Flood Resilience Alliance

Full Report

Foundations for Change

Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance Phase II

Lessons from Year 1

learning /ˈlə͡ʊnɪŋ/

noun

1 the activity or process of gaining knowledge or skill by studying, practicing, being taught, or experiencing something: the activity of someone who learns

2 knowledge or skill gained from learning

Year 1

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Acronyms

Alliance	the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, both Phase I (2013-2018) and the current Phase II (2018-2023)
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
DHM	Nepal Department of Hydro-Meteorology
DFID	the Department for International Development. DFID is a United Kingdom government department that is responsible for administering aid abroad. https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FRMC	Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities; a holistic framework developed by the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance that promotes systems thinking to understand the resilience context of a community, and an associated hybrid online and mobile app-based software tool to implement the framework in practice. Also called the 5C-4R framework.
GRP	Global Resilience Partnership. The GRP is a partnership of public and private organisations joining forces towards a resilient, sustainable and prosperous future for vulnerable people and places. Core donors include USAID, DFID, Sweden, and the Z Zurich Foundation. https://www.globalresiliencepartnership.org/aboutus/
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRL	Monitoring, Reporting and Learning system; the Alliance reporting system used to track accomplishments and the change resulting from the Alliance work.
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development; an intergovernmental economic organization composed primarily of high-income, developed countries.
PERC	Post Event Review Capability; a post-event review methodology, applied after a disaster event, for understanding why a hazard became a disaster and identifying entry points for building resilience in a specific location.
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN HELP	United Nations High-level Experts and Leaders Panel
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism

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Foreword

I joined Zurich in 2013 attracted by the offer to develop a start-up project called the Zurich Flood Resilience Program. The program brought together proposals from four organisations, which formed an Alliance and together would build community resilience to flooding. The program in its first five-year phase was successful in impacting the lives of over 225,000 people and establishing a clear, practical methodology to understand how resilience was built. This methodology is at the heart of the second phase of the program, called the Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities approach (FRMC).

We also learnt some significant lessons from phase I that we incorporated into phase II which this report highlights. First, by spending deliberate time and resources, the Alliance has become more than just a name. The focus on governance that facilitates genuine collaboration has led to a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for outcomes that was not strongly felt in the first phase. It has also led to a better harnessing of capacity across all of the partners to focus on delivery across multiple fronts.

This foundational work has already started to achieve some excellent results. In particular there are three areas that stand out for me:

First, direct action on the ground has already engaged over 115,000 people in 60 additional communities across the world. The process has identified strengths and weaknesses, and helped to design interventions that will transform lives when faced with future flood events. This is a good start on our way to influencing change for 2 million people through direct and indirect efforts.

Second, we have been successful in influencing the way in which other community organizations commit money to building flood resilience. In the first year, other actors spent around $1 million and committed to spend a further $24 million. To put this in perspective, whilst this is only scratching the surface of our target of influencing $1 billion, it is more than the Z Zurich Foundation has committed to the whole of phase II, showing we have leveraged more than our own commitments.

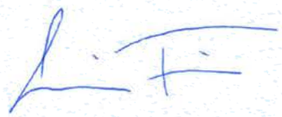
Third, the development of a clear strategy for our advocacy work, together with clear policy asks has started to bear fruit with the messaging being repeated in national and global policy forums. In particular, the closing remarks of the chair of the UNDRR's Global Platform event used our messaging verbatim about:

"an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable development […]research-based evidence provided proof of the multiple dividends of risk-informed decision-making to build resilience, and not only to avoid loss."

All of this is a good start, but we have a long way to go.

In this report, you will be able to read about the foundational work behind the Alliance as well as early results. More importantly, the report is designed to draw out lessons from the experience both for the partners and the wider resilience world.

I'm very proud about our work so far and I hope that you enjoy reading about it. You can follow our progress through the Zurich website (https://www.zurich.com/sustainability/our-role-in-society/flood-resilience) as well as finding technical knowledge and support through our Portal (https://floodresilience.net/)



Linda Freiner
Group Head of Sustainability
Zurich Insurance Group

1.0 Introduction

The goal of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (the Alliance) is to deliver resilience programming that achieves lasting, systems-level change. Our hypothesis is that to do this, you need a flexible collaborative working together across a diversity of sectors and scales over time periods long enough to develop a nuanced understanding of opportunities and entry points. This report focuses on the establishment, structure, process, and overarching objectives of the Alliance, how it has been designed to deliver resilience outcomes, the early successes this is already enabling, and the implications for resilience funding and practice.

The information included in this report, which we plan to update and publish on an annual basis, has been gathered through interviews with 24 Alliance members at both country and global levels, from workstream and organisational reports, and from the first year of outcomes-based monitoring and reporting by all Alliance organisations and country teams.

Section 1 describes who the Alliance is and what is different about how we're approaching resilience and collaboration. Section 2 describes the structure and approach of the Alliance. Section 3 explores the Alliance internal systems, processes, and ways of working that enable collective action and integrative programming. Section 4 describes the impact and influence we are already having as a result of our work together. Section 5 lays out implications of this learning for resilience programming, both for long term collaborations and for shorter term, discrete projects and engagements. Section 6 concludes with a call to action, based on the lessons the Alliance has learned to date.

1.1 The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance

Floods affect more people globally than any other type of natural hazard and cause some of the largest economic, social, and humanitarian losses. In response to clear need, in 2013 the Zurich Insurance Group, with funding from the Z Zurich Foundation, launched the Zurich Flood Resilience Program, bringing together a multi-sector partnership focused on finding practical ways to help communities strengthen their resilience to floods globally. The original Zurich Flood Resilience Program was refunded and relaunched in 2018 as the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance. We refer to both phases of Zurich flood resilience work as "the Alliance" below.

Grounded in an understanding of resilience that is holistic and wide-ranging, the Alliance developed the following definition of disaster resilience to guide our work:

"the ability of a community to pursue its development and growth objectives, while managing its disaster risk over time in a mutually reinforcing way."

This definition is operationalized through the Alliance Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC) approach, which uses systems thinking to holistically evaluate assets, resources, and characteristics at the community level that contribute to building resilience.

Community monitoring network meeting in Chosica, Peru © Giorgio Madueño, **Practical Action**

The initial five-year (Phase I) Zurich Flood Resilience Program, funded to run from 2013 to 2018, focused on working with communities and local and national governments to shift investments from post-event recovery to pre-event resilience building. This first phase of the Alliance reached approximately 225,000 direct beneficiaries across 13 programmes in nine countries. Key achievements included:

- Social transformation in vulnerable peri-urban Peruvian communities through the establishment and capacity building of community disaster risk reduction brigades;
- Development of an early warning system in Nepal based on phone tree communication at the local and regional level that is now being expanded to downstream communities in India;
- Development of a forensic post-event review (PERC) methodology and manual[1] to support actively learning from natural hazard events that become disasters;
- Review of 13 flood disasters in the EU, USA, Morocco, Nepal, and Peru to identify resilience successes and entry points for further building resilience;

"Having operated for the full 5 years of Phase I in three countries, we have built up a reputation and are a solid technical partner to government on DRR and particularly early warning systems. It's taken time, but our success vindicates that investment."

- Alliance partner

1 See here for more information: https://floodresilience.net/perc

Year 1

Disccusing FRMC results with the community in Nepal © Madhab Uprety, **Practical Action**

As the Alliance developed our vision of community resilience and associated resilience framework over the course of these initial five years, it became increasingly clear that building long-term community resilience requires a deep analysis of local contexts and issues first, and then time to develop and implement projects that address identified needs.

- Establishment of three Flood Resilience Portals[2], in English, Nepali, and Spanish, for sharing information and learning about flood resilience;
- Creation of 341 knowledge outputs outlining best practices for building resilience.

1.2 The Alliance Phase II

In 2018 the Z Zurich Foundation extended 20.3 million CHF in funding for an additional five-year phase of the Alliance. In Phase II, the Alliance has been broadened to include new members and more ambitious goals have been set— namely, to increase flood resilience spending at local, national, and global levels by 1 billion USD and to increase the flood resilience of 2 million people.

The successful extension of funding for an additional phase is a testament to the achievements of Phase I, as are the expanded partnerships and goals of Phase II, all of which are solidly grounded in the initial five-year Alliance programme funded by Zurich.

In Phase II, the Alliance is focused on increasing ex-ante investment to address flood resilience through:

2 See here for English portal, https://floodresilience.net/; Nepali portal, https://floodresilience.net.np/; Spanish portal, https://infoinundaciones.com/

- Working in communities across multiple countries to generate empirical evidence of how to build and measure flood resilience;
- Conducting further post-event studies to understand why events become disasters and provide practical recommendations for the future;
- Expanding community flood resilience knowledge and solutions available across the sector through the existing Alliance online portals and through creation of additional language and/or regionally adapted portals;
- Coupling and enhancing community-generated knowledge with existing and new peer reviewed research;
- Using practical knowledge and research to actively advocate at sub-national, national, and international levels;
- Advocating for policy and investments that build flood resilience; and
- Influencing practitioners to adopt more effective flood resilience practices.

Based on lessons learned in Phase I, the Alliance has spent the first year of Phase II establishing governance systems and frameworks to support the development, measurement, and achievement of Alliance goals and to enable effective collaboration across nine very different partner organisations. Year one has also seen the development of the tools, guidance, training, and coordination mechanisms needed to support the application of the Alliance's flood resilience measurement approach within a wide range of communities across multiple countries, which in turn will serve as the basis for development and implementation of flood resilience interventions.

"Phase I felt like a group of organizations being funded to do things that were related to one another. In Phase II, it feels much more that we're collectively working to achieve a set of common goals."

- Alliance member

Year 1

2.0 Structure and approach of the Alliance

The Alliance approach to collaboration goes significantly beyond that of more common consortia approaches. Traditional programmes and initiatives are often piecemeal and do not necessarily live beyond their funding unless tied to policy change. Creating policy impact, however, requires strong evidence from the ground regarding effective approaches, the results those approaches produce, and the benefits those results provide. It also requires consistent, clear messaging tailored to the needs of the audience and delivered by a credible source. The Alliance has intentionally set up systems and approaches that allow us to take collective responsibility to meet each element of this demand so that we can effectively link activities on the ground to lasting, beneficial changes in sub-national, national, and global resilience practice, policy, and spending.

2.1 Alliance Partners

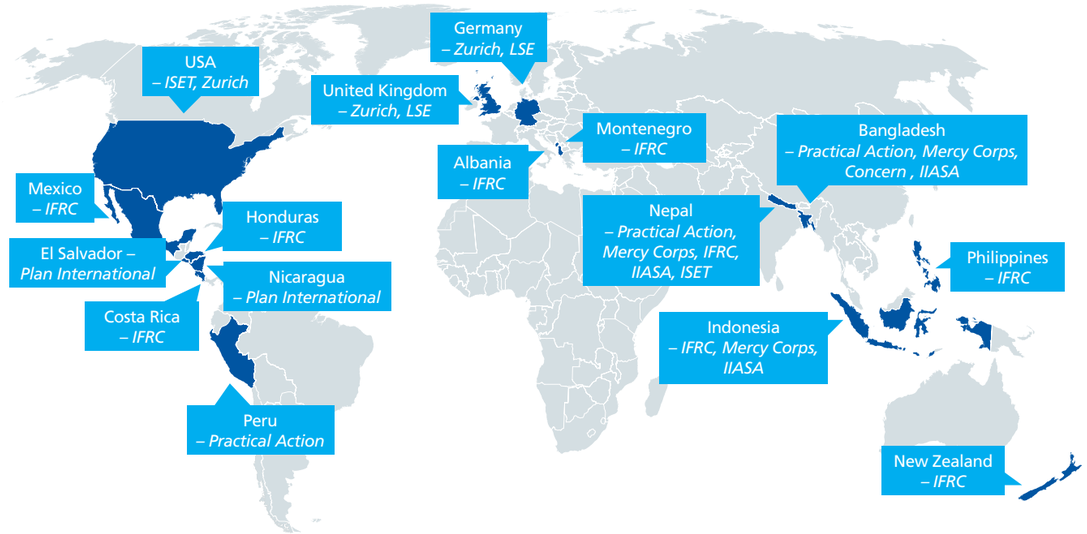
The Alliance comprises nine organisations — including private industry, international development and humanitarian organisations, and research – that have been working collaboratively for 6 years[3]:

- **Concern Worldwide (Concern)**
- **Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-International (ISET)**
- **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** and the Red Cross National Societies of Albania, Costa Rica, Honduras, Indonesia, Mexico, Montenegro, Nepal, New Zealand, and the Philippines.
- **International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)**
- **The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)**
- **Mercy Corps (MC)**
- **Plan International (Plan)**
- **Practical Action (PA)**
- **Zurich Insurance Group and Z Zurich Foundation (Zurich)**

Successful collaboration across these nine organisations has required consistent relationship building and a willingness to take the time and effort to understand the different incentive structures, goals, and values of the various member organisations. It has required the patience to slow down, and it has required flexibility on the part of Zurich, as the donor, to allow the work to adapt to the needs on the ground. The benefit has been in harnessing the diverse strengths and skills sets of Alliance partners to achieve a common goal, and in learning from one another to see and tackle problems in new ways.

