Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (EVCA)

Training of Trainers (ToT)

FACILITATORS MANUAL

Module 1: Introduction

Contents

Module 1 Introduction and objectives

Summary: In this module we get to know each other, what we hope to achieve over the duration of the training and knowledge about participatory community based approaches and VCA.

Session Plan:

Time	Session	Facilitator
1 hour	1. Introduction	
30 minutes	2. Purpose, Objectives and logistics of the training	

Methods: Individual presentations, question and answers, group work and role playing

Materials needed: Flipchart and Markers (laptop and multimedia – optional)

Session 1: Introduction

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants will have:

- Met the facilitators, people who organized training and other participants
- Revealed their baseline knowledge on community based approaches and VCA

Presentation: Ensure that all administration and registration details have been taken care of before beginning the training.

It is good practice to use a registration form in any training particularly when the training is conducted for community members and/or volunteers.   Additionally, a disaggregated format would help the branch monitor the reach and quality of its activities.

Opening and welcome:

Although it may be traditional for Red Cross to have Board members or Directors open training courses for the VCA, this may be a good opportunity to bring in a government representative from

either DDME or Ministry of Social Development. This will help demonstrate the type of necessary partnerships that would be needed when conducting VCA.

Cover any:

Occupational Health and Safety issues. Point out emergency exits and assembly points. Remind participants of any hazards to be aware of in the training room or outside. For example, to watch out for electrical cords etc.

As this is a Red Cross training, identify First Aiders in the room/venue and ensure to have a first aid kit in the room all the time.

Introductions:

Set an example for the participants by having facilitators introduce each other. Make sure the facilitators mention their experience in VCA, Community Based Approaches and in conducting training in the past.

Activity:

Option A

Have a box or bag for selecting names. Request half the group to deposit their name tags in the box or bag passed around by the facilitator. The participants not handing in their name tag randomly choose one. The facilitator then requests the participants to circulate and meet the individual whose name tag was selected. Within 5 minutes, each pair should learn each other's names, nicknames, marital status, position, profession, work, family details, reason for being in the training, experience in community based approaches and expectation of the training. Each participant then has 1 and ½ minutes to introduce his/her partner to the rest of the group.

Option B

Each participant has one and one half minutes for this, noting name, position (role as volunteer or staff), profession, reason attending the training, experience in community based approaches and expectation(s) of the training.

Ensure,

To record expectations on flip chart paper and review the list to identify those that will be covered in the training and explain briefly those that will not be covered in the training. Use this as a lead in to the overview of the training.

Session 2: Purpose, objectives and logistics of the training

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants will have:

- Been introduced to the purpose, objectives and overview of the course content
- Established the ground rules for the training
- Received information about the logistics and methodology of the training

Presentation: Explain the purpose of the training.

Begin with,

VCA is a participatory process developed to support communities become resilient through the assessment and analysis of risks that they are facing and further guide them to identify solutions. It enables them to explore how risks arise from the interaction of hazard and vulnerable elements of the community as found in the assessment, whom within the community stand to be the most affected, what resources are available at all levels that can be applied to reduce risks, and what initiatives can be undertaken that can strengthen the capacity of people at risk (updated definition by AG)

The purpose of this training is to equip volunteers and staff with the knowledge and skills that is necessary to facilitate VCA in communities and be able to train community members and other colleagues in VCA approaches using the supporting materials available.

Ask,

What participants think we mean by 'supporting communities to become resilient'?

Answers may include things like; *need for integrated approach to development, strengthening partnerships, Red Cross maintaining presence in communities, disaster risk management is not just about response etc.*

Activity:

What development project? - Game

Separate the group into two and have them move to each ends of the room. Place some blank A4 papers and markers on the floor in front of each group then give out the following instructions.

Group 1:

Divide them into pairs. Each pair is representing a community that is looking to the government for some development assistance. It is the new financial year for the government so it is likely to have some budget allocation for community development. Ask each pair to brainstorm some projects and quickly pick only one which to write on A4 paper. Fold the A4 paper and wait for further instructions.

Group 2:

Also to be divided into pairs. Each pair represent a team of government representatives who work in the Department of development. Ask each pair to write one development project they feel would be possible to implement with 5,000 – 10,000 dollars. Fold the A4 paper and wait for further instructions.

Final instructions:

Bring the two groups back together to the center of the room and ask them to remain in their pairs. Collect the folded A4 papers from the community reps side and swap them (in any order) with a corresponding pair from the Government representatives group. Ask each pair to read out what is in the A4 paper that they received. Ask, if any of the pair got what they expected then start a discussion about how the participants felt about the exercise.

Discuss the following points;

- What was the exercise trying to portray?
- What could the community or the Government reps have done to ensure that they got what they needed?

Emphasise that this is what the VCA process is about. Caution: Do not spend more time than is needed in explaining VCA here – this is only introducing what the training is about.
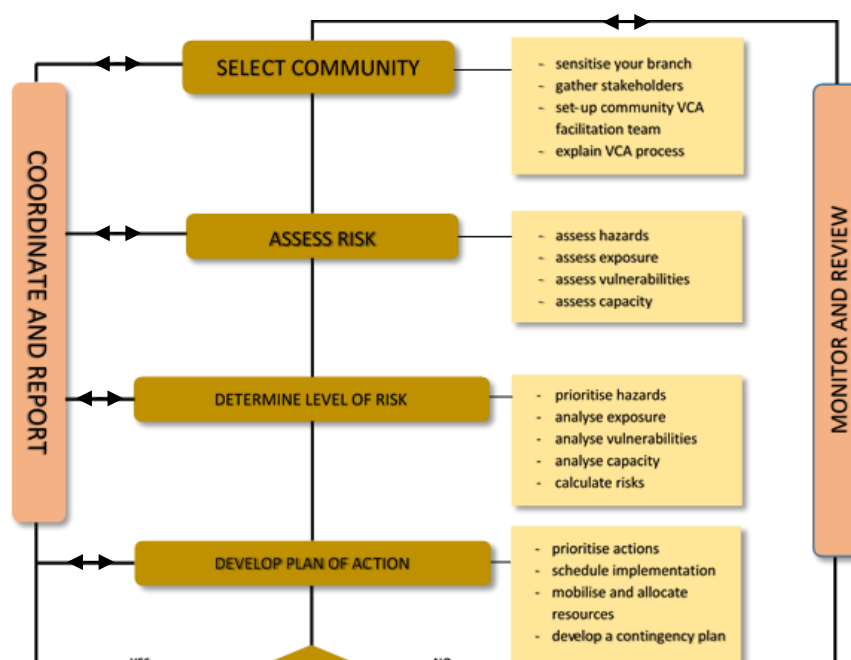
Another option could be that the facilitator can illustrate the VCA steps using placards that can be pasted on the wall and used for the remainder of the training for reference.

Facilitator is to provide a brief overview of the training content, going through each module.

Re-emphasize here the sentence on the purpose of the training and how the VCA could be part of the branch's effort to contribute to supporting communities become more resilient. Also, talk about the role of volunteers and what is expected of them after the training is completed.

Module 1: Introduction

 In this module we get to know each other, what we hope to achieve over the duration of the training and how much you already know about participatory community based approaches and VCA.

Module 2: Understanding disaster risk management and VCA contribution to risk reduction and resilience

In Module 2, we explore the field of disaster risk management broadly to be able to make links as to why through VCAs, that Red Cross can help reduce communities understand and manage the risks that they face effectively thereby increasing their resilience.

Module 3: Selecting the community

 Module three looks at the importance of putting the target community at the forefront of the process and that stakeholders who may have a role to play in the development of the community are vigorously involved throughout the process. Also emphasise the importance of using a criteria to select target communities in where to conduct VCA. Consultations also looks within set-up of the branch, its volunteers, management and leadership who will need to be sensitized about the VCA plans and processes.

Module 4: Assessing risk

In this Module, participants will look at the preparation and collection of data using tools that have been used by others in the past to collect different data related to hazards, exposure vulnerability and capacity of the community.

Module 5: Determining risk

Module 5 looks at the important process of analysing data collected during the assessment using common approaches and templates that are user-friendly to communities. This looks at the important process of analysing data collected during the assessment using common approaches and templates that are user-friendly to communities.

Module 6: Developing plan of action

Module 6 looks at the creating a plan of action based on the analysis of the findings of the assessment. As community development plans are often needed to be presented to stakeholder in many cases Government and donors. As community facilitators, we must have the skills to be able to accompany community members to be able to dialogue with development partners who may in turn support risk reduction projects that have been recommended from the VCA.

Now,

Go through the **Objectives of the training**.

At the end of the training, participants will be able to:

- List and describe key disaster risk management terminologies;
- Describe the links between hazards, exposure, vulnerability, capacity and risk;
- Describe the context of vulnerability and capacity assessment and common Red Cross approaches to strengthening resilience;
- Describe the process for selecting VCA community and stakeholders;
- Describe the steps involved in the assessment of risk;
- Describe the process involved in determining level of risk;
- Describe the process of developing a plan of action and why connecting with stakeholders is integral to the success of the VCA;
- Demonstrate how VCA findings and information is reported.

Go through the course logistics and details

Ground Rules

Remind participants that ground rules apply to participants and facilitators, so they should also make rules for the facilitators too e.g. speak clearly. For both options, the facilitator needs to write the rules on flipchart paper. Facilitators any rules they think have been missed. Ground rules to be displayed a section of the wall that will be visible to all.

Ground rules are set to ensure that the learning environment is conducive to the learning. As there is a lot of content for this training with limited time available, maximum participation is required from both

instructor(s) and participants.

The instructor can ask all participants to come up and sign the rules. This is the contract between instructors and participants. It's fun too. Depending on the group dynamic, the instructor can also set penalties (e.g. lead us in a song, give us a dance, teach us a trick, tell us a short story etc.).

Key Rules: Facilitator to ensure these are included;

- Smoking – Advice no smoking during group

- Phone calls – All phones must be turned off or on silent mode

- Participation – Stress value in all participating in the course

- Timeliness – Meal times, breaks and the need to be on time

- Respect for others – No side discussions when people are speaking

- Have fun

Methodology of the training

The learning process is highly interactive. Participants will be continually involved throughout the training. The material is presented in planned organised modules. Where necessary, exercises will be conducted to reinforce the learning. There is a lot of material to cover and the schedule requires starting on time.

Attendance at all sessions and participation in the exercises is required for completion of this training. The issue of a certificate of completion indicates the participant's achieving the objectives.

Course evaluation

Discuss the use of the daily critiques (what works and what needs improvement) and their importance. Course evaluation forms are useful as well as they are used to revise and improve the course.

Requirements for completion

Stress that attendance and full participation are required in order for a certificate to be issued. Any exceptions must be discussed and approved in advance.

Review the agenda and exercises with the participants. Stress the need for attending all sessions and respecting the schedules.

Review objectives and close the session.

Module 2: Understanding VCA

Summary: In this module, participants will explore the field of disaster risk management broadly to be able to make links as to why through VCAs, that Red Cross can help reduce the vulnerable context of communities and increase their resilience thereby reducing risk of potential losses to life and other elements of society.

Session Plan:

Time	Session	Facilitator
1 hour	3. The Disaster Management Cycle	
2 hours	4. Disaster Management Terminology	
1 hour	5. What is VCA?	

Methods: Presentations, question and answers, group work

Materials needed: Flipchart and Markers, VCA toolbox if available, VCA training video

Session 3: The Disaster Management Cycle

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Describe the disaster management cycle and different activities of the branch concerning different stages of the disaster management cycle

Presentation: To begin this module there are **two options**. The facilitator could play a **video** on VCA (the art and science of VCA?) if one is available. If not, she/he can ask if anyone from the group is willing to **share any community disaster risk management** experience they may have. Things that may come up during the discussion would include;

- There are different kinds of disasters
- Disasters are caused by different things
- Different places/communities refer to disasters in different forms (small, large, devastating)
- Disasters can affect anyone

Emphasise that:

All over the world, Red Cross contributes to dealing with disasters. To be able to deal with disasters, we must first understand the way things work in disaster management. Although the work of branches in the region has more response focus, to be effective means to prepare well for response. Therefore, branches are often encouraged to enhance their preparedness during non-disaster times. Having a basic understanding of everything covered in this Module can help volunteers who may be trained already in a specific sector such as response to work across other sectors of the branch programmes such as VCA and risk reduction.

Ask:

If anyone in the room has seen the cycle (the cycle is defined in many ways by different agencies). This disaster management cycle reflects mainly how Red Cross activities are connected the different stages of the disaster management cycle.

Discuss the disaster management cycle, and:

Ask participants about their thoughts about the cycle. Things that may come up during the discussion could include;

- There are different stages disaster management (disaster preparedness &mitigation, disaster response and disaster recovery).
- Red Cross activities are reflected in all stages.
- Every stage is connected – and the cycle continues from one stage to the next.
- Each activity is built on each other - one and leads to another.

Discuss different activities of the branch, and:

Ask how they are linked to different stages of the disaster management cycle. Things that may come up during the discussion could include;

- Examples of Red Cross activities in Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation
  - *Disaster preparedness container restocking*
  - *Disaster management training activities such as training and development of CERTs*
  - *Vulnerability and capacity assessments*
  - *Discussions with local authorities about possible community disaster risk reduction actions*
  - *Community awareness programmes*
  - *Disaster plans*
- Examples of Red Cross activities in Disaster Response
  - *Early warning dissemination*
  - *Evacuation*
  - *Restoring Family Links*
  - *First aid*
  - *Psychosocial support*
  - *Assessments*
  - *Relief distributions*
- Examples of Red Cross activities in Disaster Recovery
  - *On-going relief activities*
  - *Cash programme*
  - *Active tracing, maintain family links for isolated and vulnerable persons*
  - *Livelihoods programme*
  - *Transitional shelter*
  - *Water and sanitation programmes*
  - *Advocacy*

Review objectives and close the session.

