Back in December this year our team at InterHealth was asked to go and provide some training and support around health and wellbeing to the Anglican Church leaders in Myanmar.

As part of a workshop on resilience they asked the participants to share pictures of resilience from their own experience.

They came back with these descriptions of resilience:

- A tree that stood in a church compound and had withstood hurricane Nargis which hit Myanmar in 2008!
- A dog that survived poisoning and then fell into an open sewer but did not drown and was still alive!
- A woman who had survived by jumping from a burning house and despite having broken her arms and legs went on to recover and was alive and well!

As I was reflecting in these images this morning I was reminded of the ancient story when Moses challenged the Israelites to choose whether or not they were going to follow the Lord their God. He said to them, “This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.”

And it struck me that resilience is really about choosing life - in the midst of challenges, shocks and disasters, resilient organisations, teams and individuals, choose to do the things that promote life - and of course I am talking about life in its very broadest sense. They stand firm like that tree, they take risks to survive, like the woman jumping from the burning house, they choose to persevere, like the poisoned dog who survived even when thrown into an open sewer.

And while these examples might seem somewhat extreme - which of course reflects what people have been going through in Myanmar - we all know that the work we do and the world we live in requires increasing levels of resilience from all of us.

Some recent situations and challenges from my own experience which demonstrate the need for us to build resilient organisations include:

1. violence in S Sudan, earthquake in Nepal, refugee crisis in Europe and hurricane Matthew in Haiti which has struck when the country is still trying to recover fully from the earthquake in twenty ten…. and who knows what will happen after the recent political shocks - brexit in the U.K., trump in the US and other elections kicking off over the next year here in Kenya and elsewhere...
2. expatriates evacuated and national staff left behind,
3. sense of not accomplishing anything after years of trying. Countries are still struggling to transform the lives of individuals and communities.
4. Frequent turnover of staff members and difficulty recruiting so people are covering gaps and doing two jobs rather than one,

So, resilience is a commodity we need in spades. How do we build organisations that are full of it?

Here are my top tips, and I am delighted that we will be discussing many of these over the next two days. I have grouped them under the acronym LIVE L I V E.

**L is for LEADERSHIP**
Generally, people mirror those who lead them. So leadership development programmes should always include role modelling from the most senior team as well ascharoening the skills of existing leaders and growing emerging leaders.

If you want to build a resilient organisation you need leaders who consistently model resilience.

You need leaders who model Optimism, decisiveness, integrity and open communication - who can build excellent relationships and empower people effectively. You want to develop leaders who are brilliant at releasing people, not controlling them or abandoning them.

Does your culture and leadership model mean that everyone is waiting for the leader to come up with the solution, or have you created a culture where people believe they themselves can take action and make a difference?

I had an interesting conversation with a colleague last week, who said she was constantly being blocked by a member of our leadership team. I asked her why she felt she needed a decision from the leader to do something, why could she not just get on and improve things herself? And she said, I have never realised I have the permission to get on and sort things out myself.

So L is for leadership.

**I IS for INVESTment, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INNOVATION**

INVEST in your staff at all levels. InterHealth's model of staff care focuses on preparation, support, and aftercare.

We talk a rather glibly about staff being our greatest asset. Actually they are because without staff we cannot do anything at all! But are we investing in them sufficiently? Are we training them, equipping them, building their capacity? Are we helping and equipping them to look after their own physical and psychological wellbeing? Are we supporting them when they most need it? I am struck by how much our OUT of hours medical advice LINE is used at InterHealth, and also by the
fourfold INCREASE in CALLS we have received in the last year from people needing support after critical incidents.

And what sort of INFRASTRUCTURE are we setting up to achieve this investment and support?

Do we have the right policies and procedures and are people aware of them? Christine will talk more about this when we consider duty of care.

NB SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED CLARITY AROUND why do we exist? What do we do? How do we behave? VISION, strategy and plans…

Do people understand what is expected of them? That is why the core humanitarian standard is so helpful it sets a framework of expectation which helps people understand goals and set appropriate boundaries. Equipping people to know when to say no as well as yes is a vital part of enabling them to mature and thrive.

And remember communication is key you can have all these things in place but they are no help if people don't know they exist!

INNOVATION - necessity is the mother of invention. Resilient organisations are able to innovate in adversity. How well are you fostering innovation and creativity? How often do you say yes to people who want to try something new? If you keep saying no to people's ideas, don't be surprised when you stop being given any new ideas!

Creativity is one of our values at InterHealth and it has proved a very useful one in this regard!

Which brings me on to VULNERABILITY AND VALUES
Risk is the product of vulnerability and hazard - that is why it is always the poorest people in a community who are worst hit when disaster strikes.
How vulnerable are your staff? Are you increasing or reducing their VULNERABILITY by the way you treat them and set your terms and conditions? Are you for example, Sending people unaccompanied into remote locations for long periods of time? Expecting people to drive around at night in insecure locations perhaps because of meeting times in the U.K. Which mean people in country are forced to Skype in late at night we have one of those tonight unfortunately… Allow no people to save up their RandR so they can collect it as cash at the end of an assignment rather than taking it to promote their own wellbeing at the appropriate time?

The choices we make as leaders and HR professionals can have unintended consequences which actually increase the vulnerability of our staff.

VALUES
What are the values you espouse when working with the people you are serving, and how do those translate into the way you treat your staff?
DNA should run the whole way through the organisation.
How often do you talk about your values, do your staff understand what they mean?
Do you practice what you preach? We all fail in this one, but we need to recognise the cynicism this creates in staff and the lack of belief that we can succeed in our mission.

Ensure your values inform the whole employment journey thro recruitment, terms and conditions and reward to performance management and exit strategies.

And finally **E is for Self Efficacy**

As a Harvard Business Review describes it, Self efficacy may be thought of as the belief in ones agency and the ability to be a catalyst for change.

Albert Bandura, a psychologist at Stanford University in the US has written several books on self efficacy. He writes that Self efficacy shapes key human behaviours such as:

1. The courses of action people choose to pursue,
2. How much effort they put forth in given endeavors,
3. How long they will persevere in the face of obstacles and failures,
4. Their resilience to adversity,
5. Whether their thought patterns are self-hindering or self-aiding,
6. How much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands,
7. The level of accomplishments they realize.

Obviously all these behaviours are key to creating a resilient organisational culture.

So, How do people learn self efficacy? Here are some ideas from the Harvard Business Review:

1. Enable people to observe other successful teams and give them good role models! I think that is one reason why peer review can be so helpful - and think creatively about the opportunities you can give people for job swaps, buddying with people doing the same role in other programmes, visits to tiger programmes and so on.
2. Put them in an environment in which they will succeed - particularly early in their career. Don't put inexperienced staff in teams that are struggling - put them in teams that are winning. And celebrate success!! Staff awards have proved really popular - Sparkler at Tearfund and Star Award at IH.
3. Provide encouragement, support and mentoring. Do not underestimate the power of encouragement!! Kate Coleman: One of the reasons I love mentoring is that I can show them not my riches but their riches!!

So remember Resilience is all about helping people to LIVE through difficult times. And to enable them to do so we need to focus on LIVE - LEadership, Innovation, investment and infrastructure, vulnerability and values and developing Self efficacy in our people.

Thank you.