

Resilience Star

What is it?

The Resilience Star is a participatory tool that is used to produce, consolidate and analyze information about the vulnerabilities and capacities and risk of a community or group along the six characteristics of the IFRC Community Resilience Framework, and present that data visually in a manner that promotes community ownership and planning.



2-3 hours



Paper and pens, different coloured cards and star

Resilience characteristics covered:

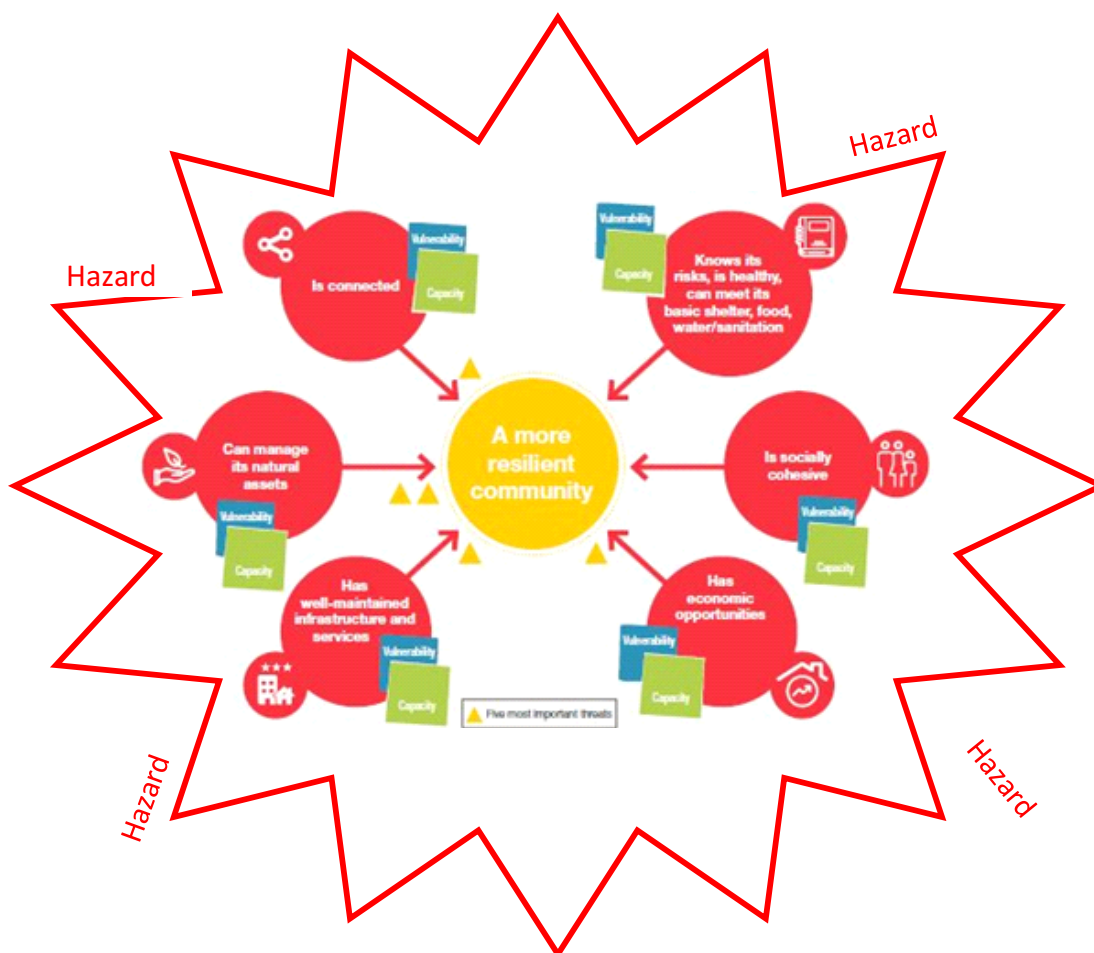


Use it as...

- **An assessment tool:** To identify and compare capacities and vulnerabilities to hazards, shocks and stresses for each of the characteristics of resilience – see EVCA steps 6-7
- **A tool for analysis:** To summarize, triangulate and analyse information on vulnerabilities and capacities previously gathered through the other VCA tools and secondary information according to the characteristics of resilience – see EVCA step 7

Skills needed

The **facilitator** needs to be able to capture accurately the voices of participants either by recording and then transcribing what they say or by taking detailed notes. The facilitator should also be able to keep the group focused on the topic, manage group dynamics and mediate any discussions or conflicts that may arise.



How to do it



Step 1. Determine who will participate

Invite a group of maximum 20 participants that are representative of the composition of the community for this discussion. In many contexts it will be beneficial for open discussion to separate women and men in different groups with facilitators from the same gender. Note that all subsequent steps will be the same for each group.

Step 2. Agree on priority hazards

If you have not already identified the top hazards or threats in previous exercises (step 5.1), brainstorm what are external factors that pose a threat or hazard to the community. Also consider how these threats might change in the future under a changing climate.