3 See here for more information: https://floodresilience.net/about-us/who-we-are

Figure 1 Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance Phase II country-level engagement



Map indicates community-based programs, post-event analysis (PERC), research studies and public policy advocacy.

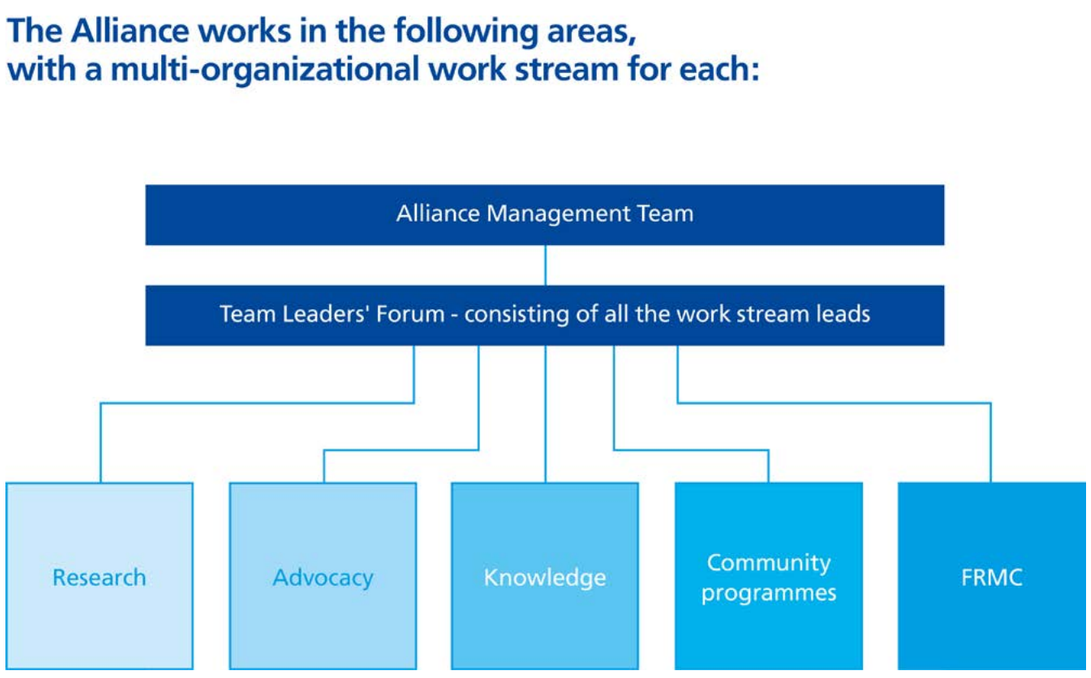
2.2 Workstreams and Governance Bodies

Operationally, the Alliance is divided into five workstreams — advocacy, community programming, knowledge, research, and Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities — and two governance bodies — the Team Leaders Forum and the Alliance Management Team (Figure 2). The primary goals and objectives of each of these groups are listed below.

- The **Advocacy Workstream** is influencing policy and spending for flood resilience at international, national, and sub-national levels. This includes working to influence the structure, focus, and amount of funding for flood resilience available through official development assistance (ODA), non-ODA, philanthropic funding, and private sector investments. It also includes advocating for improved implementation of relevant frameworks, policies, and programmes at national and global scales.
- The **Community Programmes Workstream** is generating practical and context specific evidence for improving community-based flood resilience. This includes coordinating application of the Alliance flood resilience approach across all partner organisations and country programmes, and providing support for project planning, intervention design and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The workstream also supports cross-learning between projects, countries, and organisations.
- The **Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC) Workstream** is tasked with closing the resilience measurement gap[4] through the development and

4 The United Nations Development Programme stated in one of its papers that: "no general measurement framework for disaster resilience has been empirically verified yet". Winderl, T. (2014), Disaster resilience measurements: Stocktaking of ongoing efforts in developing systems for measuring resilience, UNDP.

Figure 2 Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance workstreams and governance bodies



validation of a reliable, credible, and practical framework and content for measuring flood resilience in communities. To achieve this, the FRMC workstream has revised the FRMC approach and trained users on its use in year one of Phase II. In subsequent years, they will support country teams in using FRMC results to develop and prioritize resilience activities, validate the FRMC, and support scaling of the Alliance flood resilience approach.

- The **Knowledge Workstream** is tasked with building capacity for good knowledge management and uptake across the Alliance. To support this, the workstream devoted year one to developing appropriate platforms for internal and external sharing, accessing, and engaging with knowledge. Year one was also devoted to developing and disseminating an Alliance brand to raise awareness of the Alliance and ensure consistency of its external profile. Moving forward, the workstream will support identification and synthesis of lessons and facilitation of co-production of knowledge across the Alliance.
- The **Research Workstream** is tasked with providing evidence to support resilience decision-making. This includes analysis of the usability and validity of the FRMC, exploration of how the FRMC can be used in urban and OECD contexts, and research on risk governance best practices and incentives.
- The **Team Leaders' Forum (TLF)** is composed of the leaders of each of the above workstreams, plus one representative from each Alliance organisation not leading a workstream. The TLF is designed to facilitate coordination across workstreams and work plans, so that the workstreams can work effectively together to achieve the Alliance Theory of Change (ToC). The TLF is therefore responsible for resolving cross-workstream issues, providing guidance and process direction, and reporting on Alliance outcomes and strategic and operational performance to the Alliance Management Team on a 6-monthly basis. Effectively, the TLF is the Alliance project manager.
- The **Alliance Management Team (AMT)** is composed of one designated representative from each Alliance member organisation and is chaired by the Zurich Insurance Group. The AMT is tasked with reviewing progress against the Alliance vision and strategic objectives, with setting operational priorities and resetting direction as appropriate, and with ensuring effective deployment of resources. In the case of operational challenges or problems, the AMT is the final body for resolution. The AMT provides Alliance summary reports to the Z Zurich Foundation and Zurich Insurance Group Corporate Responsibility Working Group.

The workstreams structure is designed to support the Alliance in working towards a common set of objectives and goals. The workstreams and governance bodies together support a distributed operational model designed to allow all partners to take responsibility for the delivery of Alliance objectives, with no single organisation, including Zurich, being the sole 'manager' of the Alliance.

2.3 Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC)

Measuring the change that resilience-building efforts have is key for demonstrating impact in communities, yet there is a lack of evidence about which pre-event resilience-building initiatives actually make a difference when a flood comes. Accordingly, in December 2013 the Alliance set out to develop a verifiable approach for measuring community flood resilience. The resulting Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC)[5] consists of a holistic framework that promotes systems thinking to understand the resilience context of a community, and an associated hybrid online and mobile app-based software tool to implement the framework in practice.

The FRMC assesses resilience across five complementary 'capitals' (5C)[6] and four properties derived from resilient system-thinking (4R)[7] that help people on their development path and provide capacity to withstand and respond to shocks. For the launch of Phase II of the Alliance, the FRMC framework was revised based on user feedback and review of the Phase I data. FRMC Next Gen significantly reduces the complexity of the tool, streamlining application. The FRMC, also called the 5C-4R framework, may be used freely for research and non-profit purposes.

Alliance communities and their Alliance partners work together to use the knowledge gained from application of the FRMC to identify potential flood resilience interventions that can generate co-benefits across a broad range of issues and areas. Alliance partners assist communities in designing effective interventions to address those needs, taking into consideration factors needed to minimize maladaptation or adverse impacts on other sources of resilience. The FRMC provides a space for Alliance partners to engage

5 See here for more information: http://floodresilience.net/FRMC
6 Robert Chambers' Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), which was adopted by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).
7 Developed at the Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research (MCEER) at the University of Buffalo.

Figure 3 The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance Theory of Change

with all groups within the community and prompts them to ground truth results and to ask themselves what they are doing to promote inclusion of the community.

This approach is critically different from that of more traditional funding and makes the Alliance quite unusual. Use of the FRMC encourages practitioners to conduct a deep analysis of the community as a system BEFORE considering how to intervene. More traditional project funding is often based on scant analysis and off the shelf solutions. Our expectation is that deepened understanding will lead to more locally relevant and holistic approaches for building resilience.

2.4 The Alliance Global Theory of Change

The Phase II Theory of Change (ToC) was developed to articulate how the Alliance would influence flood resilience spending, practice, and policy. The global ToC is divided into three objectives and associated sub-objectives that bound the change the Alliance aims to achieve (Figure 3).

The logic behind the ToC is:

a. Influencing shifts in spending and policy requires an evidence base for how and why to build flood resilience,

b. That evidence base can and should be generated through community programming and research efforts,

c. Allocation of flood resilience funds and implementation of flood resilience policy will support and improve on-the-ground efforts to build resilience.

Table 1 Alliance change pathways for achieving Theory of Change Objectives 1,2, and 3

Change Pathway		1st-Step Outcome	2nd-Step Outcome	3rd-Step Outcome
OBJECTIVE 1 INCREASE INVESTMENT FOR FLOOD RESILIENCE	1A	Alliance partners build relationships with key international donors	International donors commit to increase spending to address flood resilience	International donors more effectively invest to address flood resilience
	1B	Alliance partners build relationships with key national stakeholders	National governments publicly commit to more effectively invest in flood resilience	National governments more effectively invest in flood resilience
	1C	Alliance partners build relationships with key sub-national/local stakeholders	Targeted sub-national/local stakeholders commit to increase spending on flood resilience	Spending on flood resilience at the sub-national/local level increases
	1D	Innovative private sector or public-private finance opportunity created	Innovative private sector or public-private finance opportunity is piloted	Successful elements of pilot are replicated in other contexts
OBJECTIVE 2 POLICY AT GLOBAL, NATIONAL, OR LOCAL LEVEL IS IMPROVED	2A	The Alliance has a presence in discussions on global mechanisms and policy negotiations	ZFRA is an information/ knowledge source on flood resilience for global policies and mechanisms	Flood resilience is recognized in global policies and mechanisms
	2B	Targeted national government stakeholders understand why and how to strengthen laws, policies, and enabling environments related to floods	Targeted national governments have strong and effective laws and/or policies related to flood resilience	Targeted national governments implement strong and effective laws and/or policies related to flood resilience
	2C	Targeted local/sub-national stakeholders understand how and why to strengthen policies, plans and enabling environments related to floods	Targeted local/sub-national stakeholders have strong and effective policies or plans related to flood resilience	Targeted local/sub-national governments implement policies or plans related to flood resilience in a positive enabling environment
OBJECTIVE 3 IMPROVE FLOOD RESILIENCE PRACTICE	3A	Communities where we work are aware of their flood risk	Communities are taking appropriate action to reduce flood risk	Flood affected communities where we work are more flood resilient
	3B	Targeted national/local government representatives, offices, and departments are aware of and recognize their role in addressing flood risk affected communities	Governments are using (elements of) the FRMC to guide policy implementation for flood resilient community development	Government prioritizes flood resilience investments
	3C	Alliance partners and NGOs see the value of FRMC for programme cycle management	Alliance partners identify and pilot new solutions for flood resilience	The Alliance has demonstrably influenced systemic thinking around flood resilience

Note: 1st-step outcomes are the shortest-term goals and 3rd-step outcomes are the longest-term goals.

