European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Resilience

What is it?

Resilience is the ability of an individual, a community or a country to cope, adapt and recover quickly from stress and shocks caused by a disaster, violence or conflict. Resilience covers all stages of a disaster, from prevention (when possible) to adaptation (when necessary), and includes positive transformation that strengthens the ability of current and future generations to meet their needs.

Why is this important?

The increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters and humanitarian crises poses a major threat to long-term development, sustainable growth and poverty reduction in developing countries. Crises and shocks worsen already precarious livelihoods and can often trap people in poverty.

The cost of disasters and humanitarian crises is rising, as climate change results in more severe weather-related events and the world faces new hazards and threats such as population growth, urbanisation, depleted eco-systems, scarcity of natural resources, and complex conflicts. A large share of humanitarian funding is allocated to long-term, recurring crises.

Helping individuals and communities to be better prepared for, withstand and recover from disasters is vital in reducing the impact of crises and avoiding loss of life and livelihoods. Building communities’ resilience can minimise the negative effects of disasters and prevent future humanitarian crises.

There is a long-standing recognition that humanitarian crises affect people differently. A person’s resilience depends on many factors such as their economic well-being, education, gender, health, and age. Women, children, disabled people, and members of minorities are at risk of being least resilient.
How are we helping?

All humanitarian projects that the European Union funds have to apply the Resilience Marker which defines ways to reduce risks and to strengthen people’s coping capacities so as to minimise humanitarian needs. The EU also launched the Resilience Compendium, a collection of 29 practical examples of disaster risk reduction and resilience activities carried out by the EU, other donors, organisations, and vulnerable communities.

The EU places resilience as a central objective in its development and humanitarian assistance. Recent EU-funded actions include:

The DIZA programme in Chad

The DIZA programme (Programme de développement inclusif dans les zones d’accueil) aims to help the most vulnerable people in Chad – refugees, returnees, internally displaced people, and host communities – by increasing access to basic social services, generating employment opportunities, and strengthening local governance and resilience. DIZA combines humanitarian assistance with development cooperation. This programme is implemented by a consortium of international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) cooperating with local authorities.

Emergency Response Mechanism in Myanmar

The Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM) shares information collected on a specific disaster and seeks to reduce its adverse impact through a needs assessment and an adapted response in a timely and effective manner. A joint team of local and international NGOs locally manages the ERM in Myanmar’s Kachin State – a fitting example of a coordinated humanitarian and development strategy. The ERM relies, as far as possible, on multi-purpose cash transfers in order to maximise efficiency and flexibility for recipients to cover a range of needs and shifting priorities in what can often be a rapidly changing situation.

Social protection programme in Somalia

The EU has launched an initiative to combine its humanitarian and development assistance in Somalia. The programme is implemented by a consortium of NGOs and UN agencies, mainly through cash transfers, and lays the foundations for a large-scale shock responsive social safety net to provide long-term support to households that chronically lack enough food.