

Building Resilience

In the modern world many organisations, both national and corporate face budget constraints that prohibit the investment necessary to finance effective prevention, protection and recovery measures. As a consequence pressure will mount on policymakers to reinforce the resilience of all communities and individuals and to reapportion their share of the burden.

Resilience

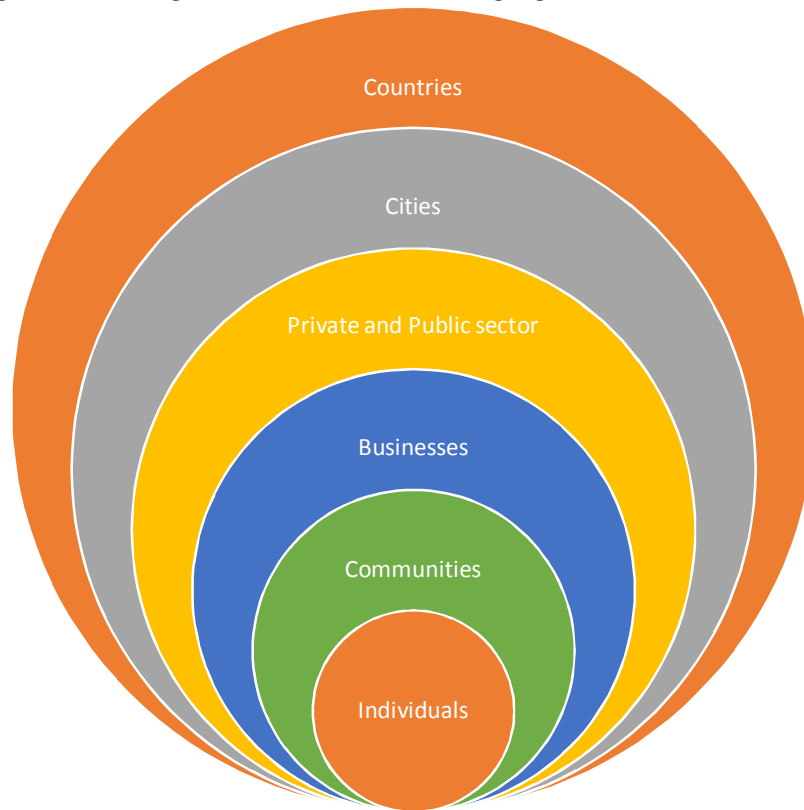
- É What is it – can you define it?
- É What does it mean to individuals, communities, businesses, private and public sector, cities and the government
- É What are the key capabilities?
- É Is it a good thing or is it worth it?

What is resilience?

The simple answer or common definition is 'to bounce back' or 'the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties'. However, I would suggest organisations need to take a broader approach. The problem is which one?

- É UK Cabinet Office: *the ability to continue through disruption and adapt to longer-term change in order to attain strategic goals*
- É British Standards Institute (BS 65000:2014): *organisational resilience is the ability of an organisation to anticipate, prepare for and respond and adapt to everything from minor everyday events, to acute shocks and chronic or incremental changes.*
- É United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNISDR: *Resilience is the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions*

If we accept the UK Cabinet Office definition '*the ability to continue through disruption and adapt to longer-term change in order to attain strategic goals*'. What does it mean to?



The key for me is that Resilience is a strategic objective intended to help individuals and organisations survive and prosper. A highly resilient organisation is more adaptive, competitive, agile and robust than less resilient organisations, can the same be said about individuals?

What are the key capabilities?

Dr Robert MacFarlane of the UK Cabinet Office, recently stated that 'Resilience: a set of ideas, and activities, that are 'nested' within one another'.

The key capabilities required I would suggest are:

1. Integrated risk management process that focuses on looking at the full range of risks facing your organisations operations; internal and external. You need to know which risks pose the greatest threat to the availability and continuity of your operations.
2. Business Continuity that allows your organisation to maintain continuous operations, with processes and infrastructures that are responsive, highly available and scalable.
3. A crisis management plan that is regularly reviewed and exercised. This must include a process to mitigate, prevent, respond to and recover from various issues and the consequences that may arise. It should identify key roles and responsibilities and include a communications plan? A tip that I also give is that risk and crises are complex; keep arrangements simple.

