

URBAN GUIDE: Road Map to Community Resilience via Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (R2R via EVCA v2)

Urban considerations for
operationalizing the Framework
for Community Resilience through
the enhanced Vulnerability
and Capacity Assessment (EVCA)





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1

Overview



Who are these considerations for?

These considerations are intended for national society staff who are responsible for designing, planning, adapting, and overseeing the Roadmap to Community Resilience via Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (R2R via EVCA v2) in urban settings. This includes project and program managers, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) or Climate Change Adaption (CCA) focal points, urban resilience coordinators, and urban branch leadership who guide decision-making, partnerships, and resource allocation.

While facilitators and volunteers may also refer to this document, its primary function is to support management-level adaptation of the EVCA to urban context and realities, ensuring that engagement, assessment, and action planning respond to the diversity, density, governance complexity, and dynamic risks found in cities

What are these considerations for?

Urban environments are highly interconnected systems shaped by multiple layers of governance, diverse populations, informal and formal networks, and evolving social, economic, and environmental pressures. Without intentional contextual understanding, resilience programming can become ineffective or even harmful, as EVCA was initially designed with rural settings in mind.

These considerations are designed to help National Societies adapt each stage of the EVCA to better:

- Understand the urban context and how communities define themselves
- Navigate complex stakeholder landscapes and power dynamics
- Recognize the interplay between chronic stresses and sudden shocks
- Ensure inclusive, participatory, conflict-sensitive, climate-smart approaches
- Connect community action with municipal plans and service systems

In essence, these considerations help ensure that EVCA in cities is both feasible and relevant to the realities of urban community resilience.

What is the Roadmap to Community Resilience via Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment v2 (R2R via EVCA v2)?

The R2R via EVCA v2 provides step-by-step guidance on how to operationalize the IFRC's Framework for Community Resilience using the Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (EVCA) process.

It is a guide for National Society staff, volunteers, the IFRC, and operational partners who wish to help communities become safer and stronger

The R2R via EVCA outlines four main stages for building community resilience:

- Stage 1 (Engage and connect)
- Stage 2 (Understand risk and resilience, which uses the EVCA)
- Stage 3 (Take action to strengthen resilience),
- Stage 4 (Learn)

It draws on six characteristics and eleven dimensions of resilience to guide community-led analysis, action, and learning.

Learn more at:

<https://preparecenter.org/site/evca/>

How do these considerations relate to other documents and work?

These considerations do not replace the R2R via EVCA¹ or its toolbox.

They are a **supplement to be used alongside IFRC's existing tools, frameworks and work** such as:

- [EVCA Toolbox and dashboard](#)²
- [Community Resilience Measurement Dashboard](#)³
- [Community Engagement and Accountability](#)⁴
- [Protection, Gender and Inclusion](#)⁵
- [Urban Resilience Dashboard](#)⁶ and [Urban Action Kit](#)⁷
- [Climate-smart disaster risk reduction programming resource](#)⁸
- [GDPC Urban Community Resilience Toolkits](#)⁹
- [GDPC Urban Collaboration Platform](#)¹⁰
- [Global Climate Resilience Platform](#)¹¹
- [IFRC guide for Navigating fragility, conflict and violence \(FCV\) to strengthen community resilience](#)¹²
- [ICRC Safer Access Framework](#)¹³

How is this document organized?

This document begins with an overview of urban risks and resilience, as understanding these concepts is key for national societies adapting the R2R via EVCA v2 in urban areas.

This document then follows the four stages and milestones of the R2R via EVCA v2.

For each step, it provides:

- A brief urban reality affecting EVCA implementation
- Urban-specific considerations to adapt the step
- Tips, tools, and suggested facilitation approaches
- Case examples where applicable

1 https://preparecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/FINAL-Road-Map-to-Community-Resilience-v2_En.pdf

2 <https://preparecenter.org/site/evca/>

3 <https://rmd.ifrc.org/>

4 <https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/inclusion-protection-and-engagement/community-engagement-and-accountability>

5 <https://pgi.ifrc.org/>

6 <https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/disasters-climate-and-crises/urban-resilience>

7 <https://www.ifrc.org/document/urban-action-kit>

8 <https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/disasters-climate-and-crises/climate-smart-disaster-risk-reduction/climate-smart-disaster>

9 <https://preparecenter.org/toolkit/urban-community-resilience-toolkits/>

10 <https://preparecenter.org/initiative/red-cross-red-crescent-urban-collaboration-platform/>

11 <https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/disasters-climate-and-crises/climate-smart-disaster-risk-reduction/global-climate>

12 https://preparecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Full-Handbook_RCC-Navigating-fragility-conflict-and-violence-to-strengthen-community-resilience.pdf

13 <https://saferaccess.icrc.org/>

2

Urban Risks and Resilience: What makes cities different

Defining a city

Cities are complex, interconnected systems that are characterized by unique governance arrangements, diverse populations, networks, and multi-layered service and market structures. These characteristics fundamentally shape how risks emerge and interact. These characteristics also provide unique opportunities for how risks are managed, but they also offer significant capacities that different actors such as municipal institutions, service providers, civil society organizations, private-sector partners, and community networks can build on. Together, these urban actors and systems create opportunities for more collaborative, scalable, and sustainable approaches to managing and reducing the risks. Key features of urban systems include:

- **Stronger and more diverse governance structures.** For instance, there are multiple municipal departments (water, waste, transport, health, planning) that act as critical operational partners.
- **Dense networks of service providers:** Cities have public and private utility providers responsible for water, electricity, telecommunications, waste management, and health services.
- **Dynamic and competitive markets:** Cities have diverse supply chains and private-sector actors that enable rapid restocking and economic recovery.
- **Rich data ecosystems:** In cities, administrative records, population registries, GIS layers, and private-sector datasets (e.g., mobile operators) are more likely to exist.
- **Skilled and specialized human capital:** Cities have access to engineers, planners, technicians, medical specialists, and a large informal labour force.
- **Strong civil society and community-based networks:** Cities have NGOs, neighbourhood groups, faith-based actors, and migrant networks that support social cohesion and local knowledge.
- **Digital and communication infrastructures:** In cities, high connectivity enables digital CEA, two-way communication, and remote monitoring.
- **Transport and logistics ecosystems:** In cities, roads, public transit, ports, warehouses, and commercial logistics enables rapid movement of goods and services.

- **Availability of private-sector solutions:** In cities, technology firms, contractors, retailers, and utilities can support scalable resilience actions.

Key Take Away

- Cities are “riskscapes” where **multiple hazards and stresses overlap**
- Urban areas face **shocks** (floods, epidemics, fires) and **chronic stresses** (poverty, exclusion, pollution)
- **Rapid and unplanned urban growth** increases exposure and pressure on services
- **Climate and environmental factors** (heat islands, flooding, poor air quality) intensify risks
- **Risk is unequal.** Low-income and informal settlements are most exposed and least protected
- Cities **offer unique opportunities for resilience** through coordinated planning, infrastructure, innovation, social networks and community engagement.
- Cities concentrate knowledge, resources, and communities, enabling powerful collective action for resilience.

Urban Risk Landscapes

Urban areas can be understood as “riskscapes”, places where **multiple hazards, chronic stresses, and systemic vulnerabilities converge and interact within complex and interconnected systems**. Risk in cities is shaped not only by sudden shocks such as floods, earthquakes, heatwaves, or epidemics, but also by chronic everyday pressures such as unemployment, insecurity, air and water pollution, and inadequate access to services. These risks accumulate over time and steadily erode the capacity of households and communities to cope, adapt, and recover.

Rapid and unplanned urbanization is a core driver. As cities expand, often into informal, fragile, or hazard-prone areas, population, infrastructure, housing, and essential services become highly concentrated. This density can amplify hazard impacts and accelerate the spread of disease and disruption across systems.

Urban risk is also shaped by **physical and environmental factors**. Many cities are located in high-risk areas such as coastlines, steep slopes, or seismic zones. Flooding is common and worsened by impermeable surfaces (concrete, asphalt), aging or insufficient drainage systems, and the loss of natural buffers. The Urban Heat Island Effect increases vulnerability to extreme heat, which is escalating due to climate change. Air, water, and noise pollution further undermine health, particularly for low-income residents.

Cities are also exposed to **technological and secondary hazards**, including fires in overcrowded settlements, industrial accidents, chemical spills, and interruptions to lifelines such as water supply, energy, transport, and health services. Because urban systems are **highly interconnected, disruptions in one sector can cascade** quickly into others, producing widespread and prolonged impacts.

Risk is not distributed evenly. Informal settlement residents, migrants, and low-income households are often located in the most exposed and underserved areas, where housing is insecure, infrastructure is weak, and fear of eviction prevents investment in safer living conditions. Social exclusion, poverty, and inequality deepen vulnerability and limit recovery capacity.

Understanding risk in urban settings therefore requires **looking beyond individual hazards to the relationship between hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and capacity**, and to the broader systems, governance arrangements, and social structures that shape access to safety, services, and opportunity.

In urban contexts, **reducing risk requires working with cities, not only in them**. Urban communities depend on municipal authorities, service providers, and private actors whose systems shape exposure, services, and recovery. Because governance is shared across sectors and jurisdictions, effective interventions require co-producing risk information with city actors, engaging municipal departments, and ensuring community insights inform planning. Strengthening these relationships is essential for systemic, long-term resilience.



*Iraqi Red Crescent raising awareness about extreme heat.*¹⁴

14 <https://www.ifrc.org/article/heat-action-day-june-2-how-iraqi-red-crescent-hely-safe>

What is Urban Community Resilience?

Urban community resilience is the **ability of people, households, and social groups in cities to anticipate, withstand, respond to, and recover from multiple and interconnected shocks and stresses**, while sustaining and improving their wellbeing over time. In urban settings, resilience depends not only on local assets and capacities, but also on access to essential services, secure and sustainable livelihoods, inclusive decision-making, and the ability to navigate complex social, economic, and governance systems. The goal is creating a sustainable and adaptable environment that can thrive in the face of various challenges. Building resilience requires strengthening the systems and relationships that support wellbeing every day This includes:

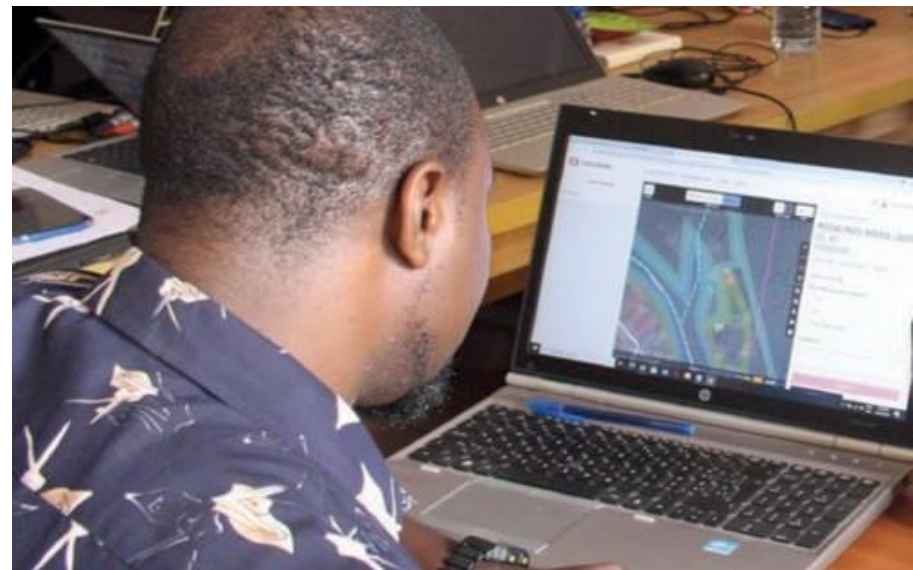
- Reducing everyday risks, not just disaster impacts
- Improving access to reliable and safe services
- Strengthening social cohesion and inclusion
- Supporting local leadership and participation
- Addressing underlying drivers of vulnerability such as insecure housing, inequality, or marginalization.

Resilience in cities therefore requires working with communities and the systems that shape their lives such as local authorities, service providers, civil society networks, and private actors.

What Is Different About Urban Community Resilience?

Building urban community resilience requires a multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary approach, While the R2R via EVCA process remains the same, applying it in urban settings requires recognizing how risk, vulnerability, and capacity function differently in cities. It also includes understanding some features maybe more pronounced in urban areas such as:

- Community identity is fluid, overlapping, and may not align with neighbourhood boundaries
- There are Multiple institutions, authorities, private sector actors, and informal networks
- Livelihoods are market-driven, informal, mobile, or precarious
- Risks are multi-hazard, chronic, and often cascading across systems
- Vulnerability shaped by access to housing, services, and differing socio-economic opportunities
- Urban areas offer distinct capacities such as dense community networks, diverse local actors, specialized knowledge, and access to services and resources that resilience efforts can build on and mobilize.



