



VCA training guide

Classroom training and learning-by-doing



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation's Global Agenda (2006-2010)

Over the next five years, the collective focus of the Federation will be on achieving the following goals and priorities:

Our goals

Goal 1: Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.

Goal 2: Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.

Goal 3: Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

Goal 4: Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Our priorities

Improving our local, regional and international capacity to respond to disasters and public health emergencies.

Scaling up our actions with vulnerable communities in health promotion, disease prevention and disaster risk reduction.

Increasing significantly our HIV/AIDS programming and advocacy.

Renewing our advocacy on priority humanitarian issues, especially fighting intolerance, stigma and discrimination, and promoting disaster risk reduction.

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Photos:

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Part 1

Introduction

Vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) is a process of participatory investigation designed to assess and address major risks affecting communities. It aims to determine people's vulnerability to those risks, and their capacity to cope and recover from a disaster.

VCA makes it possible for National Societies to work with vulnerable communities to:

- (a) help them understand the hazards they face;
- (b) assist them in taking the necessary measures to improve the situation, based on their own skills, knowledge and initiatives.

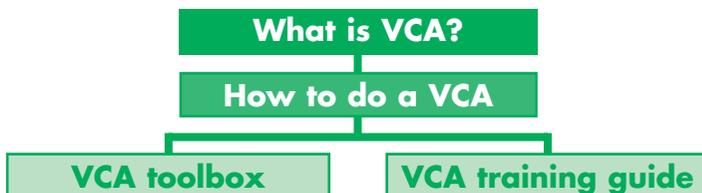
In its basic form, VCA enables people to **prepare for hazards** and prevent them from turning into disasters.

The VCA process helps communities to:

- gather baseline information, which serves as a crucial reference for emergency needs assessments following a disaster;
- better understand their environment in relation to predicted risks and hazards;
- increase awareness of their capacities to cope with risks and hazards;
- reach agreement with local authorities on actions needed to prevent or reduce the potential effects of a disaster;
- implement and evaluate projects in the areas of prevention, preparedness and risk reduction.

The module combines two distinct but complementary VCA training methodologies, both aimed at familiarizing Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers in the use of VCA: (1) classroom training and (2) 'learning-by-doing'. These are to be used along with the *VCA toolbox*, which sets out and explains the various research tools.

As shown in the diagram below, this training guide is part of a comprehensive four-part series of publications which addresses all aspects of VCA:



Each of the four VCA publications serves a specific purpose:

- 1 ***What is VCA?*** – provides an **explanation** of VCA, aimed at National Society staff and volunteers, International Federation delegations, donors and partners.
- 2 ***How to do a VCA*** – constitutes a **step-by-step guide** on how to undertake a VCA.
- 3 ***VCA toolbox*** – instructs practitioners **in the use of** a variety of information-gathering techniques.
- 4 ***VCA training guide*** – offers **instructions for training** Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers in implementing a VCA, through classroom training and more directly, through ‘learning-by-doing’.

Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers frequently act as facilitators and catalysts in the VCA process. It is therefore crucial that they possess the necessary knowledge and skills for implementing a VCA. They must be capable of obtaining reliable information, and adept at working in close collaboration with communities to address the most pressing issues. In developing risk reduction programmes, local branches must also be able to clearly distinguish those projects best suited to Red Cross Red Crescent response, from those requiring support from other organizations.

For this reason, it is critical that VCA practitioners receive quality training in how to carry out a VCA. This guide is designed to prepare volunteers to undertake a successful VCA, and to support those leading the process.

Prior to initiating a VCA, team leaders should familiarize themselves with all four of the VCA publications. In addition, VCA practitioners may wish to consult some of the VCA literature produced in their region, as well as draw on the wealth of VCA experience within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

How to use the training guide

The purpose of this training guide is to provide VCA facilitators with the necessary tools to train those who will be implementing the actual VCA. It is designed to enable volunteers with little or no experience of community-based participatory information-gathering to complete a successful VCA, under supervision.

The guide includes instructions and suggestions to help volunteers understand:

- the overall purpose of VCA;
- relevant terminology and concepts;
- means of working more effectively with communities;
- various information-gathering tools and techniques (i.e. group facilitation, accurate data recording, etc.);
- different methods for systematizing and analysing data.

The guide begins with a discussion of basic training themes. This is followed by two models of actual training courses: (1) classroom training and, (2) 'learning-by-doing'. In both cases, explanations for each activity and specific facilitation techniques are presented. Cross-references are made to the other publications in the VCA series, to illustrate how various tools fit into the overall VCA process.

It must however be stressed that this training guide is not a course for training-of-trainers. As with all guides, course facilitators may wish to supplement training in specific areas with additional material, depending on the needs of the group. Furthermore, it is imperative that facilitators ensure that all instruction is given in a culturally-appropriate manner.

Getting organised

In developing your **training plan**, it is important to use the most effective structure and methodology for any given circumstance. After all, the end result will depend on how well your VCA implementers have been trained.

The key training issues have therefore been grouped into the following three categories:

- 1 Training objectives and structure;
- 2 Overall training strategy and methodology;
- 3 Logistics, resources and materials.

Following a discussion of these themes, this guide then presents two possible training methodologies, including detailed instructions for carrying out the actual training sessions.

1. Training objectives and structure

1.1 Purpose and objectives

The first task is to clearly specify the purpose and objectives of the training. You will need to clarify 'learning outcomes': what each trainee is expected to know and be able to do by the end of the course. This allows you to ensure that all activities are linked and have a specific purpose. It also enables you to measure the success and impact of the training. The purpose and objectives should be stated in clear and simple terms.

An example of a **purpose statement** for VCA training is provided below:

To prepare volunteers to carry out a VCA in selected communities, and ensure that they understand the process and are qualified to undertake the required range of activities.

The eventual statement used will reflect the particular nature of the VCA being undertaken.

Once you have clarified the specific purpose of your VCA, you will be able to formulate clear **objectives** to guide the overall training process. Based on the statement above, some examples of objectives are presented below.

Training objectives

By the end of the training course, participants will be able to:

- 1** Understand the structure, process and key components of a successful VCA.
- 2** Understand basic concepts of community work, disaster management, and VCA.
- 3** Use a wide variety of information-gathering tools and select those best suited to determining vulnerabilities and capacities in the selected communities.
- 4** Gather valid information, recognize useful data and carry out quality analysis – leading to the formulation of realistic recommendations.
- 5** Design a VCA implementation plan with the selected communities.
- 6** Translate the information gathered into a realistic capacity-building programme that is relevant to identified needs and in line with National Society priorities/objectives/mandate.
- 7** Replicate similar learning, and support VCA in other branches and communities.

1.2 Structure

There are a number of decisions to be made about the structure of the proposed training. These will have an impact on the quality of training and participants' subsequent ability to implement VCA.

Specifically, you will need to determine:

- Who and how many people will be trained, bearing in mind the question of diversity (i.e. age, gender, ethnicity, economic background, community role, etc);
- Whether or not numbers are sufficient for the proposed VCA, and whether participants have the required experience;

- The length and format of training (i.e. over a number of consecutive days, during evenings only, or a combination of both).

In the *'How to do a VCA'* guide, we discussed the process of selecting VCA team members. While selection criteria will certainly vary, your training programme needs to be based on participants' actual skills. This will determine the amount of training needed, as well as the most appropriate tools to use. For example, if volunteers have difficulty in reading or writing, you may wish to choose more visual tools. It is nevertheless important to provide participants with the opportunity to learn about and understand all of the tools available. At the same time, the choice of tools used for the actual VCA needs to be done carefully. **Be selective, based on needs and skills.**

The number of people being trained depends on the scale of the proposed VCA and on the tools being used. In general, there should never be more than 25 participants. VCA training methodology is participatory in nature, and experience has shown that the quality of learning diminishes if there are too many people in the group. On the other hand, VCA usually generates a lot of interest and enhances local branch capacity. You will therefore need to find the right balance between optimizing the skills required for implementing the VCA, while building branch capacity. Remember that additional VCA training can always be undertaken once the initial exercise has been completed.

Tip

Don't forget to consider inviting people from outside the Red Cross Red Crescent to your VCA training. You may wish to include representatives from government, potential partner organizations and, most importantly, the community.

1.3 Capacity of trainers

Another key factor in determining your VCA methodology is the capacity of trainers. Experience has shown that the following *abilities* are critical in VCA facilitation and training.

Key abilities of trainers:

- using facilitation techniques and undertaking group work;
- managing, analysing and interpreting data;
- appreciating patterns and making connections;
- managing timelines;
- demonstrating flexibility and adaptability in the face of the unpredictable nature of training.

All of the publications in this series have stressed the need to have a VCA mentor. The same holds true for training. There are a significant number of people from within National Societies with experience of VCA training. Such 'VCA mentors' will be invaluable in supporting you during the training process. Their experience will prove useful in assisting with the technical aspects of VCA, avoiding potential problems and providing additional insight based on lessons learned. Mentors do not need to be present throughout the entire process, but should always be available to provide advice and guidance when needed.

Along with an experienced VCA trainer, your team should also include people with knowledge of community-based research, and experience of participatory facilitation and training. Their input will be crucial in deciding on the time, tools and format best suited to your specific training purposes. Furthermore, all team members must feel sufficiently confident in their abilities to complete the tasks and address any issues that arise on the spot.

2. Overall strategy and methodology

Trainers will decide on the exact training methodology and related tools according to a number of factors, including: objectives of the VCA, participants' availability and skills, resources on hand, and local needs. Whenever feasible, participants should be introduced to as many of the tools as possible.

In developing detailed training plans and course material, trainers should seek to encourage participatory adult learning. As part

of this process, it is important for volunteers to understand the reasons behind specific actions, in addition to acquiring the necessary skills.

The teaching strategy proposed in this guide is **task-based and participatory** in nature. In practical terms, this involves using the following techniques:

- group work in problem-solving;
- practice in the use of VCA tools and on-going data analysis;
- facilitation for presenting specific content in non-lecture format;
- anecdote, story and experience-sharing by facilitators and participants, to highlight learning;
- games and drawing sessions;
- practice and demonstration of communication and facilitation methods;
- ‘reflective learning’ – including the use of diaries, and other means which encourage participants to think about what they have learned, and the ways in which they are learning.

Having themselves completed a training-for-trainers course, training leaders should be able to:

- use facilitation methods that encourage participants to **observe** what they and others are doing;
- allow participants to **practice** what they are learning;
- provide opportunities for participants to learn about group dynamics through **observation and participation**;
- **build** on participants’ knowledge;
- motivate, encourage and make sure volunteers are having **fun** (i.e. use of games, ice-breakers, team-building exercises).

A number of these methods can be used at any one time. The key is for volunteers to learn and make connections, while acquiring the necessary skills to undertake a VCA. Active participation should be encouraged, especially with volunteers who may not normally have had such opportunities in the past. In dividing

participants into sub-groups for particular training activities, trainers should ensure that each group is made up of people with a range of experiences and personality styles. Special attention should be paid to youth and gender dynamics.

Example

Helping participants make connections

From the outset, participants work within groups to simulate VCA tasks. For example, rather than hold a separate session on data analysis, the training methodology requires groups to 'actually' deal with emerging data generated by the course, from the first day on. As they learn about focus groups – by participating in and facilitating the process – they will generate information which they can then systematize, and from which they can draw conclusions.

To further stimulate learning, we recommend that ALL information from ALL sessions be recorded on flipcharts and wall-mounted. This encourages participants to appreciate patterns and make connections throughout the course of the workshop. Spending time surrounded by data posted onto the walls is an essential component of the learning method. In this way, **patterns** and **connections** emerge, leading to a new understanding. This is much more powerful than simply absorbing facts. Organizers are specifically **discouraged** from using technical aids such as overhead projectors or computers for PowerPoint presentations. After all, there will be no computers in the community when carrying out the VCA. Most importantly, experience has shown that such a practical subject benefits from participants interacting as they would in the field, rather than in a classroom.

On-going assessment and evaluation are also vital to VCA training methodology. They provide the training team with information on how participants are reacting, and whether they are learning. A detailed discussion of evaluation is provided in Session 16 of the sample classroom training course.

3. Logistics, resources and materials

In addition to developing content and methodology, your training must also be meticulously organized. This includes finding the right training space, having all of the material and resources ready,

and sending pre-course reading material to participants (if applicable). As mentioned in *'How to do a VCA'*, this also assumes that a budget has been developed and the necessary funds obtained, in order to carry out the actual VCA and related training programme.

3.1 Logistics

When planning the training course, you need to take into account a variety of logistical considerations.

Logistical considerations:

- Book a room large enough to accommodate everyone, with sufficient numbers of tables and chairs, as well as wall space for mounting flipcharts.
- Arrange accommodation well in advance, if required.
- Make the necessary arrangements for the provision of meals, snacks and refreshments, as required.
- Negotiate operating hours with facility staff, taking into account evening work.
- Organize transportation.
- Make sure adjacent areas are noise-free during training sessions.
- Ensure easy access to toilets and drinking water.
- Organize smaller spaces for group work.
- Ensure adequate lighting.
- Obtain permission from facility operators to use wall space (e.g. applying tape) and move furniture, if needed.
- Explain the non-conventional methodology in advance to facility operators and to those providing accommodation (in case of evening work), in order to avoid misunderstandings.

A typical classroom set-up, in which participants and facilitators engage and interact with each other – using all available space as part of the process.

This transformative learning technique utilizes complexity in the classroom, to mimic the complexity of real-life VCA.

Venues for training should be checked in advance, to ensure that basic requirements are met, and that water, toilet facilities and electricity supply (where required) are all in working order. For example, arrange chairs and tables into the desired configuration prior to the arrival of participants, to ensure a quality learning environment. Although a degree of comfort may have to be sacrificed for budgetary reasons, successful training depends on having an appropriate and user-friendly learning environment.

3.2 Equipment and teaching materials

In addition to organizing the physical space for training, you must also make sure that you have all of the necessary equipment and teaching material to hand.

Logistics and supplies for training:

- sufficient copies of *How to do a VCA* and *VCA toolbox*;
- pre-prepared flipchart-size copies of course objectives and agenda, as well as specific instructions for each session;
- flipchart paper in large quantity;
- a number of assorted marker pens;
- name tags for all participants;
- adhesive or masking tape for wall-mounting flipcharts;
- different coloured paper for data collection;
- copies of all forms and formats, in sufficient quantities (e.g. questionnaires or surveys).

