



CONCLUSION

The key ingredients for resilience include learning to live with change and uncertainty, nurturing diversity, combining different knowledge systems for learning and renewal, and creating opportunities for self-organisation and cross-scale linkages.

CONSIDERING SOUTH AFRICA'S violent history, and the continued experience of material deprivation, dispossession and political marginalisation by many of its residents, it is not surprising that people are resorting to tactics that involve violence and aggression. However, South Africa is replete with examples of peaceful self-organisation around critical development concerns, able to achieve impressive results, often against the odds. But the limitations of what communities can achieve, particularly those without the wherewithal and influence that wealthier sections of society have, are real, especially as many factors influencing their social vulnerability are beyond their immediate sphere of control.

This publication presents various examples of community resilience from within/from below. The resourcefulness, commitment to change and willingness to learn and collaborate that emanates from these examples gives reason to pause and celebrate. But if that is all we do, we will ultimately reinforce social vulnerability, inequality and powerlessness by holding communities responsible for situations beyond their control. The role of the state and other actors, including the non-governmental sector and the private sector, is imperative in bolstering the strategies employed by the poor and in bringing about development outcomes that are in line with the Bill of Rights and progressive legislation.

Helping to bring about and sustain community resilience requires significant reform and renewal in the state. This is to some extent about leadership and state capabilities, but it is also about validating a culture of learning (within the state and with other stakeholders), deliberative and collaborative engagement, and development partnerships. As the President mentioned in his 2014 State of the Nation Address, 'We need to enable our people to play a greater role in development'. Crucially, it's about proactively addressing poverty, inequality, joblessness, socio-political exclusion, precarious living conditions and low levels of human development in a meaningful and sustained manner.

Much more attention needs to be paid to what are often considered soft issues: trauma and woundedness, ethical values, respect and belonging.

As South Africa approaches its fifth national elections this year, let us take stock of how far we have come and remain conscious of the need for sustained renewal and transformation to address the complex development challenges besetting the country.