

Human Rights Based Approach to Resilience

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Context - 1

- Disasters, climate change impacts and conflicts affect millions of people every year by destroying livelihoods and causing huge and irreversible damages to the communities and nations
- Human and economic losses are set to increase in the near future as climate change impacts become more pronounced, heaping further misery on already fragile societies. Economic damages from natural disasters were the highest ever registered in 2011 with an estimated US\$ 366.1 billion.
- Over the last 30 years the number of deaths due to disasters has reduced, although the numbers of disasters and peoples affected have increased

Context - 2

- According to CRED's Annual Disasters statistical review **2011**, natural disasters killed a total of 30, 773 people and caused **244.7 million victims worldwide**
- **Recent food crises** in Niger, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa as well as the world food price and fuel crisis of 2007-08 **have set development gains back decades**
- **Violent conflicts both arise and reinforce social and economic inequalities** and leave poor and excluded communities more vulnerable

A few community voices... - 1

- *“I have a thatched house near the riverbank, so every year we are badly affected by floods. In the recent years, our problems have increased. This is the reason why I have to spend most of my earnings to make my house safe. I need to repair it after every flood.”*

Nim Kumari Bohara
Ganga River Basin,
Bihar, India



- *“I’m one of the women farmers who are growing off-season vegetables and bananas. These crops suffer less than paddy when there is a flood or a drought. I started to grow vegetables in a kitchen garden to sell. There is no alternative other than changing our cropping patterns to reduce the risk of crop failure.”*

Lautani Tharu, Suryapatuwa village,
Bardiya district, Nepal.

A few community voices... - 2

- *“If the **government could build flood-protected shelters** for the community, it could save lives and assets during floods.”*

Ameme, Gulzar Mondol village,
Faridpur district, Bangladesh



- *“If we do not **change our attitudes and practices**, it is difficult to survive in the changing conditions. We are **strengthening our social institutions** to cope with flood and drought by providing support to each other, like food and shelter for our flood-affected neighbours.”*

