# COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT IN RESILIENCE BUILDING PROJECTS: CASE OF CHIREDZI AND MWENEZI DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE

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**Abstract**

The aim of this article is to show how collaborative management is important and how it has been embraced in the implementation of resilience building interventions in rural communities. It seeks to unravel the empirical implications of collaborative management and how it has been used in a resilience building project (Enhancing Community Resilience and Sustainability (ECRAS). The recent increased interest amongst development agencies in working with the private sector, and the general increase in the number of multi-stakeholder partnerships is a response to dissatisfaction with the scale, scope and speed of poverty reduction efforts. The complexity and multi-dimensionality of rural poverty calls for an integrated, holistic, sustainable multi-sectorial and collaborative development approach in resilience building. Experiences from the ECRAS project show that effective collaboration across multiple actors should be cascaded to those responsible for actual field implementation. Collaborative management saw the project promoting functional networks among diverse stakeholders through innovation platform, community dialogues, WhatsApp platforms, gender dialogues, participatory scenario planning, community score card, meetings at different levels and all cluster meetings. The process required the project management team to exude adaptive management strategies facilitating decentralised management responsibilities and making extensive use of localized control loops. It also involved smart pooling together of multiple stakeholders from different sectors - with different expertise, skills, resources, powers and interest. Development community-based plans (at ward and village level) were networked and synchronized to tie all partners into the system of planning and control that promoted a common understanding of community needs and collective responsibility. The project championed a high level of transparency and a shared awareness of quality and responsibility among team members. The process was facilitated by a central database that made current and consistent planning data available to all project participants and stakeholders. Basic features for collaborative management in a resilience building project were highlighted.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Collaboration, Sustainability, Market linkage, Multi-sectorial, Multi stakeholder,

## Introduction

Resilience has been defined as the ability of people, households, communities and institutions to prepare for, respond to and recover from shocks and stresses (Levine, Vaughan and Nicholson, 2017). USAID (2013) defines resilience as the ability of people, households, communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth. Households and communities can achieve this through increased capacity to access assets, opportunities and wider choices to improve their wellbeing outcomes and withstand shocks/ stresses in a favorable enabling environment.

Poverty, on the other hand, is the opposite of resilience as it is associated with vulnerability (the diminished capacity of an individual or group to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard, risk, shocks or stress) (World Bank, 2000). It has been prescribed to have many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been manifesting in many ways. It is a broad, dynamic, complex and multi-dimensional social phenomenon whose effects vary by area, age, gender, culture, socioeconomic and environmental contexts. No single indicator alone can capture the multiple aspects that constitute poverty or vulnerability. The underlying causes of recurrent crisis in most Sub Saharan Africa (including Zimbabwe) rural areas are explained by multiple, causally intertwined deficits that transcend sectors (Mutambara and Mutambara, 2012; UNDP, 2016). The complexity of rural vulnerabilities/poverty shows that, no single entity may have sufficient resources; expertise and authority to bring on the necessary change (build resilience). It calls for an integrated, holistic, sustainable multi-sectorial development approach in resilience building as the rural people require assistance or inputs from more than one specific type of development professionals (MDG Centre, East and Southern Africa, 2007). Eradicating poverty and achieving rural development goals can only be effective when there is cooperation between development players across different sectors (MDG Centre, 2007). Different people, organisations, Government ministries and private companies need each other to build community resilience. A multi-sectoral response entails involving all sectors of society - governments, business, civil society organisations, communities and the community members, at all levels (Common Wealth Secretariat, 2011). It is against this background that this study seeks to analyse the impact of collaborative management in resilience building projects.

Working across sectors is possible by working in partnerships (joint efforts, inter-agency initiatives, and partnership work) and in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations, the private sector, United Nations agencies, multi-lateral agencies and government departments (Common Wealth Secretariat, 2011). Reid, Hayes and Stibbe (2014) described multi-stakeholder platforms as part of key infrastructure to increase private sector (and other stakeholders) collaboration and strengthening their critical role in poverty alleviation. Strategies for enhancing resilience will always be as diverse as poverty itself and vary with the local, regional and national contexts in which response decisions and actions are made by individuals, households, institutions and communities. The critical success factor for such multiple actors, multi-sectorial and multiple stakeholders' efforts is collaborative ownership of initiatives and collaborative management of the multiple efforts.

Many studies regarded multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral platforms as one effective means of responding to the fragmented poverty fighting efforts. In the past decade, the trend in rural/urban development across regions and continents has been for programmes/projects to partner with Government agencies, bilateral and multi-sectoral donors, United Nations agencies, civil society, regional organizations, implementing partners, private sector and communities. In the process, deliberate efforts are made to coordinate the efforts and maximize the expertise and resources across organizations (Common Wealth Secretariat, 2011). It requires implementers or different actors to embrace collaborative management at all the levels and scales. This drive to create a coherent architecture of business engagement in rural development acknowledges the complexity and diversity of the development landscape in resilience building. The issues facing communities today are many, complex and existing at a wide range of scales involving many stakeholders and requiring the application of many minds to address. Therefore, partnerships and collaborative management are increasingly becoming the answer for these issues. Yet there are no studies that have attempted to explore the value of collaborative management in resilience building or in general project management. This paper seeks to highlight the importance of collaborative programming in resilience project with multiple, cross sectorial stakeholders and how this was applied in a resilience building project for some rural communities in Zimbabwe. It provides some invaluable insights on how collaborative programming can be implemented. The study also contributes to the existing body of knowledge on collaborative intelligence and management in resilience building

