

# **Assessment of the Resilience of Partner Organizations**



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## Introduction

In recent years, the Women's Fund Armenia has provided grants and implemented activities aimed at enhancing the resilience of its partner organizations and groups. These activities have been diverse, and the grants requested by the partner organizations have also varied accordingly.

Resilience assessment helps to understand how well organizations, groups/initiatives, and individuals are able to anticipate crises, challenges, or long-term pressures, as well as how effectively they can respond to and recover from them—whether those challenges are social, political, economic, environmental, or of another nature. In practice, resilience reflects not only the ability to survive but also to reorganize and even emerge stronger during and after crises and other difficulties - something the Fund's partners have demonstrated in their work during various crisis situations.

Resilience assessment makes it possible to identify the structural weaknesses of organizations, leadership shortcomings, as well as gaps in resources and opportunities for the sustainability of their activities (and impact). It serves as a foundation for making decisions related to strategic planning, risk management, and financing. Resilient or robust organizations are better able to deliver services purposefully and effectively protect their staff and communities during times of instability or shock (such as war, funding cuts, political repression, etc.).

Groups and initiatives often operate in unstable environments and with limited resources. Resilience assessment ensures that these informal structures, networks, and internal solidarity are strong enough to withstand pressures and continue mobilization. This approach also highlights where various forms of support (financial, technical, emotional) are most needed in order to sustain their work.

Individuals, especially those on the frontlines or in activist roles, often face burnout, trauma, and a range of personal risks (including threats to their lives). Personal resilience assessment helps to identify needs related to mental health, safety, empowerment, and leadership development. Building the resilience of individuals involved in movements is fundamental to strengthening collective capacity and ensuring the sustainability of the movement.

From the perspective of funding institutions and allies, this assessment provides insight into the long-term sustainability of partners. It goes beyond short-term outcomes and enables funders to invest in strengthening movement systems. It also allows for a shift from reactive support to more proactive and strategic long-term approaches.

In the feminist and social justice fields, resilience assessment focuses on the experiences of those most deeply affected by injustice. This approach to resilience values community knowledge, the strength of relationships, as well as the practices of self- and collective care - elements often overlooked in traditional assessments. Resilience assessment also helps develop support that is just, sensitive, responsive, and transformative, especially within the work of foundations.

## Methodology

During the implementation of grant programs, a number of questions arose. In order to study these questions and extract meaningful answers, the Fund conducted a resilience assessment among its partners during April–May 2025. The data obtained from this research provides insights into the level of resilience demonstrated by the Fund and its partners within their collaborative efforts.

One of the key objectives of the study is to identify the specific challenges most frequently faced by women and systematically marginalized groups and organizations.

## Method

The study employed a quantitative-evaluative questionnaire, primarily consisting of closed-ended questions based on an 8-point Likert scale, supplemented, where necessary, by a few open-ended, clarifying questions. The structure of the questionnaire was designed to allow for the calculation of a resilience index.

## Sample

Taking into account the Fund's collaboration with organizations, group-initiatives, and individuals, the sample included three cohort groups, each with a tailored set of questions. In total, 47 respondents participated in the study, distributed across the following cohorts:

- 34 organizations
- 9 individuals
- 4 group-initiatives

## Resilience Index Calculation

The questionnaire<sup>1</sup> included Likert scale questions scored from 0 to 7, where 0 indicates complete disagreement with the given statement, and 7 indicates full agreement. The absolute values of responses to these questions are summed, and the resulting total score reflects the level of resilience.

For organizations and group-initiatives, the interpretation of results is as follows:

- 0–104 – Low resilience
- 105–118 – Medium resilience
- 119–161 – High resilience

For individuals, due to the irrelevance of several questions, the scale is slightly adjusted:

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix 1

- 0–72 – Low resilience
- 73–82 – Medium resilience
- 83–112 – High resilience

Responses to the open-ended or non-scale questions included in the questionnaire are not factored into the resilience index calculation. These responses will be reflected separately in the report.

## Presentation of Results

As previously mentioned, the assessment included three groups of partners: **organizations, groups, and individuals**. A separate resilience index was calculated for each group, along with the identification of specific areas where low resilience was observed.

Below is the resilience index of organizations, group-initiatives, and individuals, presented by the number of participants in each cohort and the corresponding percentage distribution.

Organizations	Number	Percentage
High Resilience	12	35%
Medium Resilience	10	29%
Low Resilience	12	35%

The resilience levels among **organizations** are evenly distributed between high and low, indicating a form of **polarization within the system**. **Some organizations perceive themselves as highly capable of withstanding crises, while others face significant challenges in this regard**. The proportion of organizations with medium resilience is relatively low, which may suggest that the impact of the program or external circumstances has been either strongly positive or strongly negative for most organizations.

Groups/Initiatives	Number	Percentage
High Resilience	1	25%
Medium Resilience	2	50%
Low Resilience	1	25%

Responses to the open-ended or non-scale questions included in the questionnaire are not factored into the resilience index calculation. These responses will be reflected separately in the report.