In addition, special arrangements must be taken care of. This could include:

- agreement with the local school to undertake children's focus group exercises (see specific protocol requirements in Session 9 of classroom training);
- agreement with a small community group to do the VCA practice field work (see *How to do a VCA*);
- relevant permissions and clearances for collecting data from outside the facility.

The training team should sit down ahead of time and make a list of all of the things which may be needed. In this way, during the actual training, everyone can focus on content rather than on looking for pens – and there will be fewer surprises over the course of the session!

Part 2

Classroom training

The following classroom training programme is designed to guide you in the development of your own specific course. A series of sessions are presented in chronological order, with instructions on how to carry out each activity. **Although the programme uses a wide range of tools, this does not mean that you need to use all of them in your VCA.** Use the tool reference sheets from the '*VCA toolbox*' (and ensure that you have enough copies for each activity). Feel free to use other facilitation techniques. The most important thing is to train volunteers to use the tools in a dynamic way, based on the principles of adult education and the teaching methods mentioned earlier.

The explanation for each session describes what the activity is, how to carry it out, the approximate time needed, and gives some useful tips. In some cases, such as in making sense of the data, the process has already been explained in detail in the '*VCA toolbox*', and exact references are provided.

The table on page 18 provides an overview of the different sessions, organized into a three-day workshop. At the end of each day, time must be allocated for the daily review/evaluation (Session 16). The course is based on an average of eight hours of intensive sessions per day (breaks and lunch are additional).

You may have to adjust the schedule according to your specific circumstances (e.g. availability of volunteers, space, cultural norms, etc.). In some cases, such as during VCA field work, all activities will have to be carried out over the course of one day.

Three-day workshop – Schedule and overview

Schedule	Session number	Name of activity	Purpose	Approximate length of session (minutes)
Day 1 AM 8:30 12:30	1	Introduction	To introduce the goals, objectives and agenda of the session and to determine participants' roles and expectations.	90
	2	What is VCA	To provide an overview of VCA: ■ what VCA is ■ how it is done ■ what purpose it serves	30
	3	a Hazards, risks, vulnerability and capacity b Prevention, preparedness and mitigation	To ensure that participants understand basic terms and can identify major threats within communities.	120
Day 1 PM 13:30 18:00 17:40 18:00 <i>Daily review</i>	4	a Gathering information: using VCA tools b Briefing on community for field testing	To provide a better understanding of information-gathering techniques and VCA data-collection tools. To brief participants on the community where field testing is to take place.	60
	5	Secondary data	To provide information on secondary data collection.	15
	6	Interviews and questionnaires	To familiarize participants with the various tools and enable them to decide how these will be used during VCA field work.	180
Day 2 AM 8:30 12:30	7	Focus group discussions		60
	8	Risk mapping, seasonal charts, transect walks, direct observation		90
	9	Working with communities	To introduce themes and considerations relevant to working with communities.	45
Up to the end of Session 10 – simulation exercise	10	Dividers and connectors – reducing conflict in the community	To look at some of the causes of conflict, and ensure that VCA brings communities closer, rather than creating divisions.	120

Schedule	Session number	Name of activity	Purpose	Approximate length of session (minutes)
Day 2 PM 13:30 17:30 Second half of session 10 17:40 18:00 Daily review	11	Planning and organizing VCA field work	To plan for the practice VCA field work, which will take place in the community.	120
Day 3 AM 8:30 12:30	12	VCA field work	Actual field work in the community	4-5 hours
Day 3 PM 13:30 18:00 Note: Session 15 can be done at a later time (e.g. in the evening), depending on how tired participants are. 17:40 18:00 Course review	13	De-briefing of practice VCA field work	Technical and personal de-briefing of volunteers following the practice VCA field work.	60
	14	a Making sense of the data and developing recommendations b From data to action: project design and planning	To systematize, analyse and interpret the data collected during field work, and then develop recommendations.	120
	15	Planning the actual VCA	To understand the planning process: turning recommendations into projects designed to reduce risk and increase capacity.	60
	16	Evaluation and reflection (daily/session/course)	To modify tools and confirm logistics for the actual VCA, based on feedback and data from the practice VCA field work.	20 minutes per day or session
			To provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon and evaluate what they have learned; and to provide facilitators with feedback, so they can make any necessary changes to improve the sessions and methodology.	

Workshop methodology

Session 1: Introduction (90 minutes)

Welcome and presentation of participants

- Introduce participants and facilitators. Find a dynamic and creative way for participants to introduce each other or themselves.

Objectives of the workshop and scheduling

- Review the objectives of the training course (written beforehand on flipchart).
- Discuss the schedule of the course (dates, hours, etc.).
- Go over logistics (breaks, meals, washrooms, etc.).

Participant expectations

- Invite a participant to facilitate. The exercise consists of drawing a tree on the flipchart; each participant is asked to place two workshop expectations on the tree for on-going reference and evaluation. Review these and ensure that all are in agreement. Clarify any expectations which may be unrealistic or inappropriate in terms of the objectives of the training course and/or the VCA. Expectations should be reviewed periodically throughout the course, to ensure that participants are satisfied, and to adapt material as necessary.
- Review facilitators' expectations.

Workshop norms

- Ask a participant to facilitate. This is a simple brainstorming session during which participants decide on the rules that will guide the training session.

Examples may include:

- *start on time;*
- *respect opinions;*
- *be present throughout;*
- *don't talk too much - let others talk;*
- *be frank and straightforward;*
- *take risks;*
- *be respectful;*

- *listen;*
- *turn off mobile phones.*

Overview of methodology *(on flipchart)*

Main components are:

- maximum participation and analysis;
- task-oriented;
- use of practical exercises;
- shared facilitation;
- structured but informal process;
- group work;
- use of flipcharts - **No powerpoint.**

Invite participants to add their comments on methodology, based on their previous VCA experience.

Reflective learning

The purpose of 'reflective learning' is to encourage participants to think about the way in which they learn. In order to facilitate this process, participant will each be given a diary/notebook to record their thoughts and observations. The diary is personal and each person is free to share as much or as little of it as they wish.

The other reflective tool is called 'noticing' and is used during the daily and overall evaluations. Participants are free to share anything they may have noticed – including things that they have noted in their diaries. This gives them a chance to comment on anything of significance in relation to the training course. It also helps participants remain aware of what they are doing and the learning processes they are undergoing. Facilitators may wish to act as role models, to help participants feel more comfortable with what may be a new process for many.

Session 2: What is VCA? *(30 minutes)*

This is one of the few sessions given in 'lecture' format. Without overly complicating matters, ensure that participants understand what VCA is. Consult the four VCA guides and pick out those

points you consider to be most important. Allow time for serious discussion and reflection with participants.

Some of the issues you will want to address include:

- What VCA does and does not accomplish.
- How to prevent unrealistic expectations on the part of National Societies and communities.
- The role of VCA in disaster management, and its relationship to various Red Cross Red Crescent programme areas, such as health and organizational development.
- How VCA connects with vulnerabilities, risks, hazards and capacities (you may wish to revisit this after Session 3, where these terms will be defined in greater detail).
- The different forms VCA can take (i.e. simple or complex, small- or large-scale, etc.).
- Components of success and failure, through the use of case studies.

Session 3:

Hazards, risks, vulnerability and capacity

Prevention, preparedness and mitigation *(2 hours)*

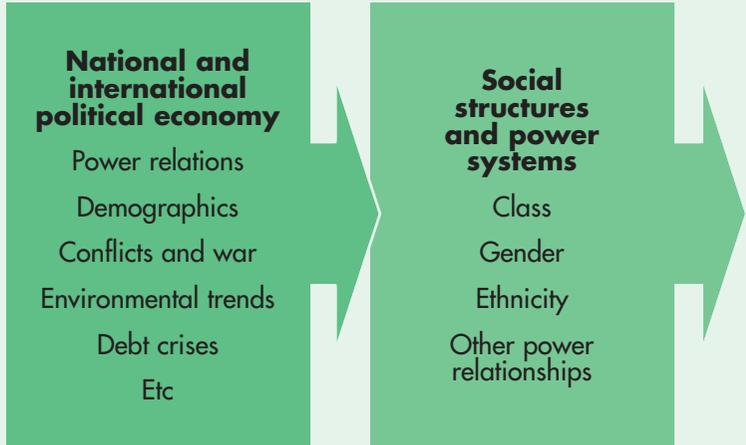
Throughout this series of publications, we have stressed that VCA is not solely applicable to disaster management. Within the Movement, it has now been recognized that risk and risk reduction are not limited to natural disasters. Nevertheless, the focus of VCA has traditionally been on disaster management – an area in which many National Society branches are skilled.

This session aims to define key terms related to disaster management, but not exclusive to it. Participants with experience of different departments (e.g. health, first aid, etc.) should be encouraged to present their perspective as well.

By discussing these topics, participants will be in a better position to recognize those areas in which branches have the required expertise to develop projects, and those in which they will need to work with other organizations to best meet community needs.

- Ask each participant to fill out two “trees” (placed on the wall) highlighting:
 - The major disasters/hazards in the area (two per participant) and,
 - Groups most vulnerable to each disaster/hazard (two groups per hazard).
- Participants then have to prioritize the three most important results from each tree (have a participant facilitate this process). This helps participants shift their thinking from a local to a global context. It also prepares them to listen to what community members are telling them, rather than hearing only what they want to hear. Finally, it introduces the notion of quality in data collection.
- Based on the two most serious disasters/hazards, divide the group into two (one group for each disaster/hazard) and ask them to answer the following:
 - Who is most affected by the disaster/hazard?
 - What is the impact of the disaster/hazard on vulnerable groups?
 - What are some of the root causes of the disaster/hazard?
 - Is the risk of these disasters/hazards changing over time?
 - What is the impact of the disaster/hazard on the National Society?
 - What can the National Society do to overcome the impact of the disaster/hazard?
- Divide the group into two sub-groups and asked them to define vulnerability and capacity.
- The facilitator should then present the International Federation’s definition of these two terms, as well as the ‘Progression of Vulnerability’ (all on flipchart). Allow time for questions and clarification. It is very important that participants understand and agree on definitions, as this will affect their subsequent analysis of the data. Furthermore, community members may ask for clarifications, which participants must be able to provide in a consistent manner.

Pressure and Release (PAR) model

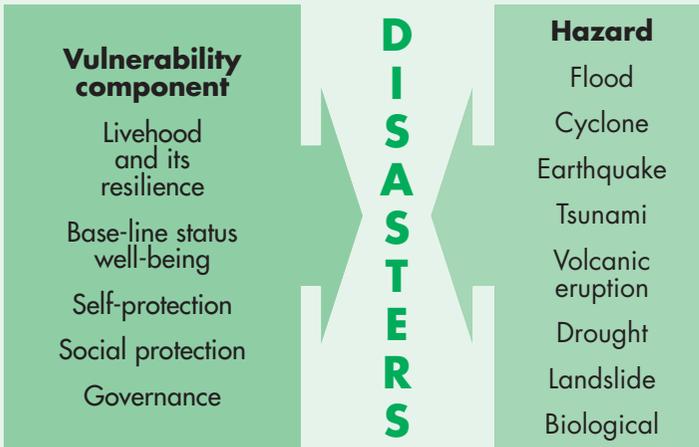


- Once the group finishes the exercise, facilitate further discussion on why this activity is important, how it could be used as part of the VCA, and with whom. This will help participants understand the relationship between training activities and the actual VCA.

Hazard: The potential occurrence of a natural phenomenon, in a specific time period and geographic area, which may adversely affect human life, property or activity to the extent of causing a disaster. Methods of predicting hazards (i.e. their likelihood and frequency of occurrence) vary widely according to the type of hazard.

Risk: The expected or anticipated loss (in terms of lives, livelihoods, property and/or economic activity) due to the impact of a given hazard on a given element at risk over a specific period of time. Risk is defined differently by people in different situations. The concepts of vulnerability, hazard, and risk are dynamically related.

The relationship of these elements can be expressed as a simple formula that illustrates that risk is greater, the greater the



likelihood of a hazard and the greater the vulnerability of the population, as a function of their capacity.

$$\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Hazard} \times \text{Vulnerability}}{\text{Capacity}}$$

This formula is not mathematical in nature. It is used by the International Federation to assess the potential impact of a hazard on a community, as a means of determining the root causes of vulnerability and identifying needs while implementing a VCA.

Vulnerability: The conditions determined by physical, social, economic, environmental and political factors or processes, which increase risk and susceptibility of people to the impact of hazards. The question that must always be asked is: “Vulnerable to what specific hazard or what specific shock?”. For example, people living in coastal zones are vulnerable to seasonal storms, flooding and rising sea levels.

Capacity: The resources of individuals, households, communities, institutions, and nations to resist the impact of a hazard. The capacities of people in chronically disaster-prone

countries facing multiple hazards (such as droughts, locust infestations and/or civil unrest) weaken over time, thereby reducing their capacity to mitigate the effects of the next crisis. The ability to maintain livelihood assets contributes to people's capacities to resist on-going negative impacts.

Disaster preparedness: The readiness of communities and institutions to predict, and where possible, prevent disasters, reduce their impact as well as respond to and cope with their consequences.

Disaster prevention: Actions aimed at avoiding the possibility of risk; activities to avoid the adverse impact of hazards and means to minimize related environmental, technological and biological disasters.

Disaster mitigation: Structural and non-structural measures undertaken to limit the adverse impact of natural hazards, environmental degradation and technological hazards.

Note: To complement (or as an alternative to) the above exercise, you can use the process presented in the transformative planning section of the 'How to do a VCA' guide. Remember to adjust the time needed to complete the exercise.

More Terms

- Divide into three sub-groups and have each define one of the following terms: prevention, preparedness or mitigation.
- Each group presents their definition, followed by a general discussion, after which the definition may be modified.
- Facilitators present International Federation definitions (on flipchart).

Session 4:

Gathering information – Using VCA tools

Briefing for field-testing with the community (1 hour)

Key VCA tools

Most of the training course will be devoted to understanding and practising a number of the tools found in the 'VCA toolbox'. The basic process consists in presenting and evaluating each tool, as follows:

- understanding how the tool is used;
- practising its use;
- assessing associated issues, such as validity and bias;
- determining with whom the tool will be used;
- determining who will facilitate the process;
- preparing material for use during VCA field work.

