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STEP 2: CONDUCT AN ENHANCED VULNERABILITY AND CAPACITY
ASSESSMENT (EVCA)

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To understand the risk and resilience of communities, the R2R guidance recommends using the Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment as a participatory community risk assessment. It enables the communities to assess and analyse together with the National Society the risks they face through a step-by-step guidance. Several EVCA tools already include aspects of anticipatory action or provide entry points to incorporate anticipatory action even more. Below is a list of some EVCA tools with ideas on what to consider for AA while conducting the EVCA:

Mapping

The mapping exercise is a way to visualize risk exposure and can show different vulnerabilities, capacities and resources. When exploring anticipatory action as part of the EVCA, consider including in the mapping exercise different magnitudes a hazard can take, if possible, even under future climate change scenarios. For example, for floods, try to map who and what is affected during floods that happen more regularly, for instance every monsoon season, and in comparison, floods that happen less regularly, but have a higher impact overall. A tool that can help you to digitalize your maps is the SketchMap Tool. Check with local disaster management or meteorological authorities if there are already existing government-led scientific hazard and/or risk maps. Connect results of these government maps with the community drawn maps to feed into each other.

Hazard characterization

As part of the EVCA, characterize together with the community different hazards with name, cause/origin, warning signs, lead time, frequency, period of occurrence and duration. This is a great entry point for anticipatory action. Important elements are especially the warning signs and lead time. It can give you an indication, if for a specific hazard the community already receives early warning with enough lead time to potentially conduct early actions.

Historical profile

The historical profile is a tool of the EVCA to build a picture of past events and impacts that had an effect on the community, including their impacts on people, livelihoods, infrastructure, services etc. During these discussions, you should ask community members about the impacts of specific past events, whether there were any indications or early warnings before specific events and if yes, how long before. In case any actions were taken by the community based on those early warnings, it is important to document the action, as this helps identify potential early actions that could be embedded within a community contingency plan or a community early warning system.

Seasonal calendar

The seasonal calendar explores the seasonality of events in a community over a one-year period. It is an EVCA tool that helps communities visualize when specific risks are most likely to materialize and how hazards have changed over the years to integrate discussions on climate change. It overlays the seasonality of weather with other key events in the community that can indicate vulnerability and risks. The seasonal calendar can later form the basis for a contingency plan that includes early actions on a specific priority hazard to develop a crisis timeline.

A crisis timeline focuses on one hazard and is especially useful for slow-onset events like droughts. A crisis timeline would for example include the timing of rainy and dry season, calendar of activities of different livelihood groups, timing of hazard's impacts on the different livelihood groups, timing of early warnings and potentially actions that could reduce the impact of the hazard. All this information is combined into an overall crisis timeline which helps to understand when hazards are occurring, when the impact is felt and at what time early actions would help to reduce the impact. You can access a 30-minute learning module on crisis timelines as part of anticipatory action on the FAO Learning platform (link in the toolbox).

Resilience Star Tool

The resilience star tool of the EVCA is used to produce, consolidate and analyse information about the vulnerabilities, capacities and risks of a community. It brings all the data from the data collection process together and categorizes capacities and vulnerabilities for each hazard separately. Through focus group discussions or workshops, communities discuss their vulnerabilities and capacities across all 11 dimensions of community resilience. In particular, the questions on the dimension on risk knowledge and management and the health dimension can support with helping to integrate anticipatory action, when talking with the community about awareness of risks, knowledge of warning signals and preparedness measures within the community. The answer to these questions can inform on potential early actions as part of a community contingency plan or community early warning system. The facilitation guide on discussing the dimensions includes also specific questions on early warning early action that can help to anchor and improve anticipatory action in the communities (link in the toolbox).

Guide for Focus Group Discussions on Early Warning Systems

In addition, a structured guidance for conducting focus group discussions (FGDs) with communities and local authorities to assess the effectiveness, inclusivity, and trustworthiness of Early Warning Systems (EWS) is available through IFRC (link in the toolbox).

Questions to include on early warning systems are:

- Does the community have an early warning system in place?
- Which early warning signs are used in the community to anticipate different hazards?

- How does the community early warning system work? Or if there is no early warning system in place: Which early warning signs does the community know?
- Does the community trust the early warning system?
- How much time does the early warning system give the community before the impact of the hazard (lead time)?
- How is the warning information communicated across the community? Are there specific channels or trusted networks?
- What actions does the community take when a warning is received?
- Which health signs, symptoms, diseases, or unusual events are monitored and reported by the community?
- Who is responsible for identifying and reporting potential health threats, and through which channels is this information communicated to health authorities and other relevant actors?
- What role do Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers, the local branch and other community-based actors currently play when an early warning is received?