Nigerian Red Cross using digital tools for EVCA.¹⁵



Launch of IFRC Global Climate Resilience Platform.¹⁶

¹⁵ https://preparecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2.-IFRC_NGA_CaseStudy_FV.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.climatecentre.org/9537/ifrc-launches-global-climate-resilience-platform-to-support-500-million-people-on-front-line-of-climate-crisis/>



Spanish Red Cross carrying out a climate mapping exercise.¹⁷



Urban Collaboration Platform 2025 in South Korea¹⁸

Our approach to Urban Community Resilience

The IFRC take a **systems-oriented, inclusive, and community-driven approach** to strengthening resilience in cities. While the R2R via EVCA v2 remains the Movement's main framework, its application in urban areas requires understanding how **people, systems, and institutions interact** across complex networks.

Effective urban programming for resilience depends on **three interlinked pillars**:

- **Context Analysis:** Understanding the socio-economic, political, and environmental dynamics, and how communities and systems are interconnected. Analyses should be conflict-sensitive, ensuring interventions **"do no harm"** principle
- **Stakeholder Analysis:** Identifying formal and informal actors such as municipal authorities, private sector, civil society, and community groups, to build collaboration and co-design inclusive initiatives.
- **Risk Assessment and planning**¹⁹: This helps communities including urban areas, assess their vulnerabilities and capacities, fostering locally led, evidence-based, and sustainable resilience actions.

Together, these pillars enable National Societies to **bridge local action and systemic change**, promoting inclusive and adaptive urban resilience

Operationalizing our approach to resilience

Our approach to urban community resilience is operationalized through global and practical mechanisms. These include the Global Climate Resilience Platform (GCRP), the Urban Collaboration Platform (UCP), the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) initiative, and practical tools such as the Roadmap to Resilience via EVCA (R2R via EVCA) and the Urban Action Kit. These work together to strengthen local capacities, partnerships, and climate-smart action.

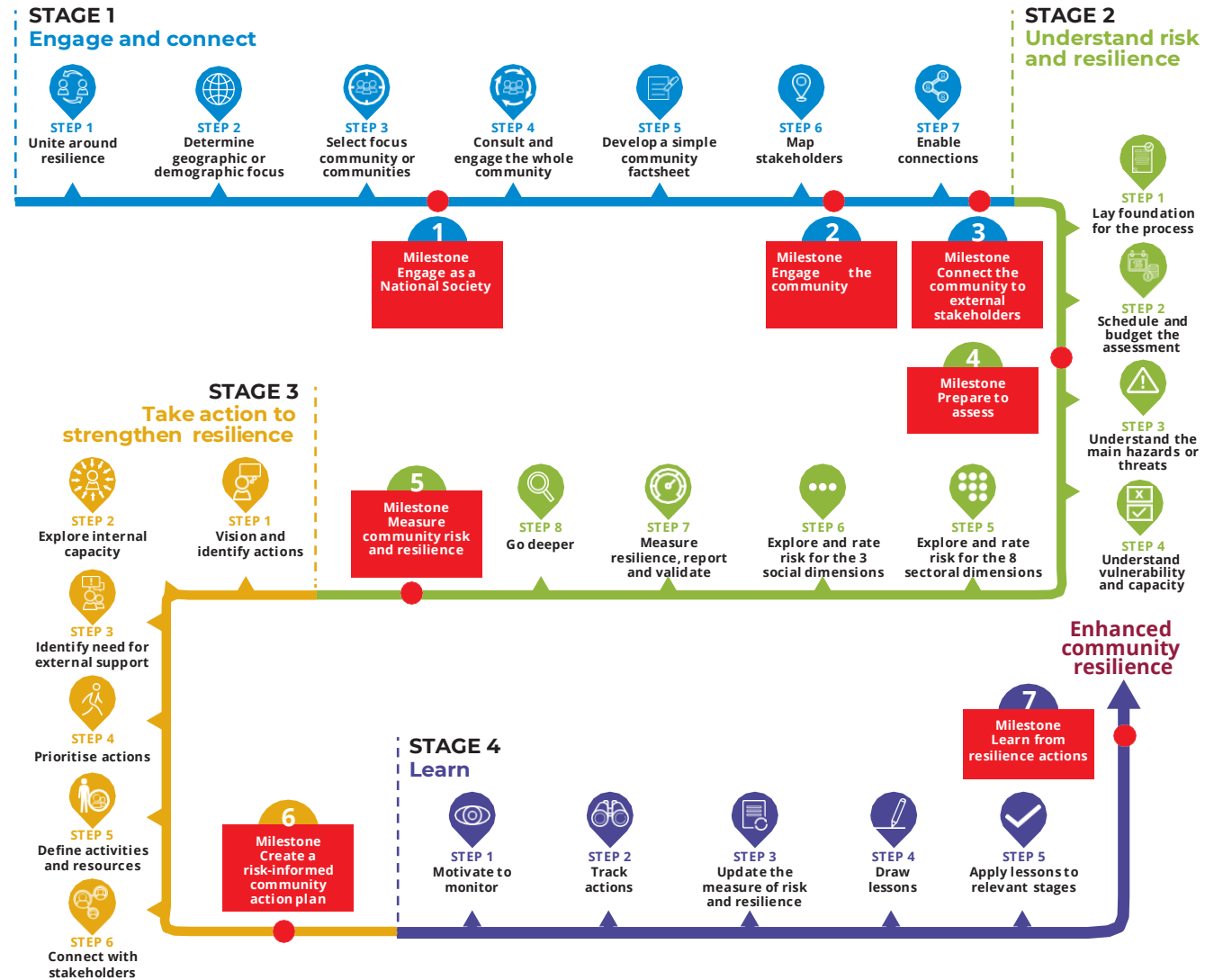
¹⁷ <https://www.zurich.foundation/climate-change/ucrp>

¹⁸ https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Urban%20Collaborative%20Platform_2024_Conference_Report.pdf

¹⁹ <https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/disasters-climate-and-crises/climate-smart-disaster-risk-reduction/risk-assessment-planning>

3

Applying the R2R via EVCA v2 to Urban Contexts



In urban areas, applying the R2R via EVCA requires additional considerations. Cities are shaped by layered risks, complex governance systems, diverse and fluid communities, and deep inequalities. **The Urban Considerations guide for EVCA** will enable National Societies interpret this complexity and meaningfully support urban communities in understanding risk and co-designing resilience strategies, and advocacy programs.

EVCA in urban areas must consider:

- Multiple and secondary hazards
- Cascading risks
- Patterns of inequality and exclusion
- Systems and infrastructure dependencies
- Power dynamics and governance arrangements.
- Mobility and fluid community composition

STAGE 1: Engage and Connect

Milestone 1: Engage as a National Society (Step 1-3)

This milestone focuses on internal alignment and commitment within the National Society (NS), ensuring all sectors understand that resilience is “everybody’s business”. It involves uniting the NS around resilience, reviewing core principles, determining the geographic or demographic focus, and selecting specific focus communities based on agreed criteria



Step 1: Unite around resilience

Step 1 focuses on building **internal alignment and shared commitment** within the National Society before engaging with communities. It ensures staff understand the Movement’s approach to resilience, including the core services, landmarks, and the 11 dimensions of resilience, and agree on how the EVCA will be used. This step establishes an inclusive resilience team, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and considers implications for funding, coordination, and organizational development.

Urban Context and Reality

Although Step 1 is an internal preparatory step, working in and/or better with cities introduces additional layers of complexity that should inform early planning discussions. Urban contexts are shaped by dense populations, diverse and overlapping communities, multi-level governance structures, complex power relations and interconnected systems (infrastructure, services, markets, and social networks). Recognizing this from the start strengthens internal alignment and prepares the NS for the realities of urban engagement.

Urban Consideration:

- **Apply systems thinking early** to understand how urban risks cut across sectors such as governance, services, infrastructure, climate, and social dynamics.
- **Ensure broad and multi-sectoral representation** in the resilience team, including staff familiar with urban services, social inclusion, migration, policy engagement, and basic infrastructure.
- Clarify the NS’s **auxiliary and bridging role within urban governance**, including how it can connect communities to municipal authorities, utilities, and other city actors.
- Acknowledge **multi-hazard and chronic urban stresses** (e.g., extreme heat, social violence, informality, service disruptions) when planning internal alignment and capacity needs.
- **Consider resource implications early:** urban resilience work often requires more time for coordination, stakeholder engagement, and advocacy than rural programs.

EVCA STAGE 1: Engage and Connect

Stage 1: “Engage and connect” is foundational, focusing on setting up the necessary internal and external relationships before undertaking the assessment phase

The main goal of Stage 1 is to ensure that the process is an integrated, multi-sectoral, multilevel effort within the National Society, as resilience is considered everybody’s business

This stage has 3 Milestones:

Milestone 1: Engage as a National Society

Milestone 2: Engage the community

Milestone 3: Connect the community to external stakeholders



Step 2: Determine Geographic focus

In Step 2, the resilience team gathers existing risk, vulnerability, and demographic information to identify which geographic areas or population groups are most at risk. This includes reviewing national and municipal hazard data, statistics, previous assessments (including Partner National Societies), [510 data](#), and the [Community Resilience Dashboard](#) scan. The purpose is to ensure the EVCA begins with an evidence-based, equitable, and feasible focus for engagement.

Urban Context and Reality

Urban settings introduce complexities that influence how the focus is selected.

- **Urban risk is uneven and often hidden.** National profiles may overlook small but highly exposed pockets such as informal settlements, hazard-prone low-income neighbourhoods, and migrant-dominated areas.
 - **Communities are not always geographical.** Urban identity often forms around livelihood, migration status, shared services, culture, or informal networks, rather than administrative boundaries.
 - Rapidly growing **secondary cities may have emerging risks** due to unplanned expansion, weak services, population growth, and high mobility
 - **Multiple approaches may be required:** Urban areas have different analytical approaches for addressing risks, such as area-based approaches (when geographic areas have multiple communities with differing risk exposures and resilience to the same hazards), systems-based approaches (where there is a need of critical infrastructure to be improved to increase access for vulnerable groups), and market-based approaches (where there is a need for the recovery of local markets). This means no single analytical approach captures the full picture.
 - **Demographic approaches may be challenging.** Multiple overlapping identities make demographic-only targeting less effective in cities
 - **Urban poor often live in hazardous areas:** Affordability pushes people into flood plains, steep slopes, and insecure or marginal land.
- **More data is available.** Urban settings often have detailed municipal datasets such as GIS hazard layers, urban profiles, mobility maps, building density maps, and service access data.

Urban Consideration:

- **Clarify “resilience of whom and to what?”.** This determines whether the focus should be geographic (neighbourhood), functional (market vendors, renters), demographic, or systems-based.
- **Use richer secondary data sources.** Leverage municipal GIS, urban profiles, satellite imagery, and mobility mapping to identify micro-level risk hotspots.
- **Consider “functional communities,”** not only geographic ones. Where boundaries do not reflect social reality, focus may centre on:
 - o livelihood groups (market vendors, waste pickers)
 - o migrant or identity groups
 - o residents of specific building blocks or rental clusters
 - o users of the shared services (markets, water points, transport hubs)
- Integrate **“do no harm” principle and reflect** on potential positive and negative, intended and unintended, effects on neighbouring communities when choosing a focus area
- Be prepared to engage with **multiple communities and stakeholders.**
- **Combine approaches** where it is useful. Urban resilience may require blending of area-based approaches for neighbourhood complexity, systems-based approaches for infrastructure and service risks, market-based approaches for economically interconnected groups, and demographic approaches where risk groups are dispersed. The approach chosen should depend on the community in focus and their needs.
- **Analyse how risks may cascade across systems.** Some neighbourhoods face greater compound vulnerability because disruptions in transport, water, electricity, or housing can rapidly escalate. This helps identify priority hotspots without conducting a full analysis yet.
- **Include transient, informal, hidden populations, and mobile groups** such as renters, informal workers, undocumented migrants, or seasonal labourers
- **Allow the focus to evolve.** In dynamic cities, initial prioritization may need revisiting once community engagement deepens.



Step 3: Select a focus community or communities

Step 3 uses established criteria to prioritize and formally select one or more communities or population groups to begin the resilience-building process. Communities are defined as “a group of people who may or may not live in the same area and share similar culture, habits, and resources,” and who face common threats. The purpose of this step is to ensure the EVCA begins with a clear, feasible, and equitable focus for long-term accompaniment..