Year 1

Figure 4 Inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact

INPUTS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
• money • staff time • internal and external expertise	• knowledge products • community interventions	• plans, policies, and finance commitments • increases in stakeholder knowledge,capacity, and collaboration • demonstration of flood resilience best practice • changes in stakeholder behaviour	• increased spending on flood resilience • improved flood resilience policies • increase in community flood resilience

→ *We want to document our **impact** - how our actions are improving lives - not just our outputs and outcomes.*

The ToC reflects the structure of the Alliance. The Advocacy workstream is primarily responsible for delivering Objectives 1 and 2, particularly at the global level. The Community Programmes workstream is responsible for delivering Objective 3, as well as contributing to delivering Objectives 1 and 2 at the national and sub-national level. The enabling workstreams (Knowledge, Research, and FRMC), and the governance bodies (TLF and AMT) support the advocacy and community programmes work and facilitate cross-workstream synthesis.

The ToC objectives are high-level, long-term goals, and are therefore broken down into a set of change pathways that outline incremental outcomes that contribute to the ToC and allow the Alliance to measure change and progress toward ToC objectives. Each change pathway (see Table 1) is made up of three levels of outcomes. The first step outcomes are those the Alliance expects to achieve earlier in the five-year programme period and the third step outcomes are the outcomes the Alliance expects to achieve later in or even after the five-year programme period. While the change pathways are presented as discrete, parallel paths, in reality they are nested.

2.5 Country-Level Theories of Change

Country-level theories of change were developed in parallel with the global ToC. While the global ToC defined the change pathways pursued by the Alliance overall, country teams were able to choose which change pathways or step outcomes of change pathways they would address based on their context. Country-level ToC development was informed by extensive analyses of the landscape for flood resilience policy, spending, and action at the national and/or sub-national levels. Country-level ToCs were referenced against the global ToC to ensure that all of the change pathways are being addressed.

Community monitoring network meeting in Chosica in Peru © Giorgio Madueño, **Practical Action**

2.6 Monitoring, Reporting, and Learning System

The Alliance Monitoring, Reporting, and Learning (MRL) system was developed to measure not only how the Alliance is progressing against the global ToC, but also to document the impact of the Alliance both within communities and as a result of advocacy. Reporting into the overall system occurs on a six-monthly basis, and feeds into an annual synthesis learning report.

The design of the MRL system reflects the wider trend in development programmes toward measuring outcomes rather than outputs. Traditionally programmes have focused on monitoring activities and outputs accomplished. However, individual outputs do not necessarily aggregate to create systemic shifts. Measuring success in resilience programmes requires monitoring diverse but coordinated interventions designed to shift entire systems, something far easier to achieve by focusing on outcomes.

However, even for an outcomes-based monitoring approach, the Alliance MRL system is complex. This is reflective of the complex nature of the Alliance. There are few, if any, programmes that are as cross-sectoral and cross-scalar as the Alliance; measuring change across these different strands requires multiple, interconnected elements. To streamline this complexity as much as possible, the MRL system was developed collaboratively to ensure that change and learning are aggregated at the workstream level rather than the organisational level. The collaborative nature of our MRL system development has also ensured the system is able to measure the change we are achieving while also meeting internal information needs to support better cross-Alliance coordination and strategy.

3.0 Enabling an Alliance

Year one of Phase II of the Alliance has focused primarily on building internal capacity and collaboration and setting up the foundation and systems to enable implementation of activities, collective action, and learning. This process has been informed by learning from Phase I, but has also been emergent as challenges have cropped up and needs have been identified.

Setting up an integrated, multi-organisational group is challenging and complex. For the Alliance, it has taken longer than expected and required significant financial commitment. Many within the Alliance have expressed that the first year has been too focused on planning and processes and that the Alliance has been over-engineered, and yet there is also broad consensus that taking the time to build this foundation will pay dividends over the five-year programme period. This section describes how the Alliance was set up and discusses some of the key enabling factors and challenges.

3.1 Establishing the Alliance

Phase I of the Alliance was an alliance in name but functioned primarily as a series of loose partnerships. Partners had bilateral memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with Zurich and there was no linking framework, ToC, or governance system to incentivise collaboration and collective action. As a result, Alliance organisations and initiatives in Phase I, with the exception of the development of the FRMC, remained siloed and organisations pursued their own activities. The development of the FRMC is one of the most widely lauded achievements of Phase I and was borne out of facilitated collaboration between all the Phase I Alliance members.

Phase II of the Alliance has been modeled around the approach used in the development of the FRMC. The Alliance in Phase II consists of diverse organisations from the practitioner, private sector, academic, and advocacy communities working together under a common strategic directive to co-produce outcomes. Alliance organisations all agree that they feel they are collectively working to achieve a common set of goals.

Building this structure has involved creating and cultivating an environment that supports:

- Establishing and strengthening partnerships,
- Developing an Alliance identity, and
- Building a shared vision.

3.1.1 Establishing and strengthening partnerships

Relationships from Phase I have been an important foundation for Phase II of the Alliance. The majority of the partners involved in Phase II were involved in Phase I, either as core implementation and research partners or as boundary partners implementing the FRMC in communities. Working with the same organisations and maintaining continuity between Phase I and Phase II has enabled the Alliance work to continue in some of the same communities to grow the evidence base on long-term resilience building. For the partners, organisations already have a sophisticated understanding of each other, in particular each others' strengths and constraints, which has accelerated the year one work.

Flood drill in Peru © Giorgio Madueño, **Practical Action**

For Zurich, the benefit of working with organisations they had worked with previously meant that they did not have to go through the process of building trust or building understanding of the Alliance and its goals. Expectations around designing and implementing a holistic, integrated resilience programme and what partners needed to deliver relative to the programme were clear from the beginning. The diversity of partner organisations provided a depth of experience working on issues of vulnerability, DRR, adaptation, and resilience across scales (i.e. local to international). This diversity also made it relatively easy to divide responsibility for different roles; partners volunteered for the roles they could most strongly deliver within the Alliance constellation.

Building collaborative relationships has not been entirely smooth. Year one of Phase II has required significantly expanding and deepening relationships, including sometimes coming into conflict and identifying mutually acceptable ways to move forward. It is a tribute to the

"In Phase I, we had a joint vision but it wasn't fully operationalized. In Phase II, we already have relationships built, which is a big deal because they take time. This is a big building block to already have in place."

- Alliance member

organisations and individuals involved in the Alliance, and to Zurich and who they selected for this alliance, that we have been able to come together so strongly. This has been aided by transparency, both between partners and between Zurich and the rest of the Alliance. In particular, issues around funding for the various partners have been shared from the initial proposal stage onward. Building partnerships has also been aided by using conflict as an opportunity and actively unpacking and learning from that conflict rather than attempting to hide it, avoid it, or pretend it was a one-time event that will not reoccur.

Investing in relationships has yielded strong benefits. Partners can be and are transparent with one another, including around capacity and resource availability, and are working effectively and leveraging their diverse capacities and strengths to achieve common goals. However, it has also highlighted the impact of staff turnover that organisations have experienced during this first year. Because of the depth of relationships that have been built between individuals, and because of the complexity of the Alliance, on-boarding replacement staff requires significant investment. Lacking that investment, areas of work within an organisation or indeed an entire organisation can become disconnected and require concerted effort not just within their organisation but from other Alliance members to reconnect them.

3.1.2 Developing an Alliance identity and building a shared vision

Much of the work of co-producing an Alliance identity and shared vision began during a six-month ramp-up phase funded by Zurich prior to the official start of Phase II. Developing a shared vision that aligned with the visions of partner organisations was challenging because of Zurich's central focus on floods, as opposed to a broader, multi-hazard approach to resilience. The pros and cons of of a single vs. multi-hazard focus have continued to be discussed throughout the first year. Nonetheless, most Alliance members also acknowledge that the single-peril focus on flood resilience gives the Alliance specificity and a tangible goal.

During the six-month ramp-up phase, MoUs were also finalized, workstream Terms of Reference (ToRs) were developed, partners worked to engage the right people from within their organisations, and partners began to establish ways of working and linkages between the various elements of the Alliance. The Alliance also began to identify shared objectives that contribute to flood resilience and to develop a global Theory of Change (ToC, Figure 3). Developing the global ToC and nested country-level ToCs was a months long iterative process requiring extensive analyses of international and national political landscapes and stakeholders to contextualize and narrow the objectives. The resulting core objectives and sub-objectives are necessarily broad, as a means to encompass the diversity of activities that Alliance organisations are conducting, and very high-level. Change pathways (Table 1) were developed to link anticipated activities at the global and country levels to the high-level ambition of the objectives. Though this process was more time consuming than expected, it resulted in strong collective ownership and significant clarity around how activities at all levels would contribute to Alliance outcomes.

Key to the TOC is the Alliance approach to resilience, which assumes the work requires a deep, systems-level understanding of community capacities, vulnerabilities, and needs. Developing this understanding requires working in collaboration with communities to prioritize, design, and implement resilience interventions, as opposed to arriving in the community with a prescriptive idea of what needs to happen. There has been significant buy-in across the Alliance into this type of community-led approach.

Boats serve as transport during floods in Jonuta, Tabasco in Mexico © **Michael Szoenyi, Zurich**

Despite the work to make the ToC as actionable as possible, the scope of the Alliance and its vision remain enormous, and there are concerns that the scope does not match the funding available. Part of the challenge is that funds are disproportionately flowing to the headquarters offices compared to more conventional projects. The level of cross-organisational and cross-country coordination required in the Alliance has made this a necessity, particularly the training and capacity building required to use the FRMC. Nonetheless, it has been a significant challenge for development organisations to justify. As a result, some organisations are working to leverage external funding to help co-deliver on Alliance goals or are finding ways to align Alliance activities to complement other existing work in ways that deliver for all projects and donors.

3.2 Functioning as a collective

Functioning as a collective has required bridging divides and silos. In particular, each ToC objective is being delivered by multiple organisations working within and across workstreams at multiple scales. The collaboration within the Alliance required to achieve

"The Alliance is the biggest consortium I've been a part of that's actually worked out as a coordinated team. The way we're getting the Alliance to work in a coordinated fashion is unusual and a real achievement."

- Alliance member

Year 1

Working with the community of San Miguel de Viso, Peru © Giorgio Madueño, **Practical Action**

"The fact that Concern, Mercy Corps, and Practical Action are all working in Bangladesh but with slightly different focus will really help us deliver advocacy at the national and international level."

- Alliance county team member

this has not simply occurred organically. Rather, collaboration has been facilitated through significant investment in internal structures, systems, and processes.

The structures and systems put into place during the first year of the Alliance have done more than just enable the Alliance, however. They have enabled collective thought and tapping into expertise and experience outside of the realm of an individual organisation. This access to expertise and the willingness among organisations and individuals to contribute to joint initiatives has helped the Alliance navigate its way through a lot of complexity and is potentially valuable to organisations beyond just the delivery of the Alliance work.

The key components that have contributed to functioning as a collective are:

- Bridging the divides between the global and country levels;
- Developing structures to support collaboration;
- Developing processes and a culture that facilitate that collaboration; and
- Shifting traditional donor-recipient roles.

3.2.1 Bridging divides between the global and country levels

The Alliance global and country teams are instrumental for delivering the global ToC. Community programming conducted by the country teams forms an important part of the evidence base used for advocacy at sub-national to global levels. At the same time, country teams need technical support from the global Alliance to effectively and efficiently conduct their work. Headquarters staff bridge the divide between the global Alliance and Alliance country teams, representing their country teams in global discussions and communicating decisions, expectations, and processes back to those country teams. When asked whether they would like to be more directly involved in higher levels of decision-making, country teams responded with a resounding 'no'.

However, country teams mentioned that they would like more contact with other Alliance members at both the global and country level to facilitate learning. In Phase I, the Alliance was relatively small and global Alliance members were able to interact regularly with country teams. Alliance regional and global events occurred regularly, as did Alliance leadership calls and visits to country programmes. In Phase II, the increase in the size and geographic distribution of the Alliance has made it difficult to maintain similar levels of contact and interaction.