## Methodology

### Study Area

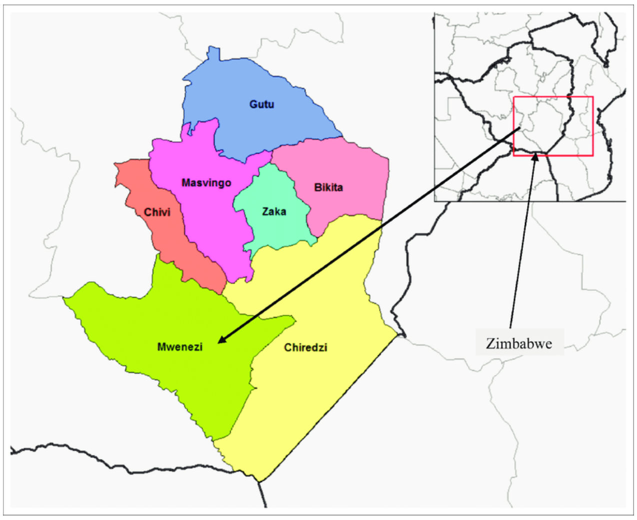


**Figure 1: Location Map for Chiredzi and Mwenezi Districts of Zimbabwe**
**Source**: Surveyor General, 2018

### Materials and Methods

The study used literature review and a case study approach based on the lived experiences from the Enhancing Community Resilience and Sustainability (ECRAS) project partnering with different government departments such as Agritex, Veterinary services, Mechanization, Irrigation, Women Affairs and Youth, District Development Fund, Local government, Environmental Management Authority, Rural District Council, Public Service Commission and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, other Non-Governmental Organizations operating in Mwenezi and Chiredzi. Other players include private sector companies such as National Organic Produce, Metbank, Econet, Nicoz Diamond Insurance, Montana Caswell Meats, Sidella, Olam, Klein Karoo and Pro-seeds involved in different value chains and staff members from the different consortium's implementing partners. The review of literature on collaborative management helped in getting the views of other authors on the subject matter.

The study used non-probability sampling technique to explore collaborative management implemented by ECRAS project in Mwenezi and Chiredzi Districts. Purposive sampling was done on key informant interviews and focus groups based on the researchers' knowledge and credibility using unstructured interview guide to determine the in-depth information on impact of collaborative programming in resilience building. Both authors were implementers of the project and their experiences, insight and judgment of the efforts influenced the content of this article.

## Literature review

### Collaborative Project Management

Collaborative management is a method used to plan, implement, coordinate, control, and monitor distributed and complex projects that entail deliberate coordination and management of the coordination of the multiple efforts to ensure that all the actors are rowing in the same direction (Scalett, 2013). It involves deliberate actions to engender political will, leadership, coordination, premised on developing and sustaining partnerships or other ways of working together to strengthen the capacity of all relevant sectors to make effective contributions towards resilience building. Promotion and strengthening of coordinated planning and programming across sectors epitomises resilience building and collaborative management. Effort should be made to engage true partners, individuals and organizations, which are affected by, genuinely interested in, and/or have the capacity to affect the issue at stake (for example vulnerability of rural households). In a typical rural community in Zimbabwe, this may entail working together at the same time with private companies, Non-Governmental Organisations and government ministries (including their departments) of health, agriculture, water, environment, early child care and development, education, economic growth, and social protection. It also entails geographic convergence of multi-sectoral interventions/programmes/projects and services to address the multiple causes of vulnerability or poverty. It enables project teams to collaborate across government ministries/departments, corporates, civic organisations and national boundaries to master growing project complexity (Susskind, Camacho and Schenk, 2012).

Collaborative project management is based on the principle of actively involving all project members in the planning, control processes, networking with multiple actors, using information and communication. It has been employed in the business and government sectors. For example, within the Federal Government, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) employed a collaborative project management approach that focuses on incorporating Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation (CLA) (USAID, 2017). CLA involves three concepts. First, collaborating intentionally with stakeholders to share knowledge and secondly to reduce duplication of effort and thirdly to learn systematically by drawing on evidence from a variety of sources and taking time to reflect on implementation, and adapt strategically based on applied learning. Collaborative management resonate well with resilience building programming as they feature the following: Complex project, long-term development cycles, great pressure to significantly reduce development/project completion times, projects with a large number of participants such as suppliers, communities, government departments, private sector companies, researchers and local authorities, projects with a multitude of interdependent project steps- layering, sequencing and integration and projects with comprehensive and varied demands on the quality of results. It strives to ensure that every project participant jointly generates, owns, accesses and uses information in the project. Strong relationships are nurtured between diverse individuals from the diverse stakeholders and across the targeted communities. Management of this diversity deliberately make efforts to foster mutual respect, trust and understanding amongst the diverse partners.