Urban Context and Reality

- **Communities overlap, are mobile, and may be dispersed.** Households often belong to multiple networks (religious, livelihood, social, ethnic). A single geographic focus may contain many communities.
- **Urban authorities define and plan neighbourhoods differently.** Official boundaries often do not reflect lived community realities and may exclude informal settlements and self-identities. A single administrative block may contain several distinct communities.
- **Some communities are reluctant to be identified.** Migrants, undocumented groups, informal workers, and those without ID may avoid visibility, yet are often most at risk.
- Urban communities have **complex organization and may lack traditional social cohesion**, making identification of legitimate representatives difficult.
- **Communication and access can be challenging.** Informal power structures, insecure tenure, and dense settlement patterns complicate outreach.
- **Risk exposure is influenced by social relationships.** Overlapping communities shape how hazards cascade across areas, infrastructure, and networks (e.g., market closures affecting multiple neighbourhoods).
- Any selected focus **will require coalition-building** with municipal authorities, service providers, and civil society actors who often hold critical influence in urban resilience.

Urban Consideration:

- **Use both administrative boundaries and self-identification.** Communities may self-identify by ethnicity, livelihood, migration status, shared services, or culture. These may be as important as administrative boundaries.
- **Recognize overlaps, mobility, and decentralization.** Urban residents commonly belong to multiple communities at once.
- **Don't let the number of communities overwhelm the process.** Simplify by identifying the groups most relevant to your intervention (e.g., women vendors, undocumented migrants, business owners, building-block residents, school communities).
- **Apply a “Resilience for Whom?” reflection** to ensure vulnerable, invisible, and marginalized groups are not overlooked.
- **Assess how the city defines and manages** neighbourhoods and how this affects communities differently. Pay attention to informal settlements that may fall outside formal plans.
- **Be prepared to work with multiple communities and stakeholders**, especially municipal actors, informal leaders, service providers, and private-sector groups.
- Plan for **additional funding and resources** for coordination, partner engagement, and the layered nature of urban programming.
- Use R2R via EVCA v2 **selection criteria with an urban lens**:
 - o Risk: Identify specific hotspots or clusters with severe vulnerability.
 - o Access: Assess feasibility of entering informal or insecure areas. Utilise [IFRC guide for navigating FCV](#) and/or [ICRC Safer Access Framework](#).
 - o Interest: Engage both formal and informal leaders without creating false expectations.
 - o Impact: Consider cluster or phased engagement to link local actions with municipal processes.
 - o Resources: Ensure long-term accompaniment capacity, as urban resilience demands sustained partnerships and advocacy.
- **Remain flexible.** Urban realities evolve quickly; the focus community may need to be refined once deeper engagement begins in Step 3 or Step 4.

CASE STUDY

Defining community in SURE Programme, Nepal Red Cross

In Nepal's rapidly urbanizing municipalities, the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) found traditional, **geographic definitions of community** that were effective in rural VCA approaches did not reflect how people actually organized their lives in cities. Urban neighbourhoods were highly heterogeneous, socially fragmented, and shaped by mobility, informal work, and unequal power relations. Using geographic boundaries risked excluding "hidden" or hard-to-reach groups such as Dalits, informal workers, landless people, Persons with Disabilities, and single female-headed households.

To address this, the SURE project adopted a **non-geographic, network-based definition** of community. Drawing on urban research, SURE worked with six types of urban community: **communities of place, interest, resistance, culture, practice, and virtual/digitised networks**. This approach recognized that in urban areas, people are connected not by location but by shared identities, livelihoods, experiences, and communication networks. It also helped avoid reproducing traditional power structures embedded in neighbourhood committees.

By defining communities through the networks people actually relied on such as family, markets, temples, employment groups, online platforms, the SURE approach enabled NRCS to more accurately identify vulnerable groups and ensure their perspectives were included in urban disaster resilience planning.

What may a Community in an Urban Area be like?

- A neighborhood or settlement
- A migrant or displaced group
- A livelihood network
- A group sharing a identity (e.g. cultural, religious, professional, gender, socioeconomic, political, age etc.) group
- A group connected through digital or social ties



Nepal Red Cross worked with local communities



Sources:

<https://ktmredcross.org.np/sure-programme/>

https://climatecentre.org/downloads/modules/training_downloads/Sure%20Urban%20Assessment%20Guidelines_may_2017.pdf

https://climatecentre.org/downloads/modules/training_downloads/2e%20IFRC%20Urban_resilience_scoping_report.pdf

Photo:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile/100076654830843/search/?q=sure%20programme>

Milestone 2: Engage the community (Step 4-6)

This milestone is reached when the NS has helped the selected community organize itself, enabling every member, especially the most vulnerable, to participate in the process. Key outcomes include consulting the whole community, selecting a representative Community Resilience Team (CRT), developing a simple community factsheet, and mapping internal and external stakeholders



Step 4: Consult and engage the whole community

Step 4 focuses on achieving broad and inclusive engagement. The NS works with community leaders to explain the need for engagement, introduce the concept of resilience and 11 dimensions of resilience, and identify or form a representative Community Resilience Team (CRT). This step guides the next steps and to take the resilience process forward.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban settings make **consultation and engagement significantly more complex**.
- **Multiple communities coexist, overlap, or remain hidden** within the same geographic area. Many urban residents belong to several communities at once (livelihood, migration networks, religion, shared services, workplace).
- Urban communities may **be difficult to identify or contact**, especially informal renters, undocumented migrants, mobile workers, or people who intentionally avoid visibility.
- **Engaging the whole community is often too time and resource intensive**, and cannot rely solely on administrative neighbourhoods.
- Urban areas often have existing organized groups, such as building associations, market committees, neighbourhood groups, school councils, sports clubs, or cultural associations, which can be leveraged to broaden participation.
- Because of **mobility, density, and heterogeneity of the communities we encounter in urban settings**, additional effort is needed to ensure so

called vulnerable and marginalized groups are represented and not overshadowed by more visible or powerful voices and that **engagement methods are adapted to different schedules and locations**.

Urban Considerations

- Recognize that **consultation will be time and resource-intensive** due to due to size, mobility, overlapping identities, and hidden populations.
- Plan for **multiple engagement rounds at different times and locations**, to ensure participation from people with non-standard schedules, long commutes, shift work, or multiple jobs.
- **Do not rely on community leaders alone**. In cities, leaders may represent only one group. Proactively seek out people who are not seen or do not want to be seen, such as undocumented migrants, informal workers, sub-tenants, or street-linked populations.
- **Engage multiple communities**. within the same focus area by **tailoring outreach** to different networks (livelihood groups, migrant networks, youth, women's groups, disability groups, faith groups).
- **Use existing urban structures**. Engage building management committees, neighbourhood associations, market vendor associations, cultural clubs, or municipal ward committees to broaden reach.
- **Validate representation and legitimacy**. Ensure the CRT selection process is transparent and fair so the group reflects age, gender, ethnicity, mobility status, disability inclusion, and diverse social groups.
- **Apply "do no harm" principle and identify connectors and dividers early**. Urban areas have strong social and political tensions. Thus, it may help to map power dynamics and prevent exclusion.
- **Support accessibility for marginalized groups**. Use multiple languages, neutral and safe locations, low-barrier formats (visuals, storytelling), and, where appropriate, digital channels (SMS, WhatsApp, social media groups).
- **Plan for additional resources for coordination**. Plan for **additional coordination resources** such as more meetings, more partners, and more facilitation support than in rural contexts.
- **Provide introductory training** to the CRT to ensure a shared understanding of risk concepts, the eleven resilience dimensions, inclusion principles, and the EVCA process.



Step 5: Develop a simple community factsheet

In Step 5, the newly formed Community Resilience Team (CRT) gathers basic information about the community. This factsheet becomes a baseline reference against which future progress and change can be measured. The CRT is encouraged to organize the collected information using the 11 Dimensions of Community Resilience.

Urban Context and Reality

- **Urban areas often have extensive secondary datasets**, including municipal statistics, hazard maps, health surveillance data, mobility maps, and GIS layers.
- **Informal settlements may have large data gaps**, since many residents are undocumented, mobile, or absent from census data.
- **Urban communities may not be geographically bounded**, so the factsheet may need to reflect demographic, livelihood-based, or network-based groups.
- **Exposure and capacity vary widely** within a single neighbourhood (different building types, tenure status, service access, and vulnerabilities.)
- Urban risks often involve **cascading impacts across systems** (e.g., flooding may cause power outages that leads to transport disruption and this may lead to market closure).
- **More than one community may exist within the selected focus area**, requiring multiple factsheets or a composite overview that highlights differences in exposure and access to services.

Urban Considerations

- **Develop a factsheet for each relevant community**, especially where multiple overlapping groups exist (e.g., tenants, street vendors, migrant networks, market associations).
- **Leverage secondary urban data** (municipal GIS layers, hazard maps, urban profiles, census, satellite imagery, open data, service maps).
 - **Utilize AI-assisted tools** (e.g., GANNET.AI) as this may help consolidate and process existing datasets.
- **Validate secondary data with the community**, particularly in informal settlements where official records are incomplete. This may help to correct inaccuracies and capture invisible realities (like informal tenure or unregistered businesses).
- **Capture settlement patterns and service access**, including:
 - building density, housing types, materials
 - tenure status (owners, renters, sub-renters, informal occupants)
 - proximity to critical services (water points, clinics, transport hubs)
- Participatory digital tools such as [Sketch Map Tool](#) can support validate data, and visualize patterns by verifying features directly with residents
- **Include key urban systems and cascading effects**, such as electricity and water supply networks, waste management, market systems and supply chains, transport and mobility, social service infrastructure
- Ensure the factsheet reflects **vulnerable or less-visible groups** such as informal workers, undocumented migrants, street-linked populations, domestic workers, waste pickers.
- **Aggregate** multiple factsheets **only where appropriate**, depending on the nature and scale of the intervention.
- Ensure the factsheet aligns with **functional communities** identified, not just administrative boundaries.
- **Maintain a Do-No-Harm lens when collecting sensitive data** (e.g., ethnicity, migration status, political affiliation) only, when necessary, safe, and agreed with the community.

CASE STUDY

Digitalizing Paper-Based Community Mapping in the EVCA, Colombian Red Cross

During an EVCA process in Colombia, the Colombian Red Cross (CRC), together with the German Red Cross (GR Assessment (EVCA)). While paper-based mapping is low-cost, intuitive, and highly participatory, its outputs are often difficult to update, share, or preserve. Converting these hand-drawn maps into digital formats has traditionally required significant technical skills and time, as geolocation must be manually recreated.

To address this challenge, the Colombian Red Cross (CRC), with support from the German Red Cross and the HeiGIT (Heidelberg Institute for Geoinformation Technology), piloted the [Sketch Map Tool \(SMT\)](#) in 2023. The SMT, developed by HeiGIT, is a free web-based tool that automates the digitalization of markings made on printed base maps derived from [OpenStreetMap](#), satellite or drone imagery. Using colour detection and automatic georeferencing, the SMT bridges paper-based community mapping with efficient digital analysis.

The project integrated the SMT into transect walks and focus group discussions in one urban-peripheral community in Bogotá. The process followed four phases: enhancing base maps through tracing building on satellite imagery during a [Missing Maps “Mapathon”](#); generating and printing Sketch Maps; conducting community mapping on the paper maps; and finally digitalizing and visualizing community information with the SMT website and in a Geographic Information System (GIS) software (see IFRC Network GIS Learning Platform). This approach maintained the strengths of participatory, paper-based EVCA activities while ensuring that results could be preserved, analyzed, updated, and repurposed for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and urban climate change adaptation planning.

The digitalized maps enabled the CRC and communities to visualize past flood exposure, local capacities, livelihood activities and the community’s development priorities (“dream maps”), supporting better local DRR decision-making, contingency planning, and advocacy. The initiative also strengthened CRC’s technical skills in GIS, open mapping approaches such as the [Missing Maps “Mapathon”](#), and data management while improving the quality of OpenStreetMap data in the project area. Overall, the SMT allowed communities to retain the accessibility of paper mapping while benefiting from the accuracy, longevity, and analytical power of digital tools.

Using Digital Tools

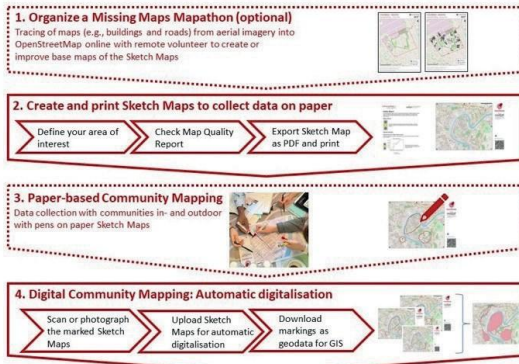
Digital tools help communities visualize how risks, resources, and aspirations relate across **interconnected urban systems**. By digitalizing community-drawn maps, it allows the National Society and the CRT to analyze physical, social, and economic patterns that shape vulnerability in dense and diverse neighborhoods.