Facilitators should begin with a short presentation tailored to the group's level of experience, introducing information-gathering and research processes. It is critical that participants understand what they will be doing and why, before showing them how. Consult the other documents in this series and retain the information you consider most useful for your particular VCA training exercise.

Briefing for field testing with the community

At this point, facilitators should brief volunteers on the actual community where field testing will occur. Field testing will involve practical use of the tools discussed thus far. Provide as much detail as possible about the community, so that participants have sufficient information to tailor their tools to actual requirements in the field. Any existing secondary sources should be made available to participants for review.

Session 5: Secondary data (15 minutes)

Facilitators and VCA team leaders will already have collected secondary sources of information prior to initiating the actual training. There is therefore no need to spend much time discussing secondary sources. It is nevertheless important to

mention them, so that volunteers are aware of them and can collect any additional documents made available during the course of the actual VCA.

- Facilitators prepare a short presentation on the difference between primary and secondary sources of information.
- Participants are asked to identify other potential sources of secondary information. Explain the need to remain alert to any new sources of information which may arise while working in the community.

Session 6: Interviews and questionnaires

(3 hours)

Facilitators should refer to the '*VCA toolbox*' for a detailed review of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

- Carry out a comprehensive discussion on the topic of interviews, as these will be used extensively and need to be properly understood. Facilitators should address such issues as validity and bias. Although it is unlikely that your VCA will require any large-scale use of questionnaires, the group may nevertheless wish to use the tool in a limited and non-statistical fashion.
- Regarding interviews, be sure to include the following explanations:
 - Why?
 - To obtain specific and specialized opinions.
 - To verify information from other sources.
 - To probe more deeply into issues.
 - To obtain direct information from the best and most appropriate sources.
 - Who?
 - Key-informants.
 - Teachers.
 - Religious leaders.
 - Community leaders.
 - Government officials.
 - Others.
 - What can influence responses?
 - Misunderstanding questions.

- Interviewees answering what they think interviewer wants to hear.
- Personal interests and hidden agendas.

Practice session

- Based on existing information about the community, ask two sub-groups to develop a list detailing how their specific tool should be used (e.g. who should be interviewed).
- Ask sub-groups to report back to each other for feedback and consensus-building. A participant can facilitate this session.
- Divide responses evenly among the two groups. Each group should have no more than two questions. The groups must then develop an interview guide, setting out the process for conducting actual interviews.
- Have the sub-groups practice, using simulation or role-playing. After each session, ask observers for suggestions. Discuss any issues that arise (i.e. are the questions relevant/valid? Are they easy to understand? Is their style appropriate?). A participant can facilitate this session.
- Participants return to their sub-groups to make any final adjustments for the practice VCA.
- A final list should then be drawn up of things to keep in mind. This should include:
 - Always make sure you get the correct name and position of the person you are interviewing.
 - Dress appropriately.
 - Explain who you are and the purpose of the interview.
 - Never be late for interviews – remember, you asked for the interview, not the person being interviewed.
 - If more than one person is interviewing, make sure tasks are divided evenly and clarified before you start.
 - It is acceptable to enter into a short discussion.
 - Never interrupt.

Session 7: Focus group discussion (1 hour)

- As a group, discuss the following aspects relating to focus groups (facilitators should fill in gaps):
 - What is a focus group?

- When are they used?
- How do you accurately record what people say?
- How do you verify the information?
- What are some of the issues that can influence a focus group (e.g. bias)?
- With whom do we use focus groups?
- What are their strengths/advantages, weaknesses/disadvantages?

Practice

- Divide into two focus groups, and choose one person from each to facilitate and another to record data (on flipchart).
- Choose a culturally-appropriate theme to generate discussion. For example: “The advantages and disadvantages of washing clothes by hand”. Facilitators should explain that although the question of clothes-washing (or any other subject matter) has nothing to do with VCA, it does provide an opportunity to understand how wider issues can emerge from any given subject.
- Give the sub-groups about 20 minutes for the exercise.
- Have a participant lead the de-briefing session; this should also address how the facilitator felt and any difficulties encountered. Remember that focus groups can be hard to manage. It is critical for participants to understand that feeling uncomfortable or having difficulty is part of the learning process. It is precisely for this reason that we practice.
- As a group, decide how and with whom you will use focus group discussions during the VCA. Prioritize no more than three groups, which may include: mothers’ organizations, groups of people living with HIV or groups with expertise in areas such as subsistence, social well-being, community well-being, etc.
- In sub-groups, develop the process/questions for field testing with each focus group – clearly specifying the information you hope to obtain.
- Finally, facilitators should lead a discussion on key issues for managing focus groups (e.g. how to ensure participation by all, factors that may influence answers, etc.).

Session 8: Risk mapping, seasonal charts, transect walks and direct observation (90 minutes)

The tools presented in this section deal with ‘seeing’ and observing. Facilitators should guide a general discussion about direct observation, following the process used in earlier sessions.

- Explain the tools, using examples and reference sheets from the ‘*VCA toolbox*’. An alternative method is to assign one tool per participant on the previous day, and have each give a presentation on its use. This enables VCA organizers to assess participants’ capacity to use VCA tools.
- In either large or small groups, have participants develop leading questions for the field visit. These will be used in conjunction with the various tools, based on secondary data and knowledge of the region, to help fill information gaps and encourage information-sharing.
- Divide the group into three sub-groups, each practising a different tool. Each participant should also use the session to practice direct observation.
- Using their own community or the workshop facilities, sub-groups each have 45 minutes to draw a map, seasonal chart or historical timeline. In the case of risk maps, participants can use the training facility and surrounding area as an example. Learning will be greater if all groups are able to leave the classroom setting.
- Each group presents its work and facilitates a discussion covering the following: strengths/weaknesses of the tool; when its use is most appropriate and with what groups; the type of information collected by each tool; any other issues to keep in mind when using the tool. At this point in the training course, participants should be sufficiently familiar with the process to undertake this activity on their own.
- A similar but distinct discussion should be facilitated for issues linked to ‘direct observation’.
- Invite a participant to facilitate a discussion on which of these tools will be used with which groups (e.g. historical timeline with village seniors).
- It is a good idea to list all of the tools on a flipchart, for easy reference during the VCA field work planning session.

This completes the section of the training course dealing with tools. Remember that you can substitute some of the selected tools for others, or add new ones from the 'VCA toolbox'. It all depends on the information you wish to obtain and the time available. Be creative in designing ways to teach the material.

Session 9: Working with communities

(30–45 minutes)

The discussion provided below is intended as a reference for facilitators, to help them prepare their material. This session is best done as a presentation, leaving time for discussion, debate and questions. Facilitators may wish to develop a series of questions to guide the discussion, based on the experience and knowledge level of the group. This should include a discussion of what constitutes a 'community' (See '*How to do a VCA*').

Working with communities in a participatory manner constitutes the essence of VCA and all community-based programming – whether community-based first aid, community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) or primary healthcare programming. While the training course is not designed to cover every single aspect of working with communities, it is critical for participants to understand the potential impact of VCA, and the responsibility that this entails.

The objective of this session is to draw participants' attention to some of the issues to bear in mind when engaging in community change or development. This will influence the way in which Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers interact with community members.

If done properly, working in a co-operative and participatory manner with communities can reduce the impact of disasters on people's lives.

Authentic community work can:

- promote maximum co-operation and ownership;

- encourage high participation;
- lead to action on the part of community members;
- reduce dependency on outside resources/experts and enhance use of community resources/expertise;
- be a constructive way of working towards a goal;
- lead to working with (rather than for) people;
- be self-determined;
- enhance local leadership and initiative;
- maximize citizen control of decision-making;
- be network based;
- focus on strengths and capacities;
- be human resource intensive;
- become sustainable.

Service delivery consists in agencies/institutions defining the needs of a community, and developing strategies and services to remedy a problem. Community work, on the other hand, is a **process** which entails:

- supporting community groups in the identification of major issues of concern, and
- helping them increase their own ability to plan and implement programmes, in order to mitigate these concerns and resolve their problems.

Community work focuses on addressing the **causes** of problems, rather than simply providing services to deal with their **effects**, as illustrated below.

Service delivery versus capacity-building

Service delivery	Capacity-building
Reactive	Pro-active
Needs driven	Core-problem driven
Top-down approach	Bottom-up approach
Minimum participation	High participation
Creates dependency	Power shift to community
Static	Dynamic – Adaptive as situation changes, constantly reinventing approaches
Low training needs	High training needs

Another fundamental aspect of community work is participation. It involves a process whereby community members gain the skills and knowledge necessary to make decisions about strategies and actions that affect their lives, rather than merely endorsing a set of plans. It is your role to ensure that the power to decide, while involving the Red Cross Red Crescent, principally remains in the hands of community members – either as individuals or through representative community organizations (see discussion on participation in *‘How to do a VCA’*).

Community work is not easy. It takes time, commitment, knowledge and skills. The better the training volunteers receive, the more successful the outcome. It is the actual process of working with communities – enabling them to determine their own needs and implement appropriate solutions – that will lead to sustainable actions to reduce vulnerability and improve the quality of life of those most susceptible to risk.

Session 10: Dividers and connectors (2 hours)

All community work has the potential to create tension. On the other hand, it can help resolve common problems. This is certainly the case for disaster preparedness and response. It is therefore essential that National Societies be fully aware of the potential impact and consequences of their interventions. This session introduces ways to reduce or avoid potential problems, and to build lasting solutions.

The various documents on VCA address a number of related issues, such as: avoiding false expectations, acknowledging power relations within the community, and recognizing the impact of Red Cross Red Crescent actions. The International Federation’s better programming initiative (BPI) specifically focuses on how to avoid creating problems through our own initiatives. This guide includes a session on this theme; we suggest that you invite someone trained in BPI to work with you in developing and facilitating it. At a minimum, facilitators must be familiar with the topic, supported by information from the *‘VCA toolbox’*.

What is a divider and what is a connector?

Divider: Systems and institutions, attitudes and actions, values and interests, experiences, and symbols that can divide communities. These sources of potential tension can be historical or current, internal or external, the result of economic relations between groups, a function of geography, politics, religion, race or culture.

Connector: There are also many things that connect people in a community. Economic systems, work patterns, history, space, common experiences – all of these provide continuity to people's lives and connect them, regardless of the type of relationships they have. There are also institutions in all societies committed to maintaining peace between groups. These may include: justice systems, community groups, schools, religious institutions. Working with these organizations often serves to reduce tension and increases the potential for peace.

Session 1 1: Planning and organizing for VCA field work (2 hours)

This session deals with planning and organizing for practice VCA field work. '*How to do a VCA*' provides a detailed guide and discussion for organizing the day, as well as a sample agenda.

To summarize, participants should hold a planning meeting to take the following actions:

- Select an overall leader/spokesperson from among participants for the day. This person is responsible for ensuring that the field work unfolds as planned, and acts as coordinator and group representative during any formal proceedings.
- Assign a person to contact the host community and explain the purpose of the field test.
- Determine, in collaboration with the community, the best time for undertaking field work (daytime, evening, weekend, etc.).
- Develop an agenda/order of the day.
- Decide which tools are to be used and by whom. Form a team for each, and choose a team leader with overall responsibility

for implementing the specific tool. Each team then needs to: prepare any required material, ensure that the tool is ready for use (e.g. questions have been formulated for interviews or focus groups), and assign specific roles to team members. Facilitators should participate actively in this part of the planning, to ensure that appropriate individuals are assuming responsibility for the various tasks.

- Establish the duration of the exercise (timelines).
- Check on logistics (draw up a check list):
 - space;
 - transportation;
 - purchase of material;
 - communications;
 - first aid kit;
 - map of the community;
 - provision of snacks/refreshments/lunch for community members.
- Ensure proper identification (as Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers: vests, caps, etc.).
- Have a plan for dealing with any emergency.
- Notify local authorities/police.
- Decide on the best way to thank the community (e.g. return visit or letter).

Invite a participant to facilitate the planning process, with support from VCA facilitators. This does not necessarily have to be the person chosen as leader for the VCA field work.

Remember that all of the areas mentioned have to be addressed. These tasks need to be completed well before the actual day assigned for VCA field work, so that the community can be notified and prepared. You cannot simply arrive in a community and expect that people will be waiting to talk to you. Another key element to stress is that this is an exercise and that you are practising skills; the team needs to make sure that no undue expectations are created in the community as a result of the visit. The group will also have to determine how many community members they need for each activity, based on the tools selected.

For example:

- two groups of ten women for focus group and historical timeline;
- ten young people for focus group and mapping;
- ten community seniors for focus group and seasonal chart;
- village Executive Officer for interview;
- clinic doctor for interview.

Most importantly, if you are going to work with schoolchildren, there is a very specific protocol that you must follow. **The advance consent (written if possible) of parents and teachers is required, and a teacher/school official must be present throughout. This point is non-negotiable. If it is not possible to obtain consent or supervision, the exercise must be cancelled, and where possible, re-scheduled.** This takes time – so make sure your planning takes into account the time required to obtain consent.

Practice field work provides participants with an important opportunity to engage in ‘reflective learning’ and to make notes in their diaries (e.g. how they reacted during the exercise, specific things they noticed and learned). Facilitators must remind participants to do this, prior to starting field work.

Session 12: Implementing VCA – Practice field work (4-5 hours)

The timeframe includes travel to and from the community, as well as time needed to carry out all activities, as per the field work plan.

Session 13: Debriefing of practice VCA field work (1 hour)

Remind participants to recall what they have written in their diaries and encourage them to share how they felt, what they noticed, and what they have learned.

- Divide the group according to tools used.
- Each group answers the following questions:
 - How did people feel? Were they nervous? Was it hard to talk with community members? Did they understand what you were doing? Were they approachable? What could be done differently to make yourselves and the community more comfortable?
 - What worked? Why?
 - What didn't work? Why?
 - Were the tools appropriate given the target population?
 - Did the tools provide the information you wanted? If not, what changes do you need to make?
 - Did the day go as planned? If not, why not?
 - Were the logistics adequate?
- For technical questions related to tools, groups can use the following table.