In collaborative management, management is not regarded as an activity reserved solely for managers but as an integral responsibility of all team members. It, therefore, promotes shared leadership, encourages flexibility while maintaining momentum and allowing the exploration of new ideas (and partners) to inform decisions and support effective partnerships with others. Partnerships and collaborations occur at all points/levels within the system to both encourage individual behaviour change and to address the systems issues that are needed to support resilience building in communities. As a result, collaborative management facilitate power sharing or transferred decision-making powers amongst the participating staff members and partner organisations, with some loss of autonomy of lead agencies.

Collaborative management acknowledges that partnerships represent the pinnacle of leadership and collaboration in project implementation/management. Collaborative management requires that each stakeholder, including all project staff members (including the drivers and cleaners) and volunteers be treated as strategic partners. The behaviour of all these stakeholders should also be that of responsible partners in a strategic partnership. Each of the partners is a manager by itself, managing themselves and the input of other input providers/ stakeholders in their jurisdictional areas, in a collaborative manner. In essence, it is an acknowledgement that we no longer live in the "command and control" era.

There is usually a temptation by consortium lead organizations to concentrate on overseeing substantive issues, such as budgets or administrative arrangements, but pay inadequate attention to relationship issues, especially the inability to resolve conflicts. Yet, conflicts are like accidents, they may not occur in the project lifetime, but if they happen, they can be fatal and measures need to be put into place to prevent the fatalities. Collaborative management takes relationship management to the centre of project management, as it acknowledges that partnerships will not be successful without thoughtful attention to the relationship, especially on how the partners should behave in the relationship. Efforts should be made to find common ground and use shared language that underscores the vision of the partners. Partnerships have to be developed and nurtured in ways that respect and recognize all individuals. **Partners enjoy working without very close supervision and lead agencies of management units should first establish buy-in of the participating partner members at different levels. This will increase the success rate** of motivating all the players in the project. In keeping with the devolution of coordinating/collaborating and management responsibilities at different levels of partnerships, building relationships is not just the responsibility of organizational leaders, but of everyone working in the partnership at different levels (even the field staff) to avoid chances of malicious obedience within the diverse partners and staff members.

Best practices in collaborative management require that a collaborative work plan be produced to guide the operations of partners in a partnership. A collaborative work plan is a document that outlines the structure of work for the partnership or a specific initiative within the partnership. **P**eople want to see progress, no matter how incremental it can be, and the setting of realistic targets is very critical in a partnership. **The partners will stay within the scope of the project and remain motivated to perform if they have measurable outcomes for the efforts. Therefore, management should c**onsider developing immediate, short-term, and long-term outcomes for the collaborative work plan to identify the determinants of the success of the collective activities/efforts and the performance indicators to be measured in the project lifespan. In such efforts, collaborative management ensures that the diverse partners in a project stay within the scope of the project.

Collaborations/partnerships initially attract groups with common/similar missions, often much is taken for granted or assumed without taking time to find out more about each partner's interests. Explicitly determined shared values and developed guides/checklists effectively prepare the participating partner members for action. This should be coupled with strong communication. Collaborative management strongly values effective communication, where strong and consistent feedback loops grease the skids of project understanding and progress amongst the diverse partners. Operationalization of this component has been made easier today, with the proliferation of smart phones and social media.

**Experiences with different collaborations suggested that partnerships/consortiums will not take full advantage of the diverse stakeholders/partners if the partners are not held accountable. Efforts should be made to make sure everyone in a partnership knows each other and lead agencies/management units should c**ommunicate group accountability and interdependence of activities, showing how member's specific tasks impact the completion of the overall task. The partnership must have an effective structure for open honest communication strongly support conversations about accountability as issues arise. In the process, balanced power amongst all partner members should be well demonstrated - avoiding the rewarding of talkative and overbearing partners or celebration of docile/sleeping partners.

It is usually tempting for lead agencies to serve as the centre for collaborative work, because naturally, team leaders refuse to make themselves vulnerable to their partner members and give them autonomy. But it was found to be more rewarding to have partner members share coordination responsibilities, to multiply the impact of their efforts. For example, where possible, efforts should be made to ensure that all partners take turns to host meetings, facilitate gatherings, or provide training to other partners and to lead other engagement with other external stakeholders. This, in turn, increases operational efficiency/effectiveness, feelings of ownership, long-term commitment to the partnership and multiplication of impact of the group efforts.

**There should be some deliberate efforts to maximize team member strengths** by deliberate capacity building effort trainings and cross learning. Partnerships thrive and perform to optimum when there are catalysts and pacesetters that s**et a good example of behaviour and quality of work. Collaborative management requires that the best practices be peached rather than the organisations in a partnership, praise good practices rather than best performing organisations in front of other partner members. This will increase the chances of average partners bringing on the table what they think can do best while learning from others. Partners will also value and appreciate each other's efforts in this environment. It also encourages bonding amongst the partners, which is a critical success factor for collaborations/partnerships.**

In order to manage the diverse partners and perspective, successful collaborative management requires that partnerships select someone to serve as a dedicated partnership manager, responsible for the partnership's relationship management. A partnership manager might support healthy relationships by coordinating communication between partners, ensuring adherence to norms and collaboration processes, spotting potential conflicts, mediating disputes, and tracking the health of the working relationship over time. A strong monitoring and evaluation should be embedded in the management process. All partnerships need an on -going process to monitor both substantive and relationship issues, anchored with broad evaluation questions might include: Is the partnership meeting its aims and objectives? How well is it performing? and what lessons can be learned?