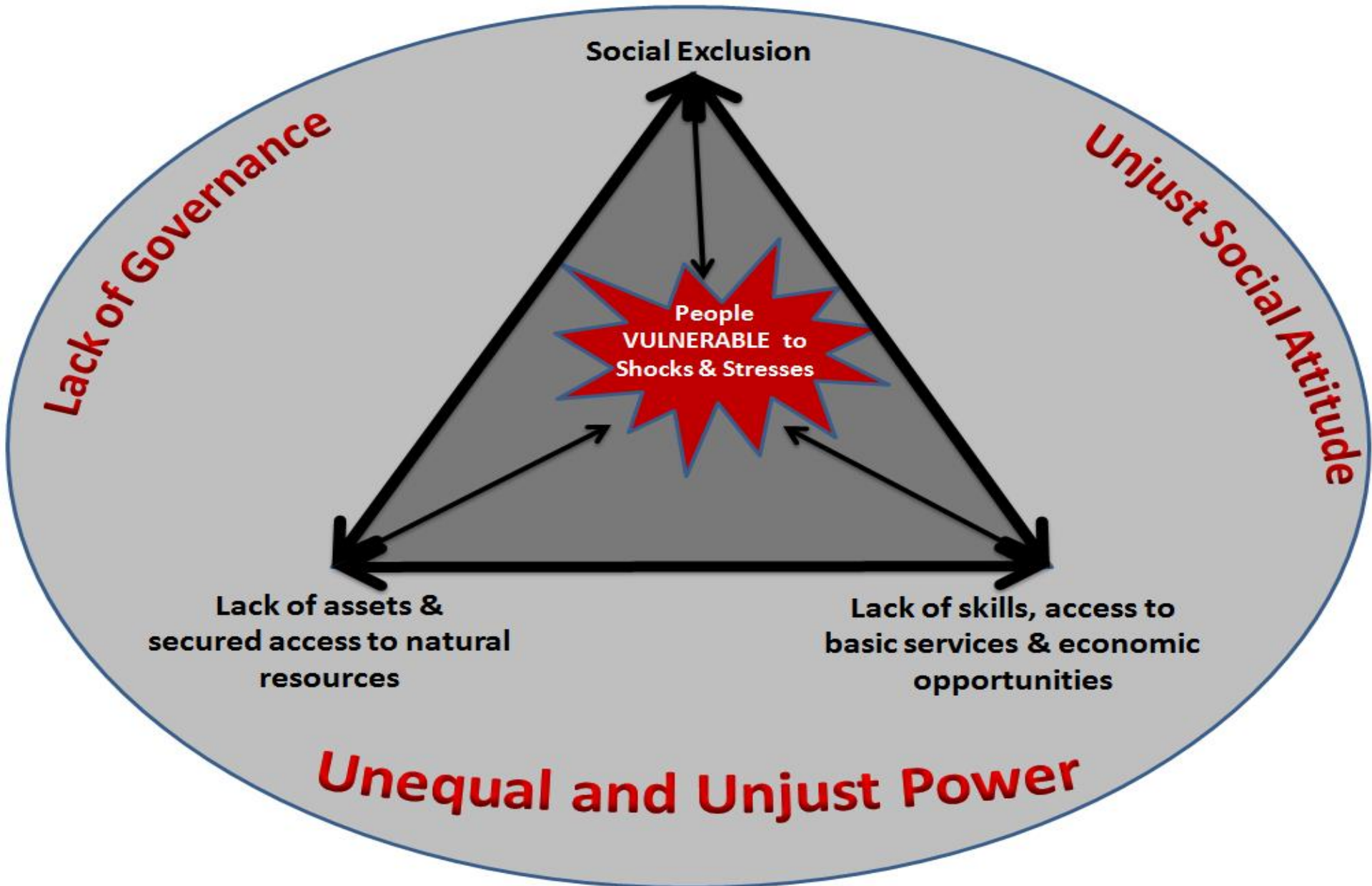
Muna Mukeri, 55
Matehiya, Nepal



Vulnerability as the Challenge

- ActionAid's work is centred around people's vulnerability to shocks and stresses as well as addressing the underlying causes that make them vulnerable
- ActionAid's analysis shows that vulnerability is primarily caused by three factors:
 - Social exclusion;
 - Lack of skills, access to basic services and economic opportunities; and
 - Lack of assets and secured access to natural resources

Underlying Causes of Vulnerability



Shocks and stresses

Shock is a broad term which encapsulates the full range of **stressors** faced by communities including physical, social, economic, cultural and political.

Disasters, climate change impacts and conflict are also included in this concept.

Examples: earthquake, cyclone, drought, floods, epidemic, sea level rise, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, food crisis, economic crisis, political unrest, violent conflict etc.

Vulnerable people

Poor and socially excluded groups, particularly:

- Children
- Women
- Displaced
- Person with disabilities
- Elderly
- HIV & AIDS affected

Social exclusion

Social Exclusion is an outcome of **multiple human rights violations** a social group faces on the basis of:

- Gender (including patriarchy)
- Race
- Class
- Caste
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Religion and
- Sexual orientation

It limits their **participation** in the economic, social and political life of the communities and societies they live in.

Lack of skills, access to basic services and economic opportunities

It includes:

