

Spilling the beans: A Game Exploring Resilience

A game originally developed by Jessica Lee, Anna Steynor, Katinka Waagsaether and Bettina Koelle

Objectives: The game is particularly aimed at highlighting two common yet different ways of construing resilience, namely; 1) maintaining the status quo or “bouncing back” and 2) changing to a new system or “bouncing forward”.

Premise for the game: The problems of language and the differing use of terms are common across the world in the climate change field. While it is often assumed that everyone interprets a word or phrase in the same way, different people attribute different meanings to particular words or phrases. This creates problems when multiple individuals, line functions and organizations need to collectively implement policy. Better understanding and resolving these language discrepancies are therefore key to the climate change development agenda.

Some Preliminary information:

Slides: There are PowerPoint slides to accompany the game; however it can be done without the slides quite easily. It is your choice whether you would like to use the slides.

Time: this game should take between 10-15 minutes. This is dependent on preparation by the facilitator and the level of engagement by participants. It is possible that players may want to engage in long discussions. It is at the discretion of the facilitator as to how long they let the discussions go on for, yet noting that it is important to make everyone feel like their perspective is valuable. Because each round requires a different setting the facilitator either needs an assistant to help with this, or needs to do this whilst facilitating the discussion.

Number of players: This game is designed for 5 players, if there are more participants they can observe the proceedings.

Your kit should contain the following materials:

1. Powerpoint slides - these can be used to assist facilitating the game, however it can also be run without the slides using only this document.
2. Bowl
3. Toy dump truck (optional)
4. 1 pack of barley / 1 pack of brown lentils
5. 5 x marked cups
6. 5 x marked narrow wine glasses
7. 5 x dessert spoons

- a) Each cup and glass is numbered, making up 5 sets each in which there is a cup, a narrow wine glass, and a dessert spoon. It is important that sets are kept together.

The Game

The game consists of three rounds. Each round requires the facilitator to describe a scenario to the players, provided in the guidelines below and on the slides, and with subsequent actions required by the game participants. At the end of each round the facilitator will be required to collect the tools and set up for a new round. Instructions for how to do this are in these guidelines (in blue).

Round 1

Materials Needed & Set up

1. For this round you need 2 ½ cups¹ of beans in total
2. Place a bowl in the centre of the players containing the two and a half cups of beans
3. Provide each player with the following:

Player 1	Player 2	Player 3	Player 4	Player 5
Cup 1	Cup 2	Cup 3	Cup 4	Cup 5
Spoon	Spoon	Spoon	Spoon	Spoon

Facilitation process

4. Set the scene by telling them about the 'setting' of the game and their role in it

You represent a domestic household. As a group you make up a system. Each of you has different water needs represented by the varying water level marks on your cups.

The low water mark represents the minimum water requirement for you to meet your domestic water needs (i.e. water for cooking, drinking, some cleaning.) The high water line represents ideal water needs (i.e. water for your non-edible garden plants, washing cars etc.).

The bowl of beans in front of you represents the sole water supply. It is an average rainfall year and you need to meet your domestic water needs. Fill your cup with beans from the bowl using the spoon you have been provided.

You should try to reach at least the first mark, though the higher water line is better. Do not go past the high water line.

You have 45 seconds

5. *Reflection 1* - Observe how the round plays out, and provide some overarching comments on

¹ Measured using the normal cups provided for round one (not the wine glasses)

what you saw (or ask one of the observers to provide some quick observations of what they saw).
For example:

While you all reached the low water mark it was more difficult for some players.
I also noticed that only some of you managed to reach the high water line.

Round 2

Materials Needed & Set up

1. For this round you need 2 ½ cups of beans in total
2. Place a bowl in the centre with 1 cup of beans. Set aside 1 ½ cups in a dump truck, this will be used to fill the bowl again (in step 4).

Facilitation process

Tell them the scenario of the second round

It is a *below average rainfall* year. The sole supply of water (the bowl of beans) is under strain.

Again you need to meet your water needs. Fill your cup with water (beans) using the spoon you have been provided. You should try reaching at least the first mark, though the high-water line is better. Do not go past the high-water line.

(30 seconds)

3. Allow the players to finish the beans in the bowl. Once they are finished let a few moments pass allowing players to notice that they need more beans.
4. Fill the bowl again with the contents of the dump truck (1 ½ cups) emphasizing that the new water has been brought in from another region as the drought relief contingency plan for the community was implemented.
5. Tell the players that they may continue filling their cups until the end of the time.

Reflection 2 – Observe how the round plays out, and provide some overarching comments on what you saw (or ask one of the observers to provide some quick observations of what they saw). For example

This round was more difficult. Prior to the dump truck many of you struggled to reach the low water line, while none of you reached the high water line.²

² Check that this is the case; it is possible that someone might have reached the high water line. If this happens note that only 1 player managed to do so.

Once relief arrived however it was possible for all of you to reach the low water line and some of you to reach the high water line.

Question to the participants (allow for only short responses):

From how you understand resilience, do you feel that the system was resilient to this low rainfall year?

Round 3

Materials Needed & Set up

1. For this round you need 1 cup of beans in total
2. Divide the beans into two bowls. Place the bowls a small distance apart.
3. Provide each player with the following .

Player 1	Player 2	Player 3	Player 4	Player 5
Wine glass 1	Wine glass 2	Wine glass 3	Wine glass 4	Wine glass 5
Spoon	Spoon	Spoon	Spoon	Spoon

Facilitation process

Tell them the scenario of the second round

It is a *below average rainfall year*.

However, you now live in a changed system. The water infrastructure has changed (there are now two water sources). Policies and legislation have led to a change in water demand from the system (different cups).

Again, you need to fill your cup with beans using the spoon you have been assigned. You should try to meet at least the first mark, though the high-water line is better. Do not go past the high-water line. You can use either bowl.

Reflection 3: Observe how the round plays out, and provide some overarching comments on what you saw (or ask one of the observers to provide some quick observations of what they saw). For example

I noticed that in this round each of you reached the low water line easily, and most (if not all of you) reached the high water line. This was done without water being brought in for relief. .

Questions to the participants:

From how you understand resilience, do you feel that the system was resilient to this low rainfall year?

Which round (2 or 3) would you say best describes your interpretation of “resilience”?

Discussion

After the third round facilitate a discussion with participants on the multiple meanings of the term resilience and how they relate to the different rounds played. The game is particularly aimed at highlighting two common yet different ways of construing resilience, as outlined below

There are two common ways to construe resilience. These are represented in round 2 and round 3.

Bouncing Back

Ability of a (socio-ecological) system to return to previous state/original state after stress or shock.

This was reflected in round 2

Bouncing Forward

Ability to move on from a stress or shock; involves re-creating and strengthening pre-existing structures of a (socio-ecological) system

This was reflected in round 3.

Would anyone like to comment?

Now that we can see that there are differences in the room in how people interpret resilience, would you like to decide on a common understanding of resilience going forward