Sources:

<https://preparecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/202403-Case-Study-DDR-in-Action-Columbia.pdf>

Source: IFRC

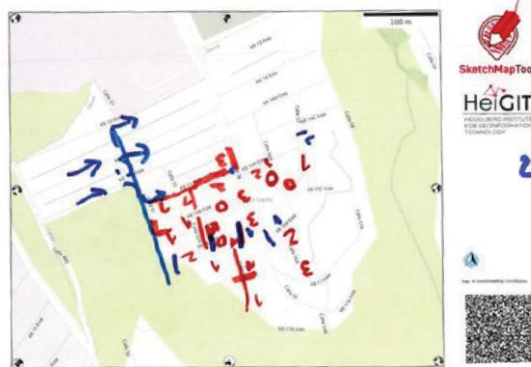
<https://gisience.github.io/gis-training-resource-center/content/intro.html>



Sketch Map of the case study location. GRC and K. Letzner

Sketch Map Tool

The easy-to-use, free web tool supports the creation of base maps, the so-called Sketch Maps, which can be exported, printed in different layout formats and its initial base information analysed. After markings are made with pens, the tool supports their digitalisation of the markings by automatically detecting their colour and geolocation.

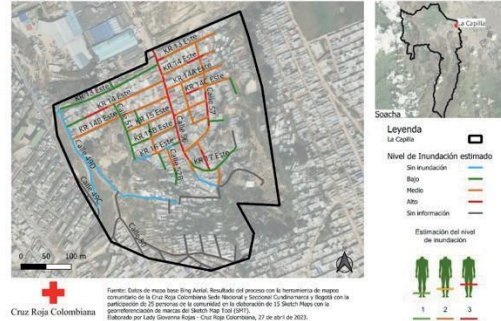


Sketch Map

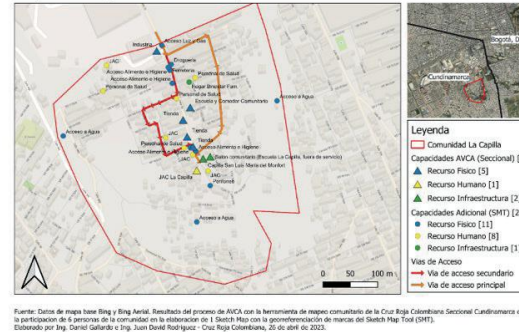
Sketch Maps depict freely available OpenStreetMap, satellite or drone imagery data at a selected scale. Sketching on these base maps aims at recording accurate georeferenced data, meaning that distances measured on the map always represent the equivalent scale-dependent distance on the ground.

Sketch Maps of community resources 1) Perception of flooded areas (lines) and estimated flood level (numbers), and 2) of community resources, Colombian Red Cross

Mapa de amenaza de inundación estimada - La Capilla



Mapa de Capacidades La Capilla



Digital community maps of 1) Flood perception, and 2) Capacities after the digitalizing and analysis in GIS, Colombian Red Cross



Step 6: Map the stakeholders

Step 3 uses established criteria to prioritize and formally select one or more communities or population groups to begin the resilience-building process. Communities are defined as “a group of people who may or may not live in the same area and share similar culture, habits, and resources,” and who face common threats. The purpose of this step is to ensure the EVCA begins with a clear, feasible, and equitable focus for long-term accompaniment.

Urban Context and Reality

- **Many more stakeholders exist in urban settings** such as municipal departments, utility companies, private service providers, CSOs, informal groups, and sometimes armed or informal power structures.
- **Multiple communities overlap**, and each may recognize different stakeholders.
- Urban stakeholders operate across **different levels and systems** (e.g., health, transport, water, markets).
- **Impossible to map every relationship**, but the community must identify the actors relevant to their risks and priorities.
- Urban projects, especially multi-hazard ones, require **additional time and resources** to map relevant actors.
- Connecting community action plans to **city-level systems and authorities** is essential; otherwise, plans may have limited impact.
- Some communities (informal migrants, undocumented people, people in illegal housing) may be reluctant to engage with authorities and stakeholder mapping must reflect this reality.
- Existing urban groups (tenant associations, building committees, market associations, school PTAs, religious groups) may already serve as connectors.

Urban Considerations

- **Map both formal and informal actors:**
 - municipal authorities, ward offices, utility providers
 - NGOs, CBOs, faith groups, volunteer networks
 - market associations, transport unions, street trader cooperatives
 - **informal power structures** (gangs, protection groups, intermediaries) where safe to mention
- **Understand interdependencies among stakeholders** operating within urban systems (e.g., water–energy–health linkages).
- **Use conflict-sensitive methods.** Apply the Stakeholder Analysis and City-Wide Risk Assessment tools. Refer to **Urban Conflict Sensitivity Guidelines, Better Programming Initiative, and [IFRC guide for navigating FCV to Strengthen Community Resilience](#).**
- **Ask communities who they trust and who they rely on**, not just who the NS sees as stakeholders.
- **Use multiple entry points** to uncover actors invisible to formal systems such as markets, transport hubs, shared courtyards, building managers, informal landlords.
- **Allocate more time and resources:** urban stakeholder mapping is inherently more complex.
- Map stakeholders through a **community-centred lens**, identifying how communities interact with systems and infrastructure.
- **Ensure links to city-level planning:** Stakeholder mapping should clearly identify which actors are essential for integrating community action plans into municipal processes.
- **Use Venn diagrams or network-mapping tools** to help communities visualize how urban actors interact across systems (e.g., utilities, markets, health, transport) and how influence differs at neighbourhood and city levels.
- Recognize that stakeholder landscapes may differ across **sub-communities**. Mapping may need to be repeated for different groups.
- Urban contexts benefit from **iterative mapping**. Revisit and update the map during later stages as new actors emerge.
- Using existing **networks** can improve identification of additional stakeholders and strengthen linkages across communities.

CASE STUDY

Stakeholder Mapping in the Greater Jakarta DRR Project

In flood-prone Jakarta, the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) placed stakeholder mapping at the center of its urban DRR and climate adaptation work. Recognizing that urban resilience depends on many actors such as municipal agencies, service providers, universities, community organizations, and the private sector. PMI developed a **comprehensive stakeholder mapping matrix** to understand who controlled key services and where influence lay.

The mapping highlighted coordination gaps, revealed which actors were often excluded, and helped frame community priorities in ways that aligned with government plans. PMI used the findings to convene multi-stakeholder workshops grounded in a **research-driven evidence base**, strengthening trust and collaboration. The project later recommended conducting an **in-depth organizational assessment** before such workshops to fully understand partners' roles and mandates.

This early investment proved critical. It enabled PMI to secure buy-in from local authorities, integrate community actions into city-level planning, and position itself as a credible partner in Jakarta's climate and disaster governance. This demonstrates how stakeholder mapping is the foundation for meaningful urban collaboration.

Urban systems are complex. Stakeholder mapping helps communities identify:

- Who controls essential services (water, drainage, waste, housing, electricity).
- Which actors hold influence, even if they do not operate locally.
- Where coordination gaps exist between government levels.
- Who is missing from the conversation (e.g., renters, informal workers, private providers).



Indonesian Red Cross continuing to support flood-affected communities

Sources:

https://climatecentre.org/downloads/modules/training_downloads/2e%20IFRC%20Urban_resilience_scoping_report.pdf

Photo:

<https://www.ifrc.org/article/indonesia-red-cross-continues-support-further-rains-are-forecast>

Milestone 3: Engage the community (Step 7)

In this milestone the NS acts as a “bridge” to help the community establish connections with external actors (such as government authorities, NGOs, and private companies), enabling the community to access public resources and contribute to decisions that strengthen their resilience



Step 7: Enable connections

In Step 7, the National Society assists the Community Resilience Team (CRT) to initiate contact with the organizations identified during stakeholder mapping. The CRT arranges introductory meetings to explain the community's intention to strengthen resilience, share examples of local shocks and stressors, and explore potential areas of collaboration after the risk assessment. The NS coaches CRT members in basic presentation, negotiation, and advocacy skills, and accompanies them if requested, while ensuring the CRT leads the engagement. After each meeting, the CRT documents outcomes, including stakeholder interest or commitments, which later inform the community action plan.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban areas contain **significantly more stakeholders across multiple governance levels** such as municipal, district, private sector, utilities, community groups, and informal authorities.
- Communities in cities may be **mobile, dispersed, overlapping**, or intentionally hidden (e.g., migrants, informal workers), making engagement more challenging.
- No single actor fully understands all stakeholder relationships within an urban system. Efforts must focus on the actors most relevant to the **community's priorities**.

- Urban areas often already have established groups (market associations, building committees, parent-teacher associations) that can be engaged rather than forming new groups.
- Community action plans will only have impact if connected to city-level actors, especially local development and disaster-management authorities.

Urban Considerations

- **Allocate additional time and resources** for reaching numerous stakeholders and coordinating across multiple sectors.
- **Prioritise the NS auxiliary and bridging role** to help vulnerable communities, especially informal or undocumented groups. Connect with municipal systems and service providers.
- **Use conflict-sensitive stakeholder analysis** to understand power relations, tensions, and potential risks when engaging diverse actors.
- **Prepare the CRT for advocacy**, including how to communicate resilience needs using language relevant to urban governance (service access, safety, infrastructure, city planning cycles).
- **Engage informal actors**, such as informal landlords, market leaders, neighbourhood gatekeepers, or community-specific leadership networks.
- **Focus on system interdependencies**, ensuring stakeholders linked to critical services (transport, water, waste, health, electricity) are included.
- **Document early relationships** to support future connection with municipal planning and ensure community priorities align with city-level processes.
- **Revisit stakeholder connections periodically**, as alliances and opportunities in cities can shift rapidly.

CASE STUDY

Using the Auxiliary Role to Influence Urban Policy and Legal Reform, Ecuadorian Red Cross

The Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) provides a strong example of how a National Society can use its auxiliary role to address politically sensitive urban vulnerabilities, particularly around insecure land tenure. After a major disaster, the ERC drew on its trained legal team to participate directly in shaping national legal frameworks, including the Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Law. This positioned the ERC as a technically credible actor capable of influencing government agendas and contributing to the construction of legal and institutional frameworks for disaster risk management.

In partnership with the Shelter and Protection Clusters, the ERC coordinated a national working group on Housing, Land and Property (HLP), working closely with municipalities and community members to understand complex tenure arrangements and land insecurity. This effort successfully led to the inclusion of informal tenants as beneficiaries of the Government's financial assistance for housing repair and reconstruction. The resulting legal framework formally recognized the ERC as a key player in national risk management and strengthened its legitimacy, access to resources, and ability to advocate for marginalized urban populations lacking secure tenure.



Ecuadorian Red Cross using their auxiliary role to influence urban policy.

Sources:

https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2025-08/PP%20case%20studies%20compilation_EN.pdf
https://climatecentre.org/downloads/modules/training_downloads/2e%20IFRC%20Urban_resilience_scoping_report.pdf
<https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/node/732>

The Auxiliary Role of National Societies when engaging with the community in urban Settings

The auxiliary role of National Societies (NSs) positions them as a bridge between communities and public authorities. In urban settings, this role becomes especially important because:

- governance is fragmented across multiple municipal departments and service providers;
- informal and marginalized groups often lack access to official channels;
- city-level planning processes rarely reflect the priorities of informal settlements or transient populations.

Through their auxiliary mandate, NSs can:

- facilitate access to public resources and services for vulnerable communities;
- support dialogue between communities and municipal actors;
- promote the inclusion of community priorities in local and city-wide disaster risk reduction and development planning;
- advocate for equitable service delivery and risk reduction investments.

This bridging function strengthens the long-term sustainability of community-led resilience efforts, ensuring they are recognized, supported, and embedded within city systems.

STAGE 2: Understand Risk and Resilience

Milestone 4: Prepare to assess (Step 1-2)

This milestone focuses laying the foundation for the assessment process, ensuring community ownership of the objectives, verifying consent, and conducting essential scheduling and budgeting.

