

Foundations for Change

Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance Phase II

Lessons from Year 1



learning /'ləʊnɪŋ/

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

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Year **1**



The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance is a multi-sectoral partnership which brings together community programmes, new research, shared knowledge, and evidence-based influencing to build community flood resilience in developed and developing countries.

We help people measure their resilience to floods and identify appropriate solutions before disaster strikes. Our vision is that floods should have no negative impact on people's ability to thrive. To achieve this we are working to increase funding for flood resilience; strengthen global, national and subnational policies; and improve flood resilience practice.

Executive Summary

Phase II of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance was launched in July 2018. The first year largely focused on setting up the internal systems and structures to achieve our broader objectives. Combining investment in these systems and structures with leveraging Phase I successes is already leading to promising contributions to flood resilience policy and practice globally. This learning report presents what we have learned about best-practice working as an Alliance and what that set-up is allowing us to accomplish.

We have found that delivering resilience programming that achieves lasting, systems-level change requires functioning resiliently — principally to be flexible, adaptive, diverse, and collaborative. In setting up Phase II of the Alliance, we have intentionally considered and built these characteristics into our internal systems, processes, and ways of working. This effort, in turn, is enabling the collective action required for achieving lasting, beneficial changes in flood resilience spending, policy, and practice.

The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance



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

The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance is a multi-sector, global partnership focused on finding practical ways to help communities strengthen their resilience to floods. Phase I of the Alliance was launched in 2013 with the goal of shifting focus from flood response and recovery to pre-event risk reduction. In light of the significant successes achieved in Phase I and recognition that systemically building flood resilience necessitates longer-term funding cycles, the Z Zurich Foundation (The Foundation) extended an additional 20.3 million USD in funding for a second five-year phase in 2018. In Phase II, the Alliance has been broadened to include new members and more countries and more ambitious goals have been set, including increasing flood resilience spending by 1 billion USD and increasing the flood resilience of 2 million people.

The Alliance is comprised of nine organisations hailing from the private, international development, humanitarian, and research sectors. Successful collaboration across these 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 flexibility

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.

to adapt to the needs on the ground. Ultimately, we have been able to harness the diverse strengths and skills of Alliance partners to work toward a set of common goals that are broader and more impactful than what we could or would take on individually. In the process, we have also learned from one another to see and tackle problems in new ways.

The Alliance's approach to building flood resilience is defined by the Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC), a holistic framework that promotes systems thinking to understand the resilience context of a community. Alliance communities and Alliance partners work together to use knowledge gained from application of the FRMC to identify critical flood resilience interventions that generate co-benefits across a broad range of issues and areas. This deep analysis of the community as a system, conducted prior to considering how to intervene, is critically different from more traditional approaches, which more often conduct only minimal analysis and rely on off-the-shelf solutions that do not always reflect the local context. This difference in fundamental approach makes the Alliance quite unusual.

“The Alliance looks at resilience from a different perspective. Looking from just one angle can result in gains in one place, collateral damage in another. The FRMC requires looking across multiple areas and thinking where strengths can be utilized.”

- Alliance country team member

Operationalizing the Alliance



Resilient leader's network in Peru
© Giorgio Madueño, Practical Action

“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

During the first year of Phase II, we have worked to develop an Alliance identity and build a shared vision. We have developed a global Theory of Change (ToC) and nested country ToCs that articulate how we will achieve our objectives to increase spending on flood resilience, improve flood resilience policy, and improve flood resilience practice. We have cultivated strong, transparent partnerships to bridge silos and divides between partners and across the Alliance in recognition that each ToC objective will be delivered collectively, by multiple organisations working at multiple scales.

The resulting structure and collaboration within the Alliance has not occurred organically. It has taken significant time, effort, and thought, invested very intentionally. Alliance partners agree that investment has been worthwhile in light of how effectively we are now operating and for the potential this type of operation unlocks for achieving resilience outcomes.