Session 4: Disaster Management Terminology

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- list the basic disaster management terminology
- understand the factors that cause disaster and the risk equation
- describe how risk of disaster can be reduced

Presentation: Ask, why is it important for Red Cross volunteers to understand common disaster terminology? Things that may come up during the discussion would include;

- In the communities, Red Cross volunteers will be required to work with other agencies, particularly in government who will expect a good level knowledge of the subject even from Red Cross personnel in the field (branch volunteers)
- Training and reporting are done in the same language therefore it's important that we are referring to the same thing when it comes to disaster management terminology.
- It is good practice to learn about new things about disaster management especially for those to want to broaden their skills.

Explain that:

In this section of the training, we will not only be looking at the basic terminology but also making sense of how and why disasters happen and how risks of disaster can be reduced thereby increasing resilience.

Write the word 'DISASTER' on the flipchart, then:

Ask participants come up with the first thing that comes to mind when they hear the word. Discuss and capture any responses.

Ask:

If anyone knows the meaning of the word then read the definition out.

DISASTER

A sudden or **catastrophic event** that seriously **disrupts the functioning of a community or society**, causing human, material, economic and environment **losses** to the extent that **exceeds the community or society's ability to cope using its own resources**. (IFRC)

Then ask:

What causes a disaster? Discuss participants' responses. Discussion would conclude that a **disaster**

occurs when a hazard impacts on vulnerable people. Write the 'risk equation' below on the flipchart.

$$\underline{H \times E \times V} = \underline{Disaster\ Risk}$$
$$C$$

Ask:

What do participants understand from this equation or if anyone has seen it before?

Reiterate that disaster is caused when the factors in the risk equation above interact with each other.

Write the word HAZARD on the flipchart, then:

Ask participants to come up with the first thing that comes to mind when they hear the word. Discuss and capture any responses.

Ask:

If anyone knows the meaning of the word then read the definition out.

> **HAZARD**
>
> Threatening event, or **probability of occurrence of a potentially damaging phenomenon** within a **given time period and area**. (IFRC)

Go back to the list of responses to the word hazard and discuss using the guiding questions below:

1. Are all hazards the same? *No. All hazards are different. Some are natural caused and others, human caused.*
2. What are some examples of natural caused hazards? *Hurricane, drought, floods, tsunami etc.*
3. What are some examples of human caused hazards? *Transport accidents (land, air and sea), structural collapse, fire etc.*

Emphasise that:

The characteristics of the hazard also influence its impact. For example, some happen quicker that others like earthquakes which could occur without warning as compared to a drought which could take months to develop.

Now let's look at the second term in the equation.

Write the word EXPOSURE on the flipchart, then:

> **EXPOSURE**
>
> People, property, systems, or other elements **present in hazard zones** that are thereby **subject to potential losses**. (UNIDSR)

Ask participants to relate to a particular community or property within the vicinity that they feel may be exposed to a particular hazard that they are already familiar with.

Ask:

What causes the exposure to occur?

- *Inadequate town and country planning;*
- *Limited development capacity or financing;*
- *Limited availability of land around the development area;*
- *High returns on investment e.g. tourism.*

Move on to the next term.

Write the word VULNERABILITY on the flipchart, then:

Ask participants come up with the first thing that comes to mind when they hear the word. Discuss and capture any responses.

> **VULNERABILITY**
>
> The **diminished capacity** of an individual or group **to anticipate, cope with**, resist and **recover from the impact of** a natural or human-caused **hazard**. (IFRC)

Ask:

What makes people vulnerable?
- *Lack of knowledge accurate knowledge on hazards and risks associated with their vulnerability.*

- *Unsafe leaving conditions; property structures, closeness (proximity) to hazardous area and cultural practises, loss of or separation from family members*

Begin a discussion on who are the most vulnerable in the community.

Ask:

Who are the most vulnerable in the community? Use the point below to guide the discussion.
- *Households headed by women with young children*
- *Single women, when there is a risk of sexual or other abuse*
- *Pregnant women*
- *Unaccompanied children*
- *Separated children (being currently be taken care of by adult family members but separated from their parents or legal guardian)*
- *Elderly living on their own*
- *The chronically ill*
- *People living with disabilities*
- *People who rely on an institution for their living conditions (prisons, orphanages, elderly homes), who have become dependent as a result of the disaster*
- *Foreigners lacking diplomatic representation or the means to access it*
- *Religious, ethnic or social minorities*

Others…any suggestions from the group?

Now let's look at another term in the equation.

Write the words DISASTER RISK on the flipchart, then:

Ask participants if they are familiar with the term. Read and discuss the definition.

RISK (OF A DISASTER)

The combination of the **probability** of an event and its **negative consequences**. (UNISDR)

Risk is the *probability* or *chance* that losses or negative consequences could occur given the presence of hazard, exposure of elements and vulnerability. When we discuss risk, we think of **probability of loss** given the hazard, the exposure and the level of vulnerability.

Ask:

What types of losses do you think we are talking about here when we are talking about communities? Discuss and use the bullet points below as your guide;

- People

- *Loss of lives*
- *Sickness and injuries*
- *Separation of families*
- *Missing persons*
- Properties
  - *Destruction and damage to homes and other household belongings*
  - *Destruction of and damage to farms and livestock*
  - *Destruction of and damage to critical utilities such as water, electricity, roads and communications*
- Environment
  - *Destruction of and damage to wild life*
  - *Air pollution of and water contamination*
  - *Destruction of and damage of cultural heritage sites*
- Economy
  - *Destruction of and damage to industries resulting in loss of employment*
  - *Destruction of and damage to cash crops and natural resources*
- Society
  - *Division of community due to displacements*
  - *Absence of law and order as local authorities are engaged in rescue and other lifesaving events*
  - *Destruction of and damage to cultural and religious possessions*
  - *Loss of traditional means of and coping with disasters*

Ask:

So how can risk be reduced?

Emphasise that the goal of disaster management is to reduce risk of losses to society, implementing effective response and promoting durable recovery.

To reduce risk means two things;

1. Modify or remove the hazard; or
2. Reduce exposure and/or vulnerability
3. Increase capacity

Group work

See Jerry's coconut tree story (Refer to Annex)

Divide participants into 2 groups and discuss the following questions:

1. Can the hazard be modified or removed? If yes, how? Discuss and list any examples.
2. How else can exposure and vulnerability be reduced if nothing can be done to the hazard? Discuss and list any examples.

Take participants back to the discussions on exposure and vulnerability.

The word 'CAPACITY' should have come up during the discussions on vulnerability. If it doesn't, then:

Write the word on the flipchart and ask the participants how important they think it is in the context of reducing vulnerability.

CAPACITY

The combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within a community, society or organization that can be used to achieve agreed goals. (UNISDR)

Emphasise that:

Red Cross efforts whether it be during disasters or peace time, should be built on community capacities.

Ask;

Why it is important for volunteers know what kind of capacities are being referred to here? Discuss and use the bullet points below as your guide;

- In a disaster, the first response is always from within the disaster affected community;
- Beneficiaries should be encouraged to participate in risk reduction activities to ensure that the support provided by Red Cross and others are appropriate to their needs;
- Most resources that are required for implementing the risk reduction work are either available in the target community(s) and nearby areas.

Comprehensive Disaster Management

The last term that we need to look at deals with the Caribbean approach to disaster risk management which is called referred to as Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM).

The "practice" of Comprehensive Disaster Management is developed and promoted in the region by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

CDM is an innovative concept for reducing the risk and loss associated with natural and technological hazards and the effects of climate change to enhance regional sustainable development.

COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The management of all hazards through all phases of the disaster management cycle – prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation - by all peoples- public and private sectors, all segments of civil society and the general population in hazard prone areas. (CDEMA)

18

CDM involves risk reduction & management and integration of vulnerability assessment into the development planning process which is much like what the VCA process aims to achieve.

Review objectives and close the session.

Session 5: What is VCA?

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Describe the purpose of carrying our VCA and why it is an integral part of Red Cross in work in supporting community resilience
- List the key steps involved in the VCA process

Presentation: To begin this module there are **two options**. The facilitator could play a **video** on VCA if one is available. If not, she/he can ask if anyone from the group is willing to **share any community VCA** experience or any community based approaches they may have been involved in, in the past. Things that may come up during the discussion may include;

- VCA (community work) can take a lot of time
- Profile of the organisation was raised due to ongoing community development work or disaster risk reduction work that were done in the community(s)

What is VCA?

"Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment" as widely known in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

It is referred to by some as a form of community appraisal process (but the term VCA is becoming increasingly excepted globally by disaster practitioners) whereas Red Cross explains it as;

VULNERABILITY AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

A **participatory process** developed to **support communities become resilient** through the **assessment** and **analysis of risks** that they are facing and further guide them **to identify solutions**. It enables them to explore **how risks arise from the interaction of hazard and vulnerable elements of the community as found in the assessment**, whom within the community stand **to be the most affected**, what **resources** are available at all levels that can be applied **to reduce risks**, and what **initiatives** can be undertaken that can **strengthen** the **capacity** of people at risk. (IFRC -

19

A long and wordy definition. However, after years of applying and revising the VCA approach. And now guided by the integration of VCA into the Red Cross Red Crescent wider development agenda and other available key modalities of work such as the 'Roadmap to resilience' and various humanitarian standards, the present definition of VCA reflects the total collective action that is objective based as supported by evidence collected and analysed into a plan that is resourced to form initiatives undertaken to strengthen the capacity of people at risk.

Twenty years of experience using VCA have shown that it is a highly-valued methodology by Red Cross Societies and partners organisations, not only for risk assessment but also as a process that, when done well, has the power to promote inclusive participation, community leadership and empowerment of vulnerable people.

The emphasis is on the importance of local perspectives and priorities as critical for the success of any risk reduction plans resulting from the VCA. Communities need to 'own' their plans and the analysis process that led to them to put their efforts into implementing them.

The VCA process

Go through the VCA process as below. Emphasise that this process will be the guidance the entire training and how VCAs are conducted in communities.

```
                                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                                    │                                         │
        ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐         ┌──────────────┐
        │                  │   │   SELECT COMMUNITY   │  │  - sensitise your branch      │         │              │    The
        │                  │   └──────────────────────┘  │  - gather stakeholders        │         │              │    key
        │                  │                             │  - set-up community VCA       │         │              │    to a
        │  C               │                             │    facilitation team          │         │  M           │
        │  O               │                             │  - explain VCA process        │         │  O           │
        │  O               │   ┌──────────────────────┐  │                               │         │  N           │
        │  R               │   │     ASSESS RISK      │  │  - assess hazards             │         │  I           │
        │  D               │   └──────────────────────┘  │  - assess exposure            │         │  T           │
        │  I               │                             │  - assess vulnerabilities     │         │  O           │
        │  N               │                             │  - assess capacity            │         │  R           │
        │  A               │                             │                               │         │              │
        │  T               │   ┌──────────────────────┐  │  - prioritise hazards         │         │  A           │
        │  E               │   │ DETERMINE LEVEL      │  │  - analyse exposure           │         │  N           │
        │                  │   │   OF RISK            │  │  - analyse vulnerabilities    │         │  D           │
        │  A               │   └──────────────────────┘  │  - analyse capacity           │         │              │
        │  N               │                             │  - calculate risks            │         │  R           │
        │  D               │                             │                               │         │  E           │
        │                  │   ┌──────────────────────┐  │  - prioritise actions         │         │  V           │
        │  R               │   │ DEVELOP PLAN OF      │  │  - schedule implementation    │         │  I           │
        │  E               │   │   ACTION             │  │  - mobilise and allocate      │         │  E           │
        │  P               │   └──────────────────────┘  │    resources                  │         │  W           │
        │  O               │                             │  - develop a contingency plan │         │              │
        │  R               │                             │                               │         │              │
        │  T               │       YES            NO     │                               │         │              │
        └──────────────────┘          ◇ Need external ◇  └───────────────────────────────┘         └──────────────┘
                                        resources?
```

successful VCA is being able to successfully guide the community through a process which allows them to discover risks to their community collectively, make decisions on how they can be addressed and mobilize resources needed to carry out risk reduction activities.

The number of tools needed and the time taken to achieve this may very between contexts. So despite the choice of approaches or tools that the VCA facilitation team may use – the VCA process must have structure to ensure that the risk are properly identified, analysed and activities that are designed to address them – are appropriate for the community and its partners and can be achieved using resources mobilised between them.

Discuss and use the questions below as your guide. Keep the discussions focused and don't dwell too deep into conversations – this discussion is meant to reinforce what we mean by the definition of VCA that was just presented.

- What is a participatory process?
- What is meant by 'supporting communities to become resilient'?
- How are assessment and analysis dependant of each other?
- What is an example of risk that arises from the interaction of hazard and vulnerable elements of community?
- Who stand to be the most affected in a disaster?
- What key resources and initiatives are there in communities that can be applied to strengthen capacity and reduce risk?

Four (4) reasons to conduct VCA;

- For communities to have a **better understanding** of the nature and extent of existing, changing and emerging risks they are and will be facing;
- For communities to **identify relevant and practical actions** to reduce their risks and strengthen their resilience based on their priorities;
- To raise awareness about the **resources within the community and externally that can be mobilised** so the community can implement its action plan;
- For Red Cross Societies to use the information and lessons from communities about risks and vulnerabilities to other stakeholders **to influence policies, laws and development investments which can benefit those communities**.

Introduce the EVCA:

Why is it now 'Enhanced VCA' (EVCA)?

The EVCA is an improved version of VCA which brings together all the previously published VCA guidelines and toolbox in one easy to access place. Moreover, the analysis process is integrated with the Roadmap to Community Resilience, includes cross cutting lens such as climate change as well as gender and diversity inclusion. It will also provide a platform for future guidance on how to conduct VCAs in an urban or conflict context and the utilisation of digital tools [under development].

Furthermore, the assessment steps with the community have been improved to focus on the elements of risk to make the analysis process easier. In the assessment the use of tools is different from the traditional VCA. The following are the key differences between EVCA and VCA:

	VCA	EVCA
Process	VCA wrongly perceived as a once-off product, not a process for community empowerment	Concise guidance on the required preparation, analysis, reporting, implementation and follow up
Data collection	VCA starts with the immediate use of the VCA tools to collect data.	The EVCA uses a systematic process which identifies specific tools that contribute to elements of risk. This process makes data collection more focused.
		The tools in the toolbox have been updated to integrate

22

Analysis	Traditional VCA often analyses the data once all the data is collected using the selected tools. This approach has meant that, at times, too much data was collected making the analysis more difficult.	EVCA does the data collection and analysis for each element of risk (hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity) separately and then later combines the results during the synthesis. This approach makes the analysis less complicated, more manageable, and allows the community to participate in the analysis.
Resilience	VCA was perceived to be a DRR focused tool.	EVCA incorporates a more holistic lens through the addition of the resilience characteristics.

