

BRACED aims to build the resilience of up to 5 million vulnerable people against climate extremes and disasters. It does so through 15 projects working across 13 countries in East Africa, the Sahel and Asia.

➔ [www.braced.org](http://www.braced.org)  
🐦 @bebraced

# Resilience Results: BRACED project final evaluation synthesis

## Summary paper<sup>1</sup>

Building Resilience to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) has supported more than 140 organisations in 15 consortia across 13 countries in East Africa, the Sahel and Asia, working locally yet at scale. After three years of implementation (2015-2018) the 15 BRACED projects carried out Final Evaluations of their work taking a realist evaluation approach. The final evaluation synthesis examines the following central evaluation question: **How, where, when and why do BRACED interventions work, and how can good practice be replicated?**

### Outcomes: what the BRACED programme has achieved

**Results for Individuals:** BRACED projects report evidence of a range of outcomes for individuals and households, as well as building understanding of how and why projects have contributed to this change in different contexts. These outcomes fall into two groups.

The first group are the result of greater absorptive, adaptive or anticipatory capacities<sup>2</sup>, but are also intermediate outcomes which create contextual conditions necessary for further progress toward resilience. They are: i) Increased and diversified income; ii) Improved food security and dietary diversity; iii) Improved access to water for food and agriculture.

### Realist evaluation

In realist evaluation, context is understood as the most important influence on whether an intervention succeeds in activating a change process (often referred to as a 'mechanism') that will cause an outcome. Causation in realist evaluation therefore rests on understanding the influence of context on 'mechanisms', therefore rests on understanding the influence of context on 'mechanisms' and outcomes, as well as understanding the mechanisms themselves.

See Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) *'Realistic Evaluation'*, SAGE

- <sup>1</sup> For the full Final Evaluation Synthesis Report see: <https://itad.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/BRCJ6513-Final-Evaluation-report-1709-WEB.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> Bahadur, A.V., Peters, K., Wilkinson, E., Pichon, F., Gray, K. and T. Tanner (2015) The 3As: Tracking resilience across BRACED. BRACED Knowledge Manager Working Paper. London: ODI.



The second group are building blocks of the *pathway* toward increased resilience, in that they contribute to absorptive, adaptive and anticipatory capacities. They also interact to contribute to the first group of outcomes listed above. They are: i) Improvements to agricultural systems and practices; ii) Improvements to livestock systems and practices; iii) Access to financial services, including credit, loans and insurance.

**Supporting institutional change:**

Institutional changes at local and national levels due to BRACED include: embedding climate risk within local planning; building and strengthening local organisations to implement resilience activities and respond to disasters; facilitating agreements around land tenure and resource use to reduce conflict; influencing national policy and building capacity to govern adaptation. These are critical to create the contexts necessary for building anticipatory, adaptive and absorptive capacities. They also generate potential for transformation, including generating impact at scale, and shifting power relationships to enable inclusive, risk-informed decision-making processes involving women and disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

**Inclusion:** Inclusion is a development outcome that both supports, and is supported by, resilience. The majority of projects focused on ensuring equitable benefits that reach vulnerable groups, while a smaller number had specific goals related to tackling the root causes of exclusion. The strongest evidence of change is centred around gender and women's empowerment.

**Climate Information:** BRACED projects demonstrate considerable achievements in brokering access to climate information, particularly short-term and seasonal forecasts. This is improving anticipatory

capacity: people are using the information to plan agricultural and livelihood activities and reduce losses from climate hazards. Importantly, projects have focused not only on technology and information products, but the institutions that shape how information is interpreted, communicated and used. This includes the relationship between scientific and traditional forecasting. While the uptake of short-term and seasonal weather forecasts has been strong, more needs to be done to integrate longer-term climate projections into decision making and planning.

## How and why change happens

BRACED provides the right kinds of incentives for people to respond to the project activities in positive ways. These incentives link directly to the contexts in which the projects are working: weak markets and institutions, high levels of poverty and low asset base, and low levels of trust in external intervention. The main findings of the synthesis are:

- In contexts where market and institutional linkages are weak or non-existent, activities that help to strengthen these can create incentives for people to participate in new activities. For example, by linking savings to potential income-generating activities, these in turn are helped to 'bear fruit' through support to improving market and other institutional linkages. This generates further confidence and motivation for people to invest in new activities likely to improve absorptive and adaptive capacities and therefore resilience. Linking savings and loans activities to other interventions appears to be particularly fruitful. In South Sudan (IRISS), linking access to credit directly to income-generating activities

creates a 'chain' between inputs and markets (thus linking across different institutional levels in the system).