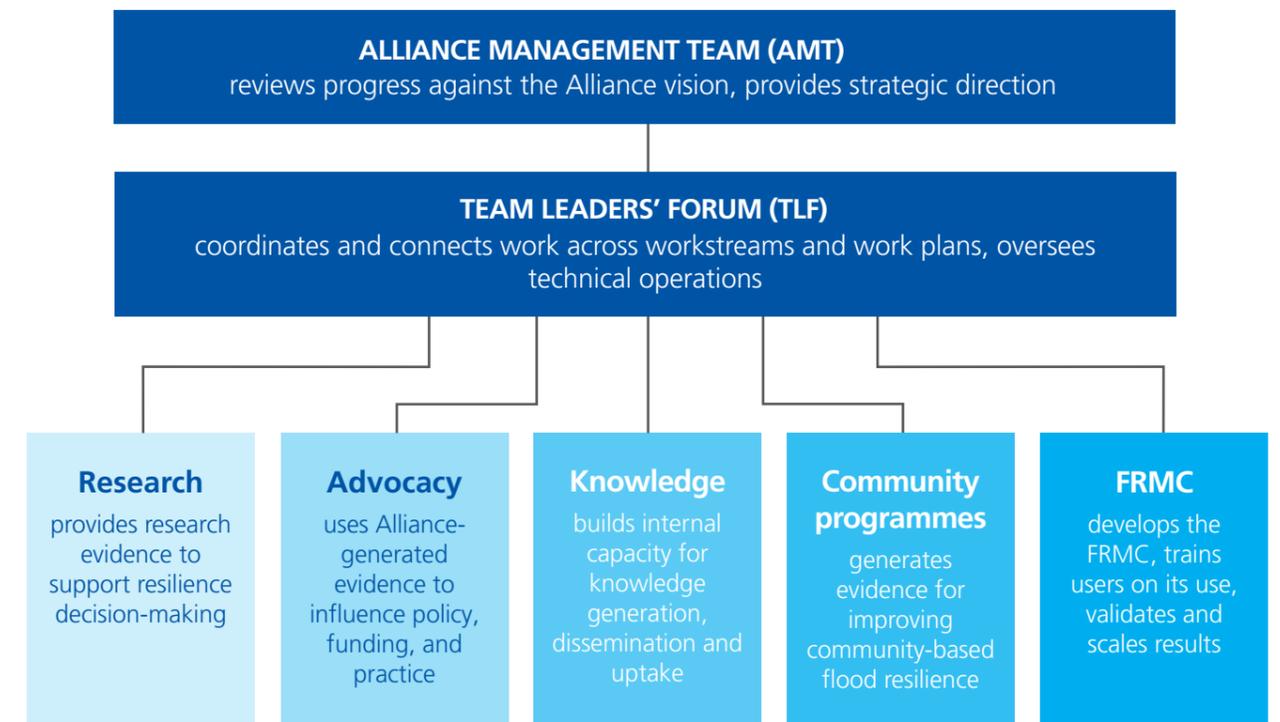
The internal structure we are using to operationalize the Alliance is a set of five topic-area workstreams, coordinated through two levels of governance bodies, as shown in figure 2 on the next page.

Each of these seven bodies has cross-organisational membership, though only the governance bodies have representation from all organisations. This structure supports distributed operation and incentivises all partners to take responsibility for the delivery of Alliance objectives; no single organisation, including Zurich, is the sole ‘manager’ of the Alliance.



Capacity building in EWS and evacuation in El Salvador © Plan International

Figure 2 Topic-area workstreams and governance bodies



Key accomplishments in the first year of Phase II

- The development of trust and collaboration between organisations and country teams;
- An effective, smoothly functioning Alliance-wide governance system;
- The development of nested global and national Theories of Change and a Monitoring, Reporting & Learning system to measure progress toward achieving those Theories of Change;
- Increasing internal knowledge of flood resilience and systems thinking;
- The finalization and roll out of the FRMC NextGen in seven different languages and implementation in 70 communities across eight countries;
- The development and use of a knowledge management system to support collaboration and learning;
- The establishment of a multi-organisational advocacy workstream that is sharing information, contacts and networks to influence donors and policy makers.

Year one change achieved

The structures and systems put into place during the first year of the Alliance have enabled collective thought and allowed us to tap into expertise and experience outside of the realm of individual organisations to achieve change against the global ToC. Given that we are so early in the programme period, successes have primarily resulted from leveraging pre-existing relationships and Phase I successes and credibility. We expect to see Phase II learning reflected in advocacy and practice-related change in the coming years.