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Individuals	Number	Percentage
High Resilience	4	44%
Medium Resilience	1	11%
Low Resilience	4	44%

The data reveals a contrasting picture of individual resilience - approximately half of the participants demonstrated high resilience, while the other half showed low resilience. This may indicate significant variation in personal resources and circumstances, suggesting that the impact of the program or intervention was perceived differently among individuals.

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**Quantitative Question Analysis (0–7 Scale)**

This analysis includes 26 questions that assessed the resilience of organizations in crisis situations. The recorded average scores range as follows:

- Highest - 6.29 (Valuing collective care for staff)
- Lowest - 2.29 (Lack of resource reserves)

## Highly Rated Areas:

- **Collective Care (average index: 6.3)** – Indicates a strong awareness and prioritization of team well-being.
- **Innovative Use of Knowledge (average index: 6.0)** – Some organizations apply experience and innovation to address crises.
- **Staff Commitment (average index: 5.8)** – Most teams show high morale and psychological readiness.

## Lower-Rated Areas:

- **Lack of reserves for unexpected expenses (average index: 2.9)**
- **Limited resource allocation for emergencies (average index: 3.3)**
- **Absence of crisis communication plans (average index: 3.4)**
- **Limited capacity to mobilize resources (average index: 3.7)**
- **Barriers to collaboration (average index: 3.8)** – Reflected in weak institutional linkages.

## Overall Observation:

The resilience of organizations is adequate at the psychological, team, and internal decision-making levels, but remains low in terms of institutional stability, resource management, and strategic planning.

## Analysis of Non-Index Questions

### ◆ Availability of Reserve Funds

Over 90% of organizations reported having no reserve funds, which is also reflected in the low scores on related quantitative questions, indicating systemic issues.

### ◆ Survival Duration Without Funding

- The majority (18 out of 34) can survive up to 6 months without funding.
- Only a few organizations (5 out of 34) have the potential to survive for more than one year.
- This highlights a significant lack of financial self-sufficiency.

### ◆ Official Risk Planning

## Responses can be categorized into three groups:

1. **Lack of Planning** – More than half of the organizations reported no plans developed due to lack of resources, time, or strategic approach.
2. **Individual Initiatives / Situational Responses** – Some organizations had temporary or short-term plans related to COVID-19, the war, or funding interruptions.
3. **High-Level Planning** – Only two organizations have strategic plans that include risk management, security, beneficiary protection, and staff discipline and safety protocols.

**Overall Trend:** There is a clear absence or lack of tested, systematic risk planning across most organizations.

**General Conclusions**

**Strengths**

- ✓ Staff commitment and psychological readiness
- ✓ Emphasis on the concept of collective care
- ✓ Innovative approaches to applying knowledge
- ✓ Speed and flexibility in decision-making

**Weaknesses**

- ✗ Absence of reserve funds
- ✗ Lack of crisis and risk planning
- ✗ Insufficient readiness to allocate resources for emergencies
- ✗ Limitations in resource mobilization
- ✗ Obstacles to full cooperation with organizations
- ✗ Lack of regular staff satisfaction assessments

**Initiatives**

**Quantitative Question Analysis (0–7 Scale)**

Initiatives were evaluated using several questions on a 0 to 7 scale, covering coordination capacities, availability of financial resources, psychological resilience, decision-making speed, and more.

**Highly Rated Areas:**

1. *Emphasis on the concept of collective care (average index: 6.50)*
2. *Active commitment of the staff (average index: 6.00)*

**Low Rated Areas:**

1. *Availability of a crisis communication plan (average index: 1.75)*
2. *Resource allocation for emergency response (average index: 2.50)*
3. *Regular staff satisfaction assessment (average index: 3.25)*
4. *Sufficient resources for unforeseen expenses (average index: 3.50)*
5. *Clear priorities during a crisis (average index: 3.75)*



These indicators show that the initiatives are strong in team and psychological readiness, with existing team support, commitment, and morale resilience. However, they still lack the necessary financial resilience and structural preparedness, including formal plans and regular satisfaction monitoring.

**Non-Index Questions Analysis**

◆ **Availability of Reserve Funds**

- All initiatives reported having no reserve funds.
- This corresponds with the low scores found in the index-based questions.
- Financial instability is also a systemic issue here.

◆ **Timeframe for Continuing Activities Without Funding**

The main responses were: **up to six months, up to one year, and more than one year**. A few initiatives showed relatively good short-term resilience, but the lack of reserves makes the situation risky.

◆ **Implementation of Risk Planning**

Many respondents answered **"No," "Not implemented," or left the question unanswered**. Only one initiative mentioned a specific program addressing safety, conflicts, and risks related to working with vulnerable groups.

**General Conclusions**

**Strengths**

- ✓ Team commitment and psychological resilience
- ✓ Valuing collective care principles
- ✓ Some degree of decision-making speed

**Weaknesses**

- ✗ Absence of reserve funds
- ✗ Lack of crisis planning and communication plans
- ✗ Lack of satisfaction monitoring
- ✗ Lack of resources to prepare for emergencies

## Individuals

### Quantitative Question Analysis (0–7 Scale)

This analysis reflects individuals' self-assessment across various areas, ranging from psychological preparedness to resource management capabilities.