3.2.2 Better coordination through a workstream structure

The Phase II workstream structure was borne out of a need to decentralize the Alliance and to facilitate collaboration between organisations to co-produce outcomes. In Phase I, the Alliance was centrally managed by Zurich. Identifying synergies and coordinating collective action between the different organisations while also managing the programme was nearly impossible. In Phase II, workstreams, each with multi-organisational membership, are responsible for coordinating, supporting, and overseeing activities under specific themes. Each workstream is led by a different partner organisation based on organisational strengths, and together they deliver practical engagement, advocacy, and the enabling environment and governance needed to achieve that engagement and advocacy.

The workstream structure represents planned coherence between Alliance partners. Without this structure, some kind of division between practice, advocacy, enabling environment, and governance would need to be at least informally replicated within each organisation to enable the delivery of the global ToC. However, doing this on an ad hoc, organisation-by-organisation basis would make it very difficult or impossible to aggregate activity across the Alliance.

Though the workstreams represent planned coherence, they are not without their challenges.

- *Developing a common language to support co-production of outcomes has taken time and effort.* The majority of the Alliance workstreams meet monthly. Smooth functioning requires regular participation of all members and focused time from the workstream lead to set up, facilitate, and track the results of those meetings and move tasks forward. Many Alliance members have questioned in this first year whether we could be doing this more efficiently, but even in hindsight, it isn't clear there is a better way to have approached this.
- *Co-production of workstream materials has needed to balance inclusive decision-making with forward progress.* Co-producing deliverables such as guidance notes has been time consuming, particularly where division of labour and ultimate responsibility are not clear, where different operational styles have come into conflict over content

"Key lessons around coordination? We can't work with all partners – we have to focus on key partners. Working relationships are important. It takes time."

Alliance member

or level of detail, or where it has been necessary to obtain official sign-off from all Alliance members. The key to overcoming these challenges has been communication coupled with an explicit recognition that different organisations have different approaches, needs, and constraints.

- *Matching workstream demands with organisational mandates has required explicit recognition of different organisational approaches, needs, and constraints.* For example, there is a strong call from the Advocacy workstream for specific information to support Alliance messages and asks. Recognizing the country programmes are still in their early stages with little hard evidence to share, the Research workstream has become the focus of these asks. For the researchers, however, the need to balance academic demands with a more service-oriented role presents a challenge. Challenges like this continue to be a discussion point within the Alliance.
- *Replicating the global workstream structure at the country level, particularly in Bangladesh and Nepal where multiple Alliance partners are operating, has been challenging.* This is partially due to a lack of clarity as to who is responsible for allocating roles and responsibilities and whether this guidance needs to come from the global alliance or local leadership. The workstream structure has helped to some degree, as it has pushed partners to come together, develop a common country-level ToC, and use that to develop FRMC implementation, knowledge, and advocacy plans. However, given that this structure was imposed from the global level, additional support in applying it might have been warranted.
- *The workstream structure risks creating new silos.* Each workstream focuses on one 'theme' and for the most part workstream members are only part of one workstream. The TLF was explicitly designed to facilitate cross-communication and prevent silos, and has operated as designed. Nonetheless, over the course of year one it has become clear that the individuals who sit on more than one workstream are critical cross-pollinators, carrying information from one workstream to another and by doing so lightening the load on the TLF. Actively identifying and using those connecting individuals can further facilitate collaboration, yet the value of these cross-pollinators was not identified a priori.

Taking on these challenges, however, is reaping benefits as the workstream structure increasingly contributes to improved coordination. Alliance organisations are building their awareness of each other's activities and are intentionally connecting outputs across organisations. In Nepal, for example, Mercy Corps is now using the results from Practical Action community implementation activities to influence national policy makers and international donors. At the global level, the Advocacy workstream members are actively sharing contacts, developing joint policy briefs and talking points, and working in a coordinated fashion to amplify key messages and maximize impact at specific events.

Evacuation in progress during a flood drill in Nepal © Archana Gurung, **Practical Action**

The structure is also fostering interest in collaboration and learning with, and between, the country and global levels, especially in regards to how teams are sharing FRMC results with communities, learning together how to use FRMC results to identify resilience opportunities and design interventions, and exploring how to use programming learning to influence policy and budgeting. In Bangladesh, Mercy Corps, Practical Action, and Concern are developing a joint national level advocacy plan and budget tracking tool so they can see the impact of their advocacy on government budgets. Mercy Corps and Practical Action have also developed an MoU outlining methods and opportunity for broader collaboration in Bangladesh beyond the Alliance work.

3.2.3 Using tools to facilitate cross-Alliance collaboration

While there are a variety of technologies that the Alliance utilizes to facilitate conversations and workstream calls, finding an optimal solution that works across all nine organisations has been a challenge. To communicate within and across workstreams and organisations, the Alliance has set up several different tools and methods including a quick communication tool (Yammer), a web-based collaborative platform (Sharepoint), and shared tools within Sharepoint (i.e. a shared calendar, shared workplan, etc.). These have complemented bi-lateral communications, monthly workstream calls, and periodic

face-to-face meetings. It has taken time for people to adjust to and adopt new tools and ways of working. However, after a slow start, all Alliance partners are now using these tools fairly fluently.

In Phase I the Alliance convened annual global gatherings. In Phase II, the size and scale of the Alliance has precluded this. Instead the focus has been on regional meetings to convene Alliance country teams working in similar contexts and/or languages, and on global governance meetings. These face-to-face meetings, while expensive and carbon intensive, have proved highly valuable. They provide concentrated work-space, but also an opportunity for Alliance members to connect both across levels — global and country-based — and between countries to share experiences and build in-person relationships. Global-level meetings are expected to decrease over the next year as ways of working, internal systems and processes, and plans are finalized and moving forward. However, the emphasis country-teams have placed on the regional meetings suggests the Alliance needs to find ways to continue these on a strategic basis, while at the same time looking for more effective methods for remote collaboration.

The Alliance also recognized the need to actively facilitate Alliance collaboration. Brought in to lead on 'integration' across the Alliance, ISET has worked in year one to facilitate connections and foster dialogue beyond what the technological platforms can do. This has included building relationships with all of the organisations and many of the country teams, participating in most of the workstreams, and supporting production of many of the guidance documents and policy briefs. ISET's role is an unusual one to actively fund within a collective, but is proving valuable to the Alliance as a whole by helping to identify and address gaps before they become problems.

3.2.4 Supporting collaboration through a common approach

The FRMC is a specific example of using tools to facilitate cross-Alliance collaboration. In the absence of the FRMC, five Alliance organisations implementing resilience programmes in multiple countries would be virtually impossible to strategically compare, learn from, and draw from that engagement best-practices and advocacy messages. Grounding and coordinating the Alliance community engagement through the use of a common approach provides the basis for a collective body of learning. This is of value for the Knowledge and Advocacy workstreams, but also for the Community Programmes workstream and the country teams themselves. Because all of the Alliance teams are approaching resilience using the same toolkit, they have a common language and framing for resilience that allows them to more effectively learn from one another.

Application of the FRMC in Alliance programming is being used by the Research workstream to validate the FRMC, both via user-validation — i.e. do those applying the tool and the communities in which the tool is run believe it adds value to their work and lives respectively — and statistically. However, the tool is currently being run in too few communities to achieve a robust statistical validation. Consequently, there is a significant push for scaling of the FRMC, both within Alliance organisations and to external users. This presents a challenge however, as for many potential users the tool needs to be first validated to encourage its uptake. For now, scaling is being done by entities and organisations that find the functionality of the FRMC compelling and attractive for their needs.

Capacity Building in EWS and Evacuation in El Salvador **© Plan International**

3.2.5 Shifting traditional donor-recipient roles

A key enabler for setting up the structures, systems, and processes to function as a collective has been Zurich's willingness to yield to Alliance partner organisations and to challenge traditional donor-recipient dynamics and roles.

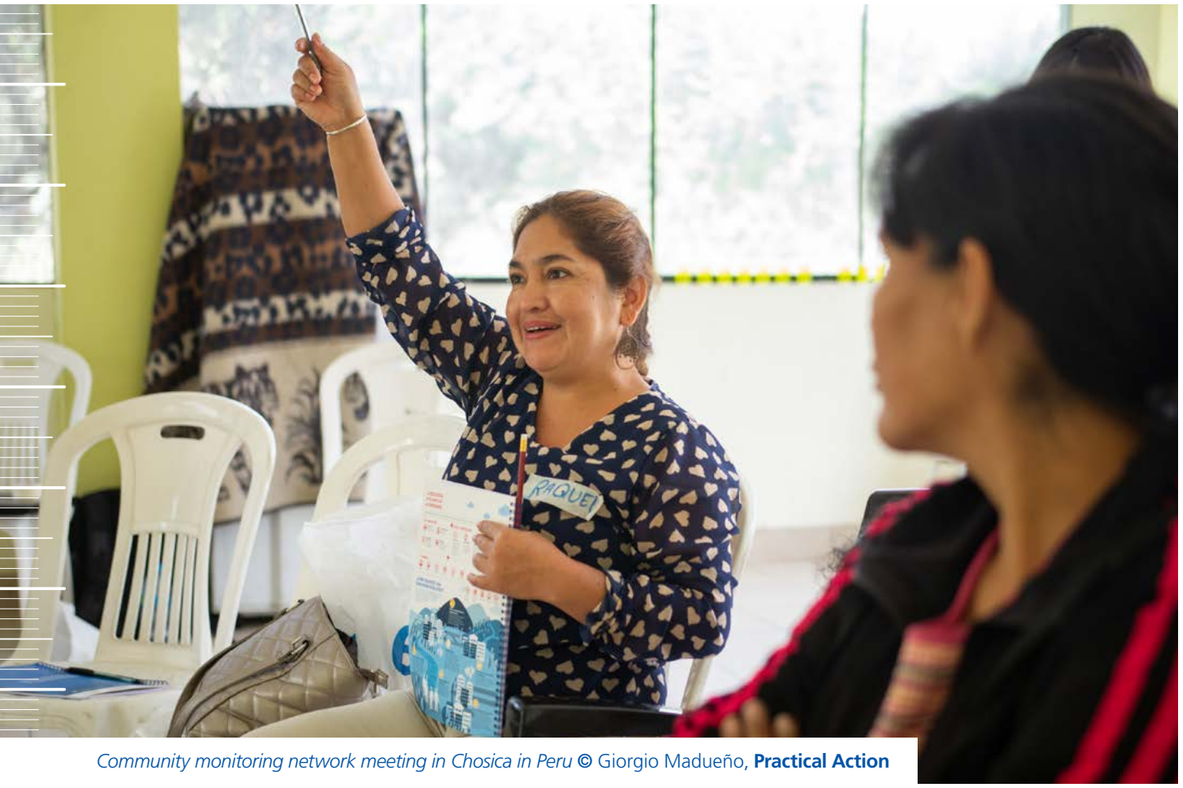
Zurich is both a donor of, and partner in, the Alliance. As a donor, they practice a light, 'hands off' management approach, where they do not need to provide the final stamp of approval on decisions that are made by the governance workstreams. This approach has paved the way for collective decision-making and has naturally led to greater transparency within the Alliance. For example, the bilateral MoUs signed between Zurich and partner organisations and six-monthly organisational progress reports are accessible to all Alliance members.

Shifting traditional donor-recipient roles in the Alliance is an ongoing process. Underlying power dynamics have not been fully overcome and there are questions of whether shared governance can truly happen if Zurich is at the table. Furthermore, the structure of reporting to workstreams has resulted in some confusion and anxiety among Alliance members, especially country teams, as the workstream leads are not the donor.

"Having Zurich as part of the team makes it feel like we can shape things. We know what they're thinking, there's flexibility to discuss priorities, decide we need different tools, etc."

- Alliance member

Year 1



Community monitoring network meeting in Chosica in Peru © Giorgio Madueño, **Practical Action**

"Zurich looks at resilience from a different perspective. Just looking from just one angle can results in gains in one place, collateral damage in another. The FRMC requires looking across multiple areas and thinking where to act and where strengths can be utilized."