Name of tool	What worked?	What didn't work?	What was appropriate?	What information did the tool provide? Was it what was anticipated?	What changes need to be made?
	■	■	■	■	■

- At the end of this session, facilitators should invite one or two volunteers to summarize all of the information in one table.

Session 14:

Making sense of the data and developing recommendations / From data to action: project design and planning (2 hours)

These two important areas are covered in detail in 'How to do a VCA' and the 'VCA toolbox'.

- **Suggestion:** Ask each group to systematize the information collected during the field visit, using flipcharts (this can be

done either as a homework assignment or during the course of the day). In addition, invite participants to draw three conclusions, and list the main vulnerabilities and capacities of the community. This will ensure that the data is in an easily accessible format, and will help participants begin the process of interpreting it.

Session 15: Planning the actual VCA *(up to 1 hour)*

Based on the information from the VCA field work debriefing, the overall VCA plan should be modified, as required. This can be accomplished as one large group, or by forming small groups and having each one adjust specific aspects.

Areas to focus on include:

- improving logistics;
- modifying tools;
- adjusting the choice of research tools if necessary;
- any other elements noted.

Team members will also be in a position to indicate which of the methods/tools they felt most comfortable with. On this basis, decisions may be made regarding the future allocation of tasks.

VCA team leaders will need to consolidate this information and make appropriate arrangements with the community. In addition, some of the participants should be asked to collect and analyse any further information obtained from secondary sources while working with the community.

Session 16: Evaluation and reflection *(10 - 20 minutes)*

Carry out an evaluation at the end of each day/session. This should be facilitated by a participant.

Evaluations should address the following:

- Learning process: How was the day/session in general? How did you feel? Were you challenged? In what way?

Did you look at things in a new or different way? What did you ‘notice’ about the day/session? Has your attitude changed in terms of the way in which you or others learn, or about your views on working with communities?

- Methodology: What was useful about the methodology? What didn’t work very well? What conclusions can you draw?
- Process: How was the facilitation? Which techniques did you like? Which ones didn’t you like? How could the day/session be improved?
- Content: How was the information? What was missing? What did you learn? What remains unclear?

- Encourage participants to share their thoughts and observations based on ‘reflective learning’.
- Make any necessary adjustments to the programme or schedule, based on the evaluations.
- Carry out an overall evaluation at the end of the course. This should include questions linked to the purpose and objectives of the training. This may be done by using a SWOT¹ analysis, a written evaluation or a combination of various techniques.

Following the training, you and your team will need to reflect upon the results of the debriefing from your practice VCA. This will lead you to select and adapt those tools most appropriate to your actual VCA. You will need to adjust, modify and be creative, so that the community is ready and able to undertake the actual VCA.

Now that the instruction has been completed, the real learning begins, as you embark upon the experiential task of conducting your first VCA.

¹ SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis.

Part 3

Learning-by-doing

The following material aims to help VCA practitioners develop their skills directly in the field, while meeting minimum criteria of reliability and validity. This example shows how a community VCA can be undertaken over a period of six days. The sessions are flexible and can be organized to best suit individual community needs or capacities – whether over one intensive week or at regular intervals over a longer period of time.

This training process promotes a practice called *reflection through returning to action*. Its purpose is to encourage participants to reconnect with past experiences in order to learn from them and use them as the basis for building future models.

‘Learning-by-doing’ differs from traditional VCA methodology, in that the processes of learning, action and reflection are integrated. The form of learning that it fosters is similar to transformative learning. This means that **both successful training and the implementation of an actual VCA can be carried out at the same time**. In this way, one workshop achieves three outcomes: (1) National Society staff and volunteers become competent in VCA, (2) a real-time VCA is carried out, leading to project development and action in the community, and (3) communities acquire knowledge of the tools and the processes for participatory approaches.

The following steps outline a series of non-traditional training activities that can help people ‘learn by doing’. As with similar processes, this is only possible when well-trained VCA practitioners understand the methodology, and are able to use the VCA toolbox in a dynamic and creative way.

Before starting

Preparatory activities for VCA ‘learning-by-doing’ include:

National Society governance support

- Ensure that the president, secretary general and other governance authorities within the National Society support VCA implementation.
- Request their support in holding a post-VCA meeting to present its outcome and eventual recommendations.

Selection of communities

- Identify the community.
- Collect secondary data about the country/region/municipality where the work will take place and, if possible, information about the community itself.
- Undertake a preparatory visit to the community (secure the cooperation of community leaders and thus, of the communities themselves).
- Determine, along with community leaders, the best times for the team to visit the community. Agree on the inclusion of certain members of the community in the VCA training process.
- On days requiring long hours of work, plan and obtain agreement from community leaders for providing a snack to participating community members and VCA practitioners.

In addition to the above, the preparation phase requires you to:

- Ensure transportation to the communities.
- Identify a sufficiently large classroom with adequate wall space for posting flipchart papers.
- If possible, ensure availability of telecommunications equipment (especially when more than one VCA is taking place simultaneously).
- Make sure that you have the following material: at least 500 pages of flipchart paper, fifteen boxes of coloured markers, five rolls of masking tape, ten sets of Post-it notes, and flipchart stands.

In addition, the VCA team must be established, and logistics put in place for getting the VCA underway. More detailed information is available by consulting the global VCA documents and *'Make the Change'* (see the disaster management resource framework on FedNet).

During the preparation phase, it is important to determine which focus group sessions will be implemented. Allocate two full days for the transformation process (normally days 4 and 5 of the 'learning-by-doing' process). Once this is done, ensure close coordination with community leaders, in order to have their support in facilitating VCA activities.

The VCA practitioners' team is responsible for developing the activities presented below. In some cases, this will require full involvement by the community and/or key people within the community; in other cases, the work will be developed exclusively by the VCA team, in consultation with the community.

Day 1

Morning

Note: On the first day, 'learning-by-doing' training starts in the classroom, providing relevant information to participants about what VCA is, and how the process will unfold.

A Welcome participants

Max 30 minutes

Depending on the country's normal protocol, this activity could take from 30 to 60 minutes. The recommended time for this activity is 30 minutes.

B Introduction to VCA and objectives

Be brief and to the point

30 minutes

Refer to the learning process, based on the accumulated experience of National Societies, International Federation delegates and other organizations. From the outset, clarify the following:

- 1 *VCA is nothing new. It is probably similar to what you are already doing in the field. Over the coming days, you will learn about the ways in which the process differs and how it is done.*
- 2 *VCA is an important step but not the final answer to all your community needs.*

The objective of the training is:

To learn how to do a VCA, by doing it.

C Expectations

Using a narrowed-down approach, follow these steps

40 minutes

Exercise

Each step is to be followed one at a time.

- 1 Split the group into sub-groups (4 to 7 people maximum).
- 2 Each participant writes down their own expectations and then shares them with the other members of the sub-group.
- 3 Each sub-group prioritizes three expectations, from all those presented.
- 4 Each sub-group converts the three priority expectations into one expectation.
- 5 Each sub-group presents its expectation in plenary session.

Explain to participants what the objective of the exercise was:

- 1 To clarify participants' expectations.
- 2 To show how the VCA process functions – from general to specific.

Clarify with participants:

Which expectations will be covered during the training and which will not be covered?

STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3

STEP 4

STEP 5

D Concepts

*Have at least 4 sub-groups
for the following exercise*

60 minutes

Present the formula used for determining risk ($R = \frac{H \times V}{C}$)

Explain to participants that the following exercise will help them understand this formula and its underlying concepts.

1 Explain how the exercise works:

Select a hazard:

- Angry and hungry lion. **Up to now, this is not a hazard.**
- Angry and hungry lion has escaped in the zoo. **This becomes a hazard.**

Identify the risk:

- There is no way for the lion to escape from the zoo or to attack other animals and/or people, because the event occurs at 6:00, the alarm is already on and the response plan has been activated. **Up to now, there is no major risk.**
- The lion has escaped during visiting hours. A group of 52 school-children (6-12 year-olds) is in the zoo. A group of 20 people living with disabilities, as well as some 20 elderly people are visiting the zoo. Members of the city's famous soccer team, along with their families, are also in the zoo. What are the risks?

Vulnerability:

- People exposed to the hazard
- People close to the hazard.

Capacities:

- Warning system available
- Response plan in existence
- Activation procedures followed
- Security measures to avoid affecting other animals (contingency).

Who is most at risk?

Open discussion with the sub-group.

What should be done to reduce the risk?

Open discussion in plenary.

Exercise

- 1 Once this explanation is clear, each sub-group does a **similar exercise** using another type of hazard. Ask them to write their case on a flipchart.

The information must be presented clearly, so that others can read and understand what has been written.

- 2 Each sub-group then defines a concept for one of the key words. For example, sub-group 1 develops a concept of vulnerability; sub-group 2 covers capacity; sub-group 3 addresses risk; and sub-group 4, hazard. (If there is a sub-group 5, they can supply a concept of disaster). Once each group has developed its concept in writing (on flipchart), a member of the sub-group presents the results of both exercises in plenary.

Specify that participants support each other in reaching the outcome.

At this point, it is not essential to arrive at exact answers.

What is important is to ensure that participants understand the differences between the terms.

Take the opportunity to mention:

**There is no right or wrong answer.
Perceptions, beliefs, cultural background
and experiences all influence the ways in
which people understand things.**

E Living through time – the complete VCA process

30 minutes

The following chart summarizes the VCA process. Explain the different components of the pathway in relation to the process and activities that will be covered during the week. The best way to present the graphic below is by using the floor as the center of attention. Prepare the arrow and information papers beforehand.



Use an exercise to create the mood of the week (represented by the center on the arrow), sensitizing all participants to the importance of the elements of the critical pathway (around the arrow), and the need to count on everyone's support.

The “living through time” model reflects the guiding principles on how to work with communities. In addition to these principles, practitioners should bear in mind key components that further increase community resilience. These elements include: livelihood, well-being, self-protection, social-protection and governance. For further explanation see VCA module 1, ‘*What is VCA*’. Explain to participants that the outcomes of the VCA should help in understanding the conditions of the above components. While the actions will enable in assessing which component of the vulnerability has been addressed.

Following an explanation of the pathway, distribute Table 1 (see Annex, page 95). Use this to explain what will happen over the course of the VCA.

F Main elements of the VCA process

30 minutes

Level 1 National Society support

- 1** Understanding why VCA is being proposed.
- 2** Sensitizing (of National Society leadership, branches, partners).
- 3** Setting up a management structure for VCA.
- 4** Setting the VCA objectives.

Level 2 From assessment to planning

- 5** Planning the VCA.
- 6** Preparation phase.
- 7** Using the investigation tools with the community.
- 8** Systematizing, analysing and interpreting the data.
- 9** Returning information to the community and deciding on priorities and actions for transformation.

Level 3 From planning to action

- 10** Turn vulnerabilities into capacities through practical actions.
- 11** Recommendations and report writing for local authorities, donors and partners.
- 12** Programme implementation: risk reduction projects with the community.

G Recap and evaluation

30 minutes

Following the explanation of the main elements of the VCA process, share a copy of Tables 1 and 2. Explain to participants that these tables should be completed at the end of each day, as homework.

Day 1

Afternoon

A Secondary data

Explain in simple terms the importance of secondary data – in particular for carrying-out VCA

Exercise

Your team has been asked to support a VCA in a different country/province/municipality. You have five days to prepare before going to the selected communities and implementing the VCA process.

What will your team do to prepare for this task?
Where will you obtain the relevant information?
What type of information will you look for?

B Direct observation

Inform participants that following this presentation and the explanation of mapping, sub-groups will be asked to put the tools into practice. This will involve walking around the building where the training is taking place.

Direct observation includes: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and feeling.

Participants should systematically observe objects, people, events, relationships and interactions, and record these observations. This gives a better picture of the disaster/hazard situation, especially elements that may be difficult to verbalize. It is a good way of cross-checking verbal information.

There are two techniques:

- 1 Direct observation; informal observation
- 2 Participant observation with key-informant

For direct observation, share a copy of Table 3.

C Community maps

Community mapping offers an opportunity to identify detailed information about vulnerabilities and capacities, as well noting living conditions, behavior and environmental factors.

Geographical information systems (GIS) provides detailed information on main risk areas in relation to specific hazards. This kind of information is highly relevant for institutions working on disaster risk reduction initiatives and should be used as secondary data, whenever available. However, such information may not reflect community behavior, attitudes, living conditions and identity. For example, a geographical map cannot show drainage conditions and the imminent collapse of the system due to an accumulation of garbage.

Community mapping provides greater awareness of the actual reality on the ground, and complements geographical information. Community mapping includes:

- Map 1** Spatial map: provides an overview of the main features of an area in relation to space.
- Map 2** Hazard/risk map: identifies hazards and risks in the community.
- Map 3** Capacity/resources map: shows local resources and capacities, as well as gender differences, or variable land use zones.

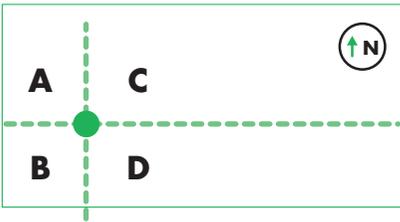
Emphasize the need to have different maps, not just a single map containing all of the information.

Key points in developing maps:

- Before drawing the map, identify key points of reference (main

road, river, hills, mountain, etc.) in order to have an overview of the place where you are going to do the mapping. This is especially important in rural areas, where communities may be located within big land areas.

- Ask members of the community to help you identify the above points of reference. When doing so, make sure to ask questions to help you better understand the information provided by key-informants.
- Pre-determine the minimum amount of information you want to collect from the selected area. This should include: topography, demography, vegetation, roads, rivers, economy, health centers, security (police, firefighters, other), local market, community meeting centers, communications, energy, religious institutions, water sources, livestock land area, schools, enterprises, etc.



- Define a centre point from which the mapping exercise will begin. That centre point should serve as a reference as you walk around the community.
- Cover the whole community by sectors (A, B, C and D), as illustrated.
- Include basic geographical information, showing north on the map.

Making sense of your data:

Answer the question: What is the collected information telling us?

- Once all maps are done, the team will need to analyze the information and identify the high-risk and high-vulnerability areas within the community. The 'transect walk' can only take place once identification of areas at greatest risk has been completed.

