



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition • FSN Forum

SUMMARY OF THE ONLINE DISCUSSION

Discussion No. 125 • from 15 February to 14 March 2016

➤ <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/INFORMED>

Online consultations for a knowledge sharing platform on resilience



About this online discussion

This document summarizes the *Online consultations for a knowledge sharing platform on resilience* held on FAO's Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum) from 15 February to 14 March 2016.

The exchange was organized by the FAO Strategic Programme on resilience with the support of the EU-funded programme INFORMED.

The consultation was divided in three online discussions and invited 200 resilience and knowledge-management experts to share their views on how to ensure that the planned resilience community generates effective and sustainable interventions towards resilience building of livelihoods.

Over the four weeks of discussion, 38 contributions were shared by participants from 10 countries.

The topic introduction and questions proposed as well as all contributions received are available on the discussion page:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/INFORMED>

Benefits of creating a knowledge sharing platform on resilience

Participants expressed a common awareness on the need to improve and bring coherence to the growing body of literature and experience on the various aspects of resilience. They highlighted a wide range of means and ways to move forward on the management and sharing of knowledge in this area.

FAO is well placed to strengthen capacities of Government institutions and other stakeholders on resilience either independently or in partnership with other resilience renowned institutions and bodies, such as Tulane University and the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPN), among others. (Jimmy Owani,)

A platform where different approaches are presented in a coherent manner, from planning to implementation and to measurement of results is missing so far. There are many initiatives on definitions, analysis and measurement but little or nothing on programming, integration, concrete activities. (Volli Carucci)

Given the wealth of material and research out there (analytical, programmatic, operational and organizational), a centralized, integrated and action-oriented platform on resilience will be a vital resource. (Julius Jackson)

An online pointer to the tools, methodologies/approaches that are already available and (may be) linked with resilience issues is missing. (Simone Sala)

Which knowledge sharing platforms including resilience work do you consult and why?

- FSIN Technical Working Group on Resilience Measurement (Tim Frankenberger, Karine Garnier)
- Resilience task force currently created by TOPS (Tim Frankenberger)
- Somalia Joint Resilience Strategy (Marco Derrico)
- IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) (Awira Anthony)
- Resilience resources by Rockefeller Foundation (Simone Sala, Jimmy Owani)
- Food Security Cluster (FSC) (Rejendra Aryal)
- LinkedIn community of practice on Resilience by PopTech: (Simone Sala)
- Farmerfirst platform (Simone Sala)
- World Bank supported Open Data for Resilience Initiative (OpenDRI) (Simone Sala)
- Agrilinks supported by USAID (Jimmy Owani, Karine Garnier)
- DFID knowledge sharing platform in partnership with BRACED and ODI (Jimmy Owani)
- Resilience Development Forum for the Near East and North Africa (Jimmy Owani)
- Global Innovation Exchange (Karine Garnier)
- Food Security and Nutrition Network (Karine Garnier)
- USAID learning labs (Karine Garnier)
- Global Resilience Partnership (Karine Garnier)

Are you involved in knowledge management for food security and nutrition (FSN)? Are there any lessons learned you would like to share with the community?

The Food Security Cluster platform offers dynamic and innovative opportunities for partners to also share their ideas, products and good practices. This platform could be well utilized by the partners working on resilience building in food security sector. (Rajendra Aryal)

The Food Security Cluster manages information by producing 3Ws/4Ws/5Ws matrices (Who? What? Where? When? for Whom?) and relevant maps using GIS. The Food Security Cluster has a strong information management team, which works very closely with the WFP VAM team, and other partner institutions, in particular OCHA. (Rajendra Aryal)

Which information on resilience related to FSN is missing so far? Are essential cross-cutting issues like gender and nutrition sufficiently addressed?