- Alliance county team member

These challenges, however, are eclipsed by the benefits. For Zurich, stepping back from programme management has provided them with the space to actively work with partner organisations on Alliance goals. This has been of direct value to all Alliance members in how it has opened opportunity to leverage Zurich's skills and expertise as an equal Alliance partner. In particular, throughout the first year of Phase II, Zurich has been directly engaging in advocacy efforts and is leveraging their influence and networks to open doors for partner organisations engaging in global advocacy. Zurich has also been closely involved in providing country teams with technical capacity to operationalize the FRMC. Zurich's role in the Alliance shows the value added of including the private sector as an active player and not just as a donor; this is an aspect of the Alliance that all Alliance members want to promote more actively within the donor community.

3.3 Building capacity

Alliance organisations have worked globally on vulnerability, disaster risk management, adaptation, and resilience, but not all partners have experience in all of these areas. Some of the organisations and field teams that have a history of working primarily on DRR, preparedness, and/or response have had a hard time moving into the resilience space. To encourage these teams to move away from 'business as usual' and adopt resilience thinking within their organisations, the Alliance has and continues to invest heavily in building resilience understanding and consistent messaging through workshops, trainings, meetings, webinars, and guidance documents. The FRMC has been an especially important resilience learning tool for Alliance organisations, but has also required significant capacity building. Despite having been streamlined between Phases I and II, the FRMC remains a sophisticated tool with more complexity than many country teams are accustomed to.

In doing this type of capacity building work, the Alliance has had to balance meeting the needs of those who want prescriptive guidance while also acknowledging that the Alliance consists of a broad, diverse collection of organisations who have different approaches to doing resilience work. Despite concerns over 'guidance fatigue', these efforts have led to increased understanding of resilience and how to approach resilience programming. A country team that had only implemented preparedness activities prior to joining the Alliance is now quoting systems thinking and is enthusiastic about its potential to deepen their understanding of and engagement with communities and the way the FRMC can support working with the community to design and implement resilience activities. This understanding and appreciation of systems thinking is the first step to Alliance members scaling systems thinking throughout their organisations and programmes and improving resilience practice as a whole.

3.4 Creating a culture of learning

Achieving the global ToC is dependent on using strong internal learning regarding flood resilience best-practices to influence flood resilience investment and policy. This requires both capturing and clearly communicating best-practices, and producing a substantial enough body of knowledge to be compelling.

In Phase I, lack of a common knowledge management approach fundamentally undermined the Alliance's ability to learn from and communicate our work effectively. This was partially rectified in the last two years of Phase I with the intentional investment in knowledge management, including a dedicated staff person, to support the development of the systems, platforms, and approaches needed. In Phase 2, these have been further developed and more actively rolled out. Knowledge management is a core activity for all Alliance organisations and country teams, and is coordinated through the Knowledge Workstream.

The Knowledge Workstream is cross-cutting and has the following roles:

- Knowledge management, including implementing a knowledge strategy that supports the global ToC, building capacity for good knowledge management and uptake across the programme, and raising awareness of the Alliance;
- Knowledge generation, including identifying and synthesizing lessons across the programme, identifying knowledge gaps, and facilitating co-production of knowledge; and,
- Knowledge integration that identifies gaps and highlights collaborative opportunities and synergies through workstream meetings, bilateral conversations, and working groups.

Community testimony on flooding on ZFRA field visit in Community Manuel Buelta y Rayón, Mexico © Brenda Avila, **Mexican Red Cross**

"The MRL system is allowing us to track changes at different levels. It's leading us to think about how to capture different information, and how to gather information in a good way. It's different and interesting."

- Alliance county team member

To support the delivery of these roles, a knowledge mapping process was undertaken during the six-month ramp up phase to determine knowledge needs to achieve ToC objectives. The mapping was cross-referenced with country-level and organisational knowledge plans to identify common bodies of work the Alliance plans on producing in coming years.

A critical system for capturing cross-programme learning is the Monitoring, Reporting & Learning (MRL) system. Phase I did not have a monitoring and evaluation system, making it difficult to know what was achieved. In Phase II there has been significant focus on capturing, monitoring, and evaluating the change resulting from Alliance activities and measuring that change against the global ToC. The reporting for the MRL system consists of both qualitative and quantitative questions structured along the steps and associated indicators of the change pathways which link everyday Alliance activities to the high-level ToC objectives. The MRL questions are designed to capture what change has been achieved and how it was achieved to facilitate internal learning and identify programme-wide lessons for building resilience.

As with the other elements of the Alliance, building these knowledge management and learning systems has taken time, collaboration, and iteration. Each of these systems was spearheaded by one or a small set of individuals, but has undergone review by Alliance members from across workstreams and organisations to assure they are useable, as efficient as possible, and fulfill Alliance needs. The MRL system alone took over six months to design, and will be reviewed based on the first full cycle of reporting.

There are concerns that the expectations around generating and reporting on knowledge are too burdensome. Different organisations prioritise knowledge and learning differently, and have different understanding of how it supports community and advocacy work. Furthermore, where the Alliance knowledge systems are significantly different from organisational practice, the Alliance approach can come as a shock. Consequently, we are working to build capacity around knowledge generation and reporting. Ideally, Alliance organisations will come to feel that the Alliance approach to knowledge generation and capture is a valuable addition to their work.

3.5 Maintaining flexibility

Establishing Phase II of the Alliance has required considerable flexibility from both Zurich as the donor and from all the Alliance partner organisations. The Alliance represents a new way of working, and developing it has come with growing pains. To try to minimize that pain, the Alliance has maintained openness and flexibility around partners approaching their Alliance work in ways that benefit and align with their organisational visions, priorities, and non-Alliance hazards work. The New Zealand Red Cross, for example, stated that the Alliance work fits neatly into their current resilience programming philosophy because it is risk-based. They take a multi-hazard approach, and they feel that the Alliance is flexible and dynamic enough to accommodate that approach despite our focus on floods.

Adaptability in budgeting and planning is a key part of this flexibility. In particular, country-level activities are structured around first running the FRMC, sharing the resulting information with the communities the tool was run in, and collectively developing interventions with those communities to build resilience based on entry points identified by the data. Knowledge generation, research, and advocacy are therefore similarly flexible, responding to needs on the ground and leveraging the direction community activities take. To accommodate this, workplanning is done annually, as opposed to the full five-year period, and incorporates a strong iterative learning component, drawing from the six-monthly and annual reporting, coupled with a forward look at upcoming opportunities to influence sub-national, national, and global policy and planning milestones.

Given the flexibility in so many aspects of the Alliance work, there has been a strong desire to structure things where possible. In doing so, however, the Alliance has had to balance the desire for consistency and uniformity with the recognition that there are contextual and institutional differences and needs across organisations and countries. For example, the FRMC was designed to help organisations develop a deep understanding of their communities and facilitate community participation in intervention design. However, organisations are exploring how to use the FRMC in additional ways, such

Evacuation in progress during a flood drill in Nepal © Archana Gurung, **Practical Action**

"The idea that communities will get to make decisions by themselves for themselves is really exciting. Usually projects are imposed on communities. The Alliance and FRMC process genuinely allows the community to own the work."

- Alliance county team member

as its potential for monitoring and evaluation of interventions or use in understanding and building multi-hazard resilience. This has the potential to add value to the FRMC in ways that were not imagined when the FRMC was first developed, but has required internal discussion and intentionally letting go of control to allow organisations and workstreams the space to think outside of the box and innovate.

Mismatched or unrealistic expectations have also been a challenge. For example, LSE and Zurich had a different perspective on how the FRMC would be implemented in the UK and Germany. Mercy Corps and Zurich found themselves on different pages as to how Mercy Corps would integrate FRMC thinking into community practice. Plans to keep all of the country teams on a similar timeline required adjustment and concessions. In all cases, dialogue has been the key to resolving these challenges and moving forward together. The resulting open and honest reflection has led to greater understanding amongst different parties.

One of the greatest challenges, requiring the greatest flexibility to address, is where organisations have significant institutional constraints and structures that do not intrinsically mesh well with the Alliance approach and structure. Overcoming these constraints requires effort from all Alliance partners to connect across silos and hierarchies within their organisations. In particular, partners have had to generate buy-in for the Alliance approach within their organisations while managing the Alliance's unique administrative and reporting requirements, requirements which in some cases are significantly different from what they use internally. Recognizing the potential risk to the Alliance posed by these challenges, Zurich is conducting risk profiling exercises with each organisation to proactively identify challenges and develop ways to bilaterally address them.

Overall, not everything has gone to plan over the first year. At numerous points in the year organisations, workstreams, and the Alliance as a whole have changed tactics, timelines, and plans. This willingness to adapt to changing circumstances is fortunately a strength the Alliance has collectively developed, because realistically it is a necessity when working with diverse groups and contexts in dynamic conditions.

3.6 How the Alliance experience is changing organisations

Looking back at year one, there is evidence that the Alliance is changing the ways in which member organisations conduct resilience programming.

For the IFRC, the Alliance model of working in multiple countries on multiple fronts and in multiple sectors is new and has exciting potential. The Alliance is the IFRC's flagship multi-sector partnership. For their partner national societies, exposure to different organisations and ways of working and exposure to the FRMC is encouraging different ways of thinking. For example, the Red Cross of Montenegro stated that the Alliance is enabling them to "think outside of the Red Cross box". The impact of this type of shift will be explored in future Alliance reports.

For Practical Action, both Phase I and Phase II of the Alliance obliged them to work in a more integrated way across their knowledge, community implementation, and consultancy streams and also between their field offices and head office. Furthermore, as a result of the Phase II expectations around leading the knowledge management component for the Alliance and adopting the MRL, Practical Action has internally invested in improving their knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation capacity. Aspects of the programme are now being used as best practice within the wider organisation.

For other organisations that are relatively new to the Alliance, it remains to be seen whether or not Alliance practices are taken up more widely or not. There is certainly widespread interest in applying Alliance processes and tools to other hazards provided there is strong evidence of the effectiveness of the Alliance's approach.

4.0 Change in year one

In this first year of Phase II, progress toward achieving Alliance goals has focused primarily on first step outcomes of the ToC change pathways. Where change has been achieved against higher level outcomes, it has largely occurred in areas where we have been able to build on Phase I relationships, activities, and credibility.

4.1 Advocacy

Changes in flood resilience spending and policy (Alliance Objectives 1 and 2) are both founded in building relationships and sharing knowledge and learning across scales. Changes in flood resilience spending will likely be institutionalized or mandated via policy, and spending and policy at the same scale and for the same issues (e.g. flood resilience) tend to be subject to the same enabling environment.

In year one, based on analysis of policy gaps and opportunities, Alliance advocacy efforts are focused on the following 'asks':

- That all development is climate-smart and risk informed;
- That global stakeholders commit to ensuring that DRR and CCA initiatives commit to prioritizing the most vulnerable and marginalized communities;
- That global stakeholders commit to supporting the local levels to increase funding and improve policies to promote resilient communities; and
- That development, DRR, and CCA are approached together, not in isolation from one another.

In making these asks, we are focusing on addressing gaps and improving existing policies rather than proposing new global frameworks, and on increasing the overall global pots of funding for adaptation and DRR as well as how funds are spent, particularly ex ante. In doing so, we are not focusing on flood resilience specifically, but rather on issues and advocacy that have implications for flood resilience, as there is no formal 'pot' of funding or specific global policy on flood resilience. In year one our focus has included a range of issues including loss and damage, innovative financing mechanisms, and integrating ex ante DRR into climate change negotiations. For example, Box 1 illustrates the Alliance coordinated strategy at the 2019 UN Climate Summit.

Advocacy strategies at the country level have been fairly stakeholder-centric. For example, in Indonesia, the country team is focusing on the spatial planning sector and how to better integrate spatial and landscape considerations into the National Adaptation Plan development process. The Peru country team is supporting the Civil Defense Institute on the elaboration of three documents focused on national guidelines for community resilience, community-based early warning systems, and response capacity.