Exercise

Participants will now practice the tools. Sub-groups organize themselves to accomplish the following tasks:

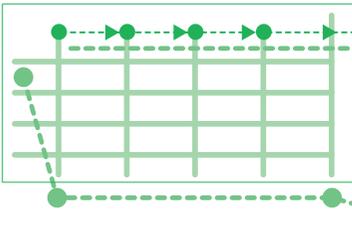
1. Walk around the training place (inside and outside) and produce a direct observation report.
2. Develop spatial, vulnerability/ risk, and capacity/resources maps.
3. Report back.

'Transect walk' map

Develop a 'transect walk' map once direct observation, and the various other maps (spatial, risk/vulnerability and capacity/resources) have been finalized, and the group has had a chance to analyse the data. Bear in mind that, once you have discussed the selected area with community members, and received additional information from them, you may decide to do another 'transect walk' in a different location. If that happens, it is fine; both 'transect walk' maps will be relevant to the VCA process.

Remember, before doing the 'transect walk' map, you have to:

- Analyse the information from the other maps (spatial map, risk/vulnerability map, capacity/resources map).
- Identify the most critical areas, i.e. those with higher risks and vulnerabilities.
- Determine the area where the 'transect walk' will take place.
- Involve members of the community and request their support as key-informants.



- When walking through the selected area, divide it into a minimum of three and a maximum of seven geographical sectors.
- While doing the 'transect walk', make a drawing of the geographical sector covered.
- All eight elements of analysis should be covered in each geographical sector.

The eight elements of analysis:

- Type of ground/land conditions.
- Livelihood within the particular sector of analysis.
- Level of local organization.
- Main hazards and risks.
- Conditions that increase vulnerability.
- Beliefs and values.
- Capacities.
- Natural environment.

Making sense of your data

Answer the question: What is the collected information telling us?

Exercise

Once participants have completed the mapping exercise, introduce the ‘transect walk’ and explain how it is used. Based on one of the maps produced, go outside with participants to demonstrate how a ‘transect walk’ map should be filled in.

D Identifying community organizations

Key-informants should help you to: (a) identify community organizations (mothers’ club, fishermen’s cooperative, social development commission, etc.); (b) identify the president, vice-president or a particular member of the community organization; and (c) contact them and agree on an interview for the next day.

The purpose of collecting this information is to better understand the existing community infrastructure (i.e. the work of these organizations; the type of support they offer to the community; the way they manage problems; and their coping capacities). This information will become useful later on in the process. Understanding the organizational structure within the community will enable future project activities to use existing capacities, rather than needlessly building-up new community structures or organizations.

Exercise

Inform participants that for the following day, they will be expected to have collected data about community organizations.

E Short briefing about Day 2

Briefly explain to participants what will happen on Day 2:

- a.** Briefing – how we will be organized in the field.
- b.** Direct observation (both alone and with key-informant).
- c.** Mapping.
- d.** Meeting with local authorities.
- e.** First sensitization meeting with community members.
- f.** First analysis and systematization of the information.

Day 2

Field work

A Briefing

The process of field work

Before going to the field, each team leader should discuss the issues outlined below with team members. The VCA team leader must ensure that all members are clear about the job to be done in the field. Agree on rules of thumb and then explain how the work will proceed.

1. Rules of thumb for field work:

- One team. One for all. All for one.
- Task is finished only when all the work is completed.
- Team work – support, cooperation and collaboration.
- Follow group leader's instructions and support his/her decisions.
- Avoid creating high expectations.
- All the information must be analysed with the members of the group.
- Flipchart papers – clear and well-written.
- Final information should be transcribed onto computers the same day.
- Translation. Talk slowly. Pause often and ensure that the interpreter translates only what is said.

2. Distribution of work in the field

Determine the following:

- (xx) # of persons to do direct observation.
- (xx) # of persons to do mapping.

When doing mapping: the whole group walks together around the community. One person will be in charge of doing the spatial map. Another person(s) will be in charge of identifying capacities and resources. Finally, someone else will be in charge of identifying the main vulnerabilities and risks.

(xx) # of persons to collect information on community organizations.

This activity is simple. Just get information from the community about existing community organizations.

(xx) # of persons to meet with community authorities.

3. Meeting with local authorities

Do not spend too much time with local authorities and do not involve all of your participants in the meeting. Try to engage local authorities in the process. Explain the basic elements of VCA.

4. What to do with the information collected

The information collected from the community must be compiled on a flipchart (in local language) and transcribed onto a computer (in English).

The information has to be self-explanatory. Avoid bullet points when reporting back from direct observation. It should flow like a story.

Once the information has been collected and written down, it then has to be analysed.

Mapping on flipcharts: Three maps should be elaborated. Start with the spatial map. Make two exact copies of the spatial map. On one of the maps, depict capacities and resources. On the other map, depict vulnerabilities and risks.

Agree with the group as to which sector of the community is at high risk and most vulnerable. After doing so, organize yourselves to do the 'transect walk' map on the next day.

5. Presenting information to the community

Community meetings are organized on a regular basis in order to provide relevant information directly to communities and to validate the information gathered thus far. A meeting should be held with the community at the end of each day. For example, the results of direct observation, names of community organizations, and different types of maps should be presented to the community for validation.

As a rule:

- Explain what you are doing and present progress achieved so far.
- Spend no more than 5 minutes in explaining and showing (e.g. flipchart papers that you have developed). Clarify with community members that the purpose is to obtain their point of view.
- Split members of the community into different groups. These groups will rotate, if time allows. The general idea is to present the information collected (on flipcharts) and to obtain their input. This is also a good opportunity to obtain additional information.

Example of the rotation:**B Direct observation**

Note that the community will verify the results of this activity later. Careful recording and systematization of the information will contribute significantly to its subsequent verification with community members.

Remind participants that direct observation includes: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and feeling. It involves systematically observing objects, people, events, relationships, interactions and recording these observations. This is a way of cross-checking verbal information.

Use the two techniques:

- Direct observation; informal observation
- Participant observation with key-informant

Activity

The group should use Table 3 for carrying out their direct observation.

C Community maps

Step 1 Drawing the maps

Remember to be as detailed as possible when doing mapping. Identify vulnerabilities and capacities, as well living conditions, behavior and environmental factors.

The maps should include information about: topography, demography, vegetation, risks, roads, rivers, economy, health, security, communications, energy, religious institutions, enterprises, etc.

Activity

The team will work on the following types of maps:

- Map 1** Spatial map: an overview of the main features of an area in relation to space. This map forms the basis for the next two maps.
- Map 2** Hazard/risk map: identifies hazards and risks in the community. A separate map should be drawn for each hazard.
- Map 3** Capacity/resources map: draw a map showing local resources and capacities, as well as any gender differences or specific land use zones. This should be done in sub-groups.

The community will verify the results of this activity later. Careful recording and systematization will contribute significantly to subsequent verification of the information with the communities.

Step 2 Making sense of your data before starting the transect walk

Activity

Once all of the maps have been finalized, the team will need to analyse the information and identify the most vulnerable sectors. This is best done as a group exercise.

Answer the question: What is the collected information telling us?

The following example identifies both negative and positive elements based on an analysis of maps:

Negative:

- Crime is rampant throughout the area due to lack of opportunities and resultant negative outlook on life.
- Poorly constructed and clustered houses are at high risk of flooding.
- People are migrating due to high crime rate and neglect of the area.
- Poor drainage is resulting in skin disease, flu-like symptoms etc.
- Lack of garbage disposal is resulting in rodents and pest infestation.

Positive:

- Three levels of education are found in one area.
- Willingness to pass-on knowledge and skills (fishing/farming/mechanics).
- Health center services provide needed healthcare.
- New management for sanitation is now addressing health concern issues.
- Security presence is attempting to reduce crime rate.

Once team members have completed their collective analysis, and identified the geographical area most at risk, you will be able to implement the 'transect walk'.

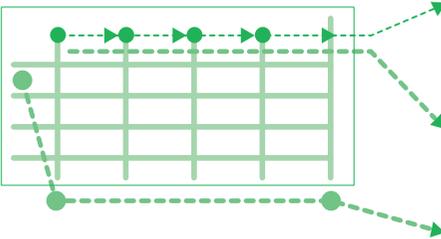
D 'Transect walk' map

Remember, before doing the 'transect walk', you have to:

- Invite members of the community to walk with you and to act as key-informants.
- Explain to them what it is you are going to do and how the process works.
- Ensure active involvement by key-informants in the collection of information.

Activity

Walk through the selected area:



- Divide the selected area into a minimum of three and a maximum of seven geographical sectors.
- While doing the 'transect walk', make a drawing of the geographical sector covered.
- All eight elements of analysis should be covered in each geographical sector.

Remember the eight elements of analysis:

- Type of ground/land conditions.
- Livelihood within the particular sector of analysis.
- Level of local organization.
- Main hazards and risks.
- Conditions that increase vulnerability.
- Beliefs and values.
- Capacities.
- Natural environment.

Activity

Note down what you observed when walking through the community, in the same way in which you would systematize information collected through direct observation (see p. 58).

Determine areas that need to be explored further (either physical areas or issues) and select the most appropriate tools to use for doing so (including interviews or semi-structured interviews).

Making sense of your data

Answer the question: What is the collected information telling us?

E Identifying community organizations

Activity

Key informants should help you to: (a) identify community organizations (mothers' club, fishermen's cooperative, social development commission, etc); (b) identify the president, vice-president or other members of the community organization; and (c) contact them and agree on an interview for the next day.

Write down the list of existing community organizations on a flipchart.

F Meeting with local authorities and other actors

Find out whether or not there are other types of community leaders your group should meet – for example, an indigenous doctor or some other person with strong spiritual influence.

The normal procedures and protocols for meeting with local authorities should be followed and appointments secured ahead of time.

Activity

A meeting will have been set up with local authorities, as mentioned above. During the meeting you should aim to get answers to the following questions:

- a. What are the main issues, problems, threats and hazards that the community faces?

- b. Which groups/people are most affected?
- c. What is their direct impact (livelihood, well-being, self protection)?
- d. What is the root cause?
- e. What impact do the threats have on the community (social protection, governance response)?
- f. What could be done to overcome the negative impact?

Make records of interview information. There are two ways of doing this:

- 1 Bring a second person with you to take notes during the interview.
- 2 Ask permission to tape-record the interview and then transcribe it.

Distribute a copy of Table 4.

Making sense of your data

Once you return to the classroom, answer the question: What is the collected information telling us?

G First meeting with community members

Agree on the objectives and outcome of the meeting with team members. **Do not raise expectations** and ensure that communities understand the nature of VCA: it is a participative assessment process through which they will identify ways to help themselves.

Activity

Hold a first meeting with community members, as per process outlined below.

The aim of this meeting is to engage community members in the VCA process. Explain to them that the process includes the following:

- The Red Cross Red Crescent team will walk around the commu-

nity and will produce information. The information collected will be presented on the following day, during a community meeting.

- Whenever possible, meetings should be held during periods of free time. Determine the times that best suit the community.
- Explain the reasons for wishing to interview various members of the community. If possible, include people from different age groups (i.e. elderly, adults, youth and children).
- Explain to the community that an important meeting (focus group), including different groups, will be held on Thursday, for example. On the following day (e.g. Friday), most community leaders, as well as representatives from both sexes and from different age groups, will need to participate in the transformation process.
- Finally, invite community members to share their opinions with the VCA team about the main hazards faced by the community, and the consequences of those hazards.

H Analysis and systematization of the information

Activity

Once you and your team have returned to your workstation (e.g. National Society building, hotel, tent, house), a hazard matrix analysis can be developed. Use Table 4.

Hazard/issue	Potential risk	Vulnerabilities	Capacities	Immediate needs	Mitigation actions
Flood	1	1.1	1	1	1
	2	1.2	2	2	2
	3	1.3	3		3
	4	1.4			4
		2.1			5
		2.2			6
		2.3			7

The results of Table 4, as shown above, will be utilized later on in the process.

Activity

Make sense of the data, as mentioned in point F above.

Review the information in the matrix.

Base this review on the following questions.

1. What are the risks/issues?

- a. Identify the hazards in the community.
- b. Determine all potential impacts. This will enable you to understand what the risk will be if the hazard actually occurs. In identifying the impact, make sure to include structural, non-structural, social, economic, and other factors. Determine vulnerabilities within the community linked to actual risks.

2. What makes people vulnerable?

- a. Use the five components of vulnerability for the analysis: (1) livelihood; (2) well-being/status; (3) self protection; (4) social protection; and (5) governance.
- b. Identify all existing vulnerabilities in the community that increase the identified risk.

3. What are the capacities?

- a. Identify the immediate needs in the event of a disaster.
- b. Identify possible mitigation measures in the face of a hazard.
- c. Identify coping capacities.

Remember that the community will verify the results of this activity later. Your careful recording and subsequent systematization of the information will significantly contribute to its effective verification with the community.

I Produce a report of the day's work

Activity

By the end of the day, participants are expected to produce a report that includes:

- Direct observation report (consolidated Table 1) and analysis.
- Spatial map and analysis.
- Risk/vulnerability map and analysis.
- Capacity/resources map and analysis.
- 'Transect walk' map and analysis.
- Community organizations.
- Hazard matrix analysis.

Homework: Work on Tables 1 and 2 and be ready to present on the next day, or as requested by facilitators.

Table 1: Using the VCA model parts.

Table 2: Evaluation of each day.

Day 3

Field work

A Welcome and logistics information

In working groups, share the outcome based on the answers from Tables 1 and 2, and develop a short conclusion to cover all points.

B Explain tasks for the day (in classroom)

The following section is aimed at familiarizing participants with the main tools and preparing the team to use them during field work later on during the day. Once fieldwork has been completed (using the tools), the VCA team should be able to make an analysis of the information gathered and draw some practical conclusions (i.e. making sense of the data).

1. Historical visualization chart

The team must gather information about what has happened in the past and produce a community profile and historical visualization. Areas to be included in the analysis should be as varied as possible. These can include: diseases, food access, work, main disasters, violence, crime, deforestation, livestock, housing (development), water sources, amongst others. This will provide an insight into past haz-

One way to optimise time with the community in preparing a historical visualization chart, is to use small stones to represent the subject of analysis. Similar to proportional pilling, the facilitator will have 100 small stones and will ask members of the community to distribute them according to their experience of the subject of analysis. For example, if the subject of analysis is to understand changes to the forest environment over time, community members will represent this by distributing the stones according to developments over the decades.