Success in year one includes influencing the commitment of nearly 24 million USD and the disbursement of over one million USD for flood resilience (see Figure 3). Though only a fraction of our 1 billion USD goal, these funds exceed the investment the Foundation has committed for Phase II of the Alliance, a substantial return on the foundational year of a multi-year project. We have also directly engaged with and built the capacity of over 4,400 individuals in the process of rolling out the FRMC tools at the community level. This engagement will lead to community interventions benefitting over 115,000 community residents.

Figure 3 Spending influenced in Year 1 of Phase II of the Alliance

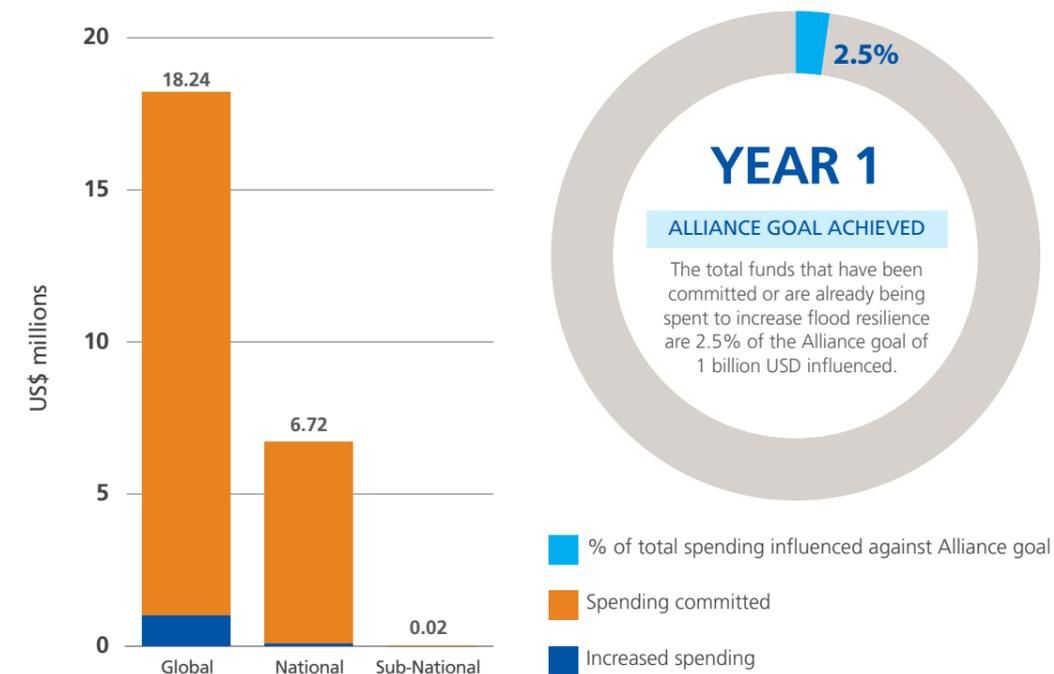
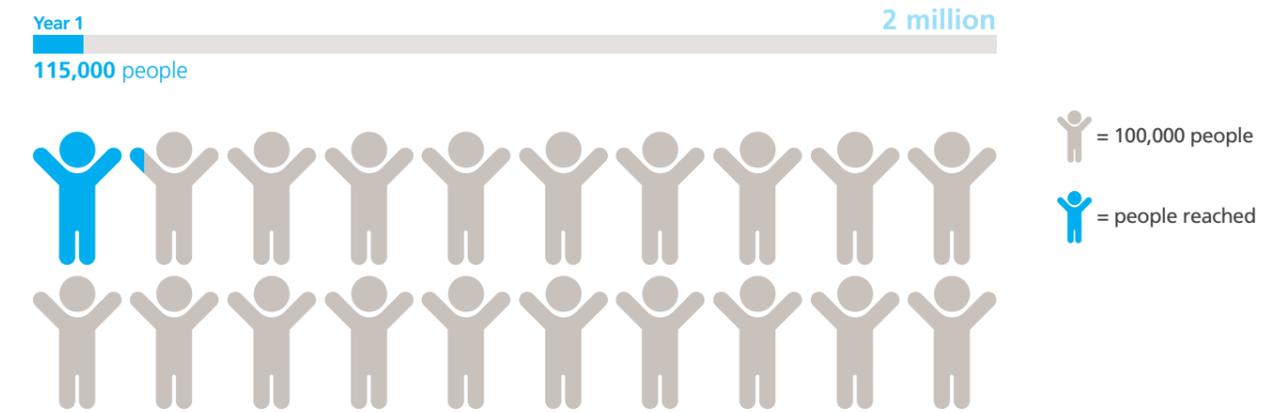