We need to share the tools we use to determine whether one practice is better than an alternative under what circumstances and in which context. (Tim Frankenberger)

Cross-cutting issues (e.g. gender, nutrition) are not adequately addressed by current initiatives. For this reason, engaging established (online) communities of practice may help in conceptualizing the way such cross-cutting issues can contribute to resilience building as well as how they can be integrated into resilience initiatives. (Simone Sala)

We need to share better practices on how to do comprehensive assessments that lead to better design. (Tim Frankenberger)

We need to determine what are better practices for linking social protection to resilience programming. (Tim Frankenberger)

How can we avoid duplication of efforts and create a living, innovative and action-oriented platform?

One of the main concerns emerging from the discussions is the need to identify the specific audience for the knowledge platform: is it targeting researchers or practitioners, how are the beneficiaries going to be involved, what kind of engagement or interaction is expected from this audience and what are the incentives for such participation?

Define target of the platform

It is critical to be clear about the main aim and focus of the platform. (Volli Carucci)

Relevance of the platform

The platform has to provide valuable & visible benefits and services to its users to incentivize their participation and the uptake of the information shared. (Awira Anthony)

Giving incentives to encourage users to use the platform is very critical. (Justin Chisenga)

Map existing networks

Before starting to build the network, it is necessary to carry out a participatory mapping of existing activities to identify gaps and to be able to tell how the information found there is different from that that will be contained in the envisaged platforming. (Volli Carucci, Awira Anthony, Dramane Coulibaly, Alexis Hoskins)

An inclusive approach

It is important that key stakeholders (donors, the academia, UN agencies, research institutions, NGOs, etc.) are actively involved and provided with regular updates through the platform. This could be done through organizing bi-annual or quarterly meetings at global and regional level. (Jimmy Owani)

Define together the actions to be taken to have a consensual tool, a course of action that should be participative and inclusive. (Dramane Coulibaly)

It is necessary to involve farmers, breeders, farm operators, researchers and technicians in the creation of the platform. (Boniface Bouan)

Facilitation

Investing into facilitation to provide the users with access to information is critical. When deciding whether to invest more in technology or facilitation it is worth remembering that only facilitation can transform the platform into a true community. (Simone Sala)

The platform needs moderation and, more importantly, curation. There must be participants in the system who have some incentive to overcome the natural decrease in participation decay and work to sort and systematize content, create summaries, and so on. (Joel Snyder)

Recognizing outstanding contributions of institutions and individuals and highlighting specific products and services generated through this platform would significantly increase the interest in and the commitment to the platform. (Awira Anthony)

Governance

The governance of the platform needs to be clarified upfront: Who will be in charge of what? Will there be an editorial team? Will there be monthly multi-partner meetings? What are the costs? How to filter info, validate what is valuable and decide what is not? (Volli Carucci)

Establish a clear boundary between technical aspects and policy in order to decide when to involve the politicians who are taking decisions. (Dramane Coulibaly)

Define clearly the support-advisory role in the organization of building the Technical Platform. (Dramane Coulibaly)

Development of a knowledge management (KM) strategy

It is essential that a shared framework for organizing knowledge be developed and that such a framework be agreed to among the range of actors who are developing local, regional and global knowledge management and learning platforms so that they can speak to one another. (Greg Collins)

IGAD Platform Coordination Unit (PCU) came up with a KM strategy: (Jemal Mensur)

- Facilitating Knowledge Generation Processes
- Strengthening Knowledge Capture Processes
- Strengthening Knowledge Sharing Processes
- Facilitating Knowledge Utilization Processes
- Diversification of Knowledge Management Experts

- Enhance Analytical Capacity of Experts
- Promoting Partnership and Networking of Knowledge for Development

Collaborations & Partnership

Given the cost of collecting primary data, we should encourage different agencies, donors and governments to make existing data available for promoting resilience analysis. (Tim Frankenberger)

The platform has to be practically oriented and interactive, making it possible to talk to practitioners (in particular in the field) to capture the knowledge generated by practical applications. (Laura Mattioli)

To be useful, the platform should provide a synthesis of useful, interesting and topical items. (Julius Jackson)

Gathering, disseminating and applying good practices seems to be considered one of the key elements of this upcoming platform. (Giulia Riedo)