On returning to the classroom, VCA practitioners will produce a historical visualization chart, using symbols to represent the subjects analyzed.

ards, including any changes in their nature, intensity and behavior. Historical visualization and profiling help to understand the current situation within the community (causal link between hazards and vulnerabilities) and serve to highlight changes over time.

Once the historical visualization has been completed, and the team has analysed the information, the next step is to develop a historical visualization projection. The process is the same as above. The aim is to project community needs and likely developments over the next 10 to 20 years. The data must reflect the fast pace of change observed over the past 10 years. It is not a wish list of what would be best in the future. It aims to reflect what the future will be, if the same behavior patterns continue.

See Table 5 for historical visualization chart.

Making sense of the historical chart

The group should be encouraged to question the data. For example:

- What is this chart telling me?
- What has happened?
- Why has it happened?

2. Historical profile

Key points to take into consideration are:

- The information we are seeking is that which is relevant to the community.
- Gather information that will make the community proud of its development, and raise awareness of how the community has faced various situations in the past.
- Communities should not be forced to depict their historical profile using only decades as a measure of time. Meaningful events in the development of the community, regardless of the period of time used, can also be used for historical profiling – especially ones that have significantly affected it or have special meaning in day-to-day life.

In gathering information, make sure you address all possible elements pertaining to the community's development. This includes

questions of land access, building of the first houses, types of crops and livestock. It should also cover areas such as: utilities (when and how they started), school development, economic development and main disasters. An example is presented below. This exercise can then be carried out with your community.

Example: Historical profile

Year	Description
1970	Smith – Brown families settle
1972	Huge migration of population – 5,000 people arrive
1973	First constructions – school / health center
1974	Strike – access to water – hospital. Ends with 2 deaths and several in jail
1980	Hurricane Jondo hits the island
1981	Red Cross is recognized by the government
1983	1st church built

Making sense of historical profiling

The group should be encouraged to question the data. For example:

- What is this chart telling me?
- What has happened?
- Why has it happened?

The chart should be analysed by comparing the vertical and horizontal axes. Main developments and events are shown horizontally, against the timeframe depicted vertically (by decades or whatever other timeframe you have chosen). Finally, a diagonal analysis shows how some events have altered over time.

3. Seasonal calendar

This tool can be used to illustrate different events (hurricane, floods), experiences (recession, long periods of drought), activities (carnival, harvest), and conditions (social and economic) which occur throughout the annual cycle. It identifies periods of stress and vulnerability, hazards, and related misfortunes such as disease, hunger and debt. It tells us what people do during these

periods, how they diversify their sources of livelihood, when they have savings, when they have time for community activities and what their coping strategies are. The calendar also identifies gender-specific divisions of work, both in times of disaster and during normal times.

The various problems/issues are inscribed along the vertical axis, while the months of the year are set along the horizontal axis. An 'X' indicates occurrence of the problem/issue in any one month. See an example of a seasonal calendar in Table 6.

Activity

Ask your participant group to fill out a seasonal calendar relevant to their community.

Making sense of your data

Answer the question: What is the collected information telling us?

4. Community-based organizations

The objective of this activity is to understand existing community organizations, their structure and regular activities, and to identify possible ways of strengthening them, in order to address the main problems encountered by the community.

It is important to make sure that the community clearly understands this objective.

Over the previous days, the group has collected the names of various community organizations. Now, the task of the group is to interview the leaders of these organizations. You will have some key questions that you would like answered. Feel free to add additional questions, as required.

Questionnaire:

- What is the history of the organization?
- When was it created?
- Why was it created?
- How many members does it have? Active, passive?
- Is this number increasing or decreasing?

- What is their involvement during meetings?
- How are decisions taken?
- Does the group have a community development plan?
- Are the group's committees functioning?
- What has the group contributed to the community in the past?

See example in Table 7: Capacities of community-based organizations.

Making sense of your data

Answer the question: What is the collected information telling us?

5. Livelihood information-gathering

The objective of this activity is to understand the various means of livelihood within the community.

See Table 8: Livelihood analysis.

Making sense of your data

Answer the question: What is the collected information telling us?

C Dialogue with key informants regarding initial findings of direct observation

At this stage, your team has already analysed the findings of the direct observation undertaken during Day 2. This has been documented electronically and on flipchart paper.

Activity

Share these documents with key-informants in order to obtain their input. Make sure that key-informants understand that the final draft, incorporating their new input, will be presented during the community meeting, which will occur later on in the afternoon/evening of Day 3.

D Verify mapping with key-informants (or community)

Your team has already worked on elaborating a first draft of the maps.

Activity

The purpose is to obtain key informants' input on the maps and get them to add relevant details to increase the quality of the information provided.

Make sure that key informants understand that the final draft, incorporating their input, will be presented during the community meeting, which will occur later on Day 3.

E Make use of table on community organizations

Your team has already collected the information required for this section over the course of Day 2 (activity E – Identifying community organizations), and Day 3 (activity B.4 – Community-based organisations). At this stage of the process, VCA practitioners should focus on collecting information. There are several options for doing this: as part of a formal meeting with members of community-based organizations, through interviews with selected key members, or during a visit to the organization's offices.

Activity

The group is to interview the leaders of each community organization. Make sure that key-informants understand that the final draft, incorporating their input, will be presented during the community meeting, which will take place later on in the week.

F Meeting with community members

The meeting with community members will have two main objectives:

- a. Validate the information from direct observation and community mapping, made on the previous day with support from key-informants (in some cases) and;
- b. Gather additional information using the tools set out below.

Activity

Hold a meeting with community members, following the process recommended below:

- 1 Briefly, explain to the community why you are there and what you have managed to produce so far. (Repeat this even if you have already said it on previous days).
- 2 Invite questions and provide answers.
- 3 Present a general overview (no more than 10 minutes). Emphasize that this information, together with additional information gathered, will be presented to all members of the community. In order to present the initial information gathered from activities carried out during the day, request that community leaders divide the group into five sub-groups:
 - Mapping (spatial, vulnerability/risk, capacity/resources, 'transect walk').
 - Historical chart (*see table 5*).
 - Historical profile.
 - Seasonal calendar (*see table 6*).
 - Livelihoods (*see table 8*).

Remember: It is very important that this be a participatory process. It is not training. Make use of various tools and methods, as appropriate (question-and-answer, group work, brainstorming and so on).

- 4 Interview representatives of community organizations present at the meeting, if they have not been interviewed earlier in the day (*see Table 7*).

At this stage, you do not yet need to complete an analysis of the information gathered from the charts. Your group of VCA practitioners will do this, once you have returned to your workstation. The results of the completed analysis will be shared with the community later on.

G

Collect and analyse data Produce a report of the day's work

Once all the information gathered has been discussed and agreed with the community, it is useful to systematize it in electronic form. However, if conditions within the community do not allow for the use of electricity, the information can be presented on flipchart paper. Whilst this can be time-consuming, its importance should not be underestimated.

Activity

VCA participants should work as a team, making sure that all of the information collected during the day is transcribed onto flipchart paper, in the local language. The collected information should also be recorded in electronic format. In both cases, this should include a written analysis and the conclusions reached, based on each of the tools used.

Day 4

Classroom or meeting room

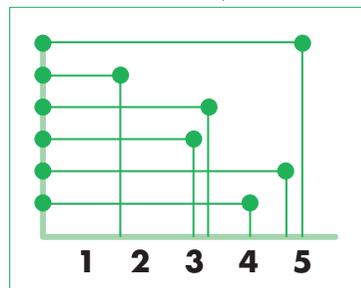
A Reflect on the past two days of work

The time has come to reflect upon work accomplished so far. This session provides participants with the opportunity to understand what has been achieved up to this stage in the process.

Activity

Request that participants follow these next steps:

- a. Individually answer Tables 1 and 2.
- b. Explain to participants that, up to this stage, the group has been exploring external factors, as represented in the critical pathway model ('Living through time'). The time has now come to reflect the level of knowledge and understanding they have gained from the community.
- c. Request that each group rank from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) their level of understanding of:
 - 1 Community environment.
 - 2 Community needs.
 - 3 Community participation in the process.
 - 4 Community engagement.
 - 5 Beliefs and values within the community.
 - 6 Community capacities.
- d. One member of the group will report back in plenary.



Following the same steps as before, reflect on the level of knowledge and understanding you have gained from communities regarding their livelihoods, well-being status, self-protection, social-protection and governance.

B Talk to the walls Identify gaps, issues and capacities

Explain to participants that all of the information collected will be analysed by each of the groups. ‘Talking to the walls’ offers the opportunity to reflect upon what has been written/collected so far.

In reading the information posted onto the walls, constantly ask yourselves: why, how, when?

Activity

Ask each sub-group to distribute tasks amongst its members. Each member of a sub-group will be asked to analyze **one** chart or table, in order to:

- Identify information gaps.
- Identify main community issues.
- Identify main community capacities.

C Agree on main issues

At this stage, several community issues will have been identified. It is now time for the group to agree on the main community issues.

Activity

To reach this objective, follow these steps:

- 1** Each individual will write one issue onto a Post-It note.
- 2** Paste the issues (each Post-It) onto a flipchart.
- 3** Sort the issues.
- 4** Reflect and agree on the main issues.
- 5** Visualize the issues on a flipchart, as shown below.

Example:

Erosion	Dengue	Viral fever	New disaster (tsunami)	Garbage management	Water contamination
High population	Pollution	Loss of crops & agriculture land	Sewer system needs improvement	Foreign labour competition at tourist resort	Electricity at maximum capacity
Rise in costs of diesel/gas increases the cost of transportation and electricity	Land-use planning, monitoring and projection for the future	Upgrade basic health equipment	Develop a disaster response plan	Foreign labour competition in every sector	Food supply
Construction material availability					

D Agree on main capacities**Activity**

Follow the same process as above. This time, participants are asked to identify all capacities and resources, and list them on a flipchart.

E Initiate the transformation process

Based on the issues identified in sub-groups, the group will now begin the transformation process.

This stage is vital in moving from assessment to planning (Step 2 within the overall VCA process). This requires a high level of participation in order to arrive at relevant suggestions for future activities.

Participants have the opportunity to dream about actions that could help the community transform its vulnerabilities (issues) into capacities. The challenge is to come up with **suggestions that are specific and feasible**. Do not include actions that may sound ideal but are unrealistic, based on the context and the conditions within the community and/or country. It is time to dream up **realistic actions** that will make the community feel empowered.

Activity

Transform vulnerabilities into capacities

Hazard/issue scenario	Vulnerabilities identified	Capacities identified	Actions to transform vulnerabilities into capacities
Hazard/issue 1	Vulnerability 1	Capacity 1 Capacity 2 Capacity 3 Capacity 4 Capacity 5 Etc.	a) Temporary relocation of residents b) Train community on specific skills needed to... c) Build sea wall
	Vulnerability 2		a) Identify leaders b) Education on cleaning of drains etc.
Hazard/issue 2	Vulnerability 1	Capacity 1 Capacity 2 Etc.	a) b) etc
	Vulnerability 2	Capacity 1 Capacity 2 Etc.	a) b) etc.

Activity

Identify where actions for transformation best fit in terms of the disaster cycle.

Once the group has agreed on actions for transformation, the next task (for VCA practitioners only) is to identify where they fit in terms of prevention, mitigation or preparedness. The table below **should not be** presented to the community, as it could create confusion.

This analysis is of great value to VCA practitioners. It will help to:

- Better understand the definition of the words prevention, preparedness and mitigation.
- Sort actions for transformation according to the three categories.
- Identify other organizations with experience in implementing prevention, mitigation or preparedness activities; and based on this, seek potential support.
- Enable the National Society to reflect upon their existing capacities, and how they can support actions for transformation – should the communities wish to implement them.

Actions to transform vulnerabilities into capacities	Prevention	Preparedness	Mitigation	
1.1 Temporary relocation of residents	X		X	
1.2 House retro-fitting activities	X		X	
1.3 Sea wall construction	X		X	
2.1 Identify leaders	Etc.			
2.2 Education on cleaning of drains				
2.3 Introduce garbage disposal use				
2.4 Group representation on subject to City Council				
2.5 Community meetings scheduled and agreed to by different actors. Etc.				

F Prepare material and organize work for the next day

The following material should be available on flipcharts, for ease of presentation to community members during the next day's visit to the community:

- 1** A list of questions to put to the community regarding information gaps.
- 2** Table of issues (one copy per focus group).
- 3** Community capacities.
- 4** Table for transforming vulnerabilities into capacities.

Remember to systematize the information in electronic format. If local conditions do not allow for the use of electricity, the information should be set out on flipcharts. Whilst this can be time-consuming, its importance should not be under-estimated.

Day 5

Field work and classroom

A Welcome and logistics information

Participants in existing working groups are invited to share outcomes based on Tables 1 and 2, and to develop a short conclusion covering all of the points.

B List information gaps

Activity

List all information gaps on a piece of paper (as identified the previous day). Sort information gaps and decide which ones need to be addressed by all focus groups, and which ones should be addressed by specific focus groups only.

Example:

Issues 1, 3, 7 and 8 will be addressed by all focus groups.

Issues 4, 5, 11, 13 and 15 will be addressed by the women's focus group.

Issues 2, 15 and 16 will be addressed by the elderly.

Issues 6, 9 and 10 will be addressed by youth.

Etc.

C Meeting with the community

Activity

During this meeting, briefly explain what has been accomplished to date and outline the activities you intend to carry out. Indicate that you will be sharing more detailed information during small group discussions.

Explain that you would like their support for two main activities:

- Activity 1: Small group discussions (focus groups).
- Activity 2: Meeting with community leaders and other members of the community having participated in the focus groups.

D Focus groups

The group should prepare for the focus group sessions beforehand. The general objective of these focus groups is to determine whether or not the main issues identified to date are indeed the ones that community members consider to be their main problems.

Focus groups carried out with children and the elderly are particularly relevant and should be encouraged. Remember that it is extremely important to respect local legal requirements and consent procedures in working with children and minors. In all situations, a teacher or social worker must be present. All of the focus groups, except the focus group with children, will address similar elements of analysis.

Activity

Organize a focus group for each of the following (or as appropriate to your particular VCA):

- 1 Elderly.
- 2 Women.
- 3 Men.
- 4 Youth.
- 5 Children.