**Importance of Multiple-Stakeholder Collaboration in Resilience Building**

Multi- stakeholder collaboration promotes competitiveness, efficiency and project sustainability. In Uganda, UNDP instituted a business linkage programme between 2005 and 2007 which helped to enhance SME productive capacity, efficiency, and competitiveness and relationship sustainability through establishing linkages with prominent transnational corporations (TNCs). The project built twenty-three linkages between TNCs and SMEs, contributing to the development of the agribusiness, manufacturing, telecom, and real estate sectors (UNDP, 2012).

Certain Value chains can expand through multi-sectoral approach in project implementation. UNDP developed multi-stakeholder platforms (engaging the governments, donors, private sector and the civic societies) to support the development of selective regional value chains. The Africa Facility for Inclusive Markets (AFIM) focused on developing private sector markets to make them more inclusive of and beneficial to low income groups as producers, consumers and employees (UNDP, 2012) . Implementation of such an approach stimulated sustainable economic growth that created jobs and income opportunities and thereby reducing poverty, primarily by ensuring that small enterprise owners and their employees take part in the growth of expanding markets.

Musika, an NGO, improved the livelihoods of small-holder farmers across Zambia through supporting the development of the agricultural private sector via technical services and subsidies to change the practices of existing agriculture companies who wanted to work with small-holder farmers (Loveridge and Wilson, 2017). This Zambian experience demonstrated that multi-stakeholder collaborative partnerships are more flexible, efficient, and pragmatic than other types of problem-solving, and can achieve greater scale and sustainability (Beisheim and Nils, 2016; Caplan, 2013; Marten, 2007). Management means having work done through others and for collaborative management, there is need for managers or coordinators of partnerships to acknowledge the need to invoke emotional intelligence and team work as one would need to make sure efforts from different organisations, where one has no direct control of, need to be pooled together, row in the same direction and produce tangible results. Experts from the different partners of the consortium need to be smartly coordinated and at times one may need to focus on the results achievement to manage their effort

In Tanzania, the creation of linkages between the Capacity 21 Tanzakesho programme with national initiatives such as the Local Government Reform Programme and Vision 2025, secured the programme’s impact, even beyond its initial pilot phase. The Local Agenda 21 (LA21) process in Turkey benefited greatly from the elaboration of the National Environmental Action plan, which further contributed to the adoption of participatory approaches in national planning and policy-making initiatives, thus facilitating the national-level acceptance of the LA21 process (UNDP, 2006).

Martens (2007) and Bulloch et al (2011) suggested that the recent increased interest in working with the private sector, and subsequent growth of multi-stakeholder partnerships, is a response to dissatisfaction with the scale, scope and speed of poverty reduction efforts. It has also been part of the wider push towards engaging business in finding solutions to development problems and poverty (UNDP, 2012; Loveridge and Wilson, 2017). The United Nation Economic and Social Council (2005) affirms that planned or intended investments in one sector are most likely to fail if they are not supported by other measures in other sectors, and the process is facilitated by collaborative management.

**Research Findings: Successful Examples of Collaborative Management in Multi-stakeholder Involvement and Partnerships in ECRAS Project**

ECRAS (Enhancing Community Resilience and Sustainability) project was implemented in Mwenezi and Chiredzi districts of Zimbabwe. The goal of the project was to ensure that the targeted communities are food and income secure and are able to withstand shocks and stresses. The project targeted to impact the lives of 47,000 direct beneficiaries, translating to approximately 9,700 households and the authors of this article were part of the project implementation team

ECRAS project has decentralised management responsibilities at all levels. Each Project Field Officer was allocated four wards to implement different project activities and managing the inputs from diverse actors. Each ward has a set of government ward-based extension staff from different departments, other NGOs and local leadership whose inputs are critical in different facets of the project. It was the responsibility of the field officer to ensure that efforts from the multiple players are coordinated and managed. The managerial / collaborative responsibilities are, therefore, shared with the field implementation teams. In other words, efforts were made to enlist the cooperation of project field staff and government extension staff and ensuring that they were held accountable for their efforts. As a result, they were all made to actively participate in the project's quarterly review meetings. It was the duty of the project field officer and the responsible extension officer to give progress report on all the project activities within their jurisdictional areas, in which the field officers were working as managers and coordinators. This became a key project communication and collaboration strategy for early identification of the impact of potential problems on linked sub-projects systems. It also created a high level of responsibility, transparency and a shared awareness of quality among project team members. The work arrangement and reporting system of the project gave collaboration responsibility on the field staff.

