

Level Four: Facilitate planning

The steps so far have been an assessment of risk in the community. It is now time for the local EVCA team to facilitate the planning process to create a community-based risk reduction action plan as well as a contingency plan in case of an emergency.

This is an exciting time when all community members participate with their ideas of how to minimise their risks by reducing the causes of their vulnerabilities and strengthening their capacities.

Tip! Facilitators need to be skilled in addressing potential conflicts that may surface during the planning process.

Step 9. Risk reduction planning

Addressing vulnerabilities is the main goal of a risk reduction and resilience-building effort. The community shouldn't only focus on the direct manifestations of the vulnerabilities; rather it should also go further and attempt to address the underlying root causes and dynamic pressures. This requires visionary thinking, long-term commitment and a systematic approach to address them. The following sub-steps contribute to this and need to be facilitated well by the local EVCA team.

9.1 Visioning with the community

Purpose: for the community to think about what they want to achieve in the future

Tools: Dream map (guidance provided in the [mapping](#) tool)

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

9.2 Identify actions

Purpose: for the community to identify actions that will help reduce risks

Tools: talking to the walls, solution tree (guidance provided in the [problem tree](#) tool)

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

Using the above tools, ask the community to look at the key risks identified and answer questions like "how can you reduce exposure?", "what actions can you take to address vulnerability?" and "what actions can you take to strengthen capacity?". Ask this for each of the priority hazard identified. Ask them to write the agreed actions in an additional column added to the synthesis table from section 8.3 - the table would look as follows:

Hazard	High and medium exposed elements	Relevant high-risk dimensions	Vulnerability aspects	Capacity aspects	Key risks	Potential actions/ solutions
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E.g: Flood	-55 houses in low-laying area by the river (H) - 1 health post (H) - 1 market (H) - 56 hectares of farmland (H) - school near the river (M)	Risk management	- No early warning system - Lack of swimming skills - 5 people with disabilities living in the exposed houses	People can access weather forecasts on their mobile (but limited knowledge on how to interpret it and what actions to take)	Children who don't know how to swim that go to school in the flood risk area are at high risk of death and injury People with disabilities in houses by the river would need help to evacuate	
		Infrastructure & services	- Poor drainage lines - Poor building standards			
		Natural resource management	- Serious deforestation on the upper stream of the floodplain			

9.3 Prioritise the identified actions

Purpose: to identify the priority actions considering different criteria

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

In the above exercise, the community came 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. The Roadmap to Community Resilience always favours those actions which can be implemented by the community themselves with no or minimal external support. However, there could be a situation whereby the action is found to be very important but the community lacks the capacity to implement it. In such instances, the action can be selected indicating that it will be supported by either the National Society or one of the stakeholders or the community will be supported in its advocacy efforts to get support from local authorities or other actors.

Facilitate the discussion for the community to agree on the criteria to choose priority actions for implementation. The criteria can be selected in a brainstorming session or focus group discussion. Some of the key criteria are:

- Impact: actions that benefit many people.
- Effectiveness: for example, actions that address multiple vulnerabilities.
- Practicality: actions that can easily be implemented by the community considering cost and other aspects.
- Social sensitivity: actions that promote gender and inclusiveness and are conflict-sensitive (Do no harm).
- Climate smart: actions that consider future risks.
- Sustainability: actions that can be sustained socially, environmentally and economically.

It is advisable for the local EVCA team to support the community to consider all the criteria. At the end, however, the community should be the one to decide on the priority actions.

Write the priority actions in the following table and check them against the criteria to rank them.



Actions	Criteria	How to implement			Rank
		Can do it ourselves	Needs support	Needs advocacy	
Fix drainage system	- Benefits the whole community - Has a high impact	X (Work force)	X (Equipment)		1

If there is a disagreement or you need to prioritize between similar ranked activities, you could pick two very important criteria and do a pair-wise ranking (e.g. practicality vs. impact, or cost vs. benefit) in a smaller team or focus group discussion. This allows options to be compared against each other using a small list of criteria. As this is time consuming, it is advised to do this only for a few activities under debate. For example, on the basis of the two tables below, the community might want to prioritize Activity B as it is easier to implement but still has moderate impact.

More difficult activities could be noted down for future implementation once the community has achieved some success and gained more experience with completing other activities.

Proposed activity A	Practical/easy to implement	Moderately easy to implement	Difficult to implement
High impact			X
Moderate impact			
Low impact			

Proposed activity B	Practical/easy to implement	Moderately easy to implement	Difficult to implement
High impact			
Moderate impact	X		
Low impact			

9.4 Create a plan of action

Purpose: to create a detailed plan of action

Tools: focus group discussion, brainstorming

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 is able to do themselves at the household or community level, what support would be needed (e.g. from the RCRC, local council, community-based organisations or other partners) and what requires further advocacy efforts.

Synthesise in the following table.



Which risk (s) are we trying to address?	How will we do it? Description of activity (quantity, beneficiaries)	What resources are required?	Where will we get the resources from?	When to implement?	Who will be responsible?