What is Enhanced VCA?

1). A participatory and empowering process

- No just about data collection, analysis and planning

EVCA is not just about data collection, analysis and action planning. It is also a process of learning and empowerment whereby target communities are supported to be in the driver's seat when it comes to their risk understanding, risk reduction and resilience building endeavours.

- Inclusive participation is important

Inclusive participation of the community is fundamental for the process, for it to be truly empowering.

- No 'one size, fit all' approach

A community is not an entity in itself therefore development activities cannot be targeted with 'one size, fit all' type of intervention. One must apply a gender and diversity approach/lens to ensure that as development stakeholders we engage with and better understand the needs, capacities, and priorities of women, men, boys, and girls, as well as people with disabilities and individuals from diverse social, cultural, economic and religious groups that make up the community.

In some cases, such as those involving urban areas, a 'community' might be harder to define and bring together, but there have been effective approaches already tested to conduct participatory VCAs in urban areas.

2). A process focusing on understanding risks and identifying risk reduction and adaptation actions

- Hazards affect people in different ways

A specific hazard does not affect all individuals, households, communities, and infrastructure the same degree and in the same way. While some could be seriously affected, others may not be affected at all. Even though the magnitude of the hazard (H) might be the same, the impact can be different depending on exposure (E), vulnerability (V) as well as coping and adaptation capacities (C).

In other words, the risk of a disaster is directly proportional to the magnitude of the hazard, level of vulnerability and exposure, and is inversely proportional to the capacity to withstand the shocks and stresses of the hazard. The H, E, V, and C are often called risk determinants or risk factors.

VCA helps communities to understand current and emerging risk factors, their underlying causes and actions that could help to reduce both separate and overall impacts.

3). A multi-sectoral process

- Most hazards affect more than one sector

Floods can affect people's livelihoods, contaminate water sources leading to illness, destroy homes and schools, and cut road networks.

- Certain situations and actions that create vulnerabilities

At the same time, unplanned development (without consideration of risk) and imbalances of power create vulnerabilities. For example, a school that is built in an earthquake-prone area without using earthquake-resistant construction techniques puts children at risk.

- Violence and conflict

Violence and conflict can disrupt government services and lead to destruction of natural resources that the community depends on. Conflict affects livelihoods, health, shelter, education, road, communication, etc. For this reason, we need to mainstream *risk sensitivity* in all sectors and we also need to consider all sectors while doing risk assessment and risk reduction planning to make the risk reduction effort successful and sustainable.

The EVCA is developed to suit all types of threats to safety and well-being, and is also designed to help understand the overall risk landscape in the community regardless of the sector.

- Multi-disciplinary team

It is strongly recommended that EVCA be facilitated by a multi-disciplinary team as it creates access for more resources to ensure the success of EVCA.   Assessment and data collection means and tools

When an EVCA assessment result identifies further sectoral information needs, a specific sectoral assessment methodology will be needed for an in-depth analysis. For example, the EVCA team with the target community may need to request the Ministry of Health who may already be a part of the EVCA to conduct further surveillance or testing in order to achieve a clearer understanding about a particular health issue discovered in the EVCA.

- Entry point for all community work

EVCA should be the entry point to all Red Cross community work because it provides the overall risk landscape of the community.

4). A multi-stakeholder process

- Shouldn't be undertaken alone

EVCA should not be a stand-alone process carried out solely by the Red Cross. In fact, it should be a multi-stakeholder process. Red Cross should accompany the community and help it connect with stakeholders that can support the community's assessment process and implementation of action plans. The more stakeholders you engage, the more successful your risk reduction efforts will be. However, it requires patience and careful planning as working with many stakeholders can be complicated. It is important to think creatively on how and whom to engage with and to do this from the start of the process.

Mention;

That for consistency, VCA and EVCA will be used inter-changeably throughout the course. The main purpose of this session was to highlight the work that has been done to update the structure, approach and application of VCA given changing trends of development, migration and risks faced by communities nowadays – hence the term 'enhanced'.

VCA and Resilience

Resilience has become a top priority for the Red Cross and Red Crescent community and other humanitarian organisations working in development.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Community resilience is the ability of communities (and their members) exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, prepare for, reduce the impact of, cope with and recover from the effects of shocks and stresses without compromising their long-term prospect. (IFRC)

Resilience also entails a holistic approach to community work that better reflects the reality in the communities.

EVCA is a useful tool for resilience work because it serves as an entry point to the community and provides a holistic risk landscape of the community. EVCA has been adapted to better analyse the different characteristics of communities and their path to resilience.

If possible project the diagram below up of the screen.

How does VCA link to Resilience?

Some understand VCA just as an assessment tool while others apply a full project cycle approach.

The VCA focuses mainly on the assessment and planning process and therefore it fits well within the IFRC Roadmap to Resilience from Stage 2 'Step 2: Choose approach through to Stage 3. Milestone: Community resilience plan of action'.

The IFRC Roadmap to Community Resilience (R2R) includes a broader process of community engagement and follow up including monitoring and evaluation which includes some steps to set indicators with the community.

If you are using the VCA for the Roadmap to Resilience process make sure you add these extra steps to VCA; Step 4: Contextualise the characteristics, Step 5: Convert descriptions to indicators and Step 8: Score the characteristics.

VCA and climate change

Caution: *do not dwell too deep into the science of climate.* There are resources that are readily accessible within Red Cross that can help explain further. For more information on science of climate change please refer to the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Guide chapter "Climate change: the basics". To know more about what Red Cross approach to climate change see the Framework for Climate Action.

> According to climate scientists;
>
> - **Weather extremes** that already affect communities are likely to occur more often and be more severe in the coming decades;
> - Weather-related disasters **doubled in the past 20 years alone**;
>
> **Weather related disasters disrupt** community health, livelihoods and education, as well as cause damage to infrastructure such as roads and homes. In addition to these effects, more gradual changes to temperature, sea level, rainfall and seasons over time can affect agriculture and water availability and quality, etc.
>
> **Now communities need to not only take action based on their past experiences, but also plan for a more severe and uncertain future.**
>
> **Climate change may already be familiar to communities.** Communities in many parts of the world are already noticing changes to climate and weather patterns or 'funny weather' relating to temperature and rainfall (particularly people who depend on climate-related sources of income such as agriculture). In many cases the observed new weather patterns are challenging traditional knowledge. Talking to communities about these changes provides people with an opportunity to come up with new strategies to deal with them, and incorporate these ideas into their "risk reduction plans" developed through the EVCA process.

Two points to be mindful of:

1. All good community-based risk reduction action plans that are addressing weather-related hazards are already to some extent contributing to 'climate change adaptation' by building better preparedness and resilience against the negative impacts of extreme weather events.

   Communities shouldn't always only focus on the negative aspects of this weather variability and changes, but also take advantage of them if they have positive impacts. However, one of the steps needed to make community-based programmes more 'climate-smart' is to adjust the EVCA approach slightly so we use the insights on changing risk patterns from communities, as well as climate information available to

us, to help prepare community risk reduction plans that are geared to a changing and more uncertain future.

2. The EVCA should not be turned into a 'climate-EVCA' by focusing only on exposure to climate change and ignoring other factors that influence community risk.

When to do VCA?

Here are things to consider before deciding to conduct VCA.

Bear in mind that conducting VCA requires commitment and investment from your branch, your stakeholders and the community and therefore deserves careful consideration before making any decisions. It may require a change in mind-set, roles and approach of your organisation. If you are interested in talking to your colleagues and branch leadership about the possibility of doing VCA, use these questions to help you determine its feasibility:

- Is community level work reflected in your branch development plans, policies and structure? If not, is your branch prepared to make the necessary changes so that this becomes part of what you do?
- Is the proposed VCA linked with any form of national government programmes?
- Is your branch willing to commit to working in a participatory manner with communities over the medium to long term?
- Is the branch ready and committed to enable and accompany communities to take a lead role in risk assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation?
- Do you have the resources and skills to undertake VCA and to do the required follow-up?
- Are the management and leadership of the branch willing to make the necessary investments in training staff and volunteers in community work?
- Is your branch prepared to work in a holistic manner, so that different technical and programme departments can respond to community needs that arise?
- Are there other stakeholders that you can involve from the start to be able to connect them with the community?

To achieve the VCA objectives, Red Cross and other stakeholders must work together facilitate community participation and empowerment.

Review objectives and close the session.

Module 3: Selecting a community

Summary: Module three looks at the importance of ensuring **consultation** as part of planning for VCAs. The importance of putting the target community at the forefront of the VCA process, community volunteers and stakeholders who may have a role to play in the development of the community. Also emphasise the importance of using criteria to select target communities in where to conduct VCA. Consultations also looks within set-up of the Red Cross branch. Its volunteers, management and leadership who will need to be sensitized about the VCA plans and processes.

Session Plan:

Time	Session	Facilitator
1 hour	6. Selecting and consulting with the target community	
30mins	7. Sensitizing branch volunteers and staff including leadership and management	
1 hour	8. Identifying stakeholders and explaining different roles	

Methods: Presentations, question and answers

Materials needed: Flipchart and Markers

Session 6: Selecting and consulting the target community

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Describe the process of selection of target community for VCA
- List the 8 steps for consulting the target community

Presentation: This session emphasises the importance of placing the community at the forefront of the VCA process. It is important to ensure that the roles of each party (community, stakeholders and Red Cross) are well understood by the facilitators of VCA. Begin the module by going through the VCA process diagram below and highlight where the training now and what will follow.

The VCA process begins with the selection of the community.
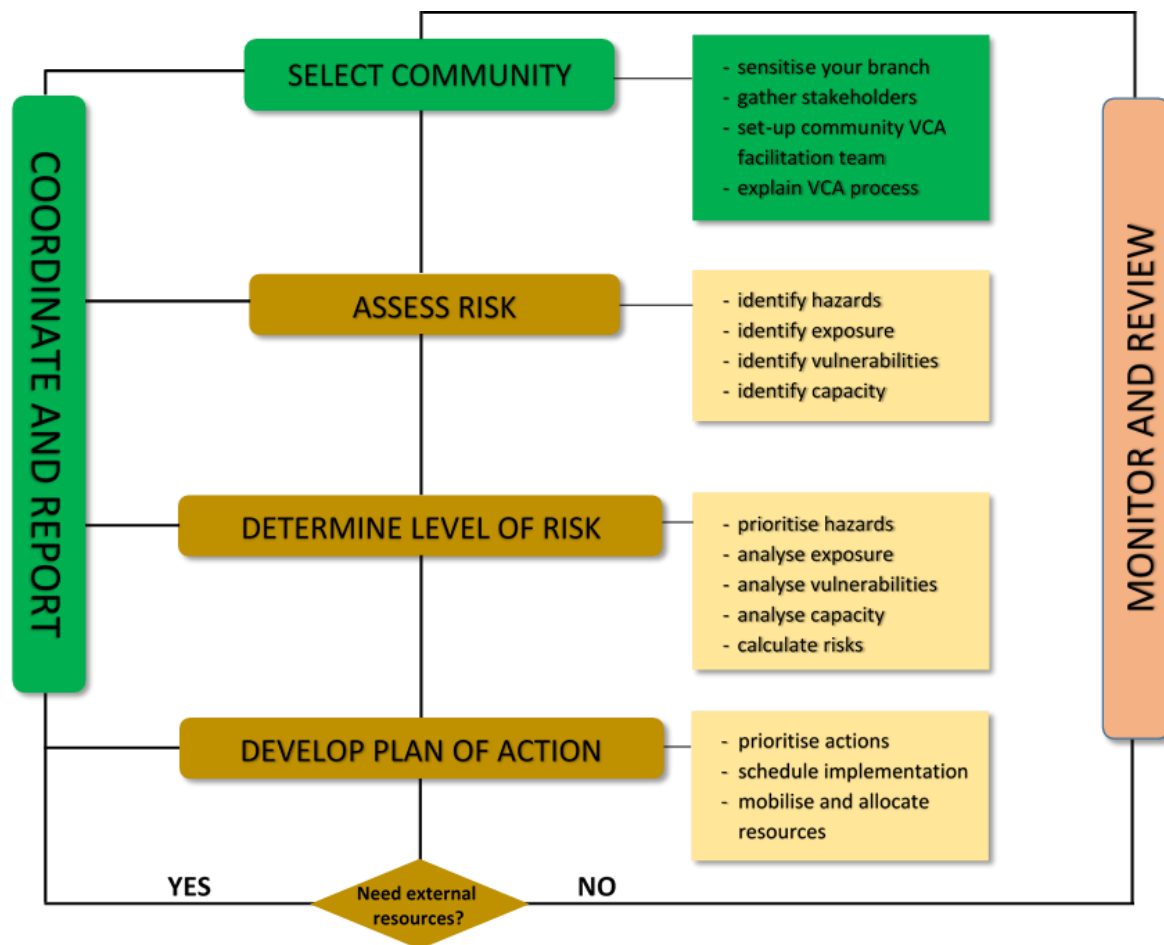
Write the word "Community" on a flipchart paper and then ask participants to explain in their own words what they understand by the term. And then discuss the definition. Highlight the key phrases 'group', 'may or may not', 'similar' and 'same' to help breakdown the definition.

> **COMMUNITY**
>
> A **group** of people who **may or may not** live within the same area, village or neighbourhood, share a **similar** culture, habits and resources. Communities are groups of people also exposed to the **same** threats and risks such as disease, political and economic issues and natural and man-made hazards. (IFRC)

Emphasise that VCA is aimed at supporting communities become resilient and globally, Red Cross has outlined 6 main characteristics that define a resilient community. Throughout this training, the VCA approach revolves around assessing how the six characteristics of resilience are often weak due to the risks associated with a community's exposure and vulnerability to hazards and explore ways in which capacity can be strengthened through risk reduction activities developed through a VCA process.