Develop a roster of experts on resilience that can be engaged or tapped whenever needed (Jimmy Owani, Alexis Hoskins)

Develop sections by country in the platform, where partners from different institutions can easily share information and materials about their researches and projects on resilience. (Rebecca Pietrelli)

It might be useful to share on the platform the indicators/criteria used to verify the improvements on resilience after the practice implementation. (Giulia Riedo)

It would be useful to let the Technical Working Group use part of this platform to progress their discussions on resilience measurement harmonization and to share their results. (Giulia Riedo)

An online platform could be also used as a tool for monitoring/validating the implementation in an interactive way: once a good practice is shared, people could upload their experiences on implementing the same practice, making comments and sharing their results. (Giulia Riedo)

How can we build effective synergies with existing initiatives? Which ones? How to link to NGOs, Academia, other UN, international and regional organizations, as well as national governments?

Effective coordination is only possible through close cooperation with partner organizations. (Rajendra Aryal)

It will be vital to ensure a high degree of interoperability between diverse knowledge management and learning platforms to facilitate the sharing of information and to set up regular feeds from other data sources, having shared/mapped ontologies etc. (Julius Jackson)

How about ‘learning’: Should we include capacity development and learning material and activities? How and which ones?

Knowledge management is one of the essential components of capacity development at individual, group, organizational and systems levels. Therefore, we need to integrate knowledge management with capacity development framework to achieve strategic goals at scale. (Tesfaye Beshah)

There is a good opportunity to integrate distance learning on the knowledge sharing platform as such products can address the needs of middle-level policy makers, technical experts on resilience measurement and analysis, as well as potential trainers and extension staff working with people in remote areas. (Beatrice Ghirardini, Giulia Riedo)

Capacity development learning material and activities would be a good feature of the platform and could include links to existing trainings by partners, keep track of upcoming in person trainings and events. (Karine Garnier)

Should a web portal be a major component of the platform? What types of modern tools and technologies could be incorporated into the platform to help maximise knowledge transfer and the overall impact of the portal/initiative?

Build the community on a platform designed to run in browsers, without unnecessary plugins such as ActiveX, Flash, Java, Silverlight. (Joel Snyder)

Recognize that traffic will be driven by web-searches. (Joel Snyder)

Use a responsive interface. (Joel Snyder)

Design the platform with a forward-looking approach in terms of web and mobile-based technologies with at least a 5-year timeframe. (Andrew Nadeau)

Avoid an extended debate on exactly what modules have to be there on day 1 and use an agile framework and rapid prototyping to get things going. Further modules can be added at a later stage. (Joel Snyder)

Make use of “push” functions providing information to users without them having to visit the website. Without it, the active user population will inevitably devolve into a small, non-representative subset. (Joel Snyder)

The community could be hosted on a platform included in zero-rating packages (such as that offered by Facebook in many countries of the developing world) this would allow having knowledge available for free to a larger user base. (Simone Sala)

Moodle is an affordable learning management system that can help deliver self-paced e-learning, as well as collaborative learning, supported by tutors. (Fabiana Biasini)

Drupal CMS can offer valuable tools for setting up the platform (Cavin Mugarura):

- Organic Groups - This feature helps to organize content around groups or sub groups.
- Taxonomy - Categorizing content around tags, taxonomy terms helps users find information easily but it also creates a richer user experience.
- Faceted Search - Building content around facets helps users find information very easily using a combination of filters, tags, terms.

- Messaging - Instant messaging between users or groups.
- Interactive maps, Views (Query Builder).

What is the best arrangement for hosting the platform's information technology infrastructure? In-house? External (partners)? Cloud? What are the pros and cons of each option?

A possibility is to channel some of the interaction on external platforms that target user groups may be already using. (Simone Sala)

If the platform will be hosted in FAO, it will provide the chance to have only verified information and knowledge products on the platform while leaving the community freely able to share knowledge outside. (Simone Sala)

How to ensure that knowledge products and other platform contents are used, useful, adopted and upscaled? For which users?

