

Innovations Exhibition @ Makerere University, Main Hall

14th March 2014

1) Who we are

The ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) is one of the seven global development labs that make up USAID's Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN). RAN is led by Makerere University working in partnership with Stanford University and Tulane University. The Network comprises 20 African universities spread over 16 countries.

The core objective of RAN is to promote the development and scaling of sustainable, innovative solutions and approaches that can help strengthen the capacities of vulnerable African communities to mitigate, adapt to or recover from natural or man-made shocks and stresses, thereby strengthening their resilience.

The Eastern Africa Resilience Innovation Lab (RILab) of RAN is located in Makerere University with a mandate to source innovative ideas - in line with RAN's thematic focus - from within the academic community and support their incubation and piloting.

2) The Resilience Innovation Challenge

How can the resilience of communities affected by the effects of climate change and chronic conflicts be strengthened through interventions that support and strengthen existing processes and institutions? RAN's Eastern Africa Resilience Innovation Lab is seeking to identify innovative solutions or approaches with the potential to demonstrably strengthen the resilience of communities affected primarily by **i) the effects of climate variability** and **ii) the effects of acute and chronic conflicts**. (see page 2 for more details)

3) Get Involved!

Do you have an innovative, demonstrable solution or approach that has the potential to strengthen the resilience of individuals, families or communities affected by the effects of climate variability and/or chronic conflict? Do you have an idea that innovatively addresses either the vulnerability factors or builds on the adaptive strategies?

If so, please register to participate in the upcoming Innovations Exhibition taking place on **14th March 2014 at the Main Hall, Makerere University Main Campus from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm**. If you are not sure whether your solution or approach fits well within the themes described, go ahead and register, and let us be the judge!

4) Requirements for Participation

This exhibition will provide an opportunity for faculty, students and local innovators to showcase their innovations, and for RAN to identify promising innovations that can be accelerated through RAN's Resilience Innovation Acceleration Program at the EA RILab. The exhibition is open to innovators who meet the following requirements/criteria:

- Open to ANY faculty member or student innovator; including recent graduates (maximum one year post-graduation).
- **ALL disciplines** are eligible to participate as RAN has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving.
- Innovations should clearly demonstrate their potential to strengthen/build the resilience of communities to natural and/or man-made stresses and shocks.
- Innovations can be in the form of 'technologies' or 'approaches', and there should be a demonstrable proof of concept for the solution/ approach.
- Innovations that build on indigenous/traditional knowledge are particularly interesting from RAN's perspective of building sustainable solutions with a high adoption potential in the local communities.

5) Registration Procedure

All innovators are required to register online, by filling out an electronic form available at the RAN website: www.ranlab.org or at this link: <http://flaturl.com/zbbM>. **Registration closes at midnight 9th March 2014!!** For any inquiries, please contact us at:



info@ranlab.org



[ResilientAfrica Network](https://www.facebook.com/ResilientAfricaNetwork)



[@AfricaResilient](https://twitter.com/AfricaResilient)

6) Benefits to the winning teams

Inclusion into RAN's Resilience Innovation Acceleration Program, where teams will receive:

- Technical support and guidance*
- Mentorship and Business Coaching
- Linkages to innovators and mentors within the HESN
- Linkages to local, regional and international expertise and contacts
- Some financial support to further develop and pilot the solution or approach towards scaling

*Technical support includes close guidance from our research team. Our expert research team is currently conducting quantitative and qualitative studies on climate variability, chronic conflict and resilience in Eastern Africa. The findings and results from these studies will closely support innovation development, implementation, and ultimately evaluate innovation impact and success.

CLIMATE VARIABILITY AND ITS EFFECTS ON RESILIENCE

Climate variability stems from a complex confluence of both natural and human-induced factors. Research shows that eastern Africa will be particularly hard hit by climate variability. Uncertain rainfall patterns characterized by sharp increases and decreases will be seen in many areas. Human actions and climate change have played a key role in worsening the problem. The topographic features in specific areas combine with these factors resulting in greater susceptibility to drought, floods, and landslides throughout the EA region. These events are increasing in frequency and are to a reasonable extent predictable.

Examples of the immediate effects: reduced agricultural outputs, damage to infrastructure, unsafe water and increases in disease causing parasites.

Possible secondary effects: changes in rainfall patterns can have diverse impacts on crop yields, thereby worsening the already precarious state of food-security in the region. This will have potentially damaging effects on the family, the communities, the countries and the economic status of the East African Community. Infectious diseases such as malaria, cholera, meningitis, plague, dysentery are also seen widely, and are closely linked with the climate cycle. With an increase in these diseases, limited public health resources become strained, and as sick people lose money on treatment, households' productivity, livelihoods and financial securities are impacted.

Other secondary consequences: malnutrition, and exacerbation of the poverty trap. The increasing frequency of conflict in the region is in part fuelled by this problem.

CHRONIC CONFLICT AND ITS EFFECTS ON RESILIENCE

Over the years, Uganda has faced several conflicts notable of which is the two decades war in Northern Uganda particularly affecting the Acholi and Lango regions. Primarily we see the effects of chronic conflicts as child abuse, loss of life, displacement, and a breakdown of the rule of law. Yet, there are secondary effects that are likewise important including: Loss of socio-economic and livelihoods resilience, a breakdown in social-cultural networks and value systems, an increase in sexual and gender-based violence, an increase in psychological disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide and despair, poverty, food insecurity and breakdown of infrastructure. Health effects such as increase in prevalence of HIV/AIDS, deadly epidemics, mortality due to preventable diseases, and a decline of health systems are also noted. A break down in other social services and an increase in land disputes also characterize the post conflict period. Many of these effects have persisted beyond the conflict and the pace of recovery has remained slow since the end of the war in 2004. The community is trapped in the recovery phase due to a range of socio-economic factors. Northern Uganda lags behind other regions in almost all the human development indicators.

RAN'S DEFINITION OF RESILIENCE

Resilience is the capacity of people and systems to mitigate, adapt to, recover, and learn from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces vulnerability and increases wellbeing. In order to fully understand RAN's definition of resilience, it is helpful to consider the components of resilience: shocks, vulnerability, and capacities. In order to fully understand this from the Uganda perspective, the local context must be explained. The text boxes below further describe the complex resilience dynamics and dimensions as they relate to climate variability and acute and chronic conflict in communities in Uganda.

VULNERABILITY FACTORS

What causes the communities to be increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and conflict? The most vulnerable groups are women, children and the poor households. This vulnerability is caused by various factors such as settling in high-risk zones (on steep slopes and in wetlands) coupled with poor methods of production. High population growth is also driving wide-spread deforestation and environmental degradation. Low economic diversification, low risk transfer, inefficient energy sources, poor early warning systems, unstructured markets, and low access to credit are also key causes of vulnerability. Social factors include negative socio-cultural beliefs and practices, high fertility rates, low levels of education, low social cohesion and occasional breakdown in the rule of law, as well as insufficient mechanisms for community led conflict resolution. Governance factors include corruption, lack of leadership and border porosity. The fact that the same communities get hit with these events year in and year out with the same magnitude of consequences, underscores the lack of resilience.

ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES

How do communities respond and adapt to changes in their environment? Communities have inherent capacity. Some community responses to climate variability have included traditional early warning systems, evacuation, and traditional mechanisms for food storage, crop diversification, settlement planning and management of the wetlands. Adaptations to conflict have included communities getting together to repulse the insurgents (e.g. in Teso), increasing social connectedness, bounce-back production, and peer groups. Enhancement of these local adaptation mechanisms is key to resilience. Communities therefore have a vast untapped potential to provide innovative solutions to resilience challenges.