Box 1. A coordinated advocacy strategy for the 2019 UN Climate Summit

For the 2019 UN Climate Summit, the Alliance is working to increase the focus on floods as a major hazard and to push for concrete support for adaptation and DRR in governments' commitments and initiatives. Alliance partners are leveraging their networks to engage diverse stakeholders and pushing out messaging across the spectrum of stakeholders and policy dialogue mechanisms at the UN Climate Summit. Importantly, the Alliance is working to develop a common set of commitments that can be announced at the UN Climate Summit to meet the UN Secretary General's call for ambitious action. The engagement strategy has Alliance partners working in the following ways:

- Zurich is engaging with the World Economic Forum and the United Nations High-level Experts and Leaders Panel (UN HELP) to ensure Alliance messages are included in their coalition advocacy efforts;
- The IFRC is working to shape a chapter of the Global Adaptation Commission Report and is also engaging the Norwegian, Dutch, and German governments to push forth Alliance recommendations;
- Practical Action, Mercy Corps, and Concern are coordinating their engagement within the Resilience and Adaptation Track of the UN Climate Summit to integrate Alliance messaging;
- LSE and IIASA are feeding knowledge on triple resilience dividend decision-making into multiple tracks, including the Global Commission on Adaptation and their flagship report;
- Mercy Corps is feeding into the InsuResilience Global Partnership commitments to the UN Climate Action Summit while the IFRC is helping shape the Risk Informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) that will be a major initiative out of the Adaptation and Resilience Track;
- Concern, Practical Action, and Mercy Corps are planning a session at the Asia Climate Week, where recommendations from the event will feed into UN Climate Summit recommendations;
- Mercy Corps is co-sponsoring the Global Resilience Partnership "Building a Resilient Future" day ahead of the UN Climate Summit where Alliance messages will be heavily showcased.

Advocacy wins to date indicate that 'demonstrations' of successful flood resilience action are important for generating buy-in and ultimately influencing flood resilience spending and policy outcomes. In future years, Alliance members will build out advocacy messages with evidence generated through Phase II community programming and research activities. The FRMC in particular is expected to be a key tool for enabling the generation of evidence-based interventions and best practices that can be leveraged for advocacy.

Cluster feedback workshop in Belka Nobabganj, Sundarganj, Bangladesh © Ohidul Islam, **Concern**

4.1.1 Relationship successes

Alliance teams are pursuing different approaches for relationship-building. This has included:

- *Engaging key stakeholders from across scales to address multi-scalar problems.* In Indonesia, to address watershed-coastal landscape issues, Mercy Corps has initiated engagement with stakeholders from two local cities and the province recognizing their shared authority regarding coastal management.
- *Joining wider networks and working groups that have access to policy dialogues and processes.* For example, Mercy Corps joined the UN Alliance Towards Resilience (A2R), whose goal is to advance efforts around coherence on adaptation, DRR, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Involvement in this group is expected to provide insight into and access to high-level policy conversations.
- *Building cross-sectoral partnerships to implement innovative solutions.* The Alliance programme has opened new doors for Alliance partners. This is due in part to the 'muscle' of Zurich, who have significant political clout and access to policy networks and subject matter experts on topics like innovative finance, and in part because of the Alliance's credibility. The Advocacy workstream, for example, has built relationships with key advisory partners from the insurance, venture philanthropy, humanitarian, and innovative finance sectors. One example of this is the work being done around a feasibility study for an impact bond, where Mercy Corps with additional support from GIZ is partnering with a private sector firm to explore innovative flood resilience instruments.
- *Accessing new policy arenas.* The New Zealand Red Cross reported that the Alliance has allowed them to broaden their relationships beyond their previous response focus, especially into the DRR, climate change, and recovery sectors. For example, they have been able to reach out to the Ministry of Environment, which has been grappling with how to deal with climate risks, and are now being invited to stakeholder meetings around flood risk management.

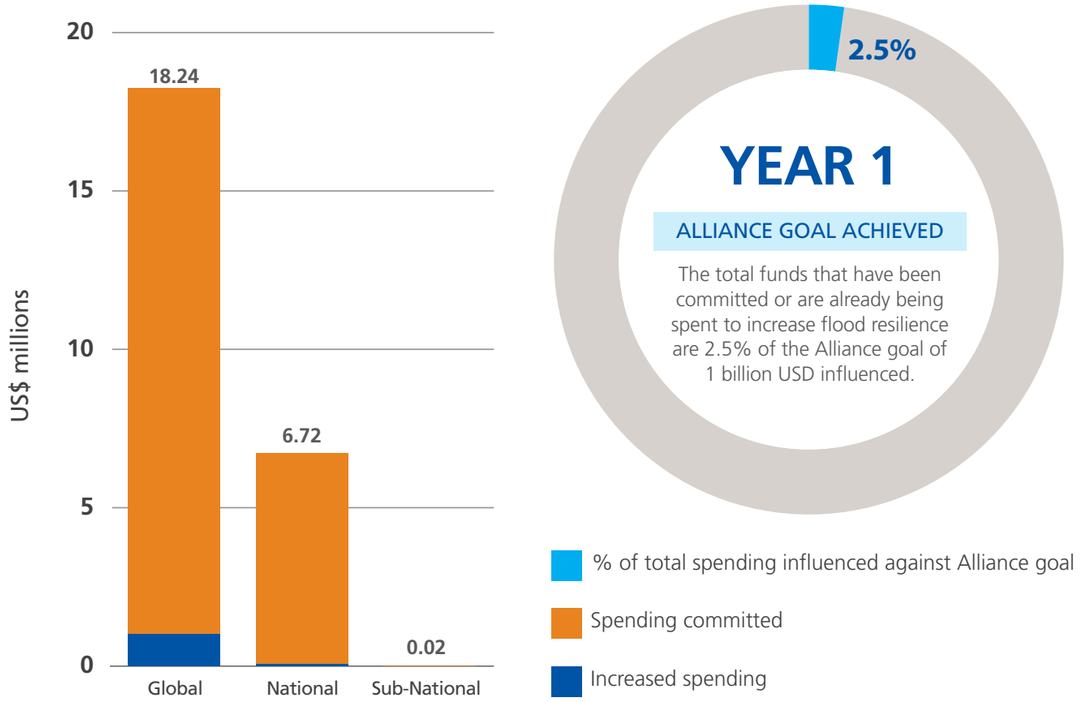
4.1.2 Knowledge successes

Knowledge efforts have helped position the Alliance as flood resilience experts, built awareness of our target flood resilience issues, and paved the way for Alliance teams to be included in policy dialogues.

- *Alliance teams have conducted national and international knowledge events to generate buy-in to the Alliance and increase our visibility.* For example, Concern Bangladesh hosted a national-level inception workshop in March 2019 to introduce the Alliance programme and its objectives. The participation of high-level government officials, including the Minister of Disaster Management and Relief, the Deputy Director of Disaster Management, and the Senior Secretary of the Planning Commission attended the workshop along with other national level stakeholders. Their endorsement of the programme may pave the way to Alliance participation in national policy dialogues and processes.
- *Targeted knowledge input is being provided to specific stakeholders to increase their knowledge on flood resilience issues.* At the global level, collaboration between the Advocacy, Research, and Knowledge workstreams has been key to developing targeted, evidence-based policy messages. For example, the "Ensuring Impact: How CSOs can Strengthen the World Bank's Disaster Risk Financing" paper[8] documents ways in which civil society engagement on DRF can improve ex ante financing and planning. The Centre for Disaster Protection called the paper "thoroughly excellent". The paper put some pressure on the World Bank to demonstrate how they are incorporating vulnerability and gender into their disaster risk financing strategies. As a result, the World Bank is working to identify more ways to work with civil society in disaster risk financing. World Bank staff at the Civil Society Policy Forum also highlighted the importance of engaging CSOs to improve disaster risk financing during an event based on the paper's findings and recommendations.
- *Positioning the Alliance as flood resilience experts is piquing the interest of policy stakeholders at the global and national levels.* Knowledge activities are increasing visibility and credibility of the Alliance and there is preliminary evidence that this interest in Alliance expertise is beginning to lead to opportunities to participate in policy dialogues and processes. For example, IIASA and Mercy Corps have been elected to serve on the Technical Expert Group on Comprehensive Risk Management of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss

8 Vaughan, A., Hillier, D. Ensuring Impact: The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Strengthening World Bank Disaster Risk Financing. (2019). Centre for Disaster Protection. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c9d3c35ab1a62515124d7e9/t/5cacb235971a185e7818c61b/1554821697405/Paper_5_Ensuring_Impact_The_Role_Of_Civil_Society_Organisations.pdf

Figure 5 Spending influenced in Year 1 of Phase II of the Alliance



and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts. This group will advise on risk profiles, risk management strategies, and insurance solutions in the context of averting, minimizing, and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. Mercy Corps will provide this group with a practitioner lens on comprehensive risk management.

- *Peer reviewed research publications are building our reputation as experts in the field.* Two major areas of research focus are the triple dividend approach for building resilience and loss and damage from climate change. A book co-edited by IIASA and LSE and published in 2018, "Loss and Damage from Climate Change"[9], alone has been accessed over 170,000 times. As a result of these types of publications, Alliance research partners are being sought out for advisory purposes by key policy stakeholders. For example, IIASA as been invited to act as an advisor to GIZ with respect to climate risk, transformation, and Loss and Damage science, and to advise the Climate Risk Management unit at GIZ on programming priorities for the next three years. LSE is advising DFID on the basis of the Triple Resilience Dividend work in ways that will help shape DFID's position at the UN Climate Summit in September 2019.

9 Surminski, S., & Tanner, T. (Eds.). (2016). Realising the'triple dividend of resilience': a new business case for disaster risk management. Springer. https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319406930

Box 2. The challenge of determining contribution to policy and spending shifts

To calculate flood resilience spending influenced, each incidence of influenced spending was weighted by the estimated percentage influence the Alliance had on that spending. However, with so many involved in policy processes and the extent of discussion and compromise, it is often difficult to determine exactly who contributed what.

An example of this challenge comes from the Alliance post-event study of the impacts of Hurricane Harvey in Houston and Harris County in 2018[10]. In the process of this work, the Alliance engaged with a broad variety of local stakeholders and government officials, the study release was covered by local and national media, and Zurich and ISET were invited to and participated in follow-up workshops. However, the Alliance was one voice among many. In the aftermath of the disaster, Harvey dominated media reporting and policy discussions, researchers and policy experts from major research institutions in Texas weighed in, and an influential private sector that was deeply impacted by Harvey made their voice heard.

In August 2018, Harris County voters (the Texas county most impacted by Hurricane Harvey) passed a USD 2.5 billion flood bond to invest in flood protection infrastructure. This is a significant increase in spending on flood resilience in Houston, and was overwhelmingly supported by voters. Yet with such a saturated policy arena and major publicity, the level of the Alliance's contribution to the bond measure is subjective and difficult to determine. As a result, we have not included any percentage of USD 2.5 billion in our calculation of spending influenced at this time.

4.1.3 Spending and spending policy successes

As of the end of our first year of Phase II, the Alliance has influenced the commitment of nearly 24 million CHF and the disbursement of over one million CHF for flood resilience (see Figure 5). These investments include:

- Investment by the Nepal Department of Hydro-Meteorology (DHM) in operation and maintenance of the Karnali river gauge station. This gauge is a crucial element of the flood early warning system in the Karnali basin. The DHM's commitment to supporting and disseminating this information has the potential to result in significantly reduced loss of lives and assets.
- Investment by DuPont in replicating the PERC methodology to understand wildfire impacts in California and identify entry points for building wildfire resilience.
- Funding from InsuResilience Global Partnership Secretariat for a feasibility study on a Flood Resilience Impact Bond replicating the DC Water Environmental Impact Bond in Indonesia.

10 Norton, R., MacClune, K., Venkateswaran, K, and Szönyi, M. (2018). Houston and Hurricane Harvey: a call to action. Zurich, Switzerland: Zurich Insurance Company Ltd. https://floodresilience.net/resources/item/houston-and-hurricane-harvey-a-call-to-action-1

Year 1

"The Zurich project is complex. It's impacting us by putting our knowledge in a systematic way. Then we explain to the government what resilience is – they are focused on preparedness, they don't have all these elements of resilience. Working with our partners in the local and central governments, we are also improving our government colleagues' thinking as well."

- Alliance county team member

- Application of the FRMC in a one million USD project in Nepal and India by Lutheran World Relief.
- Co-funding by GIZ and the Municipality of Cetinje for Montenegro Red Cross Alliance activities.
- Funding from the Peruvian National Disaster Fund for rainfall and weather monitoring, coupled with a commitment to adopt or adapt more technically-effective and cost-effective measurement 'solutions' created by the Alliance.
- Uptake of Alliance thinking in the setup of the Atlantic Council and the Asia Regional Resilience to a Changing Climate programme.