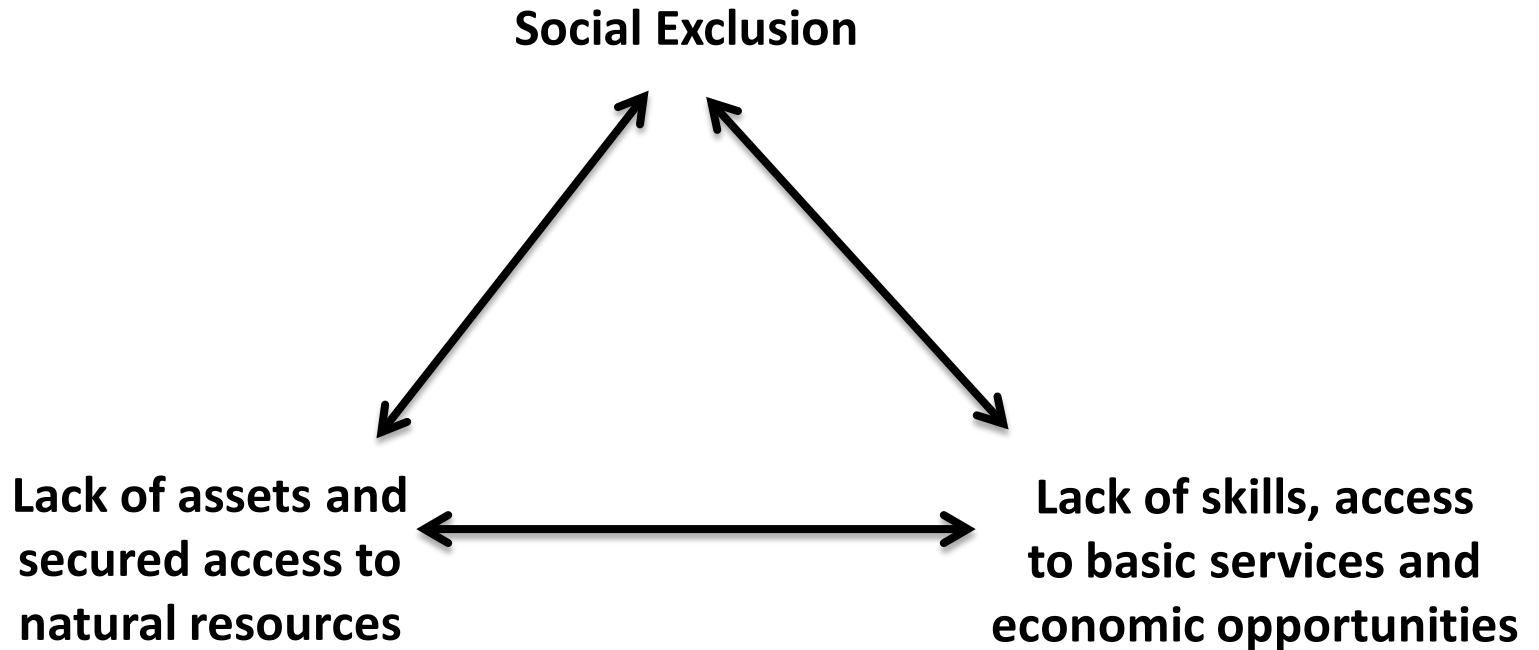
- Access to basic services such as education, healthcare, information, social protection, early warning etc
- Capacities and skills to reduce risk
- Diversified livelihood options
- Fair and stable markets
- Finance etc

Lack of Assets and Secured Access to Natural Resources

It includes:

- A safe house
- Livelihood assets
- Land
- Forest
- Water
- Bio-diversity
- Atmospheric space (links with pollution, carbon emissions etc)

Inter-relationship between underlying causes



These three underlying causes are interlinked and reinforce each other as demonstrated by the double headed arrows

Unequal and Unjust Power

The **underlying causes of vulnerability arise from unequal and unjust power** that includes the institutional perpetuation of inequality and injustice.