Go through the **SIX characteristics of a resilient community;**

1. *Knowledgeable, healthy and can meet its basic needs*
   It has the ability to assess, manage and monitor its risks. It can learn new skills and build on past experiences.

2. *Socially cohesive*
   It has the collective capacity to identify problems, establish priorities and act.

3. *Connected*
   It has relationships with external actors who provide a wider supportive environment, and supply goods and services when needed.

4. *Has well-maintained and accessible infrastructures and services*
   It has strong housing, transport, power, water and sanitation systems. It has the ability to maintain, repair and renovate them.

5. *Has economic opportunities*
   It has a diverse range of employment opportunities, income and financial services. It is flexible, resourceful and has the capacity to accept uncertainty and respond (proactively) to change.

6. *Can manage its natural assets*
   It recognises their value and has the ability to protect, enhance and maintain them.

Ask participants for their opinion on these characteristics. Use the following phrases to guide the discussion;

- Outlines the importance of human life, health and well-being and also individual knowledge and awareness as central to the ability of households individually and collectively to be able to prepare, prevent, respond to and recover from crisis and stress.
- Acknowledges the importance of assets and having access to wider resources beyond the immediate control of the community.

Selecting the target community(s)

Emphasise;

- It is important that participants understand that a criteria for selecting community to be targeted for VCA will help **ensure transparent communication around why Red Cross target some and not others**.
- It is also important to understand that VCA cannot be run from 'Headquarters'**.** The **branch or the sub-branch that is closest to the target community(s) should be in the forefront of the VCA process** as usually, they would have volunteers that are part of the community that is being targeted for the VCA.

Begin;

By emphasising that selection of the community where to undertake VCA can be narrowed down from a much broader district or island.

Once the final list of likely target community(s) is drawn. The following list of questions and help to further narrow down the targeting to the most relevant one:

- Which communities are particularly vulnerable? This information could be obtained through your previous sub-national risk analysis and maps. It is important to consider not only past and present vulnerabilities but potentially also changing and emerging ones.
- Try to collect vulnerability data disaggregated according to gender, age, disabilities, where available.
- How many communities? What size should the VCA be? This should be based on the time and resources available.
- Are there several communities with similar risks because they share the same ecosystems, such as the communities in a coastal area or communities in a river basin? Working with groups of communities in so called 'clusters' can avoid 'neighbour jealousy' and have benefits of scaling up and linking communities for joint action and involvement with local authorities.
- Are other organisations working in nearby communities? Can Red Cross work in partnership with them?

- If the number of communities with whom you can work is limited, could you pick a community that can represent the issues of other communities? Will this "sample" help you to extend programmes over a wider geographical area?

Consulting with the target community

Emphasise that;

In talking to the prioritised community(s) to discuss potential collaboration, Red Cross must take care not to raise expectations.

And it is important that the community fully understand the following;

- What the community will commit to;
- Why the VCA is being proposed;
- For what purpose is the VCA being conducted and what are the expected results.

Ask;

Should the first consultation with the community be rushed? Use the following to guide discussions;

- The first consultation with the community with the nearby Red Cross branch should NOT be rushed;
- Branches and communities should feel that they own the process. After all, branch members will carry out most of the work and communities will be most affected by the process.
- The 'selection of a community' is a critical step in the success of the VCA process. Risk and vulnerability are pre-requisites, but factors such **as interest, willingness to actively participate, and an enabling environment are as important**.

Discuss the following steps to help in consulting the target community;

1. Identify the community leaders and explain to them what VCA is for, what it involves, and why you propose to conduct a VCA.
2. Inform the local authorities of the purpose of your visit and of the VCA.
3. Suggest calling a community meeting or other event to inform the whole community, and make the invitation widely known through posters, radio, word of mouth, etc.
4. Arrange the meeting at a time and in a place that will be accessible to most people, and hold separate additional meetings for those who could not attend. In an urban setting, you may need to hold several meetings, and at different times of day, for people who work shifts or out of the community to attend.
5. Make sure that every person in the community irrespective of age, social status, gender and ethnicity has an equal opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect his or her safety,

wellbeing and future. This participation is crucial for risk reduction to be authentic and sustainable.

6. Prepare an agenda and presentation with key messages about EVCA. Ensure that it is realistic, and does not raise expectations about material or financial support.
7. Prepare objectives for the meeting, to include: confirmation that the community is interested in EVCA; a list of people who are representative of the different groups, who are willing to be involved; tentative timeline that considers community dynamics and commitments.
8. Remember that it is up to community members to decide whether to become involved with the EVCA process. If they decide they are not interested, or do not show a willingness to actively participate in the process, it may be better to consider another community.

Add;

That it is important to document the process and share information with staff, volunteers, interested communities and other stakeholders.

Setting up and training of the VCA facilitation team/ working group

Emphasise;

- The composition of the facilitation team is important.
- Without the right team composition, we run the risk creating plans based on inaccurate, biased and non-inclusive information.
- Consider practical ways to ensure that the team is gender-balanced and as much as possible, representative of the diversity within the community.
- Identify champions. The more champions, the greater the chance of community ownership of the results of the VCA.
- Look after the facilitation team.

Go through the following list of criteria which can be used to select VCA facilitation team members;

- Mix - *include a mix of staff members and volunteers.*
- Skills - *have a multidisciplinary team, with skilled people from all areas*.
- Gender - *ensure as much as possible gender balance, it is of great importance to increase the quality of the assessments and capture the voice of men and women.*
- Links and affiliation - *a cross-section of volunteers who can connect with different community sectors, such as youth and women.*
- Level of education - *decide on what level of education is most appropriate – but, be careful not to exclude people who could help in the process, even if they do not have the required level of education.*
- Other considerations;
    - *knowledge of the Red Cross Red Crescent;*
    - *good communication skills and member should be comfortable in working with all sectors of the community*

- *a knowledge of necessary local languages;*
- *group dynamics skills;*
- *well-organised;*
- *facilitation skills;*
- *patience and integrity.*

- Commitment - *members must be available and committed for the whole process, which includes training, practical sessions, actual VCA, data analysis and project planning and monitoring.*

Field work skills and competencies needed within the facilitation team

Not every team member needs to have all the skills, but the team should jointly cover most of them, you can also train the team on the missing skills:

- **VCA knowledge and skills** – know what is involved in the VCA, how to do VCA and how to apply the different tools.
- **Community mobilisation skills** - the ability to bring human resources together in an inclusive way to undertake developmental activities that lead to sustainable development.
- **Negotiation and advocacy skills** - the ability to gain community agreement or consensus inside and to connect the community effectively to the outside actors. It includes coordination with decision-makers and policy-makers.
- **Facilitation** - the ability of a VCA team to manage a process that brings people to agreement. It helps keep the branch and community meetings focused and efficient while taking encouraging balanced participation and keeping track of the overall progress.
- **Gender and diversity** – be able to take sensitive approaches and programmes in order to create ownership among all community members
- **Sectoral skills** – one of the benefits of having members from different sectors as they can bring their specific expertise to the VCA process.
- **Climate change knowledge** – basic insights into climate trends and projections for the country – is important so the team members are prepared to discuss and consider changing risks patterns during the assessment.
- **Problem-solving** - the ability to think "out of the box", take calculated risks and find creative solutions to problems, whatever they may be.
- **Analytical skills** – Being able to conduct a detailed examination and presentation of the findings, as a basis for discussion and prioritisation. This can allow the analysis to take place both during and after the assessment.
- **Technology skills** - if the branch plans to use digital data collection technology to do VCA, make a list of community members with these skills so that they can be empowered to help others become familiar and comfortable with them.

Training the facilitation team

Ask;

Why should the facilitation team receive VCA training? Use the following points to guide the discussion;

- It is vital that the team members understand what VCA is, why and how it should be done.
- Community work is highly specialised and the staff and volunteers must be properly prepared if they are to make full use of the methods, tools and materials at their disposal.
- Training the facilitation teams on VCA can take up to **three full consecutive days**.

Review objective and close the session.

Session 7: Sensitizing branch volunteers and staff including leadership and management

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Describe key steps to take in sensitizing fellow staff and volunteers within the branch in order gain a whole of organisation commitment towards the VCA.

Presentation: This session is about ensuring to gain total support and commitment members of the branch particularly from the leadership and management.

Over the last decade, VCA has become quite well known in many National Societies. This does not necessarily mean that everyone fully understands what is involved in carrying out a VCA, nor the extent of the obligations and responsibilities which will fall to branches and communities.

Doing EVCA requires a strong commitment to support communities. Therefore, it is very important that those who are proposing the exercise fully explain the EVCA process to all those involved including board members, management, and technical staff from different teams, volunteers and other stakeholders.

Discuss the following key questions regarding sensitization;

- Who should be sensitised?
- What do you want them to know and what key messages should be prioritized in the sensitization?
- Who can help to conduct the sensitization?
- When is the best time to talk with people and/or make presentations?

- You may want to organise a presentation during regular activities/meetings of the board.

Ask why is it important to sensitize the leadership of the branch?

Answers may include the following;

- They understand the commitment that is necessary from Red Cross when approaching community work.
- That they are able to connect the different steps of the VCA with the Roadmap and the strategic plan of the branch.

These are some key questions that can guide the discussion within the branch:

- Is the branch experienced in working with communities? Can the EVCA be linked to other Red Cross Red Crescent activities?
- Does the branch have other "entry points" into communities through other programmes?
- Does the branch have the political will to carry out the EVCA?
- What is the branch's capacity? Does it have enough volunteers?

Remember;

- Let the EVCA sell itself. It is a powerful process that can empower communities to reduce their risks and strengthen their resilience.
- Prepare yourself well before making presentations and ensure that you have a complete knowledge of the VCA, the processes involved in it, the benefits and most importantly, what the community stands to gain in their
- Find like-minded members of your branch who would be interested in the VCA so that they can also advocate on your behalf and help clarify important messages about the VCA to others within your branch or to other stakeholders.

Review objective and close the session.

Session 8: Identifying stakeholders and explaining different roles

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Describe the roles of community, the Red Cross and stakeholders in a VCA
- List the key considerations for stakeholder engagement

Presentation: Begin this session by revisiting the discussion on the definition of community and the discussions around the role of the community in the VCA so that participants are able to make the connection why the topic in this session is critical.

> **COMMUNITY**
>
> A **group** of people who **may or may not** live within the same area, village or neighbourhood, share a **similar** culture, habits and resources. Communities are groups of people also exposed to the **same** threats and risks such as disease, political and economic issues and natural and man-made hazards. (IFRC)

Understand the roles in VCA

Reiterate;

VCA should not be a stand-alone process carried out solely by Red Cross.

When key stakeholders have been identified, it is important that all stakeholders understand each other's roles.

Role of the community

The role of the community should evolve throughout the EVCA process; while at the starting point will depend on the existing leadership capacities within the community, everyone in your branch should be committed to the ultimate goal of the community making and implementing its own risk reduction plan.

> The community's role should be to;
>
> - Identify and analyse their risks with support of Red Cross and other stakeholders;
> - Develop a risk reduction plan based on their priorities;
> - Mobilise local resources (human, material and financial) to implement their plan;
> - Execute their plan (which could include demanding the services they are entitled to from the government and other relevant actors);
> - Monitor and evaluate their progress towards risk reduction and generate lessons to improve future actions.

Emphasise the importance of inclusiveness within the community;

- It is important that within the community, the leaders are supported and influenced to be inclusive, to involve people from all social and economic groups and in particular the most vulnerable ones.

- If the VCA is not inclusive, it risks embracing unfair power structures and deepening the vulnerability and marginalisation of some groups, such as women, older people, people living with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities and others.

Role of Red Cross

The role of Red Cross in VCA is above all as a facilitator of community participation and empowerment.

This facilitation role includes the following:

- Facilitate and encourage community members to speak, listen and analyse the data they generate.
- Ensure that the most vulnerable people in the communities are well represented in the process.
- Facilitate access to resources (financial, material, human) to enable the community to implement their action plan.
- As a NS we must be prepared and committed to support communities for several years until they are in a position to find their own long-term solutions.
- Strengthen the relationship between the community and local government officials using its auxiliary role. This fosters communication and accountability, and thereby helps the community to access services to which it is entitled.
- Bring other stakeholders together to connect the community with a network of potential sources of support for the EVCA and any actions that result from it.
- In the traditional VCA practice, the Red Cross has been very prominent in leading the process and providing resources. As we move towards the resilience approach reflected in the Roadmap to Resilience, the role of the branch will become less prominent to ensure that the communities assume a central role.
- The ultimate goal is that communities own, lead and proudly benefit from the entire process of risk reduction and resilience building with limited support from external organisations. Read more on the key services in the Roadmap to Resilience.

Highlight the following key points;

- In previous VCA practice, the Red Cross played a prominent role in leading the VCA process and in many cases providing resources.
- The resilience approach reflected in the Roadmap to Resilience, means that Red Cross becomes less prominent to ensure that the communities assume a central role.
- The key is that communities own, lead and proudly benefit from the entire process of risk reduction and resilience building with limited support from external organisations supporting their development.

Role of stakeholders

Stakeholders such as local government, relevant ministries, meteorological offices, NGOs, the private sector and academic institutions, must be brought into the process from the beginning. The role of the different stakeholders will depend on their competences and interest and should always put the communities' interest first.

The following steps and suggestions are proposed to guarantee proper stakeholder engagement:

1. **Map the different stakeholders at the national and local level**:

   - Think about who can be engaged at this level, for this purpose you can use the social network analysis tool.

2. **Think about how to engage the different stakeholders** and what you want to achieve by engaging them:

   - Different stakeholders may engage in different ways with VCA.
   - Some stakeholders may want to get trained and participate in the whole process as part of the team.
   - Others may be more interested in looking at the community action plans at the end of the process and offering technical or financial contributions. It is up to you and them to define the degree and type of the engagement. See some ideas in the roles section.