It is important to note that these achievements, especially those at the international level, are the result of multi-stakeholder efforts and cannot be solely attributed to the Alliance (see Box 2). We have counted what we estimate to be the Alliance contribution to the overall spending commitment, but in most cases that commitment would not have occurred without the influence of other actors as well.

As expected, actual shifts to spending in the first year of the programme are a fraction of our total goal. However, we have succeeded in gaining access to spending dialogues and processes. Alliance messaging is starting to be incorporated into spending recommendations made by highly influential bodies at national and international levels. For example, at the international level Alliance messages about both increasing ex ante funding for DRR and ensuring DRR initiatives are community-driven and take into account climate change, adaptation, and sustainable development were incorporated into the Chair's summary from the 2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. An example paragraph from the summary incorporating Zurich messaging is:

"Budgetary allocation for disaster risk reduction by all sectors at all levels is needed. This can be supported by aligning integrated national financing frameworks for sustainable development with disaster risk reduction strategies. Participants called for greater devolution of financial resources to local authorities to empower them and identify tailored and community-focused approaches to risk reduction, including through forecast-based financing. Countries also called on donors and international financial institutions to integrate disaster risk reduction in their development assistance".[11]

Similarly, UN HELP's paper, "Principles on Investment and Financing for Water Related DRR"[12], included Alliance recommendations on prioritizing ex ante DRR for water related disasters, non-structural DRR interventions, and blue and green infrastructure. Having these policy

11 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, May 2019. Co-Chairs' Summary, Resilience Dividend: Toward Sustainable and Inclusive Societies. https://static.ptbl.co/static/attachments/211943/1558108996.pdf?1558108996

12 High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP). (2019). Principles on Investment and Financing for Water Related DRR. http://www.wateranddisaster.org/category/documents/

Students at school in Bardiya, whose school building serves as a safe shelter during floods in Nepal © Archana Gurung, **Practical Action**

recommendations taken up opens the door for potential increases in spending on flood resilience.

At the country level, participation in dialogues is largely happening in countries that were part of the Alliance in Phase I, indicating Phase I allowed for the development of the relationships and credibility needed to access these dialogues. Alliance country-level participation is starting to result in early successes in:

- *Supporting national governments to develop messaging for international policy negotiations and events.* For example, in Nepal Mercy Corps was nominated to be a member of the Association of International NGOs - Task Group for Disaster Management. Through this network, Alliance inputs were included into the government's position paper for the Global Platform regarding the importance of cost-benefit evidence for investing in preparedness and the need to support local governments with budgeting, planning, and acting on disaster risk. In Indonesia, Mercy Corps strengthened the Indonesian COP 24 Delegation position on Loss and Damage.
- *Working with governments to increase spending on flood resilience*. A key success is in Peru where SENAMHI approved a 13,200,000 CHF investment in early warning systems as a result of their work with Practical Action Peru. Practical Action, based on their Phase I work with early warning systems, had been sharing data with and providing technical support to SENAMHI's hydrology and meteorology departments.

Working with the community of San Miguel de Viso in Peru © Giorgio Madueño, **Practical Action**

Eventually, a higher-level official requested their support in the development of an early warning system proposal to the national disaster fund. In Nepal, the country team influenced a verbal commitment from municipal authorities to increase budget allocation for flood mitigation and preparedness activities using Alliance messaging that every USD 1 invested in DRR saves an average USD 5 in future losses. Whether or not these commitments are realized will continue to be monitored.

4.1.4 Flood resilience policy successes

The Alliance is also seeing early successes in influencing international and national policy regarding flood resilience.

- Policy content positively contributed to the Swiss government's official statement for the 2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The government's introductory statement was "Resilience pays off" and the concluding statement was "Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, while fully considering the Paris Agreement, will need to foster strategies for climate-smart, risk-informed development." This Alliance message, about the need to build resilience, coupled with our specific wording around "climate-smart, risk-informed development" were picked up by international media.
- The IFRC successfully highlighted both the need to prioritize the most vulnerable and the importance of community-based funding and action at the 2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and succeeded in having this language picked up in the outcome document. This focus, closing the gap between international and local level action on flood resilience, is a key priority for all the Alliance country teams. Critical to this success was leveraging existing networks and relationships to ensure the representation of national voices at the Platform.
- In Nepal, the Alliance country team is working with sub-national through national government on several policy and DRR initiatives, including institutionalizing the flood early warning system piloted by Practical Action Nepal in the Karnali basin in Phase I. They are also working in three flood vulnerable municipalities to support the development of Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plans.
- In New Zealand, the Ministry of Civil Defense and Emergency Management has taken on board the New Zealand Red Cross' advocacy for strengthened national-level flood resilience policy frameworks in their new Disaster Resilience Strategy.
- The Albanian Red Cross successfully advocated for the inclusion of flood resilience into a draft of a new Civil Protection Law.
- In the US, Zurich North America and DuPont co-funded ISET to co-produce a post-event review in California, and Zurich North America is actively using results from PERC reports for South Carolina, Hurricane Harvey, and Hurricane Florence for state and national advocacy. As part of this advocacy, Zurich North America has taken a corporate position regarding climate change. Though not decision-makers, Zurich North America and DuPont are corporations with significant US political influence, and adoption of Alliance messaging could have national impact in what is currently a sensitive political environment.

These successes are far short of what we aim to achieve in the policy arena. However, they are significant given the bulk of our efforts in year one have been devoted to developing common positions, refining language around those positions, and setting up systems for working together to influence the adoption of these positions.

4.2 Community Programming

Country teams have spent year one building knowledge of flood risk and resilience among communities, government, and external NGOs and rolling out the FRMC in their target communities. We have achieved change where country teams and the global Alliance have advocated on Phase I successes. These successes include uptake of the FRMC approach and best practices generated during Phase I among INGOs and government.

4.2.1 FRMC implementation successes

There is unanimous agreement among Alliance country teams that the FRMC has been useful for building knowledge of flood resilience among country team staff. Partner organisations reported that the FRMC has deepened understanding of:

- The impact community conditions have on flood resilience capacity and the value of understanding these conditions before deciding on projects;
- The multi-faceted nature of flood resilience. Prior to exposure to the Alliance, most of the country teams understood resilience only through one or two of the five

Working with the community of San Miguel de Viso in Peru © Giorgio Madueño, **Practical Action**

Knowledge exchange between teams from the Mexican Red Cross and Plan International to define the best ways to use the FRMC tool in El Salvador © **Plan International**

"Zurich's approach to giving time, money and space for analysis at the start of the resilience cycle – we need to promote this as something other funders and donors can do. If Zurich can do it, and it genuinely builds resilience, other people in the international development sector can too."

- Alliance county team member

capitals. The FRMC has expanded their thinking and understanding regarding how each of the five capitals can contribute to resilience;

- The importance of pre-flood action to reduce risk rather than simply focusing on preparedness and response;
- How resilience is affected by a combination of external and internal factors; and,
- How building resilience is an ongoing process that is and must be grounded in the community.

There is anecdotal evidence that local partners of country teams are also learning from the application of the FRMC. Practical Action Bangladesh reported that their partner NGO, Village Education Resource Center (VERC), have changed their understanding of flood resilience and practice through the FRMC training process and data collection. VERC have found the FRMC useful for supporting budget and action planning to build community resilience.

Though country teams see the value of the FRMC for programming, they have also expressed concern over the time and resources required to operationalize the FRMC. Though the investment in developing a deep understanding of the community context, capacities, and needs is highly valuable, it needs to be balanced against getting interventions designed and implemented so that communities can begin to see concrete benefits.

4.2.2 Relationship successes

In year one, much of the focus has been on building or improving relationships with communities, national and sub-national government offices responsible for plans and policies, and technical departments that can support implementation. Relationships Alliance partners are building include:

- *Formal agreements.* In Peru, Practical Action has signed a formal agreement with the Weather Service to jointly work on early warning system related projects.
- *Relationships with non-government stakeholders like INGOs, NGOs, and humanitarian and development organisations.* Plan International in El Salvador presented on the Alliance and their FRMC baselines to the UN and discussed possible synergies and potential areas to partner in.
- *Pairing different types of relationships to strategically implement activities.* The Red Cross of Montenegro is collaborating with GIZ and the Municipality Centinje to co-fund and implement a waterways project in the Zabljak Crnojevica community.

4.2.3 Knowledge successes

Knowledge efforts have helped Alliance teams build relationships across scales, generate buy-in into the Alliance programme and approach, and make the case for flood resilience.

FRMC in San Miguel de Viso in Peru © Giorgio Madueño, **Practical Action**

Year one knowledge successes include:

- *Dissemination of knowledge products.* This year alone 119 knowledge outputs have been produced, largely focused on sharing resilience best practices.
- *Uptake of Alliance knowledge.* Alliance knowledge has been picked up in high-profile external publications. For example, the "Asian Development Outlook" report picked up key Alliance messages including the value of triple dividend, the FRMC, and the importance of community level evidence for decision-making.
- *Building the flood resilience capacity of national and sub-national stakeholders.* Concern, for example, reported that workshops conducted with target communities that share natural capital resources have served as a platform for community-to-community discussions of flood management issues, the first of its kind in Bangladesh.
- *Establishing a reputation for flood resilience expertise*. The Mexican Red Cross has been requested to provide trainings and presentations on their Phase I work to high-level government offices, based on their Alliance-built reputation as flood resilience experts in Mexico.

Knowledge efforts and efforts to generate buy-in for the Alliance have been enabled by a high awareness of flood risk. However, though awareness of flood risk is high, country teams have found it challenging to move governments beyond more traditional activities like building flood protection infrastructure and focusing on response and preparedness.

In some cases, country teams are responding to this challenge by providing government with support on response and preparedness with the hope that this will maintain the relationships and channels of communication to influence shifts to ex-ante risk reduction. For example, the Mexican Red Cross reported that the Civil Protection Coordination of the municipality of Teapa requested a Basic First Aid course. The Mexican Red Cross has agreed to do this with the aim of strengthening inter-institutional links with local authorities to eventually influence adoption of flood resilience practices.

There is very early evidence that key stakeholders are interested in using their knowledge of flood resilience to develop plans and implement action. For example, in Nepal, the UNEP supported Climate Change Fragility Project (CCFP) intends to implement FRMC defined community resilience priorities where they are working with Alliance communities in the lower Karnali basin. Alliance country teams are continuing to engage with diverse stakeholders to leverage resources for identified community priorities and action plans related to flood resilience.

4.2.4 Replication and scaling of the Alliance approach

The Alliance has already, in the first year of Phase II, started to see broader uptake of its approaches and practices. These successes are largely a result of scaling approaches and methodologies in Phase I locations.

- In Mexico, the Mexican Red Cross is applying Alliance approaches and methodologies to design an earthquake resilience programme.
- In Nepal, Practical Action's approach to institutionalize flood early warning systems piloted in Phase I is being utilized by development practitioners and key government departments like the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology.
- In Nepal, a USAID supported OFDA project is using the FRMC for baseline data collection and plans to use the results to guide them in designing early warning system-related interventions.
- Lutheran World Relief is implementing the FRMC in four communities in India and Nepal as part of a cross-boundary flood resilience and early warning system project. They are seeking further funding to apply the approach in additional communities.

There have also been instances of scaling where Alliance members are leveraging their networks to scale out Alliance approaches and, particularly, use of the FRMC outside of Alliance countries.

- Internal to the Alliance, Concern has been raising awareness of the FRMC within their organisation and at this point their South Sudan team is interested in using the FRMC and applying a more integrative approach in their ongoing programmes. Practical Action is having similar discussions with some of their country teams in Africa.
- External to the Alliance, Zurich reported that they are talking with the Global Resilience Partnership (GRP) about using the FRMC and resilience thinking to influence GRP innovations and scale GRP funding programmes.