4. Security plan that helps you safeguard, protect and manage your most valuable assets: people, data, information, systems and key premises. Importantly security capability is directed by and proportionate to the risks.
5. Market readiness strategy that concentrates on enhancing your organisation's ability to identify and respond to new customer demands and fast-breaking new market opportunities – this principle needs to come from your strategic leaders.

However, in the field of resilience there are limits to what organisations alone can achieve. There are many critical dependencies between public-private sector and a number of critical interdependencies e.g. supply chains and critical infrastructure requirements with international reach and a number of risks that are 'unknowns'. However, by adopting the above elements it will allow your organisation to continue through disruption and adapt to longer-term change in order to attain strategic goals.

To achieve this organisations need to develop and implement a flexible resilience program to help:

- protect your key resources (people, systems, premises and information);
- deflect the impact of normal outages and disruptions;
- assess and predict potential disruptions; and
- adapt when change inevitably occurs.

Building capability

The UK National Resilience strategy recognises that both Business and Community preparedness and resilience is a critical element to achieving resilience. The National Risk assessment is undertaken to optimally allocate limited resources, perhaps the key is that it is an all-hazards national risk assessment for country risk management which feeds both the National Security Strategy and Domestic Resilience Strategy.

Risk assessments provide policymakers and government with information to steer mitigation investments toward producing their greatest economic and societal benefit. Without a tool such as the National Risk Assessment, it may be difficult for top level policymakers to make informed decisions on the relative benefits of buying down risks to public health, safety or security.

The National security risk assessment for national security strategy takes a long term, looking at events or developments in the next 5 – 20 years. Its scope is global, all-risks, with the objectives:

- “ to ensure a secure and resilient country by protecting our people, economy, infrastructure, territory and way of life from all major risks that can affect us directly
- “ to shape a stable world, by acting to reduce the likelihood of risks affecting the country or its interests overseas, and applying our instruments of power and influence to shape the global environment

Current examples risks from the previous National security risk assessment will not surprise the reader:

- “ Hostile attacks upon UK cyber space by other states and large scale cyber-crime.
- “ An international military crisis between states, drawing in the UK, its allies as well as other states and non-state actors.
- “ International terrorism affecting the UK or its interests
- “ A major accident or natural hazard which requires a national response, such as severe coastal flooding affecting three or more regions of the UK or an influenza pandemic.

The national risk assessment for the domestic resilience strategy takes a medium term view of events in the next 5 years and is completed every year. Its scope is national, all-risks i.e. malicious threats, non-malicious hazards and serious and organised crime. The UK risk profile may be affected by climate change, global instability, networked, interdependent, and complex society. But the risk profile is unlikely to change significantly, it will remain diverse, with no single risk dominating, complex and unpredictable, with links suddenly emerging between events. The key to this process is that it define consequences of reasonable worst case scenarios in sufficient detail to confirm the scale of capability requirements, which enables or directs preparations. This means generic emergency response capabilities, crisis management, specific plans for catastrophic emergencies and an improved social-economic resilience i.e. businesses and communities.

This means building resilience capabilities; based risk identification and assessment, not forgetting the importance of regular (daily or weekly) horizon-scanning and crisis management; developing and testing the ability to respond both at a local and national level with contingency planning arrangements for the top risks; and reducing vulnerability to harm with resilience of essential services/national infrastructure, corporate resilience and community resilience

Benefits of resilience.

Resilience is not a stand-alone system. By complementing existing strategies and management systems within a resilience approach, help to develop the capability to deal with both foreseeable and unforeseen risks, respond to any disruptive event and position itself for advantage after disruptions occur.

- “ Effective business as usual capability
- “ Ability to change and adapt
- “ Ability to shape the environment
- “ Competitiveness
- “ Reputation

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