resilience Capacity	Examples from Gursum	Examples from Babile
Absorptive Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members share water resources during droughts to prevent water scarcity</li> <li>• Women participate in cooperative groups to share resources and knowledge related to agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members migrate in search of employment opportunities to cope with economic hardships</li> <li>• Households receive support from informal networks during times of crisis</li> </ul>
Adaptive Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members make adjustments to their farming practices to cope with changes in climate</li> <li>• Women participate in income-generating activities to supplement household income</li> <li>• Community members engage in dialogue to resolve conflicts and maintain peaceful relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members adjust their livelihood strategies in response to resource scarcity</li> <li>• Women engage in small-scale business activities to support their families</li> <li>• Community members adopt new technologies and practices to improve productivity and income</li> </ul>
Transformative Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members work together to establish new cooperative groups for improved market access</li> <li>• Women participate in leadership roles in community-based organizations to advocate for their rights</li> <li>• Community members engage in dialogue and reconciliation to address underlying issues causing conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members work to establish new economic opportunities and diversify their livelihoods</li> <li>• Women participate in community meetings and decision-making processes</li> <li>• Community members work to establish new mechanisms for resolving conflicts and promoting peaceful relations</li> </ul>

**Key considerations**

- Recognize the importance of local capacities for sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution in building community-level resilience.
- Identify and support the role of support networks in promoting resilience and addressing shocks.
- Address gender, age, profession, and location as intersectional aspects that affect the composition of support networks.
- Recognize the importance of absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities for resilience.

#### 4. Interventions Strategies

- Engage with and support both formal and informal institutions in communities, including family, friends, neighbors, elders, religious leaders, and local administrators.
- Work with these institutions to develop community-led solutions that are context-specific and inclusive of all social groups.
- Address the underlying factors that contribute to vulnerabilities and shocks and support these networks to respond effectively.
- Strengthen the informal organizing and networks of women and recognize gender-specific support mechanisms within each gender group.

##### Interactive activities

- **Support network mapping:** Ask participants to draw a diagram of their personal support network, including family, friends, neighbors, community leaders, religious leaders, and any other sources of support they can think of. Then, ask them to reflect on the gender and age composition of their network, as well as the types of resources they receive from each source. This activity can help participants understand the importance of support networks in building resilience and addressing shocks, as well as identify potential gaps in their own networks.
- **Resilience capacity assessment:** Provide participants with a list of resilience capacities, including absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities, as well as specific examples of each capacity. Ask them to rate their community's level of each capacity on a scale of 1-5, and then discuss the results as a group. This activity can help participants understand the different components of resilience and identify areas where their community may need to improve.
- **Gender and age analysis:** Provide participants with data on the gender and age distribution of different types of support networks, as well as the absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities of different population groups. Ask them to reflect on the intersectionalities of gender, age, profession, and other identities, and how they may affect access to support networks and resilience capacities. This activity can help participants understand the importance of addressing gender and age disparities in building community-level resilience.

## CONCLUSION

The learning objectives of this guidebook are to

- Understand the importance of taking a holistic and context-specific approach to building resilience and promoting peace
- Identify strategies and best practices for strengthening community resilience to shocks and conflict, and promoting sustainable peacebuilding
- Understand the limitations and challenges of building resilience and promoting peace in conflict-affected contexts, and how to address them.

Building community-level resilience to violent shocks is critical in conflict-affected contexts. To achieve this, it is important to take a holistic and context-specific approach, and to identify strategies and best practices for promoting sustainable peacebuilding.

Module 1 highlighted the various types of shocks and stressors that communities face in conflict-affected contexts, including violent conflict, ecological crises, social factors, and economic factors. It is essential to understand the frequency, types, and impact of these shocks on different social groups in the community, including women, youth, and ethnic minorities, to create equitable and sustainable communities. The coping mechanisms used by community members, such as social networks, informal savings mechanisms, migration, natural resource management, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, are essential for building community resilience. However, underlying vulnerabilities and inequalities, such as gender and age discrimination, can limit the effectiveness of these mechanisms.

Module 2 emphasizes the importance of community-level responses to violent shocks, particularly in resource-scarce and conflict-prone contexts. The research findings highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the local relationships and strategies utilized by community members to respond to shocks, such as migration, sharing of resources, and reliance on social networks. Trust and social connections are crucial components of these responses and help to build community-level resilience. However, the study also reveals that these responses are limited by structural and systemic factors, such as weak governance, economic instability, and historical marginalization of certain social groups.

Module 3 focused on the importance of locally driven resilience systems and mechanisms for conflict resolution. The research conducted in Babile and Gursum woredas in Ethiopia highlights the importance of locally driven processes, informal support networks, and gender-specific support mechanisms. The study also underscores the critical role of support networks in building resilience and addressing shocks in communities, as well as the importance of absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and address intersectional aspects such as gender, age, profession, and location that affect the composition of support networks and resilience capacities.

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