Figure 4 People reached in Year 1



Key changes achieved in the first year of Phase II

- Developing relationships with diverse stakeholders across sectors and scales of governance to enable uptake and implementation of Alliance knowledge of flood resilience via policy and community initiatives;
- Generating buy-in to the Alliance and increasing knowledge of flood resilience at the global and national levels;
- Developing research and knowledge outputs on flood resilience that have achieved widespread readership;
- Accessing policy dialogues at the global and national levels;
- Integrating Alliance messaging into high profile global and national level policy recommendations;
- Successfully influencing national level flood resilience policy and spending by leveraging successes from Phase I;
- Influencing external replication and scaling of the FRMC and Phase I best practices.



Flood resilient infrastructure - raised tube well, Bangaun Community, Kailali, Nepal
© Archana Gurung, Practical Action



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

The table on the next page provides examples of the successes we have achieved under each of our objectives during the first year. These examples are not a comprehensive list of all of our successes, but are indicative of the breadth of our engagement.

Table 1 Examples of successes achieved under each objective during the first year

OBJECTIVE 1 Increase funding for flood resilience	OBJECTIVE 2 Policy at global, national, or sub-national level is improved	OBJECTIVE 3 Improve flood resilience practice
<p>The following successes represent places where funding is institutionalizing Alliance lessons and learning.¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17,650 USD by the Nepal Department of Hydro-Meteorology for the operation and maintenance of the Karnali river gauge station, information crucial for flood early warning. • 27,500 USD by the DuPont Resilient Construction division for replicating the Post Event Review Capability (PERC) methodology to understand wildfire impacts in California and identify entry points for building wildfire resilience. • 33,725 USD by InsuResilience Global Partnership Secretariat for a feasibility study into replicating the DC Water Environmental Impact Bond in Indonesia. • 22,800 USD co-financing from GIZ and the Municipality of Cetinje for Montenegro Red Cross Alliance activities. • 13.2 million USD by 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. 	<p>We have seen promising wins in incorporating Alliance policy recommendations and practices into policy agendas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance policy messaging was integrated into the Swiss government's official statement for the 2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. • 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. • In Nepal, the Alliance is working with sub-national government through national government to institutionalize the flood early warning system piloted by Practical Action Nepal in the Karnali basin in Phase I. • In New Zealand, the New Zealand Red Cross successfully advocated for strengthened national level flood resilience policy frameworks in the new national level Disaster Resilience Strategy. • The triple resilience dividend work of LSE and IIASA helped shape DFID's position at the UN Summit. The concept was subsequently taken up and formalized in the Global Adaptation report in September 2019. 	<p>Successes in flood resilience practice largely consist of scaling and replication of Phase I successes and the FRMC approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mexico Red Cross is exploring using Alliance approaches and methodologies for earthquake resilience and early warning systems. • Application of the FRMC in a 1,000,000 USD project in Nepal and India by Lutheran World Relief. • In Nepal, a USAID supported OFDA project is using the FRMC for baseline data collection and plan to use the results to guide them in designing early warning system-related interventions. • Alliance members are leveraging their networks to scale out Alliance approaches - particularly, the use of the FRMC outside of Alliance countries. • High profile external publications are beginning to reference Alliance knowledge. For example, a DFID-published report in Nepal² and a regionally-focused ADB report³ both reference the Alliance Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities.