EVCA STAGE 2: Understand Risk and Resilience

Stage 2: "Understand Risk and Resilience" utilizes the Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (EVCA) to guide communities to discuss and assess the relevant community resilience dimensions and how they relate to risk and its determinants, especially vulnerability and capacity

The main goal of this is to help communities generate a holistic understanding of the risks they face so they can subsequently plan appropriate actions to reduce those risks and strengthen their resilience

This stage has 2 major milestones:
Milestone 4: Prepare to assess
Milestone 5: Measure community risk and resilience



Step 1: Lay the foundation for the process

Step 1 prepares both the community and the National Society (NS) for the assessment by ensuring everyone understands and agrees on the objectives, roles, and practical arrangements of the process. The NS supports the Community Resilience Team (CRT) to confirm the purpose of the assessment, review past experiences, define roles and responsibilities, ensure the inclusion of all relevant subgroups, explain logistical arrangements, confirm consent, establish feedback and complaints mechanisms, and secure all necessary permissions, while upholding national regulations data sensitivity, privacy, and confidentiality throughout.

Urban Context and Reality

- **Working with external stakeholders.** Private sector actors, government agencies, utilities, and service providers are important part of the assessment, because communities depend on these systems for safety, wellbeing, and resilience.
- **Access and permissions can be more complex in cities,** involving municipal departments, building managers, private owners, or multiple layers of local authority.
- **Different segments of the community may have had very different experiences** with assessments in the past, influencing expectations and trust.
- Early engagement offers an **opportunity to strengthen social cohesion** by helping diverse groups recognize connectors and dividers based on shared risks, exposure and service dependencies. In urban contexts [connector/divider analysis as per BPI](#) must take into account social dynamics amongst different groups.

Urban Considerations

- **Clarify early** that the EVCA will involve external actors (municipal services, private utilities, health providers, landlords, market associations) because urban risks are system-dependent.
- **Explain that the process will likely include government agencies and private-sector actors**, so communities understand the broader scope of the assessment from the beginning.
- **Factor in additional permissions and time for data collection**, as it involves multiple urban authorities, not only one administrative office.
- Factor in asymmetric experience with past assessments to tailor future engagement. Some groups may have been engaged before, while others excluded may be sceptical.
- Use the **context analysis** from Stage 1 to carry out connectors/divider analysis that will lay the foundation of understanding urban risks.

OPTIONS	DIVIDERS	INTERVENTION	CONNECTORS	OPTIONS
What are the programmatic options for weakening and building on the dividers?	What are the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Systems and institutions · Attitudes and actions · Values and interests · Experiences · Symbols and occasions · Other (e.g., political, economic, social, legal, environmental) that cause division and cause competition?	What are Actions and Behaviour that have consequences for the interaction between the intervention and the context? (Who? What? When? Where? Why?)	What are the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Systems and institutions · Attitudes and actions · Values and interests · Experiences · Symbols and occasions · Other (e.g., political, economic, social, legal, environmental) that bring people together and facilitate collaboration?	What are the programmatic options for strengthening and building on the connectors?

Considerations for Context Analysis in an urban environment

The **politics**: instability in municipal leadership, limited coordination across departments, overlapping mandates, weak regulatory enforcement, and competition between authorities, utilities, and informal governance actors.

society: social fragmentation, structural discrimination, rapid displacement and migration, and low levels of trust in formal city systems, planning processes, and external actors.

economics: disrupted or uneven access to essential services across neighborhoods, socio-economic inequalities, and distribution of resources (housing, services, livelihoods) shaped by affiliation, status, or tenure.

security: localized violence, criminal groups, risks to personal safety, normalized insecurity in underserved areas, and the presence of informal power structures influencing access and mobility.

environment: inadequate resource management, overexploitation of land and services, pollution, and weak enforcement of environmental or building regulations.

for humanitarian actors: recurring urban crises, access constraints to certain neighborhoods, security risks, and limited ability to reach or engage marginalized or informal communities.



Step 2: Schedule and budget the assessment

Step 2 focuses on co-developing a realistic schedule and budget for the assessment with the community. This includes planning the sequence and timing of EVCA sessions, ensuring diverse groups can participate, identifying the resources and materials needed for data collection, and establishing the practical logistics required to run the assessment smoothly. Careful scheduling and budgeting strengthen community ownership and set the foundation for an inclusive and well-managed risk assessment.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban communities have highly **diverse and inflexible working hours** (shift work, multiple jobs, long commutes), making fixed multi-day sessions unrealistic.
- **Multiple communities** often occupy the same geographic area, and their relationships can be cooperative, competitive, or conflictive, affecting how sessions are sequenced and how long they take.
- Urban assessments require **more time and resources** because there are more systems, more stakeholders, and more secondary data to analyze.
- Without sufficient time and facilitation capacity, urban EVCA's risk becoming **high-level** and missing key vulnerabilities.
- The presence of **external systems** (utilities, transport, markets) means the scheduling must account for actors beyond the community itself.
- City residents often experience **time poverty**, making participation-dependent scheduling essential.
- Urban actions can affect neighbouring communities. Poor timing or rushed assessments can **create tensions or unintended harm**.

Urban Considerations

- **Plan for shorter, flexible, repeated sessions** rather than long continuous days schedule options in mornings, evenings, weekends, or multiple small group sessions. Take into consideration this may lengthen the total days it may take as seen in the table below.

- **Allocate more time and larger facilitation teams** to handle multiple communities or stakeholders in the same area.
- Use the **context analysis** from Stage 1 and connector/divider analysis to avoid scheduling that inadvertently reinforces tensions.
- **Consult each subgroup** (e.g., migrants, informal workers, market vendors, transport workers) to determine realistic participation windows.
- Integrate **“do no harm”** principle into scheduling. Urban tensions can escalate quickly if groups feel excluded or over-prioritized.
- Expect to spend more time on **secondary data review** and mapping system actors; reflect this in the timeline and budget.
- **Use digital tools where appropriate** (SMS polling, mobile data collection, online meetings) to reach residents who cannot attend in person.
- Budget for **additional engagement rounds** with groups who may be missed in first sessions (e.g., night workers, women with caregiving responsibilities, undocumented residents).
- Ensure communication about dates/locations reaches **all** community members, including those living dispersed, renters, or those who rarely attend in-person gatherings.
- When budgeting, plan for **urban-specific costs** such as renting multiple venues, providing transportation stipends, or acquiring digital tools.
- Ensure the timeframe allows for engagement with **multiple external systems** (e.g., water utilities, municipal planning departments).
- Clarify early that the EVCA will involve **actors outside the community**, since urban risk depends heavily on service providers and municipal departments.

Event	Rural	Urban
Full EVCA process (including assessing the community resilience dimensions and preparatory work)	3-4 Days	Approx. 10-14 Days
Introductions and the hazard/threat assessment	1/2 Day to 1 Day	2-4 Days
Vulnerability and capacity assessment (using the 11 dimensions of a resilient community)	2 - 2 1/2 Days	5-8 Days
Analysis and conclusions on risk levels	1/2 Day	2 Days

Milestone 5: Measure community risk and resilience (Step 3-8)

This milestone is reached when the community successfully uses the Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (EVCA) tools and analysis to generate a holistic understanding of their risks and vulnerabilities in relation to the 11 dimensions of community resilience.



Step 3: Understand the main hazards or threats

Step 3 focuses on helping the community understand the shocks, stresses, and hazards that affect them by introducing key concepts (hazard, vulnerability, capacity, risk), identifying and brainstorming threats, and using EVCA tools to explore these hazards across time, space, and social groups. The community then prioritizes the top hazards and characterizes their nature, behaviour, and impacts. This step anchors the assessment and prepares the community for deeper analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban areas face **multi-hazard, multi-stress environments**, where chronic everyday risks (rent pressure, insecurity, pollution, illness, transport disruption) overlap with disaster risks.
- **Technological and man-made hazards** (building collapse, fires, chemical spills, industrial accidents, traffic incidents, infrastructure failure) are more common and often more severe in cities.
- Urban risks are **amplified by density**, unplanned settlements, and land constraints, leading to higher exposure and limited household control (especially for renters).
- Shocks often **cascade across systems due to interdependencies**. Failure in power, water, transport, health, or waste services triggers wider disruptions.

- Urban populations may experience **compounded crises** (e.g., economic collapse, epidemic, displacement), requiring hazard analysis that captures layered risk.
- Certain hazards (heatwaves, flooding, landslides, coastal impacts) are intensified by **climate change and urban heat island effects**.
- **Informal settlements** face especially high exposure due to overcrowding, unsafe construction, and proximity to rivers, drains, steep slopes, or hazardous sites.

Urban Considerations

- **Map and analyse urban systems** (water, electricity, transport, waste, health) to understand how hazards affect and depend on them.
- **Identify interdependencies** and possible **cascading effects** (e.g., storm leading to drain blockage that leads to road closure and causes income loss for vendors).
- Expand hazard identification beyond disasters to include **urban stresses** like evictions, rising rent, sanitation failures, crime, traffic risk, and pollution.
- Use **digital tools** where feasible for mapping or surveying, given greater digital access in urban areas (e.g., online surveys, mobile mapping apps).
- Adapt EVCA tools to urban constraints. Transect walks, mapping, and observation require special safety and access considerations (as noted in Annex A).
- Ensure hazard analysis captures **diverse groups differently affected** (tenants, informal workers, migrants, persons with disabilities, renters, market vendors).
- Integrate **climate change projections**, especially for heatwaves and coastal cities (sea-level rise, storm surge).
- Validate community perceptions with **secondary data and technical sources** (urban profiles, hazard maps, municipal datasets, academic or specialist input).
- Recognize that households often **cannot modify their built environment** (due to renting or informal tenancy), so exposure analysis must consider landlords, building owners, and municipal roles.

- Avoid “single hazard thinking” and guide the community to see how risks interact instead of treating them as isolated event.
- Standard EVCA tools apply here but must be employed with consideration. See Annex A for considerations on the following tools: Community Safety Checklists, Historical profile/visualization, Hazard characterization, Transect Walks, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Mapping, Direct observation, and, Stakeholder Mapping.

Urban Risks

1. Environmental Risks (not unique to urban)

- Natural Hazards: Cities may face risks from natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, heatwaves, hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires. Urban areas are also exposed to landslides, storm surges, coastal erosion, and other geophysical events that can be intensified by urban development.
- Climate Change: Climate change has, and will, increase known hazards and make them less predictable, increasing urban risk. It will also expose cities to new risks, including rising temperatures, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events. Climate Change will also aggravate existing risks such as, extreme heat which is magnified in urban areas due to the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect, caused by sealed surfaces, reduced vegetation and green areas, waste heat from human activities, and high population density. Droughts and water scarcity, including groundwater depletion, are also growing climate-related risks for many cities.
- Air, water, and soil pollution driven by traffic, industry, waste burning, and poor waste management, contribute to respiratory disease, cardiovascular illness, and other health impacts.
- Loss of green space, groundwater depletion, and ecosystem degradation undermine natural protection against heat, flooding, and landslides. These environmental burdens are usually concentrated in low-income and marginalized neighbourhoods.

2. Social and Economic Risks (more prevalent in urban areas)

- Poverty and Inequality: High levels of poverty and inequality can increase the vulnerability of certain populations within urban areas. Disadvantaged groups (including migrants, informal workers, and residents of informal settlements) often bear a disproportionate share of disaster and climate impacts.
- Unemployment: Economic instability and high unemployment rates contribute to social vulnerability. Precarious, informal, or highly irregular livelihoods increase people’s sensitivity to shocks and stresses such as price spikes, rent increases, or service disruption.

3. Health Risks (more prevalent in urban areas)

- Disease Outbreaks: Urban areas can be susceptible to the rapid spread of infectious diseases due to high population density and interconnectedness. Overcrowding, inadequate WASH services, and high mobility further increase epidemic and pandemic risk.

Urban Risks

Urban risk in cities arises from the interaction of many overlapping factors rather than a single hazard. This list groups these into key categories, from environmental and climate-related hazards, to social and economic pressures, weak governance, infrastructure failure, pollution, and the specific vulnerabilities of informal settlements and marginalized groups. Together, they create complex, systemic and often cascading risks, where a shock (such as a flood, heatwave, or economic crisis) can rapidly trigger health, social, and service disruptions across the whole urban community.

- **Healthcare Access:** While there is likely to be more health care services in an urban area, the infrastructure is often inadequate for the increased population and unequal access amplifies health risks during emergencies. Environmental health risks, such as air pollution, heat stress, and contaminated water increase the likelihood of non-communicable diseases (e.g., heart disease, diabetes) to deepen health impacts.

4. Infrastructure Risks (more prevalent in urban areas)

- **Critical Infrastructure Vulnerability:** The susceptibility of key infrastructure, such as transportation systems, energy grids, and water supply networks, to damage or failure during disasters. Interdependence between these systems means that failure in one (e.g., power) can trigger cascading failures in others (e.g., transport, health, communications).
- **Housing Quality:** Poorly constructed or informal housing can pose risks to residents, especially during earthquakes, floods, or other disasters. Overcrowding, high-rise building concentration, and lack of safe access routes can make evacuation and response significantly more difficult.