#### Highly Rated Areas:

1. Investing in capacity building (average index: 6.56)
2. Active and committed work until the problem is resolved (average index: 5.89)

#### Low Rated Areas:

1. Clearly defined priorities and policies (average index: 3.11)
2. Availability of crisis communication plan (average index: 3.33)
3. Ability to mobilize external resources (average index: 3.67)
4. Willingness to allocate resources for emergencies (average index: 3.78)
5. Availability of resources for unforeseen expenses (average index: 4.00)

This demonstrates individuals' willingness to continuously develop themselves, as well as their commitment to working through crises. However, according to the overall picture, individuals still lack strategic thinking, pre-developed plans, and resource self-sufficiency during emergency situations.

### Analysis of Non-Index Questions

#### ◆ Availability of a Reserve Fund

Most responses indicated "No", with a few answering "Yes", which is also reflected in the low score of the corresponding index question.

#### ◆ Duration of Project Implementation Without Funding

Responses varied: "I couldn't manage," "1–2 months," "one year," "very well," and "depends on the project.". This reveals instability in the absence of funding, both among organizations and individuals.

#### ◆ Planning for Risks

The dominant answers were "No," "not yet," and "lack of funding". Most people do not have specifically developed risk plans.

## General Conclusions

### Strengths

- ✓ Dedication and consistency
- ✓ Continuous efforts for self-development
- ✓ Overall psychological resilience

### Weaknesses

- ✗ Lack of clear plans and priorities
- ✗ Lack of financial reserves and resources
- ✗ Absence of developed crisis communication mechanisms
- ✗ Low preparedness for resource mobilization or emergency response

### Comparative Index of Resilience Criteria by Cohort

Sector	Organizations	Initiatives	Individuals
Commitment to solving the issue	5.8	6	5.9
Ability to make difficult decisions	5.7	3.8	5.6
Emotional and psychological resilience	5.5	5	5.2
Prepared team/person for crisis	5.2	5	4.9
Clarity of priorities during crisis	5.2	3.8	4.7
Ability to mobilize external resources	3.7	5	3.7
Resource preparedness for emergency situations	3.3	2.5	3.8

Like organizations and initiatives, individuals possess inner strength—shaped by **hard work, dedication, and a desire for growth**. However, practical stability in terms of resources and planning are key areas in need of serious improvement—whether it's having a reserve fund, assessing risks, or the ability to attract external support.

## Conclusions

### 1. Overall Level of Resilience

- The resilience level among the Fund's partners shows a polarized picture—especially among organizations and individuals, where there is a relatively equal distribution between those with high and low resilience. This indicates varying levels of crisis preparedness.
- Initiatives demonstrate a more balanced average level of resilience; however, due to the small number of participants, generalizations should be made with caution.

### 2. Team and Psychological Resilience

- All cohorts demonstrated strong commitment, team care, and emotional-psychological readiness.
- Dedication and hard work are foundational across all levels, representing a key potential for strengthening resilience moving forward.

### 3. Financial and Institutional Unpreparedness

- Across all groups, there is a noticeable lack of financial stability: reserve funds are absent, and the majority would be unable to operate for more than six months if funding stopped.
- The ability to attract resources and respond adequately to emergencies are among the lowest-rated areas.

### 4. Lack of Risk Management and Planning

- There is a clear absence of structured risk management plans and crisis communication mechanisms across all three cohorts.
- Most organizations do not have risk management programs, and among individuals, strategic thinking is not developed as a formal approach.

### 5. Lack of Monitoring and Evaluation Tools

- Especially in organizations and initiatives, there are no mechanisms to assess staff satisfaction. This hinders the development of predictable growth and improvement strategies.

## Recommendations

### For Strengthening the Resilience of Organizations, Groups, and Individuals

#### ◆ Financial Resilience

- Initiate the creation of reserve funds, even at a minimal level (e.g., to cover 3–6 months of expenses).
- Promote the development of diversified funding strategies based on multiple donors, grants, and services.

#### ◆ Risk Management and Strategic Planning

- Support partners in developing simplified, practical **risk management plans**, covering physical, financial, psychological, and pandemic-related threats.
- Encourage the creation of **crisis communication plans**, especially for structures working with service recipients and target groups.

#### ◆ Skills and Capacity Building

- Organize targeted **capacity-building programs** on topics such as resource mobilization, financial stability, strategic planning, and emergency response.
- Support initiatives and individuals in developing strategic thinking and planning skills.

#### ◆ Monitoring and Evaluation

- Develop **tools for regular assessment** of staff well-being and satisfaction.
- Recommend **simplified self-assessment methodologies** for ongoing improvement.

#### ◆ Creating Collaboration Platforms

- Encourage the creation of **platforms for sharing knowledge, resources, and experience** among partner organizations, combined with support mechanisms.

#### ◆ Self-awareness and Communication Tools for Individuals

- **Promote individual self-development** by providing resources to enhance management, self-protection, risk forecasting, and support-seeking skills.