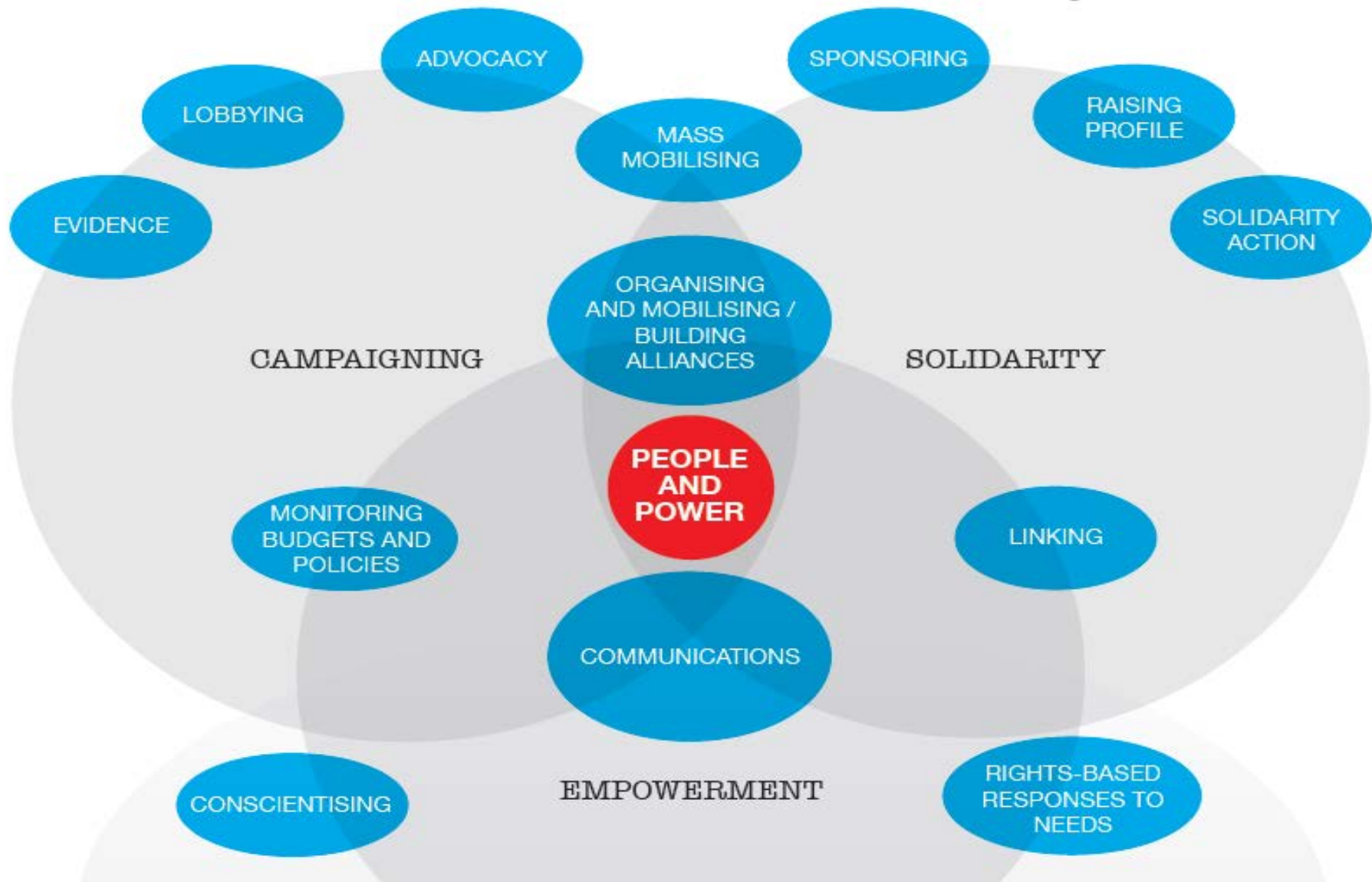
The perpetrators of such unequal and unjust power could be:

- Family
- Patriarchal community
- Local to national governments in developing countries
- Local / Traditional institutions
- Local elites
- Corporations
- Developed country governments
- Donors
- International institutions and so on.

The Solution: People's Power

- **Poverty** is a violation of human rights and **causes vulnerability**
- AA's Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to resilience puts people's vulnerabilities at the centre and **addresses the underlying causes of vulnerability** to shocks and stresses
- It is imperative to address the core issue of **existing power imbalance and inequality**
- It **provides sustainable long term solutions** for people and communities who are the most vulnerable

ActionAid's Human Rights Based Approach



HRBA to resilience

ActionAid strategically invests in three key areas of practical courses of action, required to enhance resilience among vulnerable people and communities:

- Empowerment
- Solidarity
- Campaigning

These three areas, together, achieve equity and justice for all and thereby effectively tackle the impact of shocks and stresses.

Key tenets of resilience work

- Advancing women's rights
- Promote Social Protection
- Promote credible and sustainable alternatives around resilience
- Integration across AA's work around: food security, sustainable agriculture, natural resources, education, youth and governance

Thank You

ActionAid's resilience discussion paper

<http://www.actionaid.org/publications/actionaids-discussion-paper-resilience>

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