5. Governance and Institutional Risks (more prevalent in urban areas)

- **Corruption:** Corruption within local government institutions can hinder effective disaster response and recovery.
- **Weak Regulatory Frameworks:** Inadequate regulations and enforcement can contribute to increased urban risk. Limited enforcement of land-use planning and building codes often allows construction in hazard-prone or environmentally fragile areas.
- **Complex Politics:** A plethora of stakeholders with competing interests and large differences in socio-economic well-being complicates governance for politicians who need to prioritize the needs of their constituents. Fragmented mandates and limited municipal capacity can delay or block risk-informed urban planning.

6. Technological Risks (more prevalent in urban areas)

- **Cybersecurity:** The increasing reliance on technology in urban areas brings the risk of cyber threats that can disrupt essential services.
- **Industrial Accidents:** The presence of industries within urban areas can pose risks of chemical spills, explosions, or other industrial accidents.

Rapid automation and digitization of urban services can also introduce new vulnerabilities if not managed with equity, redundancy, and security in mind.

7. Social Dynamics (more prevalent in urban areas)

- **Population Density:** High population density can exacerbate the impact of disasters, affecting evacuation, emergency response, and overall resilience.
- **Migration Patterns:** The movement of people into and out of urban areas can influence the distribution of risks. New arrivals may lack knowledge of local hazards, have weak social networks, and face barriers to basic services.
- **Violence and Conflict:** Intermittent urban violence, violent outbreaks and conflict can have a variety of reasons and root causes surrounding political elections, power struggles, polarization, or urban crime. Household-level violence and social tensions may also increase under chronic stress, overcrowding, and economic hardship.

8. Cultural and Behavioural Factors

- **Awareness and Education:** The level of awareness and education within a community can influence its ability to prepare for and respond to disasters.
- **Community Engagement:** The level of community engagement and cohesion can impact the effectiveness of risk reduction and response efforts. Low trust in authorities or past negative experiences with projects can reduce participation and uptake of risk-reduction measures.

9. Information and Communication of Risks

- **Information Access:** Unequal access to information and communication technologies can impact the ability of communities to receive timely warnings and information during emergencies. Misinformation, language barriers, and digital divides can leave specific groups (e.g., informal workers, undocumented migrants, elderly people) systematically less informed.

10. Land Use Planning

- Zoning and Urban Design: The way cities are planned and designed, including land use zoning and building codes, can influence vulnerability and exposure to various risks. Unplanned urban expansion, development on marginal land (floodplains, steep slopes, subsiding ground), and loss of natural buffers (wetlands, vegetation) significantly increase hazard exposure.

11. Informal Settlements and Land Tenure Insecurity

- A large proportion of urban residents live in informal settlements with non-durable housing, overcrowding, and limited access to basic services. These areas are often located on hazard-prone or marginal land and lack secure tenure, which discourages investment in safer construction and infrastructure. Evictions, relocations, or redevelopment can create new risks or deepen existing vulnerabilities.

12. Displacement, Gentrification, and Exclusionary Development

- Urban redevelopment, major infrastructure projects, and “upgrading” initiatives can unintentionally displace low-income residents, pushing them into more hazardous locations or worsening their access to services and livelihoods. Risk-blind planning and “smart city” strategies can reinforce socio-economic divides if they do not explicitly address the needs and rights of the urban poor.

13. Digital and Data Inequalities

- While digital tools can improve early warning, planning, and participation, unequal access to devices, connectivity, and digital literacy creates a new layer of risk. People who are offline or lack skills can be excluded from critical information, services, and decision-making processes, deepening existing vulnerabilities and inequities.



*Mozambique: Cyclone Idai
Denis Onyodi / IFRC Climate Centre*



Step 4: Understand Vulnerability and Capacity

Step 4 helps the community understand how and why different groups, assets, and systems are vulnerable to the priority hazards, and what capacities already exist to cope with them. The Resilience Star is used as the central organizing tool, allowing the community to map vulnerabilities and capacities across the 11 dimensions of resilience. Facilitators help the community contextualize the dimensions, identify vulnerable groups, and ensure inclusive data collection techniques so the assessment reflects the full diversity of the community.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban areas contain **multiple overlapping “communities”** whose vulnerabilities and capacities differ sharply, even when exposed to the same hazard, making a single Resilience Star difficult to apply across the whole area or different communities.
- **Vulnerability in cities is heavily shaped by** settlement type (formal vs. informal), tenure insecurity, infrastructure access, and migration status.
- **Urban capacities are often tied to external systems (transport, energy, water, waste management, health services)**, meaning capacities and vulnerabilities cannot be understood only at household or neighborhood level.
- The high **number of external stakeholders** (public agencies, private providers, utilities, landlords) **can obscure the root causes of vulnerability** or give communities only partial influence over the systems they rely on.
- **Urban communities may have high vulnerability due to weak, unreliable, or unaffordable city systems, while simultaneously having strong capacities through networks, civil society,** or access to services.
- **Systemic issues** such as poor enforcement of planning, inadequate urban policy integration, weak governance, fragmented authority, **often shape vulnerability more than individual or household characteristics.**

- **When multiple communities are included, it becomes challenging to define “the community”:** groups with similar exposure may not share identity, cohesion, or boundaries.
- **Urban vulnerabilities frequently include** chronic stresses (unemployment, violence, overcrowding, health inequities) that interact with hazard impacts and must be captured within the Resilience Star discussions.

Urban Considerations

- **Use separate Resilience Stars** when different groups or areas have distinct risk profiles (e.g., tenants vs. owners, different blocks, migrants vs. long-term residents).
- **Trace vulnerabilities to the system-level root.** For instance, if water is unreliable, determine whether the cause is household storage, failing pumps, energy supply, governance gaps, or private operator practices.
- **Include analysis of external systems** such as health, transport, electricity, water, waste, because urban capacities depend heavily on their functioning.
- **Use inclusive group sessions** that reach hidden or excluded groups (tenants, informal workers, migrants, undocumented residents) who face different vulnerabilities than formal residents.
- **Disaggregate all data** (gender, age, income, migration status, disability, settlement type) because differences within a single urban neighbourhood are often larger than differences between rural communities.
- **Validate findings with stakeholders who manage the systems** (utilities, municipal engineers, social service departments) to ensure the vulnerability analysis reflects real constraints and opportunities.
- **Integrate chronic stressors** (violence, affordability, evictions, service disruptions) in vulnerability discussions, as these often shape the lived experience of risk in cities.



Step 5: Explore and rate risk for the 8 sectoral dimensions

Step 5 guides the community through analysing how each of the priority hazards affects the eight technical (sectoral) dimensions of resilience, such as Health, Shelter, Economic Opportunities, and Infrastructure & Services. Using EVCA tools, the community gathers evidence on vulnerabilities and capacities, consolidates findings on the Resilience Star, and produces a risk score for each dimension-hazard pair. This results in 24 ratings that reflect how well the community can cope with different hazards across its key sectors.

Urban Context and Reality

- Sectoral performance in cities depends heavily on **external systems and stakeholders** for instance utilities, private service providers, municipal departments, so communities often cannot control the root causes of sectoral risk.
- Urban communities may **struggle to score sectors accurately because information is spread across many actors**, and some critical systems (energy, water, transport) operate far outside the community's boundaries.
- Sectoral risks in cities often involve **cascading failures**: e.g., electricity outages disrupt water supply, which worsens health risks, which then affects livelihoods.
- Differences between sub-groups are sharper in urban areas, and tenants, migrants, informal workers, and residents of informal settlements may experience **entirely different levels of access** to shelter, health care, water, sanitation, or income opportunities.
- Urban communities may show strong capacities in some sectors (e.g., health services nearby) but high vulnerability in others (e.g., unaffordable rent, weak infrastructure), meaning profiles can be fragmented.

Group Discussions with Colombian Red Cross and community members in Soacha, Colombia; GRC and K. Letzner

Urban Considerations

- **Analyse sectoral risks through systems thinking**: trace risks to the system-level source (e.g., water shortages due to energy failures, governance gaps, or privatized service disruptions).
- **Include both community-level and city-level factors** when assessing each dimension. Make note of exposure, people, community organizations and the systems/services they depend on.
- **Disaggregate scoring** by subgroup if sectoral access differs (e.g., tenants vs. owners, migrants vs. citizens, formal vs. informal housing).
- **Engage external service actors early** to fill information gaps (utilities, municipal WASH, transport departments, market authorities).
- When sectoral information is insufficient, especially on **Shelter, Livelihoods, Infrastructure, or Health**, consider additional assessments ([PASSA](#), or health-focused tools).
- **Use digital tools (maps, surveys, ranking apps)** when appropriate, as they can help document complex urban conditions and reach more participants.





Step 6: Explore and rate risk for the three social dimensions

Step 6 evaluates the three social dimensions of resilience: Social Cohesion, Inclusion, and Connectedness. These dimensions often shift less between hazards, so the community analyses them once using tools such as Venn diagrams and relationship mapping. The process examines internal relationships, power structures, and representation, as well as connections to external actors. The community then assigns a risk rating to each social dimension and adds this to the Resilience Star.

Urban Context and Reality

- Social cohesion is often weaker in cities due to **heterogeneous populations, migration, high turnover, and limited shared identity**, making urban social dimensions harder to assess.
- Overlapping communities, informal power structures, and **unequal access to services and representation** create barriers to inclusion.
- Urban **connectedness involves numerous external actors such as municipal agencies, service providers, private companies, police, landlords, informal networks**, making the mapping of relationships significantly more complex than in rural areas.
- Some groups (migrants, refugees, informal workers, people without tenure) may have very limited access to information, decision-making, and external support systems.
- Despite weaker cohesion, urban communities may benefit from **stronger connectedness capacities** such as better information flow, more support organizations, and easier access to authorities.

Urban Considerations

- **Explore both internal and external relationships in depth**; in cities, external relationships (with service providers, multiple community groups, and government) often define resilience as much as internal cohesion.
- **Look for hidden power dynamics** affecting inclusion: landlords vs. tenants, long-term residents vs. migrants, political/religious divisions, gendered exclusion.
- If social dimension **scores appear unrealistically positive, revisit “resilience for whom?”** to ensure marginalized groups are included.
- Ensure vulnerable urban groups identified in Step 3 (tenants, informal workers, youth, migrants, persons with disabilities) appear clearly in relationship maps and scoring.



Step 7: Measure resilience, report and validate

Step 7 brings together all results from Steps 1–6 to produce a consolidated picture of community resilience. The community uses the 27 risk ratings (24 sectoral + 3 social) to assign a resilience score for each of the 11 dimensions, using a scale from 0 (no resilience) to 1 (strong resilience). These ratings are validated with the wider community and key stakeholders and then compiled into a baseline resilience report. This becomes the foundation for discussing priorities and moving into risk-informed community action planning in Stage 3.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban assessments often **produce more complex and diverse data** due to multiple communities, subgroups, and varied levels of service access. Thus, consolidation may require reconciling differences across neighbourhoods or profiles.
- Because many risks in cities originate outside the community (in systems or institutions), **validation must consider whether external stakeholders agree with or can act on the findings.**
- Urban communities may have differing experiences of resilience (e.g., tenants vs. landowners, migrants vs. long-term residents), making the **“single score per dimension” more difficult to interpret without disaggregation.**
- The presence of **robust secondary data, municipal data, or hazard/risk mapping in urban areas may require triangulation** to ensure the community-generated results are realistic and not contradicted by existing city-level information.

Urban Considerations

- Triangulate findings with available urban data sources (municipal risk maps, service outage records, health surveillance, census or neighbourhood profiles) to strengthen credibility and accuracy.
- Involve relevant external stakeholders in validation (municipal departments, utility providers, local service agencies) to ensure the results can meaningfully inform future urban planning or cooperation. **Disaggregate resilience scores** when needed, for example, different neighbourhood pockets, tenure groups, or migrant communities, so that the final report reflects the real diversity of urban vulnerability and capacity.
- Ensure the Resilience Star and baseline report clearly distinguish between:
 - o what the **community controls,**
 - o what depends on **other communities,** and
 - o what depends on **city systems and institutions.**
- If the urban context is highly fragmented, consider validating resilience results **in multiple micro-sessions** rather than a single community meeting, to reach groups with different working hours, mobility, or representant.



