



OVERVIEW - Building resilience with local churches and communities



Overview of approach

This approach has five steps with accompanying Bible studies, tools and activities to be used with churches and communities for them to develop plans based upon their vulnerabilities and capacities to shocks and stresses they face. The purpose of this approach is to offer a 'recipe' to be followed that will enhance resilience by creating space for churches and communities to discuss and plan for risks. It is taken from an existing approach called Participatory Assessment of Disaster Risk and emphasises strongly that inclusion, participation and facilitation are foundational and essential. Tools and activities that are already know by partners and in the context can also be used.



Step 1 - Facilitation, inclusion and participation

Facilitation skills and tips

Activity - Inclusion - Who is able to take part in activities?

Bible study - God's purpose for mankind

Bible study - Jesus - a role model for inclusion

Activity - Participation/contested chairs

Step 2 - Resilience and the disaster cycle

Bible study - God of justice and mercy

Bible study: 1 - Emergency response, 2 - Recovery, 3 - Disaster Mitigation, 4 - Preparedness

Activity - What do we mean by resilience?

Activity - The need to prepare - reducing the effects of disasters

Step 3 - Getting to know the community & hazards

Tool - Getting to know the community

Tool - Identifying potential hazards

Step 4 - Vulnerability & Capacity assessment

Game - Making the longest line

Bible study - Elisha and the jars

Tool - Understanding vulnerability and capacity

Tool - Vulnerability and capacity assessment

Tool - Prioritising our actions

Step 5 - Taking action

Bible study - Assessing the city

Tool - Minibus planning exercise

Overview of each step -

Step 1 - Facilitation, participation and inclusion

Emphasising “*Their ideas, not ours. Their change, not yours*”. We believe that lasting change can only be achieved by making sure we listen to the community and take time to understand the context. Therefore good facilitation is essential and foundational to this process and creates space for people to re-think the problems they face (both now and in the future).

We must seek to ensure representation from different parts of the community, especially the poorest and most impacted by disasters, and to guide them through the different steps of the process. Our approach is to empower, not to teach, and to be open to hearing unexpected things. We are willing to focus on any risk that the community wants to discuss, and to not necessarily focus on the most obvious.

It is important that we take time to understand the power dynamics within the community and what barriers there might be to all people participating. Not everyone will be affected in the same way and therefore we must consider who are the most vulnerable.

Step 2 - Resilience and the disaster cycle

We all come with our own understanding of resilience. Therefore it is important that we take time to hear and understand how the community understands resilience. Finding local words for resilience is key and helps to expand our understanding of resilience to be more holistic.

Exploring how we might respond to disasters, and using the disaster cycle, encourages us to think beyond just disaster response, but to disaster preparedness, mitigation and recovery.

Step 3 - Getting to know the community & hazards

The purpose of this step is to create space for exploration of the community and reflections on the hazards and disasters they might face. Doing a transect walk and developing a community map gives a good base to uncover hazards in the next step and is a reference point for further discussion.

Following the step above and using a timeline we focus on the hazards that are most likely and most impactful.

Step 4 - Vulnerability & capacity assessment

Having identified significant hazards, we then consider who is most vulnerable and why. Following this we explore and emphasise that there are capacities within the community. The aim is to reduce the vulnerabilities, and strengthen the capacities, in order to mitigate the risks associated with the hazards identified, and to prepare for possible disasters. This information is used to identify both mitigation and preparedness responses.

Step 5 - Taking action

Having identified responses to hazards the final step is to make realistic and robust plans so that action is owned and taken by the community.

“I have learnt that the best way to succeed is to find ways of making the community doing the things themselves. Then they will produce the information and strategies themselves”

Community facilitator in Zimbabwe

Key considerations -

- Are the right people in the room? Who is being missed out? Are those in the room able to make contributions and share their ideas? What adaptations can I make to encourage that?
- Take time with the steps and stages to make sure ideas and analysis are relevant to the community. Games and Bible studies open up the space for this.
- Are the plans created realistic and owned by the community? Think about your role in on-going support and encouragement to make plans happen.
- Who might have additional information that will be helpful? Are there local people with technical experience or links to the government? You may reveal issues that need additional support and training such as advocacy or dealing with sensitive or taboo issues.