- Supporting private sector actors to operate in the remote areas where many of the BRACED project participants live also strengthens market linkages. Reducing risk to private sector providers entering new markets, while brokering products and services that meet the needs of BRACED project participants, fills a real gap in provision and changes fundamentally the external context, creating potential for real, systemic and transformative change. For example, MAR's support to mobile banking service providers in Afar, Ethiopia, played a crucial role in overcoming barriers to selling mobile banking products to remotely located pastoralists in the project Woreda areas.
- Providing resources such as tools and materials and addressing basic needs means that people are more likely to respond to project resources and implement activities, resulting in tangible, longer-term benefits. This can be the difference between people participating and the project succeeding, or not. For example, in Mali, RIC4REC found that when food security is achieved, it 'becomes a mechanism in itself' as it can trigger community buy-in into interventions. Not only are participants better able to take risks, farmers are more sure of food availability resulting in the sale of surplus yields (potentially leading to improved income; improved absorptive capacity).
- Community buy-in requires projects to respond to or change the context so that sufficient trust is generated for people to participate. This can be through working collaboratively with communities, getting the right

people on board at the community level, capitalising on demonstration effects by early adopters, ongoing involvement of project staff and follow-up with communities emphasising practical application. For example, in Nepal, relevant, practical training and demonstration by Anukulan was decisive in farmers replacing old techniques for new ones and starting to use new inputs. 'Relevance' includes advocating technology that is appropriate to the populations and settings, including climate context and risk. Interventions and results are therefore more likely to be sustainable after the project.

- Where existing policies work against poor, marginalised people and groups, a coordinated advocacy strategy implemented with partners with capacity is critical to shifting attitudes among powerholders at national and regional levels in order to achieve effective and sustained change. This is illustrated by work in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal; and Mauritania (Livestock Mobility), which found that where this is missing, ad-hoc and opportunistic activities are less likely to lead to effective and sustained change.

Overall, the synthesis found that the combination of activities, approaches to implementation and layering of outcomes determine the extent to which projects build resilience. These matter, crucially, to fostering the right (enabling) contexts and, in turn, appropriate incentives so that people respond to the project activities in the right ways. To bring about systemic, transformative and resilient change, project activities must address any disconnectedness between different institutional levels, building and strengthening capacity at community, local and national levels.

## Summary change mechanisms

### Layering and linking: between activities, institutions and across scales

- Layering and linking of activities.
- Linking across different institutional 'levels'.

### Implementation responds to context

- Hands-on, practical support that is relevant.
- Project demonstration, ongoing involvement and follow-up.

### Influencing context to create conditions for change

- Access to financial services.
- Institutional change including social norms/culture and attitude shifts.

### Providing incentives and subsidies to encourage participation

- Overcoming lack of trust.
- Compensating for low commercial viability.

### Meeting basic needs as an underlying condition for further participation

- Accepted by participants as responding to their needs and priorities.
- Participants able to take risks.
- Quick wins help buy-in.

### Collaboration and credibility

- Participatory design and implementation.
- Strong involvement of village leaders.
- Word-of-mouth.
- Engaging the right champions/higher level formal institutions.
- Using existing (formal and informal) institutional structures.
- Working with recognised expertise.

### Strengthening institutions and linking across scales

- Strengthening links in communities.
- Building understanding and capacity at higher institutional levels.

### Working with the private sector to create public-private linkages.

- Creating markets and employment opportunities.
- Improving farmers' business sense.
- Institutional change: market linkages to formalise sector.
- Institutional change: addressing thin or missing markets.
- Increased confidence and ability to take risk.



The BRACED Knowledge Manager generates evidence and learning on resilience and adaptation in partnership with the BRACED projects and the wider resilience community. It gathers robust evidence of what works to strengthen resilience to climate extremes and disasters, and initiates and supports processes to ensure that evidence is put into use in policy and programmes. The Knowledge Manager also fosters partnerships to amplify the impact of new evidence and learning, in order to significantly improve levels of resilience in poor and vulnerable countries and communities around the world.

The views presented in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of BRACED, its partners or donor.

Readers are encouraged to reproduce material from BRACED Knowledge Manager reports for their own publications, as long as they are not being sold commercially. As copyright holder, the BRACED programme requests due acknowledgement and a copy of the publication. For online use, we ask readers to link to the original resource on the BRACED website.