3. Be creative however, keep relations with stakeholders in a strategic way:

   - Remain flexible in your approach to each stakeholders and be aware of the different context that they work in (for example, talking to a Government may involve a whole series of protocol whereas a CBO can literally concern talking a person who could be working in the target community).

4. Organise meetings and sensitise local stakeholders on VCA.
   - Always handy to have a simple fact sheet about VCA available during when consulting stakeholders.

Ask the group:

Name some stakeholders that should be part of the VCA?

Use the following examples to guide discussions:

- *Government departments (local government, municipality)*
    - *provide technical support*
    - *make resources available*
    - *create an enabling environment for effective risk reduction and climate change adaptation interventions*

- *Meteorological office*
  - *provide an overview of weather climatic information in the past present and future as well as, scientific early warning information and relevant early action recommendations.*
- *Community Based organisations (CBOs)*
  - *strengthening the capacities of CBOs in the community to enable the community to take forward the plan*
- *Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)*
  - *support the community to implement part of their action plan by providing resources and technical support, and helping the sharing of experiences and lesson.*
- *Academic institutions*
  - *contribute innovative ideas and new thinking into the community and generate and share lessons. These could be used as evidence for advocating and lobbying around specific issues.*
- *Research organisations*
  - *conduct research on the effectiveness of the risk reduction and adaptation measures and generate objective evidence on the challenges and underlying causes of people's vulnerabilities.*
- *Media*
  - *awareness raising/sensitisation and broadcasting communities' challenges to give the community a voice.*
- *Private sector*
  - *local businesses or national businesses that can support communities through funding*
  - *provision of resources*
  - *technical support etc.*

Review objectives and close the session.

Module 4: Assessing risk

Summary: In this Module, participants will look at the preparation and collection of data using tools that have been use by others in the past to collect different data related to hazards, exposure vulnerability and capacity of the community.

Session Plan:

Time	Session	Facilitator
1 hour	**9. Preparing for an assessment**	
3 hours	**10. Conducting an assessment**	

Methods: Presentations, question and answers

Materials needed: Flipchart and Markers

Session 9: Preparing for an assessment

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Describe key steps to be undertaken in preparing for an assessment in VCA
- Describe common types of data collection tools used in assessments
- Know which tools to use for each of the components in the disaster risk equation [R=(HxVxE)/C]

Presentation: Begin the Module (starting with this session) by reiterating why and what we are assessing?

Revisit the Risk formula (R=HxExV/C) and emphasise that in order to determine what the risk is, we have to assess hazards, look at the levels of exposure and vulnerability of the community and find out if they have the capacity to deal with the impact of hazard.

The first part of determining risk is assessing Hazard, Exposure, Vulnerability and Capacity. This is followed by analysing risk or risk analysis which is achieved by going through findings of the assessment to calculate the level of risk.

Let's beginning our risk assessment journey by first understanding what we mean by assessments.
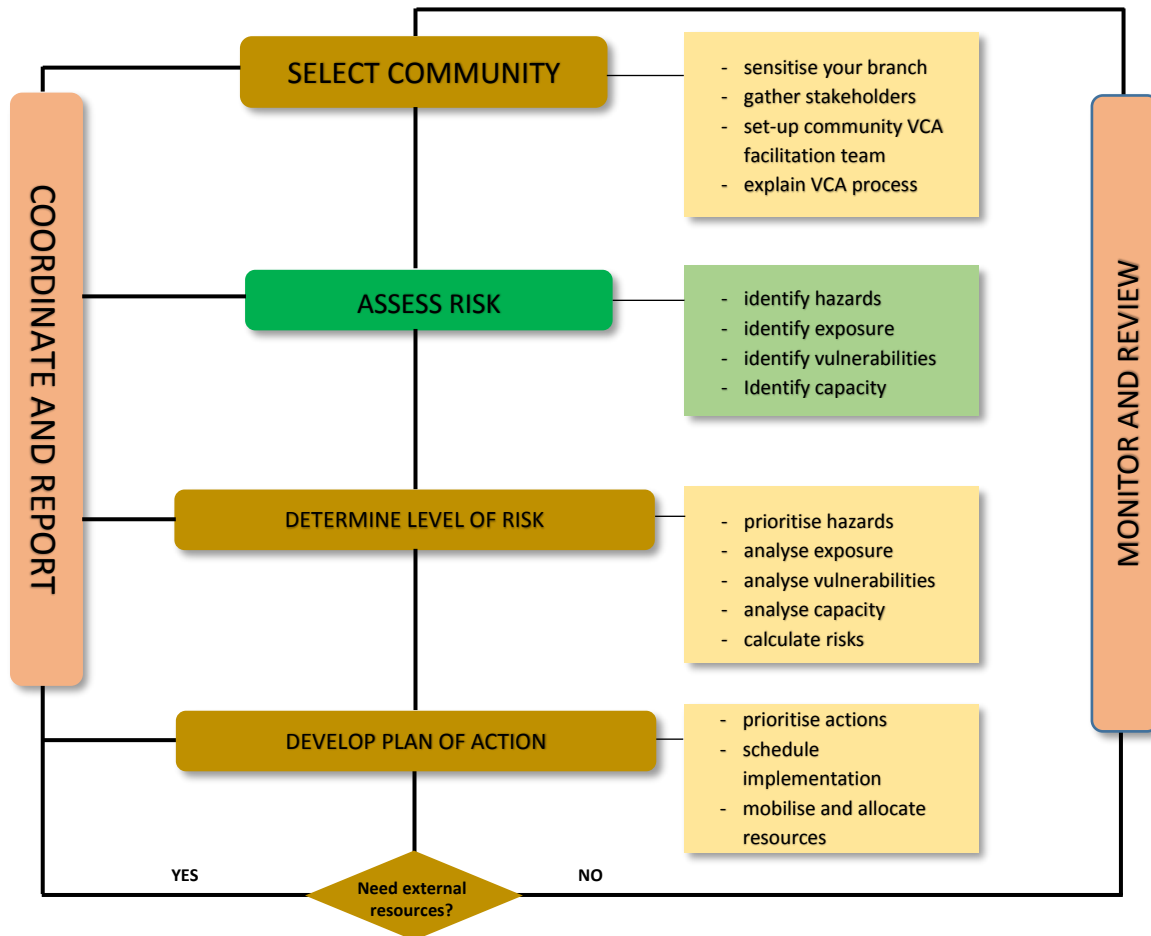
Ask if anyone has participated in any type of community assessments. Discuss the assessment was about? How long did the assessment take? Things that may come up during the discussion would include:

- Good field experience and worked with many agencies
- Useful to put the training into practice
- It was too long or too short
- It was confusing

- Didn't receive any training before the assessment
- Didn't have the right assessment tools
- No briefing done about community working principles
- Didn't understand why the assessment was being done

Emphasise;

- Most of the VCA facilitation preparation will focus on how the team will conduct the assessment. For this, different tools will be used at the different stages of the assessment: *hazard and exposure assessment and vulnerability and capacity assessment*.
- No single VCA tool can be flexible enough for every context. And in many case, a set of tools will collect overlapping information which can be used later to verify accuracy of the information. The selection of tools will depend on which part of the assessment you are in (hazard and exposure assessment, vulnerability and capacity assessment). There is no need to use all the tools that you will have at your disposal, as time may not allow for this. Once the facilitation team is able to verify the information is of sufficient quality for continuation of the VCA process and achieve the same results.

Remember;

Tools in the toolbox are must be designed and/or adapted only collect data about the risk factor (Hazard, Exposure, Vulnerability or Capacity) that is being assessed. Therefore, the team can invent a tool, or adapt an existing tool, to form a combination that makes sense in a specific community. While the list of tools may appear intimidating, many will produce similar information. This means a consensus must be made.

Selecting the right tools

Discuss the criteria you can use in making selection of tools for each stage of the assessment using the bullet points below:

- suitability of the tool to assess hazards, exposure or vulnerabilities and capacities;
- the specific context of the community (urban or rural, size, etc.);
- what is already known about the community (through secondary data, available literature and previous visits, studies);
- the time available to conduct the VCA with the community;
- the number and skill sets available within the existing human resources and facilitating team;
- any other requirements such as budgets, technology, etc. and more generally;
- what the community feels is meaningful, can absorb and can learn from.

Highlight;

It is important that the VCA team agrees beforehand which method will be used for which tool so that they can plan and implement the VCA accordingly.

Identifying participants in an assessment (whom will provide the information)

VCA participants

Emphasise;

- There should be selection criteria:
    - VCA participants must be "recruited" based on a clear set of pre-determined criteria most useful to meet the objectives of the assessment.
- To be inclusive:
    - is to ensure that voices we capture represent the full range of diversity, and especially the most vulnerable in any given community.
- Setting up for disaggregation of data:
    - The data collection tool must include an approach, question or space to differentiate the profile (i.e. male versus female). For example, in a group method, the event may need to be repeated (i.e. one for men, one for women). This will enable disaggregation of the evidence and inclusive analysis.

Discuss some key profiles to consideration when selecting assessment participants;

- Women, men and anyone who identifies with another gender or no gender;
- People of different age groups including the elderly, youth and children;
- People with different types of disability;
- People from different religious, ethnic, linguistic or migrant groups, for example regular and irregular migrant groups or stateless people;
- Pregnant and lactating women;
- Male and female heads of households;
- Organisations in the community such as local women's groups and groups working with people with disabilities, migrant populations, non-citizens etc.

Provide an example of a way to organise the assessment as in the table below;

Step and order	Tool	Method	Composition of community participants	Division in groups
Hazard assessment				
1.	Mapping	Focus group discussion	Women, men, disabled group, etc.	Yes, three different groups/ No division

Key considerations during preparation for data collection;

Prior permissions

Permissions and clearances for collecting data may need to be sought from the authorities as depending on the context in which you are assessing, the process may vary. As a rule, always request permission of the participants to collect their data. Also be aware that extra permissions may be need from the authorities to enter an area and collect the data.

Means to collect data

There are a few specific elements needed for data collection: different coloured pieces of paper for data collection are very often useful.

In your community, consider the technology that is most available and readily accessible. If every household has a cell phone, or can be provided one for the VCA, the team can organise a very simple household questionnaire using SMS responses. If the VCA team members are comfortable with computers, consider collecting data using tablets. If the team is in a community with limited or no electricity access, stones and sheets of paper and markers work just fine.

Trust building

Data quality relies on trust from those providing the information; therefore, using carefully chosen community members and volunteers for the data collection is important.

Quality also depends on carefully capturing or recording the data in a way that can be later understood and used by someone else that was not present during the assessment.

Secondary information

Ask;

Why is secondary information important in the VCA assessment? Discuss *covering* the following points;

- Building on what is already known is an important part of the assessment.
- Compiling and analysing relevant data from secondary sources is critical prior to any community-level work.
- There may already have been assessments in the community using similar tools within Red Cross (CBHFA, PASSA, PHAST) or from other organisations. It is important to consider the information in past assessments as it may save time and resources used in the assessment phase.

- Obtain (if available) spatial map of the community (google maps, open street map, government, etc.).
- It could be useful to highlight any gaps, insights reflected in the secondary sources that can help you ask the right questions during the assessments. The information will be then verified and validated with key informant interviews and/or focus group discussions with a few community members during the assessment.

Review objective and close the session.

Session 10: Conducting an assessment

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- List the steps and tools needed to carry out hazard and exposure assessment;
- List the steps and tools needed to carry out vulnerability and capacity assessment.
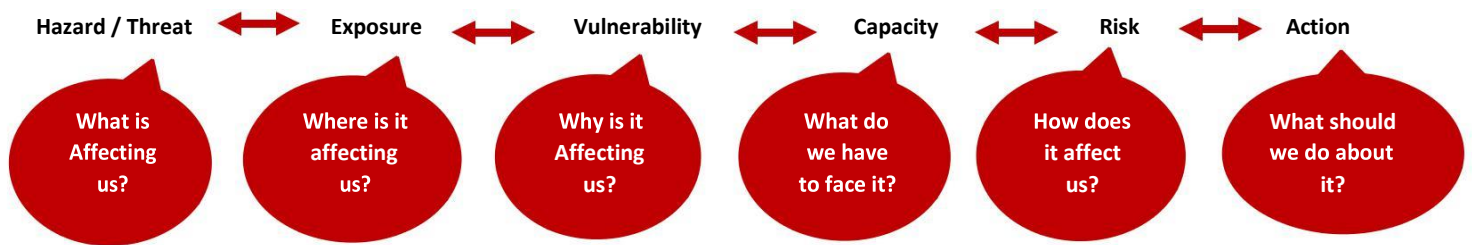
Presentation: Ask if anyone has participated in any type of community assessments. Discuss the assessment was about? How long did the assessment take? Things that may come up during the discussion would include:

- Good field experience and worked with many agencies
- Useful to put the training into practice
- It was too long or too short
- It was confusing

The assessment is structured in such a way to enable you to assist the community to identify and analyse the hazards and threats, exposure and vulnerability, and capacity in their community – the determinants of risk.   Being able to accurately describe the assessment in the whole risk equation and where it fits in the VCA process is critical for facilitators.

 the links between Hazard, Exposure, Vulnerability, Capacity, Risk and Action to emphasise this.

Go through the VCA process diagram again to draw

Hazard / Threat	⟷	Exposure	⟷	Vulnerability	⟷	Capacity	⟷	Risk	⟷	Action
What is Affecting us?		Where is it affecting us?		Why is it Affecting us?		What do we have to face it?		How does it affect us?		What should we do about it?

Hazard and exposure assessment

> **HAZARD AND EXPOSURE ASSESSSMENT**
>
> Purpose is to **identify** all the natural or man-made **hazards or threats** experienced by the community and **prioritise them** in order to gain a thorough understanding of the nature and behaviour of the top **prioritised hazards** and an understanding of the **different exposure levels** within the community. (IFRC)

Discuss the definition of hazard and exposure assessment using the following phrases to guide the discussion;

- Identify all hazards
- Prioritise them
- Different exposure levels within the community

Data quality relies on trust from those providing the information; therefore, using carefully chosen community members and volunteers for the data collection is important.

Identify hazards

Purpose: for the community to find out what hazards or threats are affecting them.

