LEVERAGING REDUNDANCY FOR RESILIENCE MODULE

Community Resilience Toolkit Workbook Section

PURPOSE

This module helps community leaders, Extension professionals, and partners design redundant, overlapping partnerships and systems so resilience initiatives remain strong—even when funding, leadership, or organizations change.

Core Principle: Resilient systems are not efficient—they are **redundant by design**.

Outcome: Participants will identify vulnerabilities in their current partnerships and develop strategies to build overlapping support, leadership, and resources.

WHAT REDUNDANCY MEANS IN COMMUNITY WORK

Redundancy is the intentional creation of **multiple pathways, partners, and resources** to support the same goal.

Examples: - Multiple organizations working on similar issues - Shared leadership across partners - Diverse funding streams - Cross-trained staff and volunteers

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WHY IT MATTERS

Without redundancy, projects are vulnerable to: - Staff turnover - Funding loss - Organizational shifts - Political or leadership changes

With redundancy, communities gain: - Stability - Flexibility - Continuity of action

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SECTION 1: IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITIES

WORKSHEET 1: CURRENT DEPENDENCY ASSESSMENT

Area	Current Dependency	Risk Level (High/Med/Low)	Notes
Leadership			

Area	Current Dependency	Risk Level (High/Med/Low)	Notes
Funding			
Partnerships			
Communication			
Technical Expertise			

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Ask participants: - What happens if this person or organization is no longer involved? - Where are we overly reliant on one partner?

SECTION 2: MAPPING EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

WORKSHEET 2: PARTNERSHIP LANDSCAPE

Partner	Role	Level of Involvement	Unique Contribution	Overlap with Others

Facilitator Tip: Look for areas with no overlap—these are vulnerability points.

SECTION 3: IDENTIFYING GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

WORKSHEET 3: GAP ANALYSIS

Critical Function	Current Support	Gap Identified	Opportunity for Redundancy

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SECTION 4: BUILDING REDUNDANT SYSTEMS

STRATEGIES FOR REDUNDANCY

1. Partner Overlap

- Engage multiple organizations in similar roles
- Encourage collaboration instead of competition

2. Shared Leadership

- Distribute decision-making across partners
- Develop co-leads or rotating leadership roles

3. Cross-Training

- Train multiple individuals to perform key functions
- Avoid reliance on a single expert

4. Diversified Funding

- Combine grants, local funding, and partnerships
- Avoid dependence on a single funding source

5. Communication Networks

- Use multiple communication channels
- Ensure information flows across organizations

SECTION 5: DESIGNING REDUNDANCY INTO PROJECTS

WORKSHEET 4: REDUNDANCY ACTION PLAN

Area	Strategy	Who Is Involved	Timeline	Success Indicator

SECTION 6: FACILITATED ACTIVITY – STRESS TESTING YOUR PROJECT

Activity (30–45 minutes)

Facilitator Instructions: Present scenarios and ask participants to respond:

Scenario Examples:

- A key partner withdraws
- Funding is reduced or eliminated
- A lead staff member leaves

Prompt Questions:

- What happens next?
- Who can step in?
- What systems are in place to adapt?

WORKSHEET 5: STRESS TEST RESPONSES

Scenario	Current Response	Gap	Redundancy Solution

SECTION 7: FACILITATOR GUIDANCE – WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS

Do This:

- Normalize collaboration across organizations
- Build relationships before you need them
- Encourage shared ownership
- Plan for change from the beginning

Avoid This:

- Centralizing power in one organization
- Assuming stability will continue
- Over-relying on a single funding source
- Treating redundancy as inefficiency

SECTION 8: REDUNDANCY SCORECARD

Use this quick assessment to evaluate the resilience of your current initiative. Score each item from **1 (Weak)** to **5 (Strong)**.

WORKSHEET 6: REDUNDANCY SCORECARD

Area	Score (1–5)	Notes / Evidence
Multiple active partners involved		
Shared leadership (not centralized)		
Backup personnel for key roles		
Multiple funding sources		
Strong communication across partners		
Documented processes (not person-dependent)		
Cross-trained staff/volunteers		

Scoring Guidance:

- **30–35 = Highly Resilient** (Strong redundancy in place)
- **20–29 = Moderate Risk** (Some gaps to address)
- **Below 20 = High Vulnerability** (Immediate action needed)

SECTION 9: REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

Example 1: Single-Point Failure (What Goes Wrong)

A coastal resilience project relied on: - One lead organization - One grant source - One technical expert

When funding ended and the staff member left: - Project stalled - Partnerships dissolved - Community trust declined

Lesson: Efficiency created fragility.

Example 2: Redundant Partnership Model (What Works)

A community resilience initiative was structured with: - 3 partner organizations sharing leadership - Multiple funding streams (local + state + grants) - Cross-trained staff and volunteers

When one partner reduced involvement: - Others absorbed responsibilities - Project continued without disruption

Lesson: Overlap created stability and adaptability.

SECTION 10: REFLECTION

Reflection Questions

- Where are we most vulnerable?
- What partnerships need strengthening?
- How can we better distribute responsibility?

ACTION COMMITMENT

Within the next 30 days, we will:

SECTION 11: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Collaboration & Partnership Models

- Collective Impact Forum
  Frameworks for multi-partner collaboration and shared outcomes
  https://collectiveimpactforum.org

- Tamarack Institute
  Tools for sustaining community partnerships and collective impact
  https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca

Resilience & Systems Thinking

- Stockholm Resilience Centre
  Concepts on resilience, redundancy, and adaptive systems
  https://www.stockholmresilience.org

- Resilience Alliance
  Research on social-ecological resilience systems https://www.resalliance.org

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Funding Diversification

- Candid (Foundation Center + GuideStar)
  Tools to identify and diversify funding sources https://candid.org

- Nonprofit Finance Fund
  Resources on financial sustainability https://nff.org

Network Strengthening

- Collective Impact Forum
  Guidance on multi-partner collaboration and shared leadership models
  https://collectiveimpactforum.org

- Liberating Structures
  Facilitation methods for distributed leadership https://www.liberatingstructures.com

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FINAL NOTE

Redundancy is not duplication—it is **protection against failure**.

Communities that plan for disruption are the ones that continue to move forward when conditions change.

Your role is to **design systems that do not depend on any single point of success.**

(End of Module)