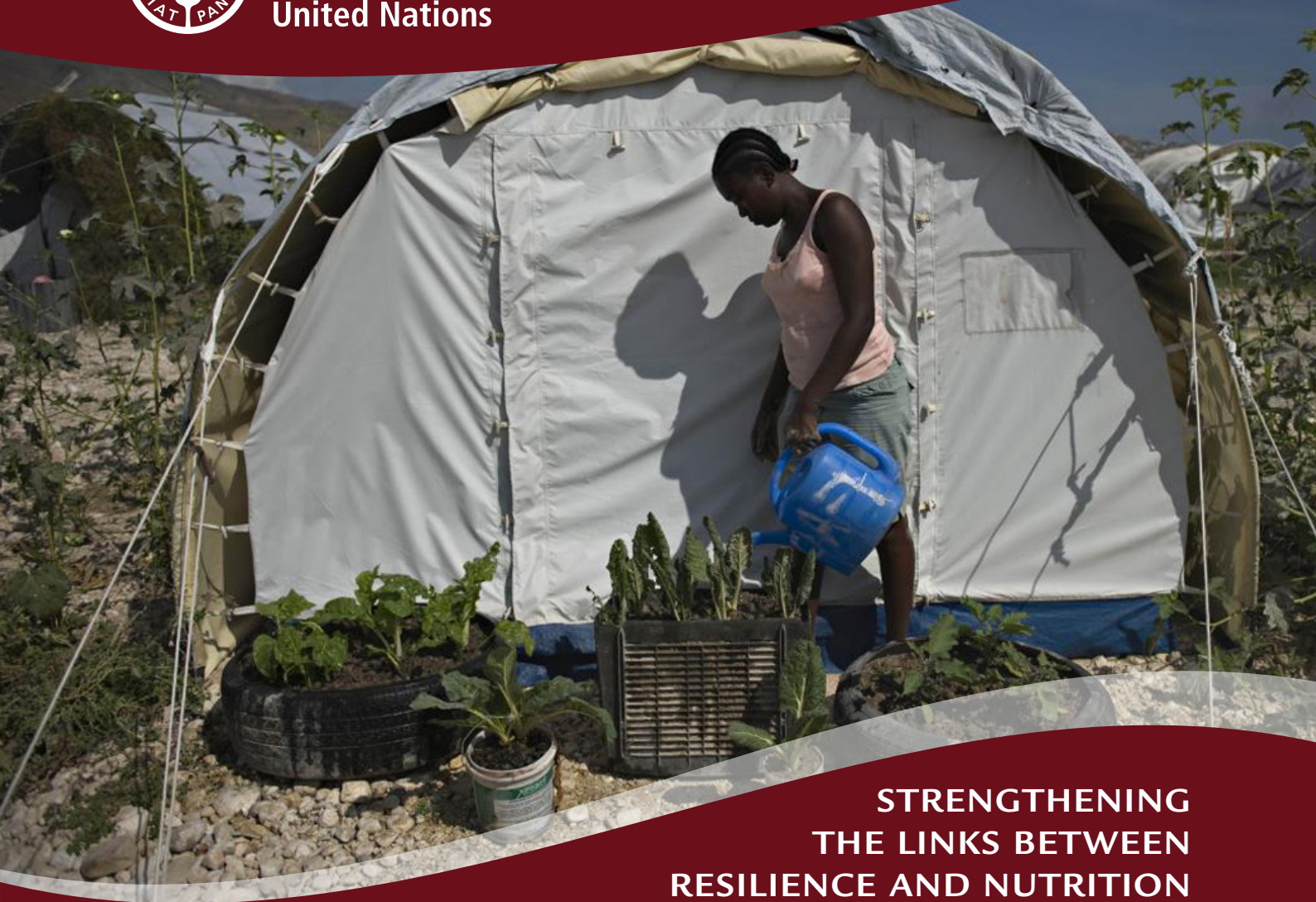




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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STRENGTHENING THE LINKS BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND NUTRITION IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The concept of ‘resilience’ and its practical application in food security and nutrition, both in policy formulation and implementation, has recently become a topical issue among the humanitarian and development communities. This issue has taken on importance as nutrition has received greater attention as illustrated by the growing number of countries and partners that are responding to the UN Secretary General’s Zero Hunger Challenge and joining the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement.

This brief summarizes the thinking on nutrition and resilience from a food and agriculture perspective and discusses the linkages between the two agendas from a conceptual, strategic and operational point of view. A full paper on nutrition and resilience developed by FAO focuses on food and agriculture but some of the concepts and recommendations may be applicable to other sectors.

NUTRITION IS BOTH AN INPUT TO AND AN
OUTCOME OF STRENGTHENED RESILIENCE

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAXIMIZE THE NUTRITIONAL IMPACTS OF RESILIENCE-BUILDING INTERVENTIONS

WHY BRING TOGETHER NUTRITION AND RESILIENCE?