Knowledge management products and materials should be communicated to target audiences in a simple and consumable format (Awira Anthony)

Data and information sharing increases in value when it comes out of a database and one can make sense of it in one's own context and see how to apply it to one's real work. (Nancy White)

To make the network valuable the sharing back of experiences of contextualized knowledge into the network needs to be encouraged. (Nancy White)

The platform should have a mechanism whereby those who share their methods, data, and analysis can interact with consumers of that knowledge in a side forum that promotes respectful exchanges that can result in constructive feedback to strengthen future efforts to design, collect, implement, and evaluate resilience building activities. (Ky Luu)

Risks / challenges

It is still unclear exactly what class of users are to be targeted with the platform. (Joel Snyder)

With the current proliferation of methodologies, and consequently knowledge management platforms, communities of practice and useful information risk being drowned out due to a disproportionate number of channels. (Laura Mattioli)

The challenge is that, there are plenty of disconnected technologies, which can address / satisfy specific requirements but not all. (Jemal Mensur)

A single platform would seem to be both untenable and constraining given scope of learning taking place at different scales from local to global and the need for diverse perspectives from the private and public sector and - above all - communities themselves. (Greg Collins)

A major challenge is the difficulty of maintaining a sustained & consistent momentum of participation of experts - especially when the platform relies purely on voluntary contributions by its members. (Awira Anthony)

How can pastoralist, farmers and fisherfolk and women get access to information that is available in digital forms? Knowledge sharing is not sufficient to create resilience capacities

because knowledge management is about integration of knowledge generation, capture, sharing and utilization. (Tesfaye Beshah)

Sense making

Past experience may or may not be useful in future application, particularly in complex situations. Therefore, knowledge sharing has to be done in a way that there is clarity about the level of complexity. If there is low complexity, the KS can help for replication. If there is high complexity, we have to do a probe/test/probe approach, which may be adaptation or something novel. (Nancy White)

Dave Snowden's sense making framework and Holling's Panarchy sense making tool can be useful for understanding change in complex systems (Mike Jones, Nancy White)

How to measure the success of a knowledge sharing platform?

In terms of measuring the success of the knowledge sharing platform, the Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Knowledge Management in Global Health Programs published by USAID and GHCK can provide precious information which can be applied to other KM areas. (Karine Garnier)

A clear theory of change that describes the pathways to behavioural change should be developed to facilitate tracking of impact of KM initiatives. (Awira Anthony)

Resources

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WEBSITES

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<http://agrilinks.org>
- BRACED
<http://www.braced.org>
- Cognitive Edge
<http://cognitive-edge.com/blog>
- Critical Zone Observatories
<http://criticalzone.org/national>

- FAO E-learning Centre
www.fao.org/elearning
- Farmerfirst platform
<http://www.farmingfirst.org/resilience>
- Food Security and Nutrition Network
<http://www.fsnnetwork.org>
- Food Security Information Network (FSIN)
<http://www.fsincop.net>
- Global innovation Exchange
<https://www.globalinnovationexchange.org>
- Global Resilience Partnership
<http://www.globalresiliencepartnership.org>
- IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative
<http://resilience.igad.int/>
- Innovation Policy Platform
<https://www.innovationpolicyplatform.org>
- Learning Lab
<http://usaidlearninglab.org>
- LinkedIn community of practice on Resilience by PopTech:
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/5074090>
- Main outputs of the Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group
<http://www.fsincop.net/topics/resilience-measurement/outupts/en>
- Missing Maps
<http://www.missingmaps.org>
- Open Data for Resilience Initiative
<https://www.gfdrr.org/opendri>
- Panarchy page by Resilience Alliance
<http://www.resalliance.org/panarchy>
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<http://digitalprinciples.org/about>
- Resilience of what, to what and for whom? Contextualizing resilience and development in drylands
<http://livestocksystems.ilri.org/2015/04/30/resilience-of-what-to-what-and-for-whom-contextualizing-resilience-and-development-in-drylands>
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<https://understandrisk.org>
- Web Page on Resilience by Rockefeller Foundation:
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