Suggested tools: Hazard brainstorming, historical profile, present information from secondary/ scientific data and direct observation

Brainstorming

Reminding the community what a hazard/threat means. Clarify the definitions and brainstorm all hazards community members can think of that are relevant to them. Using symbols/ pictures to represent key hazards for community members to equally participate.

Historical profile/disaster history

The Historical profile is a good and interactive way to start to engage everyone in the community is with the historical profile or disaster history.

It helps gather basic information on what and when disasters have occurred in the community. Based on the timeline, analyse and discuss if certain hazards are increasing in frequency. Supplement the timeline with information from key informants (especially elderly) and secondary data.

Emphasise;

The focus of the historical profile should be on the hazards but it can also capture other major events and developments in the community which you can come back on later in the analysis to discuss if they have contributed to create vulnerabilities or capacities in the community. The historical visualisation tool can be used later when discussing vulnerabilities.

Emerging and changing hazards

Present and discuss additional hazards based on secondary data, considering emerging and changing hazards because of climate change. Facilitators may need to explain climate change and extreme weather events to the community in simple language and let them express based on their own experience. It is important to explain the difference between weather and climate and ask them what changes in the climate/ climate variability they have observed over the years in their area.

Also consider the 'silent' hazards, those who often don't attract so much media attention, but persistently exist and seriously affect the community.

Red Cross has the responsibility to also highlight risks that the community may not be aware of or do not prioritise (e.g. the presence of an earthquake fault line, overview of mortality statistics in the area, traffic, industrial hazards, climate change predictions, etc.)

Ask and challenge the community with statistics (health, mortality) and local knowledge of the humanitarian consequences.

Hazard mapping

Indicate the hazard locations on a spatial map and delineate high, medium and low exposed areas.

One of the most popular and fun ways to raise awareness of how and where hazards affect the community is the hazard mapping and transect walk.

Begin by creating a spatial map first and then ask community members to locate the different hazards on the spatial map and mark high, medium, and low exposed locations for each one of the hazards based on their experience (you may use different colours or symbols for different hazards).

Note that some hazards such as droughts or storms may be difficult to locate on the spatial map. In such case, list them on the side of the map.

Discuss changes of hazard locations (e.g. changes in flood zones) and possible future risk locations due to climate or other environmental changes.

Optional: several digital tools now exist that can be used for hazard mapping (e.g. PASSA youth mapping, etc.) Digital mapping tools might be especially relevant in large urban areas and an interesting method to engage younger community members;

Transect walk/direct observation

Based on information collected in the hazard map, identify specific locations in the community to visit to investigate further. Split into smaller groups to visit several areas at the same time. After the walk, ask everyone to add additional hazards and risk locations to the hazard map.

Seasonal calendar

Start a seasonal calendar, asking community members to identify which hazard is occurring in which month, the timing of the hazards throughout the year, and in the past (10-30 years ago). Analyse and discuss if the timing and intensity of hazards has changed which could be due to climate change. It is not one past event, but patterns in the past that are interesting. Some hazards such as earthquakes can happen any time in the year so mark them equally for every month.

Add periods when many health issues occur (e.g. malaria), crop and livelihood patterns, lean periods, social events, including school events and migration periods, etc. Based on the overlaps with the hazard timing, identify what and who might be exposed to a hazard (e.g. harvesting season during flood time). Make sure to come back to the key overlaps and interconnections later when discussing vulnerabilities and capacities.

Identify the exposure

Purpose: for the community to identify where and when hazards or threats affect them.

Tools: Hazard map, transect walk and seasonal calendar.

Ask:

What is meant by the term exposure?

EXPOSURE

People, property, systems or other elements present in hazard zones that are subject to potential losses. (IFRC)

Emphasise;

For example, it doesn't matter whether houses are poorly built or well built - if they are in the same location within the hazard zone, they are equally exposed to the hazard. Therefore, houses outside the hazard zone may have a lower exposure.

A disaster occurs when a hazard strikes a vulnerable community. Damage and loss occurs to the different community characteristics (human, economic, physical, social and natural resilience characteristics) that are located in the exposed locations.

Emphasise;

That in vulnerability assessment, we are trying to answer the question **"Why is it possible that the hazard – hurricane, drought, conflict - can cause damage to human, economic, social, physical and natural characteristics in the exposed location?"**

And;

In addition to vulnerabilities, a disaster-prone community will also always possess capacities - at the community, household, and individual level.

Emphasise;

That the capacity assessment tries to answer the question "what strengths are available at community, household and community levels that can be mobilised and accessed to reduce the impact of a specific hazard in the community?" What capacities (human, social, economic, physical, natural and connectedness) mainly within the community, and outside of the community, can be mobilised and accessed to reduce the negative impacts of the hazards? Vulnerability and capacity are on the opposite sides of the same coin.

Vulnerability covers the weaknesses whereas capacity covers the strengths of the resilience characteristics.

Identify vulnerability

Purpose: for the community to reflect on how and why a hazard or threat affects them.

Tools: Seasonal calendar, historical visualisation, problem tree, livelihood analysis, household/ neighbourhood vulnerability assessment, gender analysis.

Ask the community for equivalent local translations.

Reiterate the 6 characteristics of community resilience;

1. *Knowledgeable, healthy and can meet its basic needs*
2. *Socially cohesive*
3. *Connected*
4. *Has well-maintained and accessible infrastructures and services*
5. *Has economic opportunities*
6. *Can manage its natural assets*

Add the timing when health issues occur (e.g. malaria), crop and livelihood patterns, lean periods, social events, including school events and migration periods, etc. Based on the overlaps with the hazard timing, identify what and who may be vulnerable to a hazard (e.g. harvesting season during flood time, flooding during school exam period). Discuss and analyse what and who is vulnerable and when.

Vulnerability mapping

Identify location of the most vulnerable (people, houses, etc.) on the hazard and exposure map. Identify other elements that are vulnerable that might have been missed earlier (e.g. water sources, livelihoods, health facilities, etc.) You can mark the vulnerabilities on the hazard/spatial map by using different colours. However, it may be better to draw them on a transparent paper and then overlay it onto the hazard/exposure map for analysis.

Underlying causes: historical visualization

You can show the changes in the community over time by dividing it along the characteristics of community resilience: changes in human population & demographics, social issues, knowledge (level of education), types of houses, types of economic opportunities (livelihoods, livestock), access to infrastructure & services, use of natural assets, connectedness. Discuss and analyse – what changes might have contributed to creating vulnerabilities and what has provided resources and capacities that reduce risks?

Assess the impact and root causes: Problem tree

For each of the priority hazards- ask the community to discuss the question: what is the impact and why is it possible for this hazard (e.g. flood, drought, cyclone, conflict) to cause harm and damage to human health and basic needs, economic/livelihoods, social, infrastructure & services and natural assets (characteristics of community resilience).

Draw a problem tree and try to cluster the roots (causes) and branches (impacts) by the 6 characteristics of resilience.

Going deeper

If one or more of the root causes are related to a specific sector or issue and there is not enough information from the VCA assessment to adequately explain it, you can go-deeper into the issues using the following sectoral or issue-based assessment approaches. This could be used with regard to different sectors such as livelihoods, shelter and settlements, health, WASH or also social issues such as gender dynamics or connectors and dividers.

Alternatively, a more in-depth sectoral assessment could be identified as an activity to be done as one of the first actions in the community resilience action plan.

Methodologies/ Tools which can be used to get more in-depth information include:

- Livelihood impact analysis
- Safe and unsafe settlement – Participatory Approach to Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA)
- Health – Community based health and first aid (CBHFA)
- Water and Sanitation – Participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation
- Conflict context analysis: connectors/dividers

Identify capacity

Purpose: for the community to identify what resources they have to deal with the hazard or threat and prevent or mitigate its negative impact.

Tools: secondary data, capacity map (added to hazard map), Venn diagram (government, social groups, civil society organisations), secondary data (human capital – skills and knowledge in the community)

Review secondary data on human and social capacities

Find out from secondary sources, such as the stakeholder mapping done in the preparation phase, what skills and capacities are available in the community. This can be collected during

the preparation phase or during the assessment in order to know the members of the community who may be affiliate to organisations or working in different government and non-governmental organisations within the community.

Capacity mapping

The purpose of the capacity or resource mapping is to locate and review the strength of the infrastructures and services (roads, schools, health facilities, water facilities, police stations, government offices, telecommunication, sport facilities, financial institutions etc.), human (doctor, nurses, fire fighters, experienced swimmers), economic (savings, diversified livelihoods, marketable skills) and natural environment (farm land, grazing land, rivers and springs, forest etc.). This helps the community to identify which resources and services might help them in times of disaster or what support they might be able to get from which institution to implement their resilience action plan.

In a capacity mapping, the community will go through the resources and elements again that are marked in their spatial map to consider if they are capacities.

Exposed, non-fully operational facilities are not considered as capacity. For example, a hospital can only be considered a capacity if it has enough medical personnel working and medicines to treat its patients.

The marking can be done using different coloured pens or simply drawing them on transparent paper which are overlaid onto the hazard/exposure and vulnerability map for analysis.

Assess social cohesion and community organisations

Identify different organisations and institutions (community based organisation, government offices, private sectors, civil society organisations which includes NGO, religious organisations etc.) working in the community and use a Venn diagram to analyse their importance to, and influence on, the life of community.

Communities use their own criteria (mainly power or influence and importance to the community) to map the different institutions. The group might want to do this exercise separately for each hazard (e.g. institutions that can help with drought such as agricultural department might be different to organisations that might be able to help with flood such as public works engineers).

Dealing with inconsistent information

Ask;

How do volunteers deal with inconsistent information?

Explain that in any assessment, people will be faced with the problem of inconsistent information. This occurs when informants provide different answers to the same question.

For example, a volunteer assessing at a community finds two people giving different information about number of single headed households in the same community. One is saying that there are 7 another is saying that there are 14 families.

Three common reasons for inconsistencies can be;

- *Perception* – there is not always a 'correct' answer. People's interpretation of events and situations depend upon their own circumstances.
- *Access to information* – some people may be better informed about a particular subject than others.
- *Misinterpretation* – sometimes people purposefully provide misleading information.

There are two general rules to dealing with these:

- The first is to ensure that analysis (which is the next thing to be discussed) should be done throughout the assessment. Information should be analysed as they are collected. Do not leave analysis until the end of the assessment!
- Try to verify important information using 3 different sources – may be using different tools. These sources should be as diverse as possible (e.g. community informant, women's rep, government representative working in the same community). If several different sources provide the same information, it is probably correct.

Review objective and close the session.

Module 5: Determining level of risk

Summary: This looks at the important process of analysing data collected during the assessment using common approaches and templates that are user-friendly to communities. It also looks at the creating a plan of action based on the analysis of the findings of the assessment.

Session Plan:

Time	Session	Facilitator
3 hours	**11. Analysing hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity information**	

Methods: Presentations, question and answers

Materials needed: Flipchart and Markers

Session 11: Analysing hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity information

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Describe key steps and tools used in analysing hazards, exposure, vulnerability and capacity

Presentation: This Module consists of one long session which is aimed at analysing VCA assessment funding.   Ask if anyone is familiar with analysis of survey information and where they may have experience? Discuss what analysis is about? At what stage during the assessment can analysis be made?

Facilitator to explain that an *"Analysis is the process whereby the information collected is organized and interpreted to answer key questions about where to focus the plan of action in the VCA"*
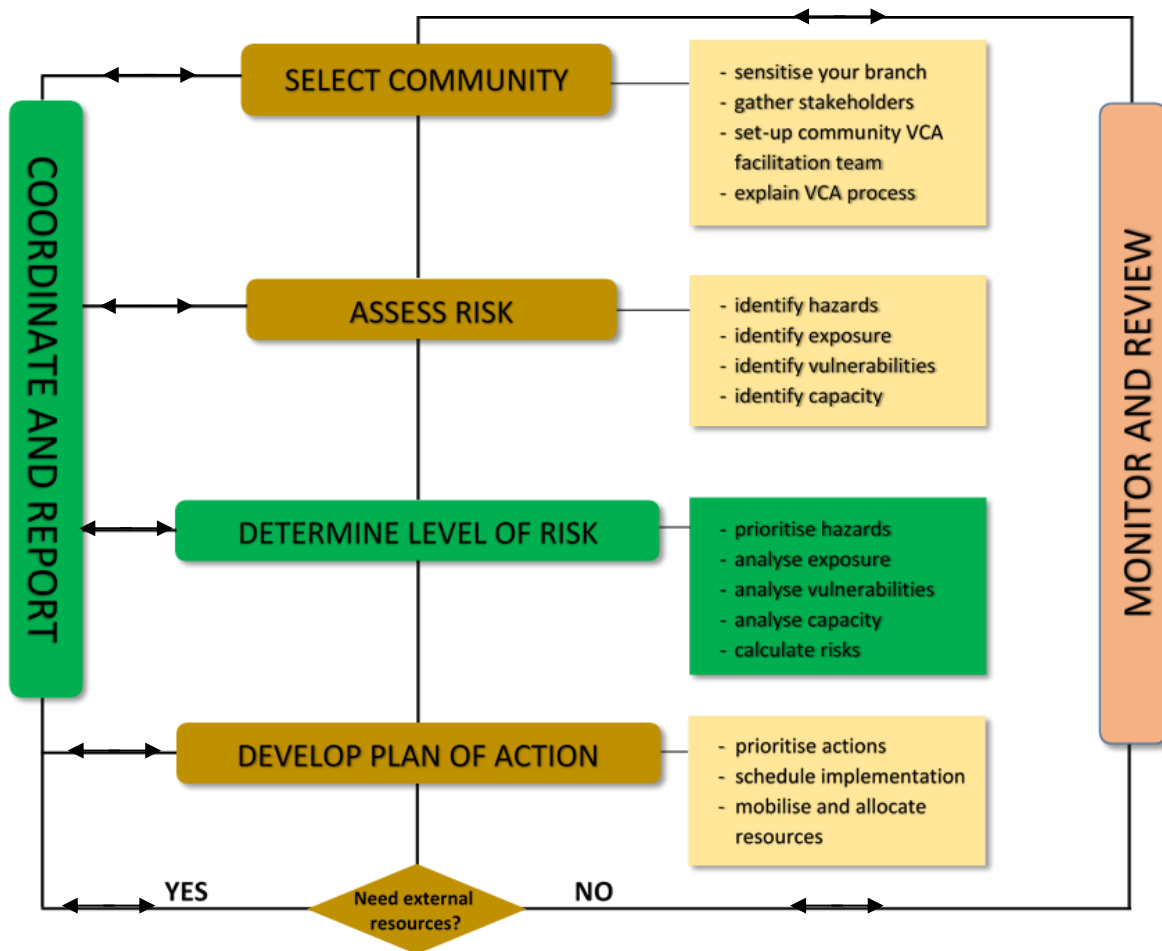
Introduce:

The Wall Method Approach

One of the simplest ways to analyse assessment data is the wall method approach which is a low-tech method of analysis used mostly in community research activities such as the VCA.