Tip! When planning the timeframe, also review the seasonal and daily calendars to see when would be the best time to implement the activities, including based on when community members would be available to implement them. Finally consider how (known and potential) threats might adversely affect the implementation or success of the risk reduction action plan, and what can be

done to minimise disruptions or damage. For example, the community might need to change the timeframe to avoid certain activities during monsoon season, or include extra means to store tools and other resources above the most extreme flood levels, or reassign responsibilities when key people are sick or absent. Adjust the plan accordingly.

Step 10. Contingency planning

A hazard 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 include a community contingency plan in the risk reduction plan of action.

The contingency plan should at least cover the priority hazards that have a high potential of striking the community. The following sub-steps are a short version of a contingency planning process. However, we encourage you to go through the entire process as described in the [RCRC contingency planning guidance](#).

10.1 Scenario planning

Purpose: to define the scale of potential impact of specific hazards and identify the response capacity gaps within the community

Ideally, it is advisable to prepare a contingency plan considering the worst-case scenario. Such an approach is increasingly being justified now that extreme weather events are occurring more frequently due to climate change. However, we should also consider that resources at the community level are often scarce and that it may be difficult for communities to set aside a significant amount of resources in preparation for the worst-case scenario. Therefore, it may be more practical and realistic for the community to prepare their contingency plan based on the most likely scenario, coupled with estimates of which areas and households would be at risk if a more extreme event occurred.



Remember to bring back the hazard characterization forms done for the priority hazards in step 6.3.3 and use them to inform your scenario planning.

The next step will be for the community to fill out the below table based on their experience, which can be complemented with technical advice, e.g. from meteorological services regarding likely future risk levels.

Example

Hazard	Likelihood rating 1-5	Potential scale (geographical scope, numbers affected, duration)	Community and individual coping capacities	Projected gaps
e.g. Flood	4	- 41 disabled and elderly people could be at risk of death or injury - If new extreme flood event occurs, it is likely that an additional 6 households with elderly people would be at risk	- Community has a safe evacuation space on higher ground identified - 15 of the disabled and elderly could be easily evacuated by their relatives	- Not everyone may be aware and receive early warning information - 26 disabled and elderly people could require evacuation support
		- 70 houses could be partly destroyed (+10 in more extreme flood)	- 45 of them could be repaired by the owners	- 25 houses are owned by poor families and could require support to repair

				<i>the potential damages (27 in case of extreme event)</i>
		<i>- 55 hectares of crops could be destroyed (61 likely in the case of an extreme event)</i>	<i>- 50% of the owners have alternative income sources</i>	<i>- 50% of the owners might face food shortages for 6 months</i>
<i>e.g. Dengue</i>				

10.2 Contingency planning

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

Look back at the information you identified in step 6.1.5 on early warning signs, lead time, duration, frequency and period of occurrence for each hazard – it will help you prepare a good 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.

Here are some important resources that will help you with contingency planning:

- [RCRC contingency planning guidance](#)
- [Community Early Warning Systems \(CEWS\)](#)
- [Public Awareness and Public Education Key Messages](#)
- [WhatNow Service](#)
- [CRREC Community Preparedness Modules](#)

Tip! Revise the contingency plan regularly based on the frequency of the hazard.

Example

Hazard	Objective	Specific activities	Time	Resources needed & sources	Roles and responsibilities
<i>e.g. Flood</i>	<i>Evacuate 26 disabled and elderly people before the hazard event</i>	<i>1. Check early warning information 2. Identify evacuation route and place, and alternative options in case flood levels are more extreme 3. Prepare shelter, food and household items at evacuation place 4. Disseminate early warning to all concerned 5. Evacuate people</i>	<i>1. Regularly 2. Before start of rainy season 3. 1 week before flood or as soon as warning received 4. & 5. 1 day before the flood</i>	<i>- Radio news - Community labour - \$100 to transport the community - Tents - \$300 to cover food expenses</i>	<i>1. The Early warning focal person of the community 2. & 3. The community emergency response committee 4. & 5. The community emergency response committee</i>

The contingency plan should include links to relevant stakeholders such as local government and RCRC branches to closely follow up the early warning information and be ready to complement the community’s own contingency resources if a worst-case scenario develops. Some preparedness actions don’t require much resources and can be easily planned for the worst-case scenario. Furthermore, if the community is planning bigger investments, such as building an emergency shelter or a protection wall, it is important that these consider the worst-case scenario to ensure the investment will hold up in such an event.

Step 11. Reflect and provide feedback on the EVCA process

Once you have finished the assessment and planning process, it is important to reflect on the collaboration with the community and what lessons can be drawn: what went well, what didn't go well, how did the team perform, how was the community participation, how was the contribution of the other stakeholders, what should be improved or done differently in the future? Reflection encourages learning, leads to better programme performance and ultimately to better results for communities.

Mutual feedback also improves the relationship and builds trust between communities and the RCRC, and also empowers community members.