Projects in Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF) are implemented by consortia made up of different Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The ECRAS (Enhancing Community Resilience and Sustainability) is implementing resilience building activities in Mwenezi and Chiredzi. Care International in Zimbabwe, Plan International and International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) form the consortium partners working through the Ministry of Land Agriculture and Rural Resettlement. It has different government departments and private players as highlighted in the introduction. In order to enlist the support of all the government departments and ministries needed for resilience building, the project facilitated the formation of a working group, chaired by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement (MLARR)'s Agritex department, to coordinate the efforts of these critical players. The management of these multiple partners require collaborative management skills. The process involves inculcating, among the different actors, the need to complement, collaborate and work together in the different organisations working in a given geographic location. Resilience building is diverse and requires multiple- stakeholder management with different expertise, skills and resources. Addressing the multi-dimensionality and complexity of poverty requires collective action. At its inception phase, the ECRAS project carried out the Community Adaptation Action Plan (CAAP). The exercise was aimed at promoting planning together among communities, government departments and private players. The activity also helped in the collective identification of sustainable value chains that the communities need, resources and institutions that are essential for successful implementation. During the project implementation process, innovation platforms, participatory scenario planning, gender dialogues, project review meetings at different levels were tailored to bring together different people and expertise across organisations and sectors. Community/Participatory Score Card was also used as a tool to bring together community members, service providers, and local government to collaboratively identify, score/rate service utilisation and provision challenges, to mutually generate solutions, and to work in partnerships to implement and track the effectiveness of those solutions in an on-going process of improvement. Different institutions were presented with an opportunity to collaboratively evaluate the services they were offering to the targeted communities.

Collaborative project management makes extensive use of localized control loops. ECRAS relied on annually reviewed and updated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) plans, Community Adaptation Action Plans (CAAP) and Community Score Card (CSC), Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP), localised value chains and local players in implementing the project. These acted as barometers of project activities wellness and a major facilitator of adaptive management. Complex projects were broken down into smaller "more tangible" sub-systems which are then assigned to members of the relevant departments. Consequently, planning and control responsibility was assumed by those responsible for field implementation of project activities. It was well linked to adaptive management, as these control and feedback loops ensured that evidence on how the project activities were impacting communities helped to inform re-engineering of the project. Sub-plans (from different implementing partners and other players outside the project including government) were networked and synchronized to tie all the multiple partners into the system of planning and control and to promote a common understanding of overall planning, implementation and evaluation.

The cross- collaboration along the multi-facets of resilience programming and the complex- cross-institutional collaboration processes were facilitated by a centralised database. The central database made current and consistent planning data available to all project participants wherever they may be located. The database shows all the stakeholders involved in the project and their different information needs and dashboards. Integration, sequencing and layering of project activities and the impact of the collaborative efforts of different actors was well demonstrated in the inclusive database. The database was inputted by the collective effort and responsibility of all project staff.

ECRAS projects collaborative programming promoted development of new products and adoption of new technologies that are market driven. For example, the engagement of Mwenezi and Chiredzi farmers with Metbank (financial support through inputs) and National Organic Produce, in the commercial production of indigenous chicken with the project played a facilitatory role. Meetings were conducted collaboratively with the involvement of government stakeholders, for the sustainability of the engagement process. A Memorandum of Understanding was crafted with the responsibilities of all the players well-articulated-MOU farming. The role of the project was to incubate and manage relationships between the rural farmers and the private sector companies and to hold each other accountable for the pledged inputs. It made farmers more innovative and produce competitive products for local market at a low cost using locally made feeds (after the project trained then in feed formulation).

Under the ECRAS project, besides the collaborative promotion of indigenous chicken commercial production, there was also a collaborative community-scale cattle pen fattening which saw the Montana Caswell Meats (MC Meats) contracting 123 farmers in Mwenezi and Chiredzi realising over $400000 (USD) in 3 months. The Government's Veterinary services Department, Agritex, Rural District Councils, CARE, Plan and ICRISAT worked collaboratively to ensure successful implementation of this elaborative community scale cattle fattening project. This result is consistent with the findings of the study by UNDP, 2012 which found out that collaboration with private sector enhanced the development of selective regional value chains

MC Meat promoted growth of their business through provision of correct information on how it grades cattle, how fattening can be done effectively and profitable and the need to circumvent the exploitative middlemen who had enjoyed a long period of misrepresenting the MC Meats brand in the communities to their advantage. It also delivered the input (cattle feeds and vaccines) to the farmers and transported the fattened- ready to slaughter cattle to their abattoirs, which reduced risks and transaction costs to both farmers and input suppliers (private sector). The ECRAS project arranged exchange visits to the MC meats slaughter houses and fattening farm. The use of exchange visits was to ensure that adoption was not driven by the private sector's flowery and sometimes misleading, marketing language but by demonstrated tangible benefits of the value chain to the farmers. Farmers need to see the benefits and make independent decisions to engage. The roles of implementing partners remained facilitatory through the push and pull approach to help all the value chain players to exploit opportunities as they come. The value chain analysis had earlier on identified challenges of exploitative middlemen, information asymmetry and the unclear meat grading systems. Collaborative management helped to reconcile the differences between the different players for the mutual benefit of all value chain actors.

