

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 climate 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

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

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

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?
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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)
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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 climate 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?
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ACTION COMMITMENT

Within the next 30 days, we will:

SECTION 11: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Collaboration & Partnership Models

- Collective Impact Forum
<https://collectiveimpactforum.org>
Frameworks for multi-partner collaboration and shared outcomes
 - Tamarack Institute
<https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca>
Tools for sustaining community partnerships and collective impact
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Resilience & Systems Thinking

- Stockholm Resilience Centre
<https://www.stockholmresilience.org>
Concepts on resilience, redundancy, and adaptive systems
 - Resilience Alliance
<https://www.resalliance.org>
Research on social-ecological resilience systems
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Funding Diversification

- Candid (Foundation Center + GuideStar)
<https://candid.org>
Tools to identify and diversify funding sources
 - Nonprofit Finance Fund
<https://nff.org>
Resources on financial sustainability
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Network Strengthening

- Collective Impact Forum
<https://collectiveimpactforum.org>
Guidance on multi-partner collaboration and shared leadership models
 - Liberating Structures
<https://www.liberatingstructures.com>
Facilitation methods for distributed leadership
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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)