Step 8: Go Deeper

Step 8 is optional and occurs when the community decides that one or more resilience dimensions require deeper analysis before they can make informed decisions about solutions or actions. The community identifies where more information is needed, and the NS supports by offering relevant sectoral expertise, connecting the community to technical specialists, or facilitating engagement with external stakeholders. This deeper analysis strengthens the accuracy and usefulness of the upcoming community action plan.

Urban Context and Reality

- Some urban issues such as housing, infrastructure, tenure, service delivery, or public health may require **specialised technical expertise** that local branches may not have internally.
- Urban vulnerabilities often tie into **systems** (e.g., water, electricity, transport) rather than isolated community conditions, meaning deeper analysis may require engagement with **city departments, utilities, or technical professionals**.
- Because many urban services are externally managed, additional investigation may depend on **data or cooperation** from municipal actors/entities.

Urban Considerations

- When a dimension requires deeper analysis, check whether the issue links to city-managed systems (e.g., drainage, building codes, waste management) and identify the appropriate technical body or service provider.
- Use existing **urban stakeholder mapping** (from Step 6) to determine which external actors such as government, utilities, NGOs, private companies can offer the needed expertise.
- If the NS lacks the technical capacity (e.g., infrastructure, tenure law, public health surveillance), facilitate **referral or linkage** rather than attempting to fill the gap internally.
- Support the community in using the NS auxiliary role for **advocacy or higher-level access**, particularly when systemic issues require engagement above the neighbourhood level.

STAGE 3: Take Action to Strengthen Resilience

Milestone 6: Create a risk-informed community action plan (Step 1-7)

This milestone focuses on identifying community led actions to minimize risks identified by the community by reducing the causes of their vulnerabilities and strengthening their capacities. The NS has a facilitation role to mediate any potential conflicts that may arise during the planning process.

EVCA STAGE 3: Take action to Strengthen Resilience

Stage 3: “Take action to strengthen resilience” use the evidence gathered in Stage 2 to take action. The NS facilitates this process through connecting communities with relevant stakeholders, and accompanying communities as they identify and take action.

This stage has 2 major milestones: Milestone 6: Create a risk informed community action plan.



Step 1: Vision and Identify Action

This step opens the planning phase by guiding the community through a visioning exercise to imagine what a safe and resilient community would look like once major hazards and threats are reduced. Tools such as the dream map or solution tree can help inspire creative thinking.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban communities often have **diverse priorities** and **multiple overlapping issues**, so the visioning exercise may produce a wide range of action ideas.
- In urban context, not all actions can be led by the community. **Existing structures, and city level policies, and local government hierarchies** may hinder the community's ability to undertake resilience actions.
- Visioning must allow space for both **neighbourhood-level concerns** (e.g., safety, services) and city-level dependencies (e.g., transport, utilities, governance).
- The process should acknowledge that **some actions will depend on external stakeholders**, not only the community.

Urban Considerations

- Support communities to articulate which external systems (e.g., electricity, water supply, health services) must function well for their vision to be achievable.
- The process should acknowledge that some actions will depend on external stakeholders, not only the community.
- Encourage realistic action ideas by reminding participants that some solutions will require collaboration with city authorities or service providers.
- Ensure the visioning session includes or reflects the perspectives of marginalized groups who may experience the city differently.
- Support the community to align the resilience action existing plans and policies.



Step 2: Explore internal capacity

This step focuses on identifying the community's internal capacities to address its priority risks. The weakest resilience dimensions and the actions identified in Step 1 are reviewed together, and participants discuss and document what resources or capacities they already have to support those actions. The exercise is repeated in small or separate focus groups to ensure that the perspectives of people who could not attend or who may feel uncomfortable speaking in large groups are included.

Urban Context and Reality

Urban context doesn't change for this step.

Urban Considerations

- There are **no additional urban considerations** needed for this step. The existing EVCA process already adequately captures internal capacity mapping for both rural and urban communities.



Step 3: Identify for external support

In this step, the community shifts its focus to the actions that cannot be implemented using only its internal resources. For each weak resilience dimension, participants discuss what kind of external support would be required, such as technical assistance, infrastructure services, or government involvement, and record these ideas on cards or a public board using a different color from those used for internal capacities. As in previous steps, the exercise is repeated in small or separate focus groups to ensure that the perspectives of people who could not attend or who may feel uncomfortable speaking in large groups are included.

Urban Context and Reality

Urban communities sometimes have more city level dependencies. Urban Considerations.

Urban Considerations

There are no specific or unique urban adaptations required for this step. The process of identifying which actions need external support works the same in rural, peri-urban, and urban contexts. Communities simply determine which actions exceed their internal capacity and note what kind of external actor would be required.



Step 4: Prioritize actions

This step helps the community select a realistic set of priority actions from the full list generated earlier. The community first agrees on simple, transparent prioritization criteria such as impact, feasibility, effectiveness, social sensitivity, sustainability, and alignment with responsible external actors. All actions are rated against these criteria in an open, visible process to ensure accountability and inclusion. The process is participatory and inclusive, ensuring input from groups who may otherwise be excluded.

Urban Context and Reality

Community members may have more diverse schedules and availability making it harder to include input from all.

Urban Considerations

Although the prioritization method does not change, two small reminders may help facilitators in urban settings:

- facilitators may need to run the prioritization exercise at multiple times or with additional small groups to ensure full representation.
- Some actions may depend on city-wide systems or multiple external actors, so feasibility discussions may require clearer framing.
- Differences between neighbourhoods or groups within dense, diverse urban areas may mean that one action has unequal benefits. Facilitators should ensure the question "Who benefits?" is asked so that marginalised groups are not overlooked.



Step 5: Define activities and resources

In Step 5, the community takes each of the priority actions agreed in earlier steps and breaks them down into concrete activities, then estimates what resources are needed to implement them. Activities are sequenced (who does what, and in what order), and resources such as labour, money, materials, equipment, services, and technical support are identified. The plan should consider environmental implications, seasonal and daily timing, and include a clear, documented and visible schedule that the whole community can see, use, and update. This results in a complete risk-informed community action plan and, where relevant, can also feed into contingency planning.

Urban Context and Reality

some activities and resources are more dependent on external systems and actors (e.g., municipality, utilities, private contractors), and implementation must fit around busier, more diverse work patterns and city rhythms.

Urban Context and Reality

- Flag system-dependent activities. When breaking actions into activities, mark those that rely on city systems (e.g., drainage networks, roads, power, solid waste collection) or external contractors so they can later be linked to Step 6 (Connect with stakeholders).
- Plan around urban time constraints. Use daily and seasonal calendars that reflect shift work, commuting times, market days, school schedules, and religious or cultural events. Activities that need many people at once may need evenings, weekends, or several smaller shifts.
- Think “multi-site” and “multi-group”. In dense or dispersed urban settings, the same activity (e.g., canal cleaning, awareness sessions) may need to be repeated in several blocks, buildings, or settlement pockets, not just one central location.
- Document clearly for a moving population. Make sure the plan is simple, visual, and displayed in multiple locations (e.g., community centres, markets, building entrances, WhatsApp groups) so that people who move frequently or work away from home can still follow and join activities.



Step 6: Connect with stakeholders

Step 6 is where the National Society (NS) supports the community to connect its risk-informed action plan with external actors and resources. The community prepares a clear presentation or “pitch” explaining its assessment findings, priorities, and planned actions; the NS helps arrange meetings with relevant stakeholders (local government, disaster management authorities, NGOs, private sector, etc.), coaches community members in presenting and advocacy, and supports them to secure commitments, formalize partnerships (e.g., MoUs), and align the plan with local development and disaster-management processes.

Urban Context and Reality

- Cities have **many more stakeholders and governance layers** (municipal departments, utilities, regulators, private developers, service providers, NGOs, neighbourhood groups).
- **Community actions often depend on city systems and policies** (drainage, solid waste, roads, electricity, public space, building control), so **connecting with the right actors is essential** for feasibility.
- **Responsibilities are often fragmented** (e.g., one department plans roads, another maintains drainage, another manages solid waste), so communities may need to engage several institutions.

Urban Context and Reality

- **Target the right city actors:** Ensure the presentation reaches the specific municipal departments or service providers who control the needed systems (e.g., ward office, utilities, housing, transport).
- Leverage NS’s auxiliary role to help communities, especially informal or marginalised groups to gain legitimate access to these institutions.
- **Formalise commitments:** Encourage simple MoUs or agreements with stakeholders as responsibilities are fragmented, to avoid passing the responsibility.
- Prepare community members for **policy-level advocacy by framing** their priorities in the language of urban governance.
- **Promote inclusive participation:** Ensure diverse community voices are present and protected, recognizing that power dynamics in urban settings can easily side-line certain groups.

CASE STUDY

Strengthening urban connections in Dhaka, Bangladesh Red Crescent (BDRCS)

BDRCS has built a model of urban resilience centred on strengthening relationships between communities and the institutions that shape city life. BDRCS is described as having **a strategic approach to enhancing urban resilience through advanced networking, partnerships, and coordination**. The goal is to achieve sustainable societal change through collective efforts. BDRCS works closely with the Town Level Coordination Committees (TLCC) of various municipalities in Bangladesh. BDRCS also assists City Corporations in forming and reconstituting Disaster Management Committees at both city and ward levels. These committees bring together municipal officials, service agencies, citizen groups, and representatives from informal settlements. The TLCC is a unique and inclusive body. Unlike other local government entities, the TLCC comprises a diverse membership, creating one of the few formal spaces where diverse urban actors sit at the same table. Through **sustained engagement, BDRCS helped expand the TLCC's role in disaster preparedness by offering training, facilitating dialogue, and opening linkages with additional government departments, universities, private companies, and ward-level disaster committees**. The combined efforts have led to Strengthened Local Governance and improved City Resilience. BDRCS, leveraging its auxiliary role, actively seeks to bring the voice of vulnerable groups into decision-making processes at the local and municipal government levels. These relationships proved essential during Dhaka's extreme heatwaves in 2024. Because communication channels and trust had already been established, BDRCS could rapidly coordinate early warnings, safe-water distribution, protective equipment for outdoor workers, and temporary cooling stations across the city's 129 wards. Community volunteers, municipal officials, and local service agencies acted in sync, demonstrating how strong urban connections enable faster, more inclusive, and more coordinated crisis response.



Source and photo:

https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Urban%20Collaborative%20Platform_2024_Conference_Report.pdf

WHY URBAN CONNECTIONS MATTER

Urban resilience depends on relationships, not geography.

In cities, no community can reduce risk on its own. Services, infrastructure, and decision-making sit with multiple institutions. Strengthening resilience therefore requires connecting communities with the municipal departments, utilities, and actors who control the systems they depend on. Effective urban DRR happens when communities know who to talk to, how to be heard, and where decisions are made.

URBAN STAKEHOLDERS AT A GLANCE

Urban communities typically depend on:

- **Municipal government:** planning, waste, drainage, infrastructure
- **Utility providers:** water, electricity, sanitation
- **Transport authorities:** mobility and road safety
- **Health services:** clinics, hospitals, community health workers
- **Private sector:** markets, landlords, employers
- **Academic institutions:** risk analysis and technical inputs
- **Civil society and volunteer networks:** outreach and mobilization

STAGE 4: Learn

Milestone 7: Learn from resilience actions

This milestone helps to assess whether the time, energy and other resources invested have resulted in heightened resilience.



Step 1: Motivate to monitor

Step 1 involves reviewing with the community why monitoring matters and agreeing on how all stakeholders will contribute. Monitoring helps the community understand whether actions are producing the intended resilience outcomes, learn from successes and mistakes, and adjust their plans. It also ensures transparency, participation, and shared ownership of progress.

Urban Context and Reality

- Monitoring may require engaging multiple urban actors with different mandates and schedules.
- Community members often have diverse work patterns, mobility constraints, or fragmented social networks.

Urban Considerations

- Schedule monitoring in flexible ways (evening sessions, digital check-ins) to reach people working irregular or long hours.
- Ensure monitoring captures the influence of city systems (e.g., service performance, institutional responsiveness) on resilience actions.
- Intentionally include municipal actors and service providers in the monitoring process when relevant.

EVCA STAGE 4: Learn

The primary objective of Stage 4: “Learn” is to guide communities as they track their progress, learn from good practices and mistakes, and adapt their plans accordingly. This helps communities learn from the results of their resilience-building actions.

This stage has 1 major milestone. Milestone 7: Learn from resilience actions

In this stage, all 7 landmarks of the EVCA process will be considered.