Nutrition and Resilience concepts are strongly interlinked: nutrition is both an input to and an outcome of strengthened resilience. Reducing malnutrition is crucial to strengthening resilience because well-nourished individuals are healthier, can work harder and have greater physical reserves; households that are nutrition secure are thus better able to withstand, endure longer and recover more quickly from external shocks. Conversely, households that are least resilient are most affected by shocks and therefore face the greatest risk of malnutrition; thus, strengthening resilience is essential in efforts to reduce malnutrition.

The food and agriculture sector is essential to human nutrition and to communities' resilience, but approaches designed to increase households' resilience to shocks do not always contribute to positive - and sometimes even have negative-nutrition outcomes. Specific attention is required to make resilience-building interventions "nutrition-sensitive".

Strengthening the legislative and policy environment to ensure that nutritional considerations are fully taken into account in developing policy, programme and coordination frameworks for resilience and food security

- Raise awareness of policy makers working on resilience-building on the social, economic and human costs of under- and malnutrition.
- Include explicit nutrition objectives in resilience and Disaster Risk Management policy frameworks, as a means of ensuring that the nutritional needs of vulnerable individuals and groups are addressed.
- Build stronger linkages between development-oriented food security and nutrition policies and coordination mechanisms and emergency-related initiatives and coordination bodies related to resilience, at national, regional and global levels.

Integrating nutrition in food and agriculture information systems to improve monitoring of threats and situation analysis for resilience planning

- Include indicators of food consumption such as dietary diversity in early warning systems to increase their ability to detect forthcoming shocks and the households or livelihoods groups at greatest risk.
- Consider nutritional indicators (especially stunting) as an indicator of the erosion of people's resilience and of greater vulnerability in situation analysis and surveillance.
- Understand the causes of malnutrition in different livelihoods groups to analyse early warning indicators and "anticipate" impact on specific groups.

Making prevention, preparedness and response activities more nutrition-sensitive to reduce the impact of shocks and threats on individuals' and households' nutrition situation:

Key entry-points for nutrition-sensitive programming to build resilience:

- Use nutritional indicators to identify and target vulnerable groups in:
 - prevention and disaster risk reduction: target prevention activities to groups who face chronic food security and or health problems, or are exposed to regular nutrition-related shocks;
 - preparedness and contingency planning: anticipate which groups risk being hardest hit by a given shock or threat;
 - post-disaster response: indicators on food consumption can be useful to effectively identify which groups need urgent help.
- Design multi-sectoral resilience-building interventions based on an analysis of the causes of malnutrition, disaggregated by livelihoods groups.
- Make nutrition an explicit objective of food and agriculture programmes aiming to build re-silience and monitor their progress against a set of indicators, including individual nutritional status and food consumption indicators.
- Ensure resilience programmes meet the nutritional needs of, and support, both women and men through a gender-sensitive approach.

Examples of nutrition-friendly resilience programming

- Strengthen household livelihoods and promote dietary diversification to contribute to the pre-vention of both chronic and acute malnutrition and the reduction of vulnerability to shocks through direct consumption or income generation.
- Incorporate nutrition education to improve dietary practices, especially for vulnerable groups, and contribute to improved food utilization and prevention of acute and chronic child malnutrition, short and long term.
- Link food and agricultural interventions with social protection measures to help protect the assets of the target population from shocks and to positively improve their nutritional status.
- Link food and agriculture to other programmes that address other determinants of malnutrition (health, water and sanitation, and education), and create partnerships to enhance nutritional impact.

EFFECTIVE RESILIENCE AND NUTRITION PROGRAMMING BOTH REQUIRE

■ A systemic approach (multi-sectoral, multi-level and multi-stakeholder)

Both the nutritional status and resilience of an individual, household or community result from a combination of interlinked factors that can be influenced by various sectors, at different levels and by a wide range of stakeholders. Resilience and nutrition thus require work on several fronts with diverse partners.

■ A twin-track approach, linking emergency and development

Fighting malnutrition in a comprehensive way and strengthening resilience require that acute needs in emergency situations and crises be addressed at the same time as making investments in long-term development to tackle the root causes of vulnerability and malnutrition.

■ A context-specific approach

A successful nutrition or resilience-building intervention in one country or livelihoods zone may not be fully replicable in another context. Adapting interventions to local contexts requires in-depth understanding both of populations' and individuals' existing coping mechanisms, food systems and nutritional needs, and of enhancing environmental and social synergies.

■ Strong local/country/regional ownership and political leadership

Political leadership is a prerequisite for the success of complex programmes requiring multisectoral, multilevel and multistakeholder approaches. Strong political leadership enables a favourable policy environment to be created and facilitates the integration of resilience-building and nutrition programmes across ministries.

For more information, please visit:

Nutrition and Resilience discussion paper: www.fao.org/2/i3777e

Food Security Capacity Building project: www.fao.org/in-action/food-security-capacity-building/en/

FAO in emergencies – Resilience: www.fao.org/emergencies/how-we-work/resilience/en/

FAO and Nutrition: www.fao.org/nutrition

and www.fao.org/policies-programmes