Agree on the top three hazards/threats (e.g. floods, drought, cholera) and write or draw them on note cards to be placed on the top of the flipchart.

You can consider all three hazards together or divide into three groups and assign one hazard per group so that the initial discussions on vulnerabilities and capacities for each resilience characteristic can be more specific to that hazard (e.g. how shelter needs are affected by floods is different from shelter needs during heat waves; or how well a community is connected to partners and networks for dealing with cyclones might be different than connectedness to stakeholders for droughts). All subsequent steps will be the same for each group.

Step 3. Prepare the resilience star

Draw the outline of the resilience star as seen above. The star can be placed on a wall or the ground and painted or drawn on several pieces of paper.

Place six bands (each 2.5 meters long) or draw six lines in the shape of a spider web or star: they connect in the middle, and form evenly distributed radials. In the centre, place a circle (about 50cm in diameter) that represents the community. Write “a more resilient community” on the circle.

At the outer end of the radials, place small red circles (25 cm) that symbolize the six characteristics. Write or draw the characteristics on each of these circles. Use symbols and drawings for communities with high illiteracy rate or when discussing with children.

The first characteristic (knowledgeable, healthy and can meet its basic needs) can be separated into 3-5 sub-components to facilitate easier discussion and data analysis. This makes it less unwieldy, for example: 1a) knows its risk (and can meet its education needs),

1b) can meet its basic shelter needs and), 1c) is healthy and can meet its basic food and water and sanitation needs.

If participants prefer, the exercise can also be done and presented in a simple table format:

| Hazard(s) | Characteristic of resilience | Vulnerabilities | Capacities | |
|------------|---|-----------------|------------|--|
| e.g. flood | Knowledgeable | | | |
| | Healthy | | | |
| | Basic needs: Food, Water, Shelter | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | Social cohesion | | | |
| | Economic opportunity | | | |
| | Infrastructure and services | | | |
| | Natural assets | | | |
| Connected | | | | |

Step 4. Introduce resilience and the characteristics of community resilience

Now introduce the logic of the Star to the group. Explain resilience: “the ability of individuals, communities, organizations or countries 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 prospects” Explain that you would like to discuss with them the elements that the community needs to be resilient.

Briefly introduce the resilience characteristics one by one. Ask the group to translate and contextualize the characteristic (E.g.: what does “is healthy mean to you”). Add translations and key definitions on each red characteristic card.

Step 5. Discuss vulnerabilities and capacities for a specific characteristic

Introduce the green cards (capacities/strengths) and blue cards (vulnerabilities/gaps). If you have not discussed vulnerabilities and capacities before, remind people about the concepts and give examples (see [key terms](#) in Step 4).

Start with one of the characteristic and discuss vulnerabilities and capacities in relation to the specific hazard(s) that the community faces. You can do this together with the group by reviewing findings from other VCA tools and sorting them according to vulnerability and capacities by the resilience characteristics. It can also provide a chance to probe and discuss in more details further vulnerabilities and capacities that might not have come out yet before:

- Discuss and write vulnerabilities on blue cards and also place them on the band, starting on the outside (working inwards).
- Discuss and write what capacities the community has on green cards and place them close to the inner circle (working outwards).

For example, for ‘Knowledgeable about risk’ in relation to flood, discuss “How do people know when and where it will be flooding?” A vulnerability might be “no local early warning system” while a capacity might be “we know from the community mapping exercise that streets A and C by the river always flood in August” and “the school educates children not to cross the road when its flooded due to strong currents”. Or for shelter needs a vulnerability might be “some of the old houses in street C might collapse in a flood” while a capacity might be “we have a local by-laws that prohibits building new houses on street A” and “families from houses on street C are usually helped by volunteers to evacuate to the cyclone shelter “ .

Or for ‘economic opportunity’ and drought, a vulnerability might be “maize harvest in March is often poor due to lack of rain”, while a capacity might be “lead farmers have been trained by agriculture extension workers on conservation agriculture techniques” and “some people also have vegetables gardens that have drip irrigation.”

For each characteristic the community then notes down what are the key vulnerabilities or weaknesses (blue cards) as well as their capacities (green cards). Ask them to write or draw them on cards (one card for each point) and place them next to the relevant characteristics. Sometimes a specific vulnerability or capacity can be related to more than one characteristic. You can show this by drawing lines to connect them. Displaying and comparing all capacities against vulnerable like this can help with the synthesis and prioritization of key issues to be addressed.

Step 6. Repeat with all the characteristics

Repeat the above for every characteristic.

TIP!

Try to avoid questions that lead to “yes” or “no” answers. Instead, use “open questions” which allow people to elaborate on their responses.

Step 7. Compare and synthesize results

(If applicable) Compare the results of women and men and youth groups and let the groups discuss the similarities and differences and consolidate the findings.

(If applicable) If you have done the star separately for each key hazard, compare and synthesise the similarities and differences on vulnerabilities and capacities across the

characteristics for the different hazards. This might help to prioritize critical areas of intervention. Note, please keep in mind that some capacities and vulnerabilities might be very specific to a specific hazard but can still be very important to address.