The reflection and feedback can be done jointly with the community and the local EVCA team, or separately by gathering community feedback first and then having an EVCA team debrief session with self-reflection and a discussion on the community feedback received. Normally the reflection is followed by suggestions for future improvement of the process.

When to do it?

If possible, have the team reflection at the end of each EVCA planning day in order to improve the process for the following planning days. However, the field reality may not always allow that, in which case it should be done at least immediately after the action planning is complete so that all the EVCA team members and community participants can participate in this joint reflection process.

How to do it?

There isn't one specific method which will be applicable across all contexts. It depends on the available time, materials, place, literacy and numeracy skills of the participants, energy of the team etc. Below are links to a few interactive methods. It is up to the team members to decide which is most relevant and practical for their context and available time. You can use one or a combination of the below methods or you can potentially create your own.



- [Child/youth friendly methods](#)
- [“Plan for community feedback”](#) (CEA Guide p48, Ph2/Step 5; [Tool 15](#))
- [How to establish and manage community feedback mechanism](#)

No matter what method you choose, the key points for participants to reflect on are:

- What did you like and why?
- What didn't you like and why?
- Did this process achieve what you expected? Why or why not?
- Were you able to effectively participate and did people listen to your ideas?
- What should be improved or done differently in the future?

Self-reflection questions for the local EVCA team

In addition to the general reflection questions above, as a facilitation team you may want to discuss the below questions for future improvement of the EVCA process.

- Did the EVCA go as planned? If not, why not?
- What worked well? What did not work well? Why?
- How well do you think team members worked together?

- How did people feel? Was it hard to talk with community members? Did they understand what you were doing? Do you think everyone was able to participate and share their views? What could be done differently to make you and the community feel more comfortable?
- Did this process achieve what you expected to achieve? Why or why not? Support answers with examples.
- Were the tools and methods appropriate given the target population? Did the tools provide the information you wanted? If not, what changes do you need to make? Collect specific suggestions (see table below).
- Were the logistics adequate?
- What suggestions do you have for similar exercises next time?
- What were the main complaints and suggestions from the community about the process and how to address these?

Self-reflection sheet for the local EVCA team - see [VCA debriefing](#)

Ask everybody in the team to reflect and write comments on the key steps and tools used. This can only be done if you have adequate time (1-2 hours) and should be done with the entire EVCA team.

Name of step and tool	What worked well?	What did not work well?	Did the tool provide the expected information? What is missing?	What changes need to be made?

Step 12. Report and share

A good EVCA report is key to ensure everyone is clear about the identified risks and the agreed actions to increase resilience and to mobilise support.



The EVCA report should document the process while remaining concise and clear – so that it will be accessible and easy to read rather than sit on a shelf! It should provide an overview of the context for the assessment and summarize the findings of the assessment (e.g. the synthesis tables referred to above). It should include as an annex the risk reduction action plan (with the more detailed information on who will do what by when) and contingency plan. An EVCA report template is available on ifrcvca.org.

Ensure the report and risk reduction plan are shared 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 laminated/printed flip charts or posters (e.g. the hazard map displayed in a community centre), a printed document, a presentation or digital PDF report posted on a community website, or a report included in 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 process. **Before finalising the report and action plan, ensure that it has been verified and disseminated to the wider community for feedback.** If necessary, organise additional focus groups or surveys with key vulnerable groups and stakeholders to have them verify that their inputs have been well reflected. 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 meetings or at a

community event, public display, radio & social media, etc. For example, in the Caribbean, the local Red Cross branches often organise a fish fry to present the report to the local community.

The report should be submitted to National Society management and the board, thereby raising their awareness of what has been achieved. This will go a long way towards obtaining internal support to organise EVCAs in other branches in the future and ensuring that the EVCA and community work become a standard process within the National Society.

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. But first **discuss with the community if they agree to share their EVCA results, and under what conditions**. Then propose to community leaders to present the report themselves which will enhance the ownership of the EVCA process. If the EVCA was conducted in an urban context and the Red Cross is part of a city coalition for resilience, share the report and action plan with the coalition members.



The EVCA reports are a strong basis for the National Society to bring the risks of vulnerable people and communities to the attention of national policy makers: a synthesis of the risks identified – including the changing risks due to climate change – provides compelling evidence that may convince planners to address those risks in their development plans and National Adaptation Plans¹³.



We urge National Societies to **upload EVCA reports to the [VCA repository](#)**. 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 National Society contingency planning, for future programme planning, policy dialogue, or as useful background information in case a future emergency response is needed in the area. Discuss with the community if they agree to upload their EVCA and under what conditions, and, if necessary, remove any sensitive and personal data.

Once you have facilitated the creation of the risk reduction action plan and contingency plan and shared the EVCA report, you can move on to the final stage in the EVCA process related to accompanying the community in implementation and learning.

¹³ IFRC (2013) How to engage with National Adaptation Plans Guidance for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (www4.unfccc.int/nap/Documents/Supplements/IFRC%20NAPs%202013.pdf)