5.0 Implications for Resilience Programming

Building resilience programmes is not easy and there are a multiplicity of ways in which they can be approached. The Alliance approach is particularly complex and therefore difficult to replicate without significant investment and support. However, the Alliance approach is also unusually collaborative, and as a result there are particularly interesting lessons that can be drawn out and applied to new or ongoing development, DRR, CAA, and resilience programmes. The lessons, principles, and reminders below, which have helped the Alliance navigate through what has been an emergent process, can be used by donors, practitioners, researchers, and academics who are integrating resilience into programmes or seeking to collaborate.

These lessons, at first glance, seem obvious, yet are rarely seen in adaptation, resilience, and other consortia-based programmes. The formation of the Alliance and its early successes show that putting these lessons into practice is both possible and beneficial, for the communities the Alliance is working with and also for the partner organisations; everyone benefits.

5.1 Challenge traditional donor-recipient roles

Zurich's flexibility as a donor and partner has enabled an Alliance that is agile and responsive to emergent demands in terms of advocacy, implementation, and the ability to meet internal capacity needs. In particular, Zurich's willingness to learn from and collaborate with Alliance partner organisations during this foundational year has been integral to setting up systems and processes that support the resilient functioning of the Alliance. This has required Zurich to step back from its previous Phase I management role, cede equal responsibility to partners for the governance and operation of the Alliance, and fully participate as a member of the Alliance to co-produce Alliance objectives. The result is an open, non-competitive space where donor and recipients are learning from each other and working towards a shared goal. Donors that want to fund creative, agile, effective programs should strongly consider adopting non-traditional donor-recipient relationships.

5.2 Fund long-term programmes

It is very difficult to achieve long-term systemic shifts with short-term, piecemeal projects, and yet development, DRR and CCA funding is often limited to short-term funding cycles and specific, narrowly-focused projects. The Alliance five-year, adaptive funding cycles are intentionally designed to fundamentally shift systems that cause risk and vulnerability. The areas where our Phase II work is building on the first five years of Phase I work are yielding our most significant successes in this first year. Donors who are striving to support and fund programmes and projects that propose systems level change should provide funding cycles to fit the long timeframes and on-going engagement required to achieve that change.

Tharu women in their fishing Attire in Nepal © Archana Gurung, **Practical Action**

5.3 Invest in building the foundation and relationships needed for the work

Setting up governance systems, developing theories of changes, establishing ways of working and guidance materials and workplans has taken most of the first year of the Alliance to accomplish — longer than anticipated. However, taking the time to develop and launch these systems in ways that work for everyone has enabled the building of relationships and trust. Alliance partners agree our foundational systems will facilitate achievement of our goals over the remaining four years of Phase II. Bringing disparate organisations, cultures, and ways of working together into a cohesive network that is working towards the same goals does not happen automatically when an alliance is formed. Building the necessary foundation and relationships takes time, time which should be recognized upfront, resourced, and incorporated into the planning phase of long-term resilience programmes.

5.4 Build programmes around a tangible shared vision

Developing a shared vision that partners can align with and work toward can facilitate the integration of different organisations, workstyles, and cultures into a streamlined, effective resilience programme. Alliance partner organisations began this first year of Phase II still focused on their own specific organisational missions. The collaborative, iterative process through which we have developed the Alliance vision has generated

Relocating grains and goods to a safe place using boats during the 2017 flood in Premnagar Basti, Rajapur, Nepal **© Practical Action**

buy-in and given individual organisations the time and opportunity to shape and align that shared vision with their individual mission statements. Our challenge now is to add specificity to this vision to best leverage current opportunity and to align with our various strengths in ways that optimize our impact.

5.5 Intentionally build mechanisms for collaboration across scales and sectors

Collaboration rarely occurs organically. In developing resilience programmes and alliances, mechanisms for collaboration should intentionally be incorporated into workflows and systems. For the Alliance, collaboration is intentionally built in via:

- Governance systems that provide strategic oversight, support effective management and allocation of resources, and ensure progress is made against the Alliance objectives;
- Workstreams with multi-organisational membership that facilitate co-production of outcomes and cross-programme learning; and
- Technology tools like Sharepoint and Yammer that support connection and shared work.

5.6 Private sector names open doors and bring a different legitimacy

Having Zurich as a key partner and donor of the Alliance has opened different doors from those traditionally available to non-governmental, humanitarian, and research organisations. As a private sector business, Zurich's role in the Alliance has provided us with a different legitimacy than any of the other partners would carry alone or even together. The access, weight, and visibility that the private sector brings can amplify the impact of their partners, but only if they actively work to make it available. In partnerships that bring together organizations from different sectors, the different networks, resources, and access various partners bring should be leveraged to open new doors and explore novel opportunities.

5.7 "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good."

Reaching common ground within the Alliance has been an ongoing process requiring patience and compromise. We have learned that there is no perfect system - what works ideally for one organisation may be new or complicated to set up for another. We have had to avoid being prescriptive and to prioritize usability in our approach to programming, advocacy, and capacity-building. We have also learned to compromise around decision-making, particularly as it relates to content and process. Overall, as we have set up systems, processes, workflow, tools, and guidance, we've learned not to get side-tracked by trying to make each of these elements perfect. Focus on achieving a shared vision and learn to recognize when things are good enough to get you there; striving for perfection can quickly derail success.

5.8 Respond to internal demands

To build a strong, effective Alliance we've paid close attention and responded to internal needs and requests.

- We have achieved this by creating demand-led, service-based workstreams that support collective delivery of the Alliance objectives, coupled with systems and processes for regular, internal evaluation.
- We have also planned for capacity-building by allocating funding and time and by creating internal structures that identify and support capacity-building needs.
- The delegation of operational oversight and management of strategic direction of the programme to two separate governing bodies (the TLF and AMT respectively) has also enabled us to respond to emergent needs effectively.

Paying this sort of attention to internal functioning can enable an alliance to come together quickly and flexibly, allow it to respond effectively to a range of opportunities and challenges, and provide a strong foundation for learning and innovation.

5.9 Invest in internal and external learning

Building capacity and investing in knowledge generation and learning, both internally and externally, can help to strengthen an alliance while also supporting progress towards objectives and goals. Phase I of the Alliance saw the successful development and roll-out of the FRMC, but there was no overarching strategy or focus on learning.

As a result, opportunities for capturing and sharing Alliance-wide learning were lost. Recognizing this, in Phase II tracking and ensuring that key learning is documented and shared both externally and internally has been a focus. This investment is enabling the Alliance to develop thematic areas of collective knowledge, to collaboratively deepen that knowledge across a range of contexts and geographies, and to actively use that knowledge for advocacy.

5.10 Successful innovation requires flexible, holistic programming

Calling for innovation does not necessarily mean that innovation will occur. To achieve innovative results, the Alliance has created programmes that are flexible and grounded in a nuanced understanding of community context, capacities, and needs. We have also set up feedback loops to learn from both successes and failures, recognizing that real innovation means doing things in a new way with no guarantee of success. We are seeing significant success using this approach. Donors that want to fund innovation should provide organisations with the resources and flexibility needed to create holistic programmes, including the flexibility to fail as long as that failure is used as an opportunity to learn.

5.11 Systems thinking can be taught

At first glance, systems thinking — taking a holistic approach to examining how the various parts of a problem, situation or community interact and relate to each other — often appears prohibitively complicated. However, the Alliance experience with using the FRMC and investing in internal learning shows that there are tangible ways in which systems thinking can be taught and learned. Utilizing a systems thinking approach has helped us build the capacity of internal partners and external actors to explore problems more holistically, to understand interconnections, and to see new entry points for action. Systems thinking is critical for resilience programming, but will likely be of benefit to any development, DRR, or CCA programme given its potential to strengthen programming and increase impact.

5.12 Measure the 'intangibles' in impact measurement

The impacts of building resilience cannot be measured solely through traditional means such as policies changed and dollars spent. To fully assess the impact of long-term resilience programming, measurement needs to also capture 'intangibles' such as the knowledge gained regarding key risks and vulnerability, or whether and how communities are empowered to take action and advocate for themselves. These are significant, on the ground impacts that have the potential to result in lasting, beneficial change for communities. But they are also highly difficult to measure, which is why they are typically avoided in spite of being exactly where change is most likely to be seen.

Resilience practitioners and donors need to accommodate for these intangibles by broadening what we measure as impact. This could have the additional effect of inspiring organisations and communities to think more creatively about how they can both change lives and achieve something 'measurable'. Within the Alliance, we are working towards this by connecting qualitative indicators and reporting questions that capture the results of knowledge uptake and the on-the-ground impacts of

Flood Resilient Infrastructure - Raised Tube well, Bangaun Community, Kailali, Nepal © Archana Gurung, **Practical Action**

programming alongside more quantitative FRMC results. We hope that within a few years' time we will be able to say that when communities are empowered to understand their vulnerability and risk, and when they are given the tools to build their resilience and advocate on their own behalf, their flood outcomes improve.

5.13 Systems change requires working across scales and sectors

Long-term systemic change requires working across multiple sectors and scales. This is particularly true for challenges like DRR, CCA, and flood resilience — areas where policy, practice, knowledge, and funding at multiple levels so strongly influence what is possible at the local level. To change individual lives and communities, ultimately change is needed at all levels up to, and including, the global scale. Nonetheless, few programmes have the ambition or funding to work at sub-national, national, and international levels simultaneously, or to work across research, practice, policy, and funding.

Within the Alliance, our workstream structure supports sector-specific work. Cross-workstream collaboration allows us to aggregate that work to deliver our much broader, cross-sectoral shared objectives. Similarly, the Alliance country-level ToCs, which are tailored to specific country contexts, are aggregated within the global ToC to deliver results across a broader range of contexts and scales. Developing these strategies has been and continues to be an emergent process requiring flexibility, patience, time, and resources. The potential impact, however, is the chance to fundamentally shift the entire playing field — to align global funding and policy with national policy change to support local capacity and needs.

6.0 Conclusions

What does it mean to build resilience?

- That we consider dimensions of climate change or uncertainty?
- That activities be tailored to local needs and context?
- That interventions be developed using systems thinking and be sustainable?
- That we achieve change across scales and/or sectors?

We, the members of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, would argue that building resilience requires all of these. Yet often traditional development programmes are piecemeal interventions with short-term funding, developed externally, and imposed upon a local context, with no explicit commitment to capturing and actively using learning to achieve lasting, systemic change.

To move past business as usual and achieve the change that we commit to when we respond to bids and write proposals promising to build resilience, we need to do things differently. Our most powerful lessons from year one of Phase II of the Alliance are that resilience building requires:

- Time, particularly time to build a shared vision and to collectively set up systems, processes, and ways of working that support collaboration;
- Transparency, which is the basis for trust and shared responsibility;
- Mechanisms for learning and for sharing that learning;
- Systems thinking, grounded at the local level, because resilience is context specific and can only be built locally; and,
- Multi-scalar action and advocacy, because though resilience is context specific, it can and must be incentivised and funded at multiple levels.

We've also learned that launching a programme to deliver all of this requires more effort and time than we expected, but it's an effort worth making. We are already seeing successes beyond what we anticipated in our first year, and are working more effectively, efficiently, and collaboratively than we believed possible.

Making these changes takes a village. It requires donors that invest in process and not just outcomes, donors that work with their recipients as partners to co-design programmes and co-create outcomes. It requires practitioners that are willing to collaborate with other practitioners who do things very differently. It requires researchers to find ways to balance or align their research interests with internal research needs while also fulfilling expectations of their institutions. It requires the private sector to step into fields and ways of working that are deeply unfamiliar. And overall, it requires different sectors to come together, to compromise, and to collaboratively determine how they can align their interests and visions.

FRMC training in Montenegro © Lucile Robinson**, Practical Action**

For the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, we are piloting a new way of working — a way of working that puts collective action, inclusion, and innovation at the forefront. We hope this new way of working will push the wider development sector to take a chance, to experiment, to do things differently. To encourage this shift, we are committed to transparently reporting on our progress, our successes, and our failures in this endeavor. We will be producing a Synthesised Learning Report annually to detail our progress toward achieving the five year objectives we have set ourselves — to leverage flood resilience spending at local, national and global levels by 1 billion USD and increase the flood resilience of 2 million people — and to share what we have learned in the process.

Year 1

Flood Resilience Alliance

For more information, visit floodresilience.net or follow @floodalliance on social media.

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