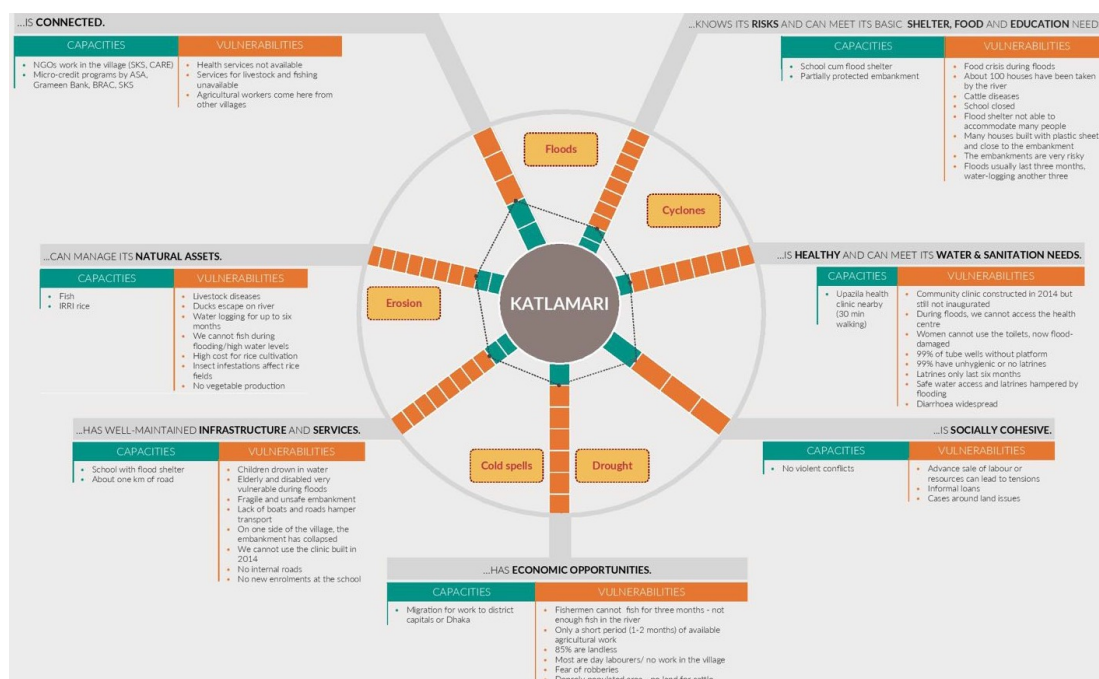
(If time is short, carry out this next step at a follow-up session during the planning meetings (EVCA step 8 or R2R Stage 3):

When completed, you can place the red circles with the characteristic in between the green and blue cards. This can symbolize how resilient the community is by showing how many vulnerabilities versus capacities the community has for each characteristic that makes them a more resilient community. This is just a symbol and not a real score (for resilience measurement tools refer to the Roadmap to Resilience Stage 2 – Step 5-9). Explain that the goal in the future is to reduce the number of vulnerability cards and add more and more capacity cards. You might ask: what would you need to do to move the red circles to the outside (having more capacities, less vulnerabilities) – thus raising resilience? To what extent can you build on capacities, to what extent can threats be addressed? This can be the starting point for planning.

Step 8. Document the exercise

Take a photo and type up the findings in a table or graphic (see picture below). Complete a brief summary.

Digital: for technologically savvy participants such as youth or in urban areas, this exercise could also be done online or documented electronically: e.g. conduct a survey on each characteristic via WhatsApp or slide.do or with a word cloud; or visualize the star electronically e.g. with mindmap (see picture).



Source: Patrick Bolte, Banyaneer for Swiss Red Cross

Constraints and pitfalls

- Pre-prepare material for the making/drawing the 'star' (e.g. pictures of the resilience characteristics, colour cards, arrows etc.). In communities with high illiteracy rate or when discussing with children, use symbols and drawings for the characteristics and the capacities and vulnerabilities.
- The exercise will require a team of three facilitators: one lead facilitator, one who writes and places the cards, and one who documents the discussion. Make sure that the facilitator understands the holistic nature of resilience and not just gears all questions towards DRR. The facilitator also needs the ability to contextualize the characteristics to the local context
- Consider conducting the exercise in separate gender groups for the initial round (and reconciliation)
- Split the first characteristic "Knows its risks, is healthy, can meet its basic shelter, food and water/sanitation needs" into two or even five sub-components (making it more manageable). Adapt characteristics as necessary to local priorities, for example some communities added to 'knows its risk' also 'can meet its education needs.'
- Don't worry that there are some overlaps and back and forth discussion between the characteristics. For examples discussions on 'can meet its water and sanitation needs' might lead to discussion on 'well maintained infrastructure'. Distinguish between household level needs and community/government level infrastructure. Capture key points dynamically as they are being raised under the relevant characteristic and you can also draw lines or put strings to show the connection.