The project facilitated the establishment of an NGO forum, an arrangement in which all NGOs working within a particular district met to discuss who is doing what, where, when and how. The objective of these forums was to prevent the multiple development actors from stepping on each other's foot in the process of assisting the same communities and to provide an opportunity of collaboration and synergies. For example, Heifer International was offering subsidized livestock feed to community members and the ECRAS project was promoting cattle pen fattening encouraging the project participants to make good use of the subsidized feeds. This collaboration helped to multiply the impact of the ECRAS investment through leveraging on other NGOs' activities, thus taking advantage and building on what others have done, making beneficiaries realise better return from integrated intervention from different actors. ECRAS invested in dam construction in Mwenezi to improve communities' access to water. Aquiculture, an NGO working in the same district, took advantage of the established dam to promote fish farming to the participating community members. This had effectively promoted layering, sequencing and integration of activities that helped to maximise benefits to the farmers. The programme management unit was not only responsible for brokering these partnerships/collaborations but also to manage the functionality of these collaborative efforts.

Cluster meetings such as Civil Protection Unit (CPU), District Drought Relief Committee (DDRC) and Rural District Disaster Committee (RDDC) are also part of the arrangements in which all government departments and NGOs operating in the area come together to plan and monitor possible disasters that may affect the District. The office of the District Administrator coordinates all these clusters. Participating in these cluster meeting allowed different projects and organisation to broker some synergetic linkages and to leverage on each other's strength. Growing a multi-stakeholder platform became an iterative process where learning from experience continually informed the improvement of practices in the 2 districts.

The CAAP plans were linked to the Rural District Council (RDC) plans which in turn helped the RDC in resource allocation and identifying wards that require priority in the upgrading of roads infrastructure, community driven gully reclamations and road repairs. ECRAS experience has shown that collaborative management of multiple actors in resilience building promote accountability, strengthen awareness, creates lasting relationships, supports innovation, improve access to and use of resources, builds ownership by both primary and secondary stakeholders, encourage utilisation of available expertise and promote adoption of new technologies.

Government departments, private sectors, research institutions and development organisations work together with the aim to shift from enhancing productivity of food crops to improving profitability and competitiveness of small-scale farming and linking smallholder farmers to more profitable markets. Similarly, Uganda and Malawi governments (Njuki, 2008) in collaboration with agri-business sectors were increasingly putting emphasis on transforming subsistence agriculture to make farming a business and to an entrepreneur culture in rural communities, where farmers produce for markets rather than trying to market what they produce. It was realised that partnering with universities, research institutions and private companies require identification of common ground, common or mutual interest and the articulation of the benefits to make sure both parties will feel working together will add value to their systems

ECRAS collaborated with agribusiness companies such as Sidella and supported farmers to produce sesame and cow peas for the company through contract farming. The project also facilitated Klein Karoo ($K_2$) to contract seed sorghum and seed pearl millet producing farmers in Chiredzi and Mwenezi, respectively. In Zimbabwe, communal farmers are viewed as un-bankable and unreliable because they do not have any form of collateral. The land tenure system does not allow them to use land to secure credit from financial institutions. Mutambara et al (2015) indicated that the introduction of well-designed and self –sustaining rural finance system, which involves convergence and collaboration of different sectors, has the potential to transform smallholder farming into a vibrant business and to break failure cycle in most agricultural interventions. This will provide the needed incentives to maintain and establish the relevant infrastructures for different agricultural value chains. He further reiterates that African countries such as Zimbabwe, should adopt a ‘Market Work for the Poor’ approach that encourages collective agency and emphasises the participation of private sector to reinforce the strengths of market systems for sustainable poverty alleviation. Mwenezi and Chiredzi farmers used to produce sesame, pearl millet and cattle which they used to sale to the middlemen at lower prices. In order to promote a viable market and isolate middlemen, ECRAS directly linked farmers to Sidella for sesame, $K_2$ for pearl millet and MC Meats for cattle marketing.

ECRAS project encourages project ownership and collaborations by all institutions within the economic market such as the private sector, government and local communities of Mwenezi and Chiredzi. ECRAS promoted the construction of water harvesting structures in which communities contributed up to 60% of the total cost through locally available raw material, labour and monetary. Individuals, community and agriculture mechanisation department worked with the project engineer, RDC and traditional leadership to ensure smooth completion of the community asset within 6 months.

The NGO forum established by the ECRAS project in Mwenezi and Chiredzi have helped NGO within the two districts to work together to maximize the benefit on the farmers. For example, in Mwenezi, CARE and the Mwenezi Development Training Centre had some field-based collaboration which saw CARE rolling out Village Savings and Lending groups on farmers participating in a Food For Asset (FFA) - community assets creation programme implemented by Mwenezi Development Training Centre (MDTC). Aquaculture worked with CARE and ICRISAT in the rolling out of fish farming, leveraging on each other’s strength. The artificial insemination by MDTC and partners, working with the Veterinary department collaborating with ECRAS, pooling resources to ensure wide-scale implementation of the artificial insemination activity. Agritex, Department of Veterinary Services, CARE, ICRISAT, Plan and communities worked together to promote wide scale adoption of silage making and urea treatment of dry stover.