- Risk-informed
- Holistic
- Demand-driven
- People-centred and inclusive
- Climate smart and environmentally sustainable
- Accompanying
- Enabling
- Connecting



Step 2: Track Actions

Step 2 focuses on regularly checking whether activities are progressing as planned, identifying obstacles, and deciding together how to address them. Communities establish a monitoring plan that includes meetings, reports, photo documentation, and adjust activities through collective decision-making. Successes are celebrated, and mistakes are treated as learning opportunities.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban actions often depend on institutions (utilities, municipal departments) whose progress must also be tracked.
- Digital tools are typically more accessible and commonly used in cities.

Urban Considerations

- Track not only community actions but also commitments made by city actors (e.g., repair schedules, service upgrades).
- Use appropriate technology when helpful (e.g., WhatsApp groups, SMS reporting, simple digital surveys).
- Monitor whether benefits are reaching marginalised urban groups, not just the most visible or organised residents.



Step 3: Update the measure of risk and resilience

Step 3 involves repeating the resilience assessment to measure progress over time, identify new hazards, and adjust indicators as needed. The community compares updated results with baseline data and records them carefully so trends and changes can be clearly understood.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban risk evolves quickly because of population changes, informal settlement expansion, and infrastructure ageing.
- Cities often have more secondary data available (hazard maps, demographic data).

Urban Considerations

- Triangulate community-generated data with secondary urban datasets and expert inputs to strengthen credibility.
- Include scenario-based discussions about future urban risks (e.g., climate impacts, planned developments).
- Use city-level data platforms or dashboards when available.



Step 4: Draw Lessons

Step 4 focuses on analyzing why changes occurred whether positive or negative. The community and stakeholders document key lessons, examine downward trends, and assess both community efforts and the National Society's contribution. Lessons help improve future planning and strengthen programming.

Urban Context and Reality

- Many results are shaped by city systems and governance quality.
- Urban inequalities mean different groups may experience very different outcomes.

Urban Considerations

- Examine how governance, policy enforcement, or institutional processes contributed to results.
- Document whether marginalized groups benefited equally and how inclusion affected outcomes.
- Use lessons to strengthen NS understanding of urban policy systems and refine how the NS accompanies and connects communities in city contexts.



Step 5: Apply lessons

Step 5 involves using the lessons learned to adjust the community's action plan through continuing, adapting, scaling, or stopping activities as needed. The community revisits Stage 3 planning steps with new insights and reaches out to external actors when necessary.

Urban Context and Reality

- No major urban-specific adaptations are required; the step functions the same in any context.

Urban Considerations

- (No specific additional urban considerations for this stage)

4. Applying R2R via EVCA in urban contexts: key takeaways

Cities present fundamentally different conditions for resilience work, and this supplementary guidance supports National Societies to adapt the Roadmap to Community Resilience via the Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (R2R via EVCA v2) for use in urban and complex settings.

Urban environments are shaped by the interaction and interplay of multiple hazards and chronic stresses, such as poverty, exclusion, pollution, and insecure livelihoods, across dense and highly interconnected systems. These risks often cascade through infrastructure and services, and are intensified by rapid and unplanned urbanization that concentrates people in hazard-prone or underserved areas. At the same time, cities offer distinct opportunities for resilience, drawing on dense community networks, diverse local actors, and access to specialized knowledge and services that can be mobilized to strengthen local capacity. In cities, community identity is fluid and overlapping, shaped by networks and mobility rather than fixed geographic boundaries. Governance within cities is highly complex, involving multiple municipal departments, utilities, private service providers, and informal actors. Moreover, risk in cities is often unequally distributed, influenced by tenure insecurity, service access, and socio-economic conditions. These realities require practical adaptations across the four EVCA stages.

In Stage 1, National Societies may need to identify functional communities, such as livelihood groups or migrant networks, rather than relying solely on administrative boundaries, and must emphasise their bridging role to connect vulnerable groups with city institutions. In Stage 2, engagement often requires shorter, repeated sessions to accommodate diverse schedules, while the assessment benefits from leveraging rich secondary urban data and analysing vulnerabilities at the system level. Distinct sub-groups may require separate Resilience Stars to reflect differing exposure and capacities. In Stage 3, action planning must acknowledge system dependencies and use the language of urban governance to advance advocacy and secure commitments from municipal stakeholders. In Stage 4, monitoring and learning improve when municipal actors and service providers are actively involved, recognising that outcomes are shaped by broader city systems.

Overall, strengthening resilience in cities depends less on geography and more on relationships, coordination, and systems thinking. National Societies must invest additional time and resources to navigate complex governance environments, engage diverse stakeholders, and ensure that EVCA remains relevant and feasible in dynamic, dense, and diverse urban contexts. Although the assessment demands considerably more time and resources, it is a worthwhile investment. By doing so, branches can draw on the potential and capacities we see in cities to jointly and effectively enhance resilience.

Annex A: EVCA tools in urban contexts

Community safety checklist



The Community Safety Checklist is used to get an overview of local hazards, current safety conditions, and the community's ability to understand and manage its own risks. In urban areas, it also becomes a bridge between community perspectives and municipal systems, helping authorities and residents see where safety is strong and where it is weak.

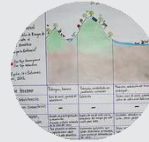
Urban Context and Reality

- Different hazards affect different neighbourhoods and groups in very different ways, even within the same city.
- Groups within the same area (e.g. tenants vs. owners, formal vs. informal workers) can have very different levels of resilience and exposure.
- Urban governance is layered and messy: multiple government bodies with overlapping or unclear roles can complicate the use of a safety checklist.
- Systemic risks (infrastructure, services, social and economic systems) interact, so a checklist must look beyond only household-level issues.

Urban Considerations

- Involve **municipal focal persons** (e.g. ward officer, DRR focal point) early so city information and community perspectives are combined.
- Use the **60-point overall score and sub-scores** to help local authorities identify weak areas and prioritise interventions across neighbourhoods or population groups.
- Make sure the checklist looks at **multi-hazard and systemic issues** (e.g. cascading failures in power, water, transport) and not just single events.
- Where possible, include basic **geospatial references** (which wards/blocks/settlements) so results can be linked to city plans and infrastructure maps.

Transect walk



Transect walks are guided walks through different parts of the community to observe people, places, risks, and capacities in their real-life context. They help verify information from other tools and reveal conditions that maps and meetings might miss.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban areas contain **multiple overlapping communities** such as by ethnicity, livelihood, tenure, or identity, not just geography.
- Areas where the most vulnerable live may be **volatile or controlled by informal or criminal groups**, creating safety concerns for staff and volunteers.
- High density, vertical buildings, and complex street layouts make it hard to “see” everything in one walk; different streets can have very different risks.

Urban Considerations

- Plan **several transect routes** to cover different communities, risk zones, and types of spaces (formal areas, informal settlements, markets, transport hubs).
- Prioritise routes based on existing mapping/brainstorming: start with areas where information is missing or where risk seems highest.
- Ensure **team safety**: understand local power dynamics, negotiate access with those who control the area, and adapt communication style per context.
- Include people with different perspectives (e.g. women, youth, persons with disabilities) and **walk accessibility** routes to see real barriers.
- Encourage community members to share **photos or videos (e.g. via social media groups)** to complement observations and capture places you cannot safely visit.
- After the walk, update the **Resilience Star and maps** with new information on vulnerabilities and capacities.

Key Informant Interviews (semi-structured)



Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) are semi-structured conversations with individuals who hold specific knowledge or perspectives (e.g. local leaders, service providers, officials, CBOs). They help build a multi-angle picture of risk, governance, and services in complex urban settings.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban areas have **many more stakeholders**: multiple government agencies, utilities, NGOs, community-based organisations, private actors, and informal leaders.
- This diversity means **more KIIs are needed** to get a balanced picture.
- Governance is fragmented, and mandates overlap; different informants may give **contradictory versions** of the same issue.

Urban Considerations

- Start with a **stakeholder analysis** to identify key informants across government, CBOs, service providers, community leaders, and the private sector.
- Review available **secondary data** (plans, statistics, hazard maps) first so KIIs can focus on clarifying gaps and contradictions.
- Use **semi-structured guides** so you can compare some answers across informants while staying flexible to follow important leads.
- Adapt communication style and approach per interviewee; different communities and individuals may require different entry points and language.
- Where appropriate, use **digital tools** (tablets, simple data platforms, SMS-based mini-surveys) to collect and organise KII data efficiently.
- Make sure KIIs cover both technical perspectives (e.g. infrastructure, services) and social dimensions (cohesion, inclusion, connectedness).

Focus group discussions



FGDs bring together small groups with shared characteristics (e.g. women, youth, tenants, street vendors) to discuss risks, priorities, and ideas. They are used to explore attitudes, compare perspectives across groups, and generate options for action.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban communities are **large, diverse, and fragmented**; people may not feel comfortable speaking openly in mixed groups (e.g. across gender, caste, income, ethnicity).
- Power imbalances and representation issues are common; **stakeholder mapping** can itself become a point of tension.
- In dense areas, women, migrants, or other marginalised groups may lack **safe spaces** to talk freely.

Urban Considerations

- Plan for **more, smaller FGDs** rather than a few big ones: separate groups by gender and by marginalized status where needed.
- Use **culturally sensitive approaches** to ensure all groups feel safe to participate and are not overshadowed by more powerful voices.
- Where possible, hold FGDs in **trusted existing spaces** (CBO offices, community centres, faith-based venues) that already have access to vulnerable groups.
- Allow enough time and facilitation capacity; urban FGDs are **resource-intensive** when done inclusively.
- Use FGDs for both **brainstorming** (identifying problems and options) and **validation** (checking whether planned actions are acceptable and fair across groups).

Mapping



Mapping tools help communities and facilitators visualise where hazards, exposed people and assets, and key capacities are located. In urban areas, mapping must also capture how **systems** (water, energy, transport, health, waste, etc.) function and interact.

Urban Context and Reality

- Urban areas are system-based: many local problems (e.g. no water, frequent flooding) are caused by issues outside the immediate neighbourhood.
- Understanding risk requires mapping not just places, but how **services and systems flow through the city**.
- This means more actors, more scales (neighbourhood-city-national), and more complexity than in rural settings.

Urban Considerations

- Combine **hazard/vulnerability mapping** with **systems mapping**: include health, energy, water, transport, waste, communications, and other essential services.
- Be conscious of the difference between **vulnerable places** (e.g. flood-prone areas) and **vulnerable people** (e.g. tenants, migrants, informal workers who may live or work across multiple locations).
- Use multiple mapping methods:
 - o existing cadastral or city maps,
 - o digital tools (GIS, apps, satellite images), and
 - o analogue tools (large printed maps, sketch maps, hand-drawn neighbourhood maps).
- Where possible, **digitize community sketch maps** so local knowledge on how systems really work (who uses what, where, and how) can be shared with city authorities.

Mapping Exercise with Community Members and Red Cross Colombia; GRC and K. Letzner.

- For city-wide or multi-neighbourhood work, link community maps to a broader city risk assessment so local findings can influence city planning.
- In dense or informal urban areas where official maps are incomplete or out of date, the **Sketch Map Tool** supports accurate, participatory mapping by converting community-drawn sketches into georeferenced digital maps. It allows residents to document hazards, access routes, infrastructure gaps, and local knowledge that may not appear in satellite imagery. This is especially useful where literacy is mixed or many residents cannot draw to scale. The tool digitises what they contribute and aligns it with GIS layers. The result is a more reliable, inclusive map that reflects how communities use and experience the urban environment.



Stakeholder mapping



Stakeholder mapping identifies who influences, delivers, or is affected by risk and resilience in the area. In urban EVCA, it is essential for understanding complex governance, aligning with city systems, and respecting the “do no harm” principle.

Urban Context and Reality

- Cities contain **large numbers of stakeholders** with overlapping, unclear, or competing roles, making “the right people” hard to identify.
- Meetings with urban stakeholders can be hard to organise at scale and may produce **contradictory inputs** on the same issues.
- Poor preparation can lead to missing key actors or unintentionally reinforcing existing divisions and power imbalances.

Urban Considerations

- Use **systems mapping** first to reveal stakeholders you might not initially think of (e.g., regulators, operators of critical services, informal providers).
- Be aware of **cascading effects**: include stakeholders who can prevent or manage system failures (e.g., utilities, emergency services, infrastructure departments).
- Use tools like **Social Network Analysis (SNA)** to visualise relationships, influence, and gaps, and to identify key connectors and potential allies.
- Apply “**do no harm**” principle. deliberately identify both “connectors” and “dividers”, and avoid processes that could deepen tensions.
- A **coalition-building approach** can help bring diverse stakeholders together around shared objectives while acknowledging different interests.

Treat stakeholder mapping as a **living process**: update it regularly as new actors appear, roles evolve, and alliances shift.



Community Mapping Exercise with Colombian Rec Cross, Copyright: GRC and K. Letzner

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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.

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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.

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