Sense and Sensibilities of Coherence (Almedom’s contribution)

“Measuring Resilience and Adaptive Capacity for Local Populations”

Workshop hosted by the Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism

Syracuse University

16-17 January 2009
Definition of health

state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity…a fundamental human right…most important world-wide social goal whose realization requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector.”

Alma-Ata Declaration, 12 September 1978
Resilience

- a multi-dimensional construct defined as the capacity of individuals, families, communities, and institutions to **anticipate**, **withstand** and/or **judiciously engage** with catastrophic events and/or experiences; actively **making meaning** out of adversity, with the goal of **maintaining normal function** without losing identity. (Almedom 2008)
Assumption: Resilience as a Process (Adaptation - a dynamic process)

Ease

Adaptive

Resilience

Commitment

Dis-ease

Maladaptive

Vulnerability

Alienation
Resilience: Theoretical Underpinnings

Salutogenesis

pathogenesis
Resilience of *what*? Resilience to *what*?
Resilience of Whom?

- Resilience as a Phenomenon
- Resilience as a Process
- Resilience as a Power (energy and motivation to reintegrate)
Public discussion & debate: 1998-2008
International Resilience Workshop – Talloires 2007
Related Books/Reports, and wider international and local public discussion
Social Support: *types* and *timing* determine impact

Remain Unscathed?

Crisis

Psychosocial Transition

Positive aftermath

Negative aftermath

Remain Unscathed?

Cognitive

Emotional

Material
Social Support: types

- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Material

Social Support
Psychosocial Transition – an integrated model (Almedom, 2004)

Social Support: *types, timing and level*

I. Micro-level: Family, community

II. Macro-level: Gov, NGO, Nat., International

Crisis

Remain Unscathed

Psychosocial Transition

Cognitive  Emotional  Material

Positive aftermath

Negative aftermath

Tufts
Sense of Coherence (SOC)

- a global orientation that expresses the degree to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that engaging with adversity is:
  
  i. Manageable
  ii. Comprehensible
  iii. Meaningful

Antonovsky, 1987 (paraphrased)
[Why] Does Eritrea spell Resilience?

Figure 2.1
Population Pyramid

Age

Male

Female

Percent

EDHS 2002
Measuring Resilience using the Sense of Coherence (SOC-13) Scale in Eritrea

Mean SOC scores by location nested in settlement type (N=157 women)
Sense of Coherence in NOLA, Lower 9th Ward & surroundings (March 2007)

Sense of Coherence (SOC-13) Scores by variable

SOC score

65

39

13

Overall Sex Age Category ACORN member? Returned home?

F M <50 50-59 60+ No Yes No Yes

47.76 (N=41) 46.83 (N=24) 49.06 (N=17) 45.11 (N=9) 47.48 (N=21) 50.46 (N=11) 50.74 (N=19) 45.18 (N=22) 43.75 (N=24) 53.41 (N=17)
Multiple indicators of Resilience in our “Resilience Index”

- **Social support:** type; timing; level
- **Social cohesion mediated by social capital:**
  shared norms & values; Reciprocity; Trust; civic participation;
- **Sense (and sensibilities) of Coherence:**
  manageability, comprehensibility, meaningfulness
  (of engaging with adversity)
- Accountability and governance (of pre-existing + emergency local, national and international humanitarian action)