It was also realised in the collaborative efforts of the ECRAS project that collaboration across multiple actors is more effective where collaborative efforts, joining hands in working together is cascaded to the field level (involving project field officers from different NGOs, area-based extension officers from different government departments and private sector players). Otherwise, collaboration will remain abstract and substance void. Institutions, organisation and projects may have MOUs to facilitate collaboration in different value chains and activities but if the engagement ends at national, provincial and district level or at project management level without involving those responsible for actual implementation or for making things happen on the ground, the collaboration will be mere window-dressing or box ticking. The ECRAS field staff and extension workers were trained on the need to work together with different players in the communities and made to realise that no single actor can be effective in resilience building, the need to complement each other's effort instead of competing. Individual organisations increase their chances of achieving their goals and changing the lives of the targeted communities by collaboratively working together. The role lead agencies or fund managers in consortia is to manage these collaborative efforts by different players and soft skills are equally as critical as the technical expertise. Where collaborative management is not well embraced, the project implementing partners work in silos, the goal of the project is placed secondary to individual organisational goals, team work is usually non-existent, and achievements remain mediocre. Team members are not motivated to volunteer any extra effort beyond the call of duty and dodge responsibility, individual staff members and agencies strive to secure credit for the little achievements instead of celebrating collective achievements and joint ownership of project mistake. Blame game is the order of the day, and participating institutions, partner organisations and project staff members fail to admit own mistakes and usually fail to confront unethical practices amongst themselves. Consortia partner are less likely going to enjoy the full benefits of working as consortia and may lack the big picture. Conflicts across different agencies and staff members of different organisations are common and very difficult to manage. Expertise/talents within some individuals is usually subdued.

Where collaborative management is embraced, the individual staff members are more likely going to carry multiple tasks at any given time in-keeping with the diverse activities which will make them multi-skilled as an immediate outcome of working together with other staff members from the other multiple stakeholders. The teams in different sub-systems of the project are more likely to be more resilient- able to function as normal in the event of some level of staff-turn over or in the absence of one implementing partner or stakeholder. Where collaborative management is being embraced, the following characteristics are evident.

**Characteristics of Collaborative Management in a Resilient Building Project Team**

1. Team members/organisations/build trust through reliability and authenticity.
2. Team members admit own mistakes and confront unethical actions in others.
3. Team members meet commitments and keep promises.
4. Team members hold themselves accountable for meeting their objectives.
5. Team members are organised and are careful with their work.
6. Team members/ organisations are highly adaptable-smoothly handle multiple demands, shifting priorities and rapid change. The adapt responses and tactics to fit fluid environment and remain flexible in the way they view events.
7. Team members set challenging goals for themselves and measure their own performance against those goals.
8. Team members seek out fresh ideas from several sources and take fresh perspective and risks in their thinking.
9. Team members listen to what others say, understand and appreciate other views/issues
10. Team members focus on attaining goals/task without conflict.

11. Team members know how to get things done in their organisation, districts of operation or work arrangement.
12. Team members act with the client/targeted communities' best interest in mind.
13. Team members identify and adapt situation so that they provide an opportunity to improve productivity and satisfaction.
14. Team members recognise challenges to change and seek out solutions to remove them.
15. Management remains open minded and willing to embrace different perspectives from diverse actors.
16. Management cultivate a broad network that encompass colleagues, professionals, contacts and friends, respecting their diversity and keeping them informed.
17. Management ensures that the project is well defined and understood by all staff members and stakeholders.
18. Management ensures that work is done through the diverse stakeholders, the majority of whom, it has no direct authority over.
19. Management ensures that everyone's potential is continually developed, and the diverse staff/stakeholders are motivated to volunteer responsibilities.
20. Teams share the credit for victories and the blame for losses- collective responsibility and accountability.
21. Individual team members choose actions and behaviour that will drive their goals and that of their teams.
22. Management focus on helping team members and be skilled at building and strengthening relationships allowing themselves to be vulnerable to each other.
23. Management strives to build consensus and mutual understanding of the multiple actors.
24. Management should lead by example and guide others' performance and hold each other accountable.
25. Team members/organisations/partners share information and resources to foster collaboration.
26. Management promote a climate of friendship and cooperation and have the expectation that team members support and help each other.
27. Management find ways for all team members from different organisations to bring their strength to the table.
28. Management build a team identity, foster team pride and provide compelling vision to the team.
29. Acknowledge and reinforce that every person/organization on a team/consortium has a role to play, and every role plays its part in contributing to the bigger picture (project goal).
30. The consortium/ implementing partners have catalyst players and critical staff members/volunteers who make things happen.
31. Joint planning and review meetings (monthly, quarterly, bi-annually or annually) at different levels for the diverse staff and stakeholders.
32. Collaborative research across stakeholders, joint learning events, trainings and exchange visit across different implementing units.
33. Common WhatsApp platforms or communities of practice for different stakeholders for updates, messaging and information sharing.