The focus group with the elderly, men, women and youth should include the following steps:

- a. Briefly explain the work that you have been doing.
- b. On a flipchart, show the main issues that your team has identified in the community. If possible, write them in the local language.
- c. Ask focus group members to identify issues that have not been covered.
- d. Ask each person in the focus group to collect seven small stones (or beans, etc.).
- e. Ask each person to identify the seven issues they feel need addressing and for which solutions must be found. In order to do so, each participant will place their stones on seven issues of their choice.

Erosion	Dengue	Viral fever	New disaster (tsunami)	Garbage management	Water contamination
High population	Pollution	Loss of agricultural land	Sewer system needs improvement	Foreign labour competition at tourist resort	Electricity at maximum capacity
Rise in costs of diesel/gas increases the cost of transportation and electricity	Land use planning, monitoring and projection for the future	Upgrade basic health equipment	Develop a disaster response plan	Foreign labour competition in every sector	Food supply
Construction material availability	Etc.				

Once the above process is completed, try to obtain answers to information gaps previously identified (to be distributed for discussion during focus group sessions).

The focus group with children (with parent's permission) includes the following steps:

- a. Ask each child to draw, on a piece of paper, those things they *like* the most about their community.
- b. Ask each child to draw those things they *dislike* the most about their community.
- c. Ask each of the children to explain their drawings (another member of the group should take notes about what the children are telling you).

E Community leaders' focus group, including representatives from the community

This meeting should include community leaders and a representative from the working meetings of previous days – and in particular from focus group sessions carried out earlier during Day 5.

Activity

Step 1 Present findings and conclusions

Explain to community leaders that the group has identified several capacities and resources within the community, which could contribute to finding potential solutions to the issues previously discussed. Share with them the list of capacities identified, together with the list of issues. By emphasizing community capacities, communities will be motivated to act.

Vulnerabilities identified	Capacities identified
Vulnerability 1	Capacity 1 Capacity 2
Vulnerability 2	Capacity 3 Capacity 4 Etc...

Step 2 Outline possible solutions

Explain that you have also done some initial thinking regarding potential solutions to the issues raised. Ask communities if they would like to hear some of these ideas. If the answer is yes, make sure to stress that they will also be expected to provide their views and recommendations in finding solutions to the problems. If the answer is no, and the community would rather undertake the process of transformation itself, agree to do so and facilitate the process.

A key point in developing actions for transformation is to be as specific as possible. Make sure to emphasize that every action for transformation should take into account the community's existing capacities to solve problems. Some actions will require additional support from outside sources. This is fine, but in that case, this action should not be seen as the way forward in solving the problem.

Vulnerabilities identified	Capacities identified	Actions to transform vulnerabilities into capacities
Vulnerability 1	Capacity 1	a) Temporary relocation of residents
	Capacity 2	b) House retrofitting activities
	Capacity 3	c) Build sea wall
Vulnerability 2	Capacity 4	a) Identify leaders
	Capacity 5	b) Education on cleaning of drains.
	Etc...	c) etc...

Step 3 Commitment to action – identifying and turning actions for transformation into potential community commitments

The next step is to identify actions for transformation which are agreed to by the community. Analyse those situations which can be changed or influenced, as opposed to actions which may be more difficult to implement. Ask community members to decide on the way forward.

Based on existing knowledge of community capacities, identify which changes can be implemented directly by the community:

- C** Stands for issues that the community can **change**.
- I** Stands for issues that the community can **influence** in finding solutions.
- T** Stands for issues that are out of the community's hands and for which **transformation** will take a long time.

Communities should mark with an "x" accordingly.

Vulnerabilities identified	Capacities identified	Actions to transform vulnerabilities into capacities	C	I	T
Vulnerability 1	Capacity 1	a) Temporary relocation of residents			
	Capacity 2	b) House retrofitting activities			
	Capacity 3	c) Build sea wall			
Vulnerability 2	Capacity 4	a) Identify leaders			
	Capacity 5	b) Education on cleaning of drains.			
	Etc...	c) etc...			

F Systematization of the information

As previously, participants will be asked to share outcomes using Tables 1 and 2 and the group will be invited to make a short conclusion covering all the points.

Day 6

Field work and classroom

A Welcome notes and administrative information

Participants in existing working groups are invited to share outcomes based on Tables 1 and 2, and develop a short conclusion covering all of the points.

B Second meeting, transformation process – How it will work

This is the final step in the analysis, based on results agreed to date. Community leaders and a representative from each focus group should all be present.

Activity

Based on the actions for transformation agreed upon the day before, the team's task is to arrive at potential solutions, as follows:

- a. Can the actions for transformation be undertaken using the community's existing resources – immediately, in the medium or long term?
- b. Will this require financial resources?
- c. Can the community find the resources themselves? If yes, how?
- d. Will this require technical support? If so, where from?

Solutions need to be based on existing skills and/or resources within the community. If the solution requires money, then finding funding must be part of the solution (using creative ideas such as raffles, parties, collections, etc.). If it requires certain skills, these need to be available within the community itself (i.e. amongst friends, relations etc.). Turning to people from outside the community should only be used as a last resort.

Actions to transform vulnerabilities into capacities	C	I	T	Can be done with own resources and capacities			Requires financial support		Requires technical support	
				S	M	L	Yes	No	Yes	No
Period of time to implement				S	M	L	Yes	No	Yes	No
a) Temporary relocation of residents			X			X	X		X	
b) House retrofitting activities	X			X	X			X	X	
c) Sea wall construction	X			X			X		X	
a) Identify leaders	X			X				X		X
b) Education on cleaning of drains	X			X				X		X
c) Etc.			X			X	X		X	

S = short-term M = medium-term L = long-term

Activity

Selecting actions that can be undertaken in the short or medium term

Following consultation with the community, the group should identify actions for transformation which can be implemented in the short or medium term (as identified by a "C" or an "I"). At this stage, any actions requiring longer-term implementation should be set aside.

Actions to transform vulnerabilities into capacities	C	I	T	Can be done with own resources and capacities			Requires financial support		Requires technical support	
				S	M	L	Yes	No	Yes	No
Period of time to implement				S	M	L	Yes	No	Yes	No
b) House retrofitting activities	X			X	X			X		X
a) Identify leaders	X			X			X		X	
b) Education on cleaning of drains	X			X				X		X

S = short-term M = medium-term L = long-term

Once this has been finalized, explain to the community that a formal report will be submitted to them, which will also be shared with local authorities and the National Society.

C Systematization of the information, analysis and connections

You can now proceed to a final systematization of the information and conclusions. Once completed, all team leaders will present their final results (in electronic version) to the National Society's management and, where appropriate, to the International Federation's team leader.

D Networking – Challenges for future follow-up

Activity

The following steps outline the way forward on the part of the National Society. A similar approach should be implemented at community level.

Step 1

- a. List the top issues prioritised by the community.
- b. Identify Red Cross Red Crescent capacities to provide support (technical, financial, material, human resources, etc.)
- c. List those organizations (governmental, non-governmental, other civil society organizations) with experience of the particular issue.

Community name:

Issue	National Society capacities and resources to address that issue	Other organizations with experience of the issue
Issue 1	a. b. c. etc.	a. b. c. etc.
Issue 2		

Step 2 Institutional and social analysis – from the National Society perspective:

Based on the institutions and/or organizations identified in the exercise above, proceed to a ranking showing: (a) the importance of these organizations in helping to solve the problem, and (b) how close they are to the community in responding to their needs.

This is of critical importance to enable National Societies to move the process forward at different levels. The assessment at community level has been completed. Potential solutions have already been identified. The team now needs to bring the information back to the National Society and to carry out an internal assessment of possible future actions in addressing the community's needs.

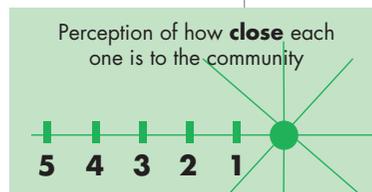
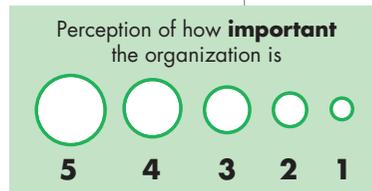
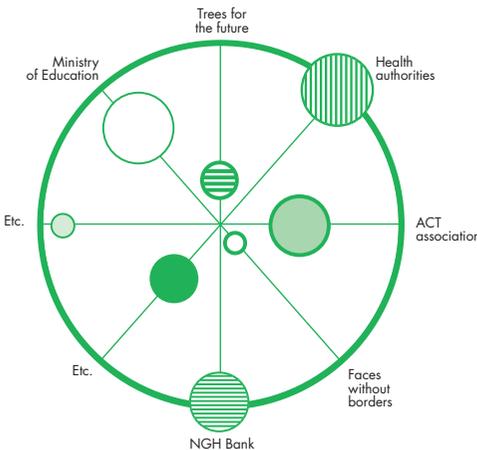
Each member of the group involved in ranking should vote from one (lowest) to five (highest), for each organization in both categories.

For example, five members of the National Society carry out this exercise:

Organization	How important is the organization in solving the problem?					How close is the organization to the community's needs?						
Ministry of Education	4	5	5	4	5	23	2	2	1	2	3	10
Health district authorities	5	5	5	5	3	23	1	1	1	2	1	6
Faces without borders	1	1	1	2	2	7	5	5	5	4	5	24
Trees for the future	5	1	1	2	2	11	5	5	5	3	5	23
ACT association	3	3	3	2	4	15	5	4	5	4	4	22
NGH Bank	5	5	5	5	4	24	1	1	1	1	1	5
Etc.												

The exercise above offers the opportunity to assess the National Society's perception of various organizations in relation to their importance in solving a particular problem or in contributing to its potential solution. At the same time, it offers the opportunity to analyse how close these organizations are to the National Society and to the community in being able to address its needs.

Depict the results of the analysis in graphic form, to facilitate visualization of the status of these organizations.



This exercise shows that there are organizations that could be highly relevant to the community, but are too far removed to service their needs. Other organizations may be working very closely with the community, but may not be recognized as sufficiently important.

The general idea is to show how some organizations can remain important, while getting closer to community needs and becoming more relevant; whilst those that are already relevant (working closely with the communities) may need to find ways to be perceived as more important.

Step 3 Understanding how each organization can offer support

Below, an example of the way in which each agency/organization could support community needs:

Organization	Support needed
Ministry of Education	Allow schoolteachers to participate in training activities. After the training, allow teachers to include a particular issue as a subject, in order to raise awareness as part of their regular activities.
Health district authorities	Commitment from health authorities to ensure participation of health centre staff in monthly community meetings, and support for rapid health assessments every quarter.
Faces without borders	Request their technical expertise on leadership development, to help community leaders improve their negotiation skills.
Trees for the future	Advocate for their support related to the critical situation of deforestation in the community, to be included on their website and in their reports to donors. Invite them to see for themselves the current environmental conditions.
ACT association	Supply skills and volunteers for labour, and request support from the Ministry of Transportation to facilitate transport of material.
NGH Bank	Advocate with the bank the possibility of financial support for the community's initiative to plant 500 trees over the coming months.
Etc.	

Step 4 Contact the organizations

Contact the selected organizations; if possible, invite them to a meeting to inform them about the VCA process and the conclusions arrived at in terms of actions for transformation (as agreed with the community). Seek their advice on the way forward and ask for their support.

As a result of the above, pursue planning and coordination with those stakeholders expressing interest in the process. All stakeholders should then hold a joint community meeting to agree on next steps, as soon as possible.

Activity

With the community

An exercise similar to the example shown above should be developed with the previously identified community organizations.

Remember: when doing the ranking, each member of the community will do his/her own ranking. Once the ranking is done, someone from the team can develop the visual chart, representing the respective levels of importance and relevance (services that address community needs).

E Final report

Activity

Each working group will finalise their written report (in electronic format) and present it to the host National Society. This also acts as a symbolic gesture of support to the host National Society (and community, branch, etc., as relevant)

F Closing ceremony and next steps for the future

Next steps should be developed and planned together with the communities you have been working with, as well as with local authorities and Red Cross Red Crescent Society branch members.

Indeed, once the ‘learning-by-doing’ process has been completed, National Societies must give careful consideration to the VCA summary report, in order to assess their own capacity to support follow-up actions in the communities. This may take the form of financial and technical support, or assistance in seeking additional funds for the implementation of community plans. National Societies may also encourage other partners to engage directly with the communities. In turn, community leaders are expected to advocate with their local authorities, in order to obtain additional support from them. In all cases, the purpose will be to transform negative situations, as identified by the VCA, into opportunities for development.

Annex

Table 1 Using the VCA model

In working with communities (and more particularly during the initial phase of the process), the following tool enables VCA practitioners/volunteers to *consider a community's perspective* linked to its cultural identity, beliefs and values; furthermore, it encourages respect for community capabilities and behaviors within its environment (natural, social, political).

Element of analysis	Describe what you see, smell, hear, feel, sense
<p>Environment refers to the place where VCA is being conducted (i.e. village, town, apartment blocks etc.), as well as to possible social and economic factors that influence the behavior of the people you are working with.</p>	
<p>Behaviors represent the actions being taken by people operating in the environment.</p>	
<p>People's actions will to some extent be controlled by the capacities or capabilities that they perceive themselves as having.</p>	
<p>Beliefs and values are extremely powerful because these are deeply embedded in our being. These relate to what is important to people, representing what they want and what they don't want.</p>	
<p>Identity is even more profoundly placed, because it is about our very being and refers to who we are. It will influence how we think with regard to each of the other positions.</p>	

Table 2 Evaluation of each day

Element of analysis	Comments Day #
How did people feel? Were they nervous? Was it hard to talk with community members?	
Did they understand what you were doing? Were they approachable?	
What can be improved, so as to make yourselves and the community more comfortable?	
What worked? Why? What didn't work? Why?	
Were the tools appropriate given the target population?	
Did the tools provide the information you wanted? If not, what changes do you need to make?	
How did the organization of the day go? Were the logistics adequate?	