As the name suggests, the method requires the use of the walls of a good-sized room in the community so that large amounts of data can be displayed at one time and then sorted into categories by volunteers who are familiar with it.

Wall Method

The facilitator can use the analogy of an Emergency Operation Centre (which is used to manage information and decisions during a disaster operation) where there are usually several screen and boards on the wall that contain different sets of information that need to be monitored or analysed. In VCA, the wall method approach serves the same purpose.

The wall-mounted data can then be organized into clusters, whereby a number of similar data bits are grouped together on the wall. This way people can easily make sense of the information. Once all the data have been assigned to a cluster, it should be possible to spot the main emerging themes.

Before you begin the analysis;

Emphasise;

> In order to analyse, VCA facilitators should first synthesize (combine and summarize) hazards and exposure information.

Purpose: Synthesise and analyse information collected from the assessments

Tools: Reading the hazard and spatial map, ranking/scoring, focus group analysis

Prioritise the hazards

Communities could face various hazards or threats and they may not be able to address all of them because of resource limitation.   This is why it is important to prioritise the most important hazards or threats that are affecting them.

Different criteria could be used to prioritise the hazards but the most common is the impact on the community. Community members know well which hazards are affecting them most and should be addressed as a priority.

It is advisable to divide the community into different age, gender and social groups to do the prioritisation (or if it's a very large group, select a few representatives of each different group). Use symbols for the hazards and give each person ten beans/stones and ask them to choose four most important hazards – the more beans they allocate the more important that hazard is to the community member/group (in terms of impact/concern).

In the case that different groups prioritise different hazards, ask them to justify, and finally facilitate the discussion to reach a consensus on the top priority hazards based on plausible justifications and consideration of the most vulnerable groups. It is ideal to limit the number of priority hazards to four or less.

Characterise the priority hazards or threats

This is the step where the facilitation team and community representatives synthesise and analyse the nature and behaviour of the top priority hazards which includes the cause, warning signs and signals, lead time, period of occurrence, duration of occurrence, and frequency. This is very important information to gather to prepare a community contingency plan.

For this step, the facilitators should prepare by triangulating the community information with external expertise – from relevant specialists at, for instance, universities or meteorological agency – and bring the information into the discussions with the community. For example, the community may report more severe floods than in the past – so it is easy to blame climate change – but if local weather records do not show any change in rainfall intensity, perhaps changes in the management of the watershed upstream is a more likely reason for the changes in floods.

Tools: Secondary sources (refer to your secondary sources to understand the scientific causes of the hazard, scientific warning signs and signals, duration, frequency, period of occurrence) and focus group discussion.

Use the following hazard characterization questions:

- What is the cause/origin of that specific hazard?
- What is the force (the factor) that causes the harm within that hazard?
- What are the traditional and scientific/modern warning signs and signals of the hazard?
- What is the lead time – how long does it take between the sign/signals and its arrival – lead time? It is also called forewarning.
- Which part of the year – which months does it occur?
- How often does it repeat itself – what is its frequency?
- What are the changes in frequency and severity in the last decade(s)? Do you expect any changes in the next five to ten years (considering climate change or other factors)?
- For how long does it stay within the community?

Analyse community exposure to the hazard(s)

By reading the hazard map (drawn on the spatial map that is enhanced by direct observation) and seasonal calendar, analyse and list what and who is exposed to the different hazards ranking their exposure as high, medium or low. Include human, physical (houses, infrastructures), and natural assets in this process.

Summarise the information in a table. This could be done by the facilitation team using as in the example below;

Priority Hazard	High exposure – to what and who?	Medium exposure – to what and who?	Low exposure – to what and who?

Example: *Flooding*	-25 children living in area A and going to school by the river -9 elderly persons living in area A -44 adults - 10 houses by the river front made of wood -1 school by the river -5 shops -2 km of road	-46 children living in area B but going to school by the river -2 disabled persons - 14 elderly persons - 61 adults -55 houses built on stilts - 1 health post - 1 market - 56 hectares of farm	-123 children living in area C on the hill - 1 visually impaired - 19 elderly persons - 98 adults - 51 houses on high ground - 1 school 4 km road -1 natural spring

Synthesise and analyse vulnerability information

Analyse vulnerability information

It is important now to summarise your vulnerability findings in the following table. This might be done by the facilitation team or together with the community, for example through the resilience star tool.

Priority hazard	Characteristics	Impact (past and future)	Vulnerability aspects with their causes	Score (High. Medium, Low)
Example: *Flooding*	Risk knowledge, health and basic needs.	Death, injuries	No early warning, lack of water safety knowledge	
	Social cohesion	Displacement	Ethnic division among the community members	
	Economic opportunities	Loss of crops	No alternative livelihoods for most of the community	
	Infrastructure & services	Cut-off road, damaged buildings	Poor drainage lines, poor building standards	
	Natural Assets	Loss of fertile soil Increased flash flood risk	Serious deforestation on the upper stream of the flood plain	
	Connectedness	Lack of timely support from external organizations following crisis	Community has s no connections with the district disaster management office	

Synthesise and analyse capacity information

Analyse capacity information

Summarise the capacity assessment in the following sheet.

| Hazard/ threat	Characteristics	Community capacities	Individual capacities	Score (High/Medium/ Low)
Example: *Flooding*	Risk knowledge, health and basic needs.			
	Social cohesion			
	Economic opportunities			
	Infrastructure & services			
	Natural Assets			
	Connectedness			

Consolidate and conclude on risk levels

Purpose: for the community to consolidate the results of the assessment and identify who and what is at high, medium and low risk.

As indicated earlier, vulnerabilities and capacities are different sides of the same coin. One describes the weaknesses or gaps within the community while the other explains the strengths within the community.

In this step the team facilitates the process for the community to align the vulnerabilities and capacities identified around the six resilience characteristics.

Tools: Resilience star, wall method, or vulnerability/capacity/risk table

Example of the Resilience star
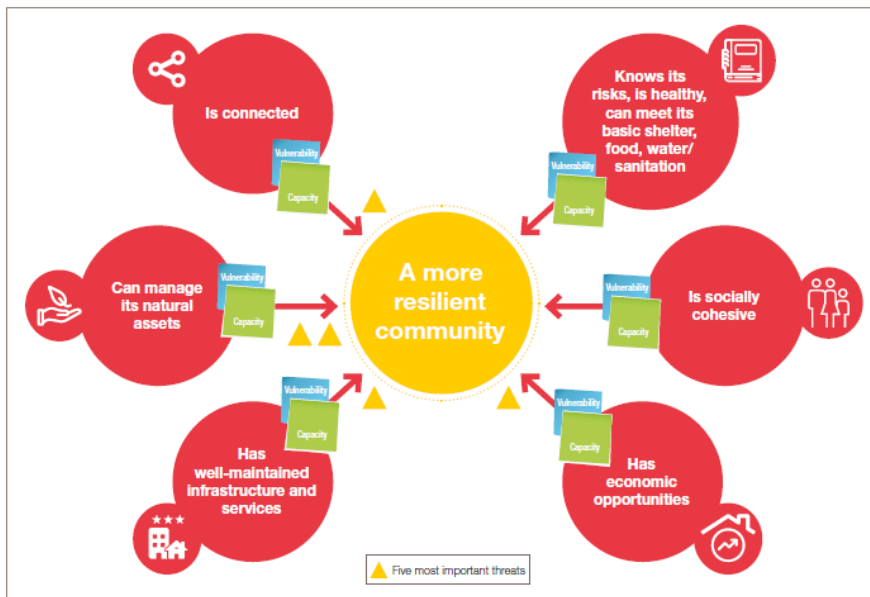
Consolidate the results: Exposure, vulnerability and capacity

Now it is time to facilitate the community to bring the results of exposure, vulnerability and capacity for each hazard together to start to make sense of it. Remind the community about the risk management formula once again. The risk of disaster is a factor of hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity. Clarify to the community that where the highest exposure, high vulnerability and low capacity meet – the risk level is the highest.

$$\underline{\text{H x E x V}} = \textbf{Disaster Risk}$$
$$\text{C}$$

On the other hand, where the lowest exposure, low vulnerability and high capacity meet, the risk level for that specific hazard is the lowest.

Purpose: to identify the risk levels of the different elements by consolidating the analysis results of exposure, vulnerability and capacity.

Tool: *talk to the walls, ask the community to put the exposure map and the synthesis of vulnerability and capacity assessment result – and the completed resilience star of each hazard side by side.*

The VCA facilitator team asks the community to identify out:

- For whom and for what the highest exposure meets the highest vulnerabilities and lowest capacities. Prioritize these!
- For whom and for what the lowest exposure meets the lowest vulnerabilities and high capacities

The VCA facilitator team can ask more probing questions by combining high, medium and low exposure with high, medium and low vulnerabilities, and high, medium and low capacities. They can have the following combination of the three risk determinants.

	High vulnerability	Medium vulnerability	Low vulnerability
High exposure	**Highest risk**	High risk	Some risk
Medium exposure	High risk	Medium risk	Less risk
Low exposure	Some risk	Less risk	Least risk
	Low capacity	Medium capacity	High capacity

Based on the above exercise, pick the highest and medium at-risk elements with their respective exposure', vulnerability and capacity details and put them in the table below.

Hazard/ Threat	Characteristics	High and medium exposed elements	High and medium Vulnerability aspects	Capacity aspects	Risk
Example: Flooding	Risk knowledge, health and basic needs.				
	Social cohesion				
	Economic opportunities				
	Infrastructure & services				
	Natural Assets				
	Connectedness				

Role of the facilitation team:

- Help the community to consolidate exposure, vulnerability and capacity results in order to conclude risk levels.

- Most households may have a combination of vulnerabilities and capacities

The VCA facilitation team would help the community in how to consolidate the exposure, the vulnerability and capacity results of different households, groups (social, economic and age groups) and infrastructures to conclude on the risk levels.

The conclusion on the risk level at the end of the day is more of a subjective judgement by the community and that is still the best conclusion given they know each other best. Moreover, both vulnerability and capacity are not static; rather change in time and the process of VCA should be repeated periodically (at least once in a year once the community master how to do it).

Once they have a clear idea of what are the most at-risk elements in the community according to their exposure, vulnerability and capacities you are ready to start the planning phase.

Review objective and close the session.

Module 6: Developing plan of action

Summary: This looks at the important process of analysing data collected during the assessment using common approaches and templates that are user-friendly to communities. It also looks at the creating a plan of action based on the analysis of the findings of the assessment.

Session Plan:

Time	Session	Facilitator
2 hours	**12. Facilitating planning and reporting**	
1 hour	**13. Coordination and implementation**	

Session 12: Facilitating planning and reporting

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- <mark>Describe key steps and tools used in planning and implementing actions to address risks associated with hazards, exposure and vulnerability thereby increasing and increase capacity</mark>
- <mark>Understand how to support communities with Contingency planning</mark>

Presentation: Begin the presentation by going through the steps completed so far and emphasise that the community takes the lead in everything with the support of the VCA facilitation team.

Presentation: Begin the presentation by going through the steps completed so far and emphasise that the community takes the lead in everything with the support of the VCA facilitation team.

Addressing vulnerabilities is a key part of risk reduction and resilience building effort. The community shouldn't only focus directly on what is seen to indicate vulnerabilities; rather it should also go further in addressing the underlying root causes and dynamic pressures pushing the community to accept the risk situation that they are in.

The actions that make up the plan would help the community reduce their risks by either;

- reducing the intensity of the hazard *(e.g. improving the drainage system of a flood prone community changes the characteristics of flood);*
- reducing the level of exposure *(e.g. planting mangroves reduces exposure to storm surge);*
- reducing vulnerability *(e.g. risk reduction activities that takes into account diversity and inclusiveness in a community ensures equal participation of all including the most vulnerable members of the community)*
- increasing capacity *(e.g. creating a community disaster plan that is adequately resourced and frequently tested)*

Creating risk reduction plans requires visionary thinking, long term commitment and taking systematic approach. The following sub-steps contribute to this and need to be facilitated well by the VCA team as itThis is the stage of VCA where the planning process for reducing the risks takes place.

Visioning with the community

Purpose: for the community to draw what they are dreaming to achieve in their area in the future.

To start the planning phase, it is good to do a visioning exercise with the community, motivating them to think about what would a safe and resilient community look like when all the major hazards/threats are addressed? This exercise is meant to help inspire and motivate.

Tool: Dream map

Identify actions

Purpose: for the community to identify actions that will help them reduce their risks and strengthen their capacity.

At this stage the community has understood how and why hazards/threats affect them. The next step is to answer the key question: what actions can be taken to address these vulnerabilities to prevent and/or mitigate a potential disaster?

Tool: *talking to the walls or solution tree*

Using the above tools, ask the community to look at the key risks identified and answer questions like "How can you reduce exposure using the available capacities?", "what action can you take to address vulnerability X using capacity Y"?

Ask this for each of the vulnerabilities identified. Ask them to write the agreed actions need to be written in an additional column added to the synthesis table.

Alternatively, problem tree from the earlier exercise can be turned it into a solution tree by adding ideas to address the vulnerabilities and reduce the impact (as leaves on the branches).