34. Collaboration and management responsibilities devolved to the lowest possible level for the project staff, such as field staff and the drivers.
35. Shared responsibility and accountability imbedded in normal day-to-day activities for holding team members/organisation accountable.
36. Multi-skilled and multi-tasking team members across different implementing partners staff members.
37. Monitoring, evaluation, reporting, learning and accountability made everyone's responsibility, within the resilience project implementation equation.
38. Conflicts across staff members, consortium members and stakeholders are immediately resolved.
39. Management to foster collective responsibility among the diverse actors and staff members.
40. Management to brokers as many partnership arrangements/agreements as possible, written or unwritten to facilitate working together of diverse players.
41. Partner members embrace the law of materiality in the engagement of multiple stakeholders, where every player feels valued and deduce some material value from the engagement.
42. The project vision and values are inculcated and reinforced among the diverse players.
43. Common database to capture project efforts, demonstrate impact and information sharing across multiple stakeholders.
44. Management to foster trust and convergence of interest among the diverse players.
45. Management to create, incubate and manage relationships.
46. Team members naturally feel they are part of something bigger than themselves.
47. Team members naturally become as passionate about the goals and objectives of the project as their leaders. The more connected and understood they feel to their managers or leaders, the more motivated they will be to perform, impress, be creative and exceed expectations.
48. Team leader strive to decreases confusion, finger-pointing and the disintegration of team cohesion.
49. Management breaks down the walls of individualism and honour collective accomplishment.
50. Team members are motivated and are able to manage and resolve any issues amongst themselves.

**Collaborative Management Challenges**

Typical barriers to collaborative management include:

1. Limited vision or failure to inspire.
2. Lack of clear purpose or inconsistent understanding of purpose.
3. Competition between partners for the lead or domination by one partner.
4. Unequal and/or unacceptable balance of power and control.
5. Over-concentrating on substantive issues, such as budgets or administrative arrangements and paying inadequate attention to relationship issues.
6. Lack of support from organizations with decision-making power in the partnership.
7. Pioneer and originator mentality (which scuttle change and the embracing of new ideas, prevents professional assessment/judgement of other players inputs into the projects and makes it very difficult to seed autonomy and power to other team members/partners.

8. Key stakeholders missing from the partnership.
9. Insecurity issues amongst the partners.
10. Lack of commitment and unwilling participants.
11. Differences in philosophies or work styles.
12. Inadequate understanding of roles and responsibilities.
13. Hidden agendas.
14. Malicious obedience.
15. Failure to communicate.
16. Failure to learn.
17. Refusal by partner members to make themselves vulnerable to each other.
18. Lack of evaluation or monitoring systems in the management system.
19. Situation where financial and time commitments outweigh potential benefits.
20. Turf battles among stakeholders.
21. Clashes between different organizational cultures.
22. Rigid policies/practices regarding intellectual property and other spheres.
23. Inappropriate staffing and role assignments.
24. The ups and downs of community politics and
25. Partners member burnout.

**Conclusions**

Vulnerability/poverty and resilience are opposite sides of the same coin. Since poverty is multi-dimensional, resilience building efforts should also be multidimensional—involving multiple actor across sectors. Multi-stakeholder involvement and partnership have been identified as an important mechanism for resilience building and increasing the engagement of business in development at community, country and regional level. It offered the potential for intensive, innovative and sustained collaboration from all sectors on issues that are integral to local, national development plans and to a flourishing and sustainable private sector. Development agencies and resilience building effort require collaborative management.

Active involvement of communities with other stakeholders - government departments, private sector, CARE, Plan International, ICRISAT and other NGOs, on each stage of the business cycle during project implementation has provided an avenue and for feeding in new ideas and technologies into resilience building process without a top down technology dissemination. Using participatory approaches has strengthened the prospects of sustainability in new interventions as the community become part of the learning and decision-making process, rather than just being recipients of project information and technologies. The use of multi-stakeholder approaches in community score card and community adaptation action plan help in identifying market opportunities and enterprise selection rather than prescribing markets and products is especially critical for empowering farmers and creating ownership of the process in rural communities. In strengthening social and human capital, engagement of private sector in resilience building should encompass proactive strategies, to ensure gender equity and farmers' empowerment, so that farmers can access and benefit from market opportunities and technologies and be agents of change.

**Recommendations**

Collaborative efforts across multiple actors is more effective where organisations, join hands in working together and efforts are cascaded to the field level. However, if the engagement ends at national, provincial and district level or at project management level without involving those responsible for actual implementation or those that make things happen on the ground, the collaboration will be merely window-dressing and substance void.

Partnerships need to embed strong M&E system in the management system to create methods for evaluating and revising aims and objectives. This means providing opportunities to learn what has been successful and what has not and to build these lessons into revised plans. Formal performance management processes, such as clarifying performance expectations and providing feedback, also contribute to partnership or collaboration monitoring and evaluation.

Partners should be encouraged to report on the health of the working relationship between partners through use of a formal mechanism. This helps identify simmering conflicts, to identify organizational barriers to effective partnering/collaboration, negative perceptions, or relationship risks, which can then be constructively addressed before they undercut the partnership. It is essential to look across multiple relationships.

Organisation or individuals managing consortia and multiple stakeholders should focus on relationship building and foster trust and convergence of interest among the diverse players.

Management should be everyone's responsibility with collaboration and management responsibilities devolved to the lowest possible level for the project staff, such as field staff.

Management to foster collective responsibility among the diverse actors and staff members.

Management to brokers as many partnership arrangements/agreements as possible, written or unwritten to facilitate working together of diverse players.

Management ensures that everyone's potential is continually developed, and the diverse staff/stakeholders are motivated to volunteer responsibilities.

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