Table 3 Direct observation

Demographic information	
<p>Distribution of the population (age, work, gender).</p> <p>Daily routine (school-aged children in school, adult present with children at home, working in the fields, etc.).</p> <p>Family structure (nuclear or extended family, child-headed households).</p> <p>Community interaction.</p>	
Infrastructure	
<p>Types of housing and other infrastructure; use of latrines.</p> <p>Construction materials, design and proximity of buildings.</p> <p>Types of roads.</p> <p>Green spaces and playgrounds. Sports facilities.</p>	
Health, sanitation and other essential services	
<p>Sanitation (sewers, running water – availability, functionality and type).</p> <p>Availability of electricity, water and telephone.</p> <p>What basic services exist?</p> <p>Distance people have to travel to schools and health centres.</p> <p>Animals in the streets.</p> <p>Institutions present.</p>	
Daily activities	
<p>What do people eat?</p> <p>Where do they shop?</p> <p>Religion – churches, etc.</p> <p>Recreational activities.</p> <p>Types of transportation used.</p>	
Visible vulnerabilities and capacities	

Table 4 Understanding risks

Hazard/issue	Potential risk	Vulnerabilities	Capacities	Immediate needs	Mitigation actions
Flood	1. 2. 3. 4. etc.	1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 2.1 2.2 3.1 etc.	1. 2. 3. etc.	1. 2. etc.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. etc.

Table 5 Historical visualization chart

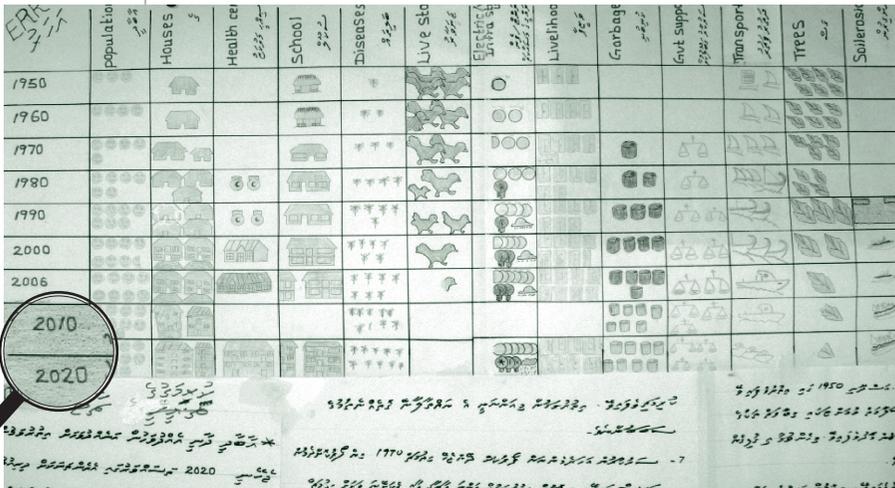


Table 6 Seasonal calendar

Security	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Low income				x			x	x	x			
High income	X	X	X								X	X
Immigration and migration	X				X	X						
Burglaries				x					X			
Crop season						X	X	X				
Drug trafficking		X	X	X					X	X		X
Vehicle accidents				X					X			X
Domestic violence	X	x	x	X	X	X	X	X	X	x	x	x
Harvest time	X	X										X
Rainfall period						X	X	X	X			
Health	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Flu, coughs, colds	X										X	X
Stomach illness (vomiting, diarrhoea)	X					X	X	X				X
Conjunctivitis			X	X	X							
Water-borne disease (fungi, sores)						X	X	X	X			
Head lice	X											
Hazards	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Hurricane						X	X	X	X	X	X	
Forest fire	X	X	X	X	X							
Agricultural fire						X	X	X				
Floods							X	X	X			
Fire												X
Temperature (high-low)	X	X	X	X						x	x	x

X = high

x = low

Table 7 Community-based organizations*

	Island development committee (IDC)	Women's development committee	Maduvvay Ekuveringe club
Who founded the organization?	Maldivian Government	Maldivian Govt. in 1979 (Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Security)	Four people from the community, in 1987
What are the aims of the organization?	To develop and organise community work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To promote women's participation in the country's development ■ To promote women' education and capacities/ capabilities 	To promote and develop sports and youth activities on the Island
How many members does the organization have?	12 members (1F, 11M) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WDC president ■ 3 members nominated by the atoll chief 	23 members 22 female 1 male	315 members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 75 female ■ 250 male 18 is the minimum age to become a member
Internal structure of the organization	President = Island Chief Vice-pres. = Vice Island Chief Secretary = elected member (Mr. Ahmed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3 Meeting per month. ■ Members get an allowance of 20 Mrf for each meeting attended ■ Community meetings are called twice a year and/or whenever important community issues need to be discussed ■ No budget for administration ■ New rules in 2007; all the members will be elected by the community 	1 president 1 vice president 1 secretary elected for a two-year term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respectively, receiving 200, 175 and 150 Mrf per month from govt. Application for membership to the president Meetings held 4 times per month Allowance: 15 Mrf per meeting	Membership assembly and running committee composed of: president, vice-president, 2 secretaries (1 male, 1 female), 2 sports secretaries (1 M, 1F) budget secretary, and 10 members. The GA meet once a year, the RC every month <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Written rules and regulations ■ Not recognized by the govt.

* Example extracted from the Maldives VCA report, June 2006

Parent's and teacher's association	Scout association	Internally displaced people's committee (IDP)
Found in 1999 by the school, for involving parents in school matters	Mr. Gaasim initiated the Scout Association in 1986	From the MIDP in 2005
Involve parents in school management, organization and education (change of behaviour)	To help the development of students and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To identify the needs of IDPs and report them to Island Office, Atoll Office and MIDP ■ Co-managing IDP camps with the Island Office
All parents and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Selected students up to Grades 6 and 7 ■ at present, 38 male students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 10 members, of which 5 are IDPs ■ 2 facilitators, of which one is IDP
<p>Executive Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ President: Headmaster ■ Vice president (Jamila) ■ 10 members ■ Meeting = 1 per month 	<p>Council: 3 leaders, 4 patrol leaders and 4 assistant patrols</p> <p>Meeting: every Friday, 2 pm</p>	Not clear

	Island development committee (IDC)	Women's development committee	Maduvvayr Ekuveringe club
Main activities achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Seawall initiated by IDC, later taken-over and financed by the govt. ■ Harbour ■ Cable TV ■ Boundary wall for the mosque 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Organise cleaning of the island twice a month; ■ Prepare meals and decorations for public functions; ■ Organise stitching courses; ■ Contribute to the school, with a donation of 5 computers and 1 sound system – for a total value of 65.000 Mrf. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Built existing health centre (govt. + UNFPA 200.000 Mrf , Club provided free work) ■ Cleaning the island over a period of two months (handed-over to WDC) ■ Built the women's mosque ■ Jetty Red House ■ 10 toilets for the schools ■ Built cemetery (with IDC) ■ Organise and run pre-school ■ Provide service to fishermen for repairing boats ■ Organise football and volleyball competitions ■ Assist tsunami-affected people coming to the island (5000 Mrf -currency)
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sanitation and sewage project in preparation with the community ■ Water plan (RO) financed by International Federation was not well specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Build WDC offices ■ Awareness-raising on family planning , dengue and health matters ■ Organise food and decoration ■ Organise advanced courses in stitching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Finish the recreational centre with pre-school facilities ■ Sports events ■ Improve preschool

Parent's and teacher's association	Scout association	Internally displaced people's committee (IDP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Computer laboratory 	<p>Ongoing projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cleaning of beach and reef (waste management) ■ Plant a Neem tree in every house (total 500 trees) ■ Leaflet on environmental protection 	Not clear
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pursue current on-going projects 	Not clear

	Island development committee (IDC)	Women's development committee	Maduvvay Ekuveringe club
Fund-raising mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most of the activities/ budget are financed by the government ■ Wealthy Maduvvaree living in Male 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Receive 1500 MRF per month from the government ■ Preparing food and decorations or other work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Membership fees 50 MRF for male, 12 MRF for female members ■ Community contribution for projects ■ Donation from wealthy Maduvvaree living in Male
Difficulties and challenges encountered in the past and present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No dedicated office space; island office is being used. ■ No budget for administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No office space ■ Less job opportunities on the island for women, in particular for girls after finishing Grade 10 ■ Needs: training for women in health, nutrition, managing households and budgeting, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No space for construction of club building /pre-school ■ Raising money ■ Govt. promised to allot the plot where the IDP camps have been set
Interaction with other community organizations on the island	<p>Mostly with the Women's Development Committee</p> <p>No formal interaction</p>	<p>Mostly with IDC and Island Office</p>	<p>Good when required – Mostly with IDC</p>
Interaction with other community organizations in the atolls/ country		<p>With the islands of Fainu and Innamaadhoo, for obtaining material for roof-mat weaving</p>	<p>Before tsunami, with Kandholhudhoo</p>

Parent's and teacher's association	Scout association	Internally displaced people's committee (IDP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Funds from government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Government (very helpful) ■ Island Office ■ Community 	No fund-raising
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No difficulties so far ■ There is good cooperation with the parents <p><i>But</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ parents and teachers are concerned about drug problems (brown sugar) on the island; ■ more than 20 young people are addicted; ■ some of the them have left school; ■ problem has not yet been discussed at the PTA meeting; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Activities depend on teachers' motivation and availability ■ High cost of transport for scout club interchanges ■ Obtaining scout uniforms (material not available) 	<p>Only 3 meetings held so far – the committee is not functioning at all.</p> <p><i>IDP problems:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 block has not electricity ■ Salt water for bathing in Unit 4 ■ 11 IDP families living outside the IDP camp, complain about having to pay electricity, while other families are not paying. <p><i>Solution: hold meeting to discuss problems and report to the MDI</i></p>
<p>WDC= donation of 5 computers and 1 sound system, cleaning of school compound. IDC = submitted proposal for developing the computer laboratory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ekuvveringe = for sport activities 	The "Club" activities have started; at present, no interaction with other committees	No interaction with other committees
No contact with other PTAs	With Meedhoo, for camping	No interaction with other IDP committees

Table 8 Livelihoods chart*

<i>Income-generation activity</i>	<i>Who does it?</i>	<i>Per cent people employed?</i>	<i>What percentage of income does it provide?</i>	<i>What social security exists?</i>	<i>What are the threats?</i>	<i>What alternative livelihoods exist</i>
<i>Fishing</i>	Men/ Fishermen	30%	On average/ person Mrf 3000	None	Oil is expensive. Not enough boats. Young people are not interested.	Reef fishing
<i>Weaving</i>	Women	10%	1500	None	Not enough thatch.	Tailoring. Killi making. Cake decorating.
<i>Fish processing</i>	Men/ women	5%	2000	None	Not enough land.	None.
<i>Boat building</i>	Men	3%	2000	None	No demand for the work.	Daily labour (fishing & tourism)
<i>Construction</i>	Men	2%	1500	None	Less skilled people.	Daily labour (tourism)
<i>Agriculture</i>	Men/ women	1%	500	None	Not enough land. Not enough equipment.	Start own business
<i>Government work (office, teaching, health centre)</i>	Men/ women	6%	2000	Pension	Less job opportunities	Start own business.

* Example extracted from the Maldives VCA report, June 2006

	What alternatives could be considered?	How do people cope?	What preparedness activities would reduce loss of livelihoods?	How could this be satisfied?
	Look for any work available	Help from family and friends	Introduce fishing to young people	Awareness-raising programme for young people (Island Office)
	Learn another skill	Help from family and friends	Teach weaving to young people	Teach young people
	Salt the fish	Help from family and friends	Introduce fish processing to young people	Create fish processing area (Island Office)
	Daily labour (fishing & tourism)	Help from family and friends.	Fibreglass	Organize workshop (IDC)
	Daily labour (tourism, fishing, protection of walls)	Help from family and friends	Introduce construction to young people	Learning programme (people who know)
	Learn other skills	Help from family and friends	Get sufficient equipment /land	Create agricultural area (Island Office). Open agricultural shops (shop keeper) Awareness programme to consume more vegetable
	Start own business	Help from family and friends	Improve education on island. More government courses. Motivate people to work for government. Give more jobs to Maldivians	Provide more government courses

<i>Income-generation activity</i>	<i>Who does it?</i>	<i>Per cent people employed?</i>	<i>What percentage of income does it provide?</i>	<i>What social security exists?</i>	<i>What are the threats?</i>	<i>What alternative livelihoods exist</i>
<i>Local business (shops, restaurants)</i>	Men/ women	2%	1500	None	Shopkeepers do not have own dhoani for supply	Daily labour
<i>Tourism</i>	Men/ women	5%	2000	None	Lack of resorts. Many foreigners working in the resorts for less money.	Fishing
<i>Farming on uninhabited islands</i>	Men/ women	2%	800	None	Oil is expensive. Fertilizers are not available. Difficulty to access land.	Men: fishing Women: housework

What alternatives could be considered?	How do people cope?	What preparedness activities would reduce loss of livelihoods?	How could this be satisfied?
Daily labour	Help from family and friends	Make bigger businesses. (family business to cooperation)	Create shopping complex, shopping areas
Fishing. Daily labour	Help from family and friends	Establish laws to protect Maldivian workers and Maldivian products	Awareness-raising programme for resort people (tourism industry) and for job-seekers
Fishing. Daily labour	Help from family and friends	Get sufficient equipment	Government should allow agriculture on uninhabited islands. Provide access to live on uninhabited islands. Create more demand for agricultural products in Male. Transportation and access to markets (Male).

Conclusion

This training guide, the final document in the VCA series, is meant to do exactly that – guide VCA team leaders and facilitators in designing their training programme. It will not answer every question, nor does it provide examples to fit the needs of every VCA. The agenda, methods and tools are only suggestions, which can be adapted to your particular situation and the needs of the communities you are working with.

VCA is a powerful tool which aims to help National Societies work with communities to reduce risk and increase capacity. Remember that some communities may not be able to devote the necessary time to the process; others may not be fully engaged from the start. For these reasons, we need to be able to implement VCA in a flexible manner.

VCA practitioners should be aware of the local dynamics and ever-changing environment of community life, so as to tailor the process to the situation. This is the challenge which makes every VCA unique!

List of acronyms

BPI	Better programming initiative
CBDP	Community-based disaster preparedness
DM	Disaster management
GIS	Geographical information systems
IDP	Internally displaced people
NHQ	National headquarters
NDP	National development plan
NSP	National strategic plan
PAR	Pressure and release
PPP	Project planning process
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
VCA	Vulnerability and capacity assessment

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.