1 Note: in reporting on spending influenced, here we report total, unweighted amounts. However, in evaluating our achievements against our goal of 1 billion USD, we weight total commitments by the estimated Alliance role in influencing that spending.
 2 Brooks, N., Faget, D., and Heijkoop, P. (2019). Tools for Measurement of Resilience in Nepal: Literature Review. DAI Europe. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5cff7c18e5274a3cc494e7b1/Resilience_measurement_LitRev_FINAL-updated1_ML_June_2019.pdf
 3 Asian Development Outlook 2019: Strengthening Disaster Resilience. (2019). Asian Development Bank. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/492711/ado2019.pdf>

Lessons from year one



Community testimony on flooding during a ZFRA field visit in Community Manuel Buelta y Rayón, Mexico © Brenda Ávila, Mexican Red Cross

Aligning different organisational cultures, workplace systems, and individual visions while also honoring the diverse and rich expertise that each partner organisation brings to the Alliance has been a fruitful yet challenging process. The lessons that have emerged from this process can be utilized by donors, practitioners, researchers, and academics alike.

A key enabler for functioning as a collective has been Zurich's willingness to **challenge traditional donor-recipient dynamics and roles** and work with the Alliance partners to co-create outcomes. **Involving the private sector**, i.e. Zurich, as an active, equal partner in the Alliance has brought an added weight and visibility to the programme, provided access to different networks, and amplified the impact of partner organisations. As a result, the Alliance has been able to achieve greater change than we could as individual organisations.

By adapting funding cycles to fit the long timeframes required to achieve systemic change, the Alliance is positioned to fundamentally shift systems that cause vulnerability and risk. Our five-year, adaptive funding has provided the time and planning necessary for developing a shared vision, which in turn is enabling us to work together toward common goals. However, these mechanisms for collaboration had to be intentionally incorporated into workflows and systems.



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

Setting up an alliance has required patience, compromise, and the recognition that **there is no perfect system**. Indeed, striving for perfection can quickly derail success; we have learned instead to recognize when systems are 'good enough' to allow us to achieve our vision. Building a strong foundation for the alliance has also meant **responding to internal demands**. Doing so has enabled us to come together quickly and flexibly to respond to a range of opportunities and challenges, and is providing the basis for learning and innovation. This basis is further supported by investment in tracking and ensuring that key learning is documented and shared.

Our work in this foundational year illustrates that **flexible, holistic programmes, informed by local contexts, are vital to achieving innovative results**. In particular, founding our work in a **systems thinking** approach has **helped us build the capacity of internal partners and external actors** to explore problems more holistically, to understand the interconnections, and to see new entry points for action.

Utilizing systems-thinking and creating a space for innovation, however, does not fit within typical measures of programmatic impact. This gap underscores the need to capture more than just policies changed and dollars spent in evaluating programme success. To fully assess the impact of long-term resilience programming, **measurement should also capture 'intangibles'**

"Having the Zurich name attached to the Alliance has opened doors. The private sector element gets people excited and draws attention to us; and Zurich is excited for us to do that."

- Alliance member



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

“It’s good that we’re exposed to other organizations and see how they work even if they are very different. This is the biggest consortium we’ve participated in. It was overwhelming at the beginning but we are grateful for the opportunity to meet the others.”

- Alliance member

such as the knowledge gained regarding key vulnerability and risks, or whether and how communities are empowered to take action and advocate for themselves.

Ultimately, *long-term systemic change requires working across multiple sectors and scales*. Within the Alliance, our workstream structure supports sector-specific work. Cross-workstream collaboration allows us to aggregate that work to deliver broader, cross-sectoral shared objectives, and our nested country and global ToCs support delivery of results across a 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.

Taken together, these insights illustrate a new way forward for implementing programmes that are beneficial for communities and organisations alike. To deliver such programming differently from business-as-usual, to truly tailor it to local needs and contexts, we need funding that provides the time and flexibility needed for innovation and learning. We hope that our demonstration of success in this new way of working will push the wider resilience sector to take a chance, to experiment, and to learn and adapt.

Zurich, as an active, equal partner in the Alliance has brought added weight and visibility to the program. We want to encourage more donors to adopt this type of non-traditional donor role.

Achieving systemic change takes time; funding cycles should be adapted to fit the long time frames required.

Flexible, holistic programmes, informed by local contexts, are vital to achieving innovative results.

Measurement should also capture ‘intangibles’ such as the knowledge gained regarding key vulnerabilities and risks.

Long-term systemic change requires working across multiple sectors and scales. This, in turn requires systemic collaboration intentionally built into workflows and systems.



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