Characteristics	Exposure	Vulnerability	Capacity	Risk	Potential actions/ solutions
Common					

|					
Risk knowledge, health and basic needs.					
Social cohesion					
Economic opportunities					
Infrastructure & services					
Natural Assets					
Connectedness					
Hazard/ threat specific					
Example: Floods	Risk knowledge, health and basic needs.				
	Social cohesion				
	Economic opportunities				
	Infrastructure & services				
	Natural Assets				
	Connectedness				

Prioritise the identified actions

Purpose: to identify the priority actions considering different criteria.

Ask:

Why is it important to prioritise the identified actions? *Use the bullet points below to guide the discussion;*

- Prioritises actions based on a criteria;
- Clarifies which action can be carried within the capacity of the community and within what timeline;
- Provides an opportunity for the community consider their capacity first before looking outside for support;
- Gives the opportunity for the community to begin making connections with external stakeholders whom they may need to access support from.
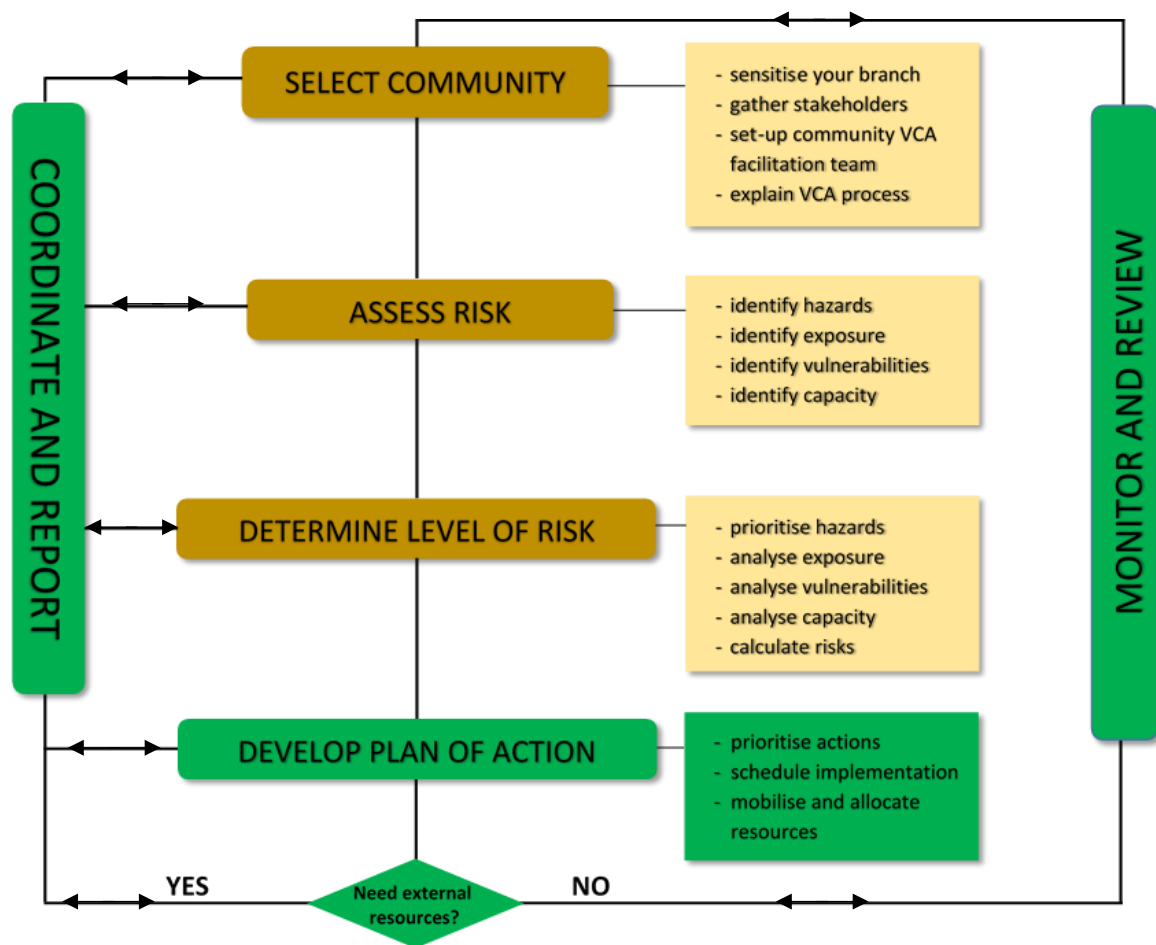
In the previous exercise, the community would come up with a list of actions or activities to address vulnerabilities, reduce exposure and strengthen capacity. However, it may be difficult, to implement all the identified actions. Therefore, prioritisation is important. Actions must be prioritised based on agreed criteria by the community.

Tools: ranking, cost/benefit analysis, 'do no harm' check.

The criteria can be selected in a brainstorming session or focus group discussion. Some of the key criteria are:

- Practicality; actions that can easily be implemented by the community considering cost and other aspects.
- Effectiveness; for example, actions that address multiple vulnerabilities.
- Impact; actions that benefit many people.
- Socially sensitivity; actions that promote gender and inclusiveness and are conflict sensitive.
- Climate smart; actions that consider future risks and
- Sustainability; actions that can be sustained socially, environmentally and economically.

It is advisable for the VCA team to sensitise the community about some of the criteria that can easily be overlooked or taken less seriously by the community. At the end, however, it is the community that decides on which action(s) to take. One option is to do a pair wise ranking on shortlisted activities, for example comparing expected benefits vs. cost.

Summarise the selected actions in the following table. The community might just want to pick 2-3 agreed top criteria or do a pair-wise ranking and then check against other criteria (e.g. do no harm) in a smaller team or focus group discussion.

Actions	How to implement			Criteria	Rank
	Can do it ourselves	Needs support	Needs advocacy		
Fix drainage system	X (Workforce)	X (Equipment)			

Plan actions to address vulnerability and strengthen capacity

Purpose: Create a detailed plan of action for priority actions.

It is now time to describe in detail the prioritised actions and define the how, when, where, and who of the implementation. Encourage discussion on what the community can do themselves at household or community level, what would need small support from RCRC, local council, community based organisations or other partners, and what needs further advocacy efforts.

Tools: focus group discussion, brainstorming.

Synthesise in the following table.

Which risk(s) do we try to address?	How will we do it? Description of activity (quantity/ beneficiaries)	What resources are required?	Source of resources	When to implement?	Who will be responsible?

Contingency planning

Purpose: Facilitate the preparation of a simple contingency plan by the community based on the gaps identified in the above table.

A hazard or threat doesn't wait until prevention or mitigation measures have been taken. It can strike the community at any time. Therefore, people must be prepared for any eventualities in addition to their day-to-day efforts to reduce their risks. For this, it is important to also include a community contingency plan in the plan of action.

The contingency plan should at least cover the priority hazards/threats that have a high potential of striking the community.

Information on the early warning signs and signals, the lead time, the duration, the frequency and period of occurrence of the hazard will help to prepare a good contingency plan. It should include key tasks and roles and responsibilities for community emergency response teams immediately before, during and after a disaster event. For sudden onset disasters, community early warning systems and evacuation plans are a minimum component of a contingency plan.

An energising way to initiate contingency planning discussions with the community is to play the participatory game "Ready!" - possibly with different groups (gender, age etc.) as different teams.

Reporting

Ask;

Why is reporting important?

Go through the VCA report template that is in the last section of the manual. Use the key messages below to reinforce why it is important to document the VCA process.

- A good VCA report is key to ensure everyone is clear about the identified risks and the agreed actions to increase resilience and to mobilise support.
- The VCA report should as much as possible document the entire process, whilst remaining concise and clear – so that it will be accessible and easy to read rather than sit on a shelf.
- Share the report back with the community. Communities need to "own" the EVCA report to manage their Action Plan and monitor progress.
- The community should have access to something tangible they can use. This could be a series of protected flip charts or posters including the hazard map displayed in a community centre, a printed document, or a presentation or a digital PDF report posted on a community website, or to the VCA repository. Try to provide the community with a tangible EVCA product that they can be proud of and that everyone can easily access.

Verify & disseminate:

Due to the participatory nature of the EVCA process, often only a smaller number of representatives from the community can actively participate in the assessment and planning. Before finalising the report and action plan, ensure that it has been verified and disseminated to the wider community. If necessary, organise additional focus groups or surveys with key vulnerable groups and stakeholders to verify their inputs.

Organise a presentation to launch the EVCA report to raise awareness and mobilise community support for the actions. This can be done through existing community governing meetings, or at a community event, public display, radio & social media etc. For example- the local Red Cross branch can organise a fish fry to present it to the local community.

The report should be submitted to the branch management and the board, thereby raising their awareness of what has been achieved. This will go a long way towards ensuring that VCA and community work become integrated into and part of a standard process within the National Society. This will make it much easier to organise VCAs in other locations, with the support of all programmes and technical departments.

Once approved, the community will also be able to share the report with relevant stakeholders. This can be done via email or as a formal presentation, for example at the next local/district government council meeting or district disaster management committee.

Support community leaders to present the report themselves. Discuss with the community if they agree to share their VCA results, and under what conditions it can be shared.

The VCA reports are a strong basis for the branch to bring the needs of vulnerable people and communities to the attention of national policy makers: a synthesis of the needs identified – including the changing needs with climate – provides compelling evidence that may help convince planners to address those needs in their development plans and National Adaptation Plans.

While thousands of VCA reports have been produced across the world, only a few hundred of them have been made publicly available. There are many reasons for this including the lack of a standardised format, the ability of VCA teams to send/share digitally, languages used, protection of the identities named in the reports, time management, and many other issues.

There is a strong call, nonetheless for a global compilation of VCA reports in a manner that facilitates sharing and learning – and policy dialogue. Storing the reports online ensures that they don't get lost and offers more possibilities for the information to be used, for example to feed into national level risk profiles, for branch contingency planning, for future programme planning, policy dialogue as mentioned above, or as useful background information in case a future emergency response operation is needed in the area.

Review objective and close the session.

Session 13: Coordination and implementation

Explain the objectives of the session.

Learning objectives: At the end of the session, participants should be able to:

<mark>Describe process of connecting the community with stakeholders and how accompanying implementation is done</mark>

While the key output of the VCA is a report that summarises the findings and action plan, the resilience process does not end there. It is not enough to do the VCA process up until the action planning stage and then leave the communities. It is important that the branch maintain continuous engagement with the community to implement the action plan. Remember, the VCA covers only part of the process in the Roadmap to Resilience. Here the VCA process connects with Stage 3 - Taking Action for Resilience of the Roadmap to Resilience.

Connecting the community with stakeholders

The community's plan of action is likely to need inputs from many actors. In addition to any material, financial and technical support it can provide, your branch can contribute to the plan's success by connecting the community to other relevant actors, processes and resources. In this respect, links to stakeholders with responsibility for local development (usually local government) are critical. Any actions the community wants to take to strengthen its resilience must take into account, and whenever possible be aligned with, ongoing development activities. The community may also be able to tap into government funding to achieve parts of its plan.

Carry out the tasks below to help generate resources and partnerships.

- Assist the community to prepare a presentation of what it wants to do and why, starting with a 'My Community Factsheet'. Collate the findings of the VCA, the objectives the community has chosen, and a summary of prioritized activities. If community members are willing, when-ever possible use visual aids (photographs, sketches, PowerPoint). Encourage several members of the community to act as presenters or speakers, making sure that those chosen reflect the diversity of the community.
- Help set up meetings with external stakeholders who participated in the assessment, and others who might be able to offer some resources. Use your Branch or volunteer contacts to obtain meetings if the community is unable to do this itself.
- Accompany community members to meetings, assist and coach speakers, record any offers of resources, and assist the community to access them. The branch may need to help members of the community to develop a proposal, arrange future meetings, train in project management skills, or take other follow-up actions.
- Discuss the process with your branch's donors. Explore whether your current funding arrangements might permit you to support the community's plan of action. When requesting new funding, try to build 'funding flexibility' in from the start.

Once community members consider that they have the resources to carry out the initial activities of one or more objectives, encourage them to begin implementing these, even while they continue to reach out to other potential contributors and partners.

The number of objectives that a community can address simultaneously will vary from community to community. If resources are available, talk to community members about how much they can manage. Encourage them to consider options for coping: sequencing; the formation of working groups with different responsibilities that meet periodically to report progress; or renegotiation of timeframes. Use this approach in your branch too: if various programme teams and groups of volunteers are involved, be prepared to adapt, postpone and coordinate in order to provide your support at an appropriate pace.

Accompanying implementation

Your support to the community for taking action could take many forms depending on the context and available capacities (technical, financial and material).

You could help them explore and strengthen their internal capacity by creating or training a community organisation or committee that will mobilise the wider community and lead the implementation of the action plan. You should also offer to help implement some of the activities in which your branch can offer expertise (e.g. first aid training, first responders training, establishing early warning systems, etc.) and whenever possible, provide seed funds for a micro-project generated from the action plan. Another important way for Red Cross to support communities is to connect them with stakeholders who could support them financially or technically. For this, your branch could help train the community in proposal writing and presentation, and convene the meetings.

These are the three RCRC services of accompanying, enabling and connecting that support vulnerable communities in their journey to resilience.

This support is expected to yield two results: strong community organisation and adequate human, financial and material resources for the community to implement their action plan.

Accompanying communities as they strengthen their resilience may require a range of advocacy initiatives. "Advocacy is about persuading people to make changes, whether in policy, practice, systems or structures. Advocacy can include speaking for, working with and supporting others to speak for themselves. It is a way of taking community voices to a different level of decision-making. Advocacy can bring communities together and encourage them to respond to external threats. It goes hand-in-hand with awareness raising and education. Awareness raising and education can empower communities to change and to have safer, healthier lives, while advocacy can create the conditions in which they are actually able to do so."

The community will need to persuade authorities and other stakeholders to support community resilience. Use the Red Cross Red Crescent's credibility and auxiliary role to connect the community with relevant authorities and other decision-makers.

Your branch can also assist the community to prepare for these meetings. Share your experience and skills on presenting evidence, requesting action and documenting agreements: this can help the community to take full advantage of opportunities.

Review objective and close the session.