



Transforming churches and communities

Strengthening preparedness:

Why and how to consider disaster
preparedness on your journey to church
and community transformation (CCT)

tearfund

What CCT is and what this guide provides

Tearfund believes that when God created the world, it was made in perfect relationships: between humankind and God, creation, each other and ourselves.

In the Fall, those relationships were broken, becoming the root causes of poverty. God's mission – and therefore the mission of the church – is to see these relationships restored. This is made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus. When Christians seek to live out their faith in everything they do, impacting all four broken relationships, we call this *integral mission*.

We believe that when local churches commit to integral mission, they begin a journey towards whole-life change. This journey empowers people to realise their potential and recognise the resources God has given them, inspiring them to respond holistically to the needs of their community. The church – internally and externally – starts addressing forms of exclusion that keep people living in poverty and hinder them from flourishing. The goal is to see broken relationships restored, bringing about church and community transformation (CCT).

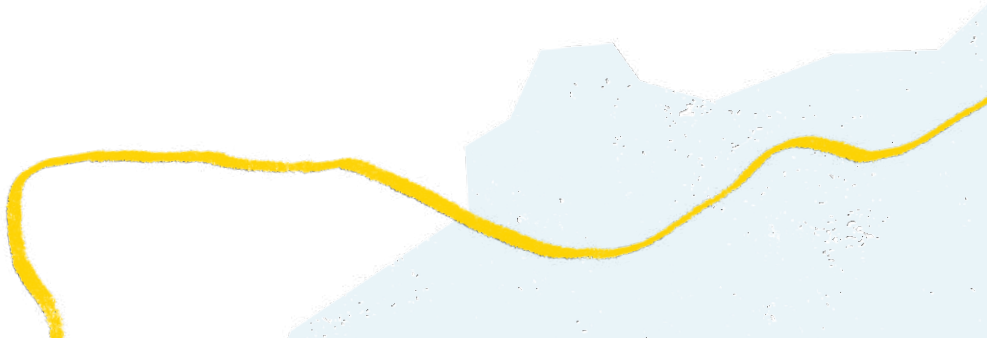
This guide is one in a series that seeks to help strengthen holistic transformation in CCT.

The Light Wheel (page 12) depicts nine aspects of wellbeing considered in CCT to help us see relationships restored and lives transformed. Many additional elements – such as advocacy, inclusion, self-help groups, gender protection and disaster preparedness – can be integrated into a CCT process to overcome specific challenges, ensuring that holistic transformation is being achieved.

Each guide in the series will focus on one element that will strengthen a church and community's journey towards CCT. The first part of a guide helps facilitators reflect on the topic and its place within CCT. The second part of a guide provides practical tools, learning and ideas.

This guide looks at **disaster preparedness.**

The objective of CCT is to experience holistic transformation that is long-lasting and owned by the church and community. The sustainability of these changes relies on people being aware of, and prepared for, any disaster that may strike.





Contents

What is disaster preparedness?	6
Theology of disaster preparedness	10
Ensuring that CCT is leading to holistic transformation	12
Considering preparedness throughout a CCT process	16
Bible study – The people and the land: Numbers 13 and 14	20
Bible study – Noah: Lessons in preparedness	24
Bible study – Joseph and his response to drought	26
Activity – The need to prepare: Reducing the effects of disasters	29
Activity – Getting to know our community (mapping and transect walk)	32
Activity – Prioritising our actions	38
Case study – Integrating preparedness into the church and community mobilisation process	42

What is disaster preparedness?

Disasters can have a hugely negative impact on communities, affecting many aspects of wellbeing. These include emotional, mental and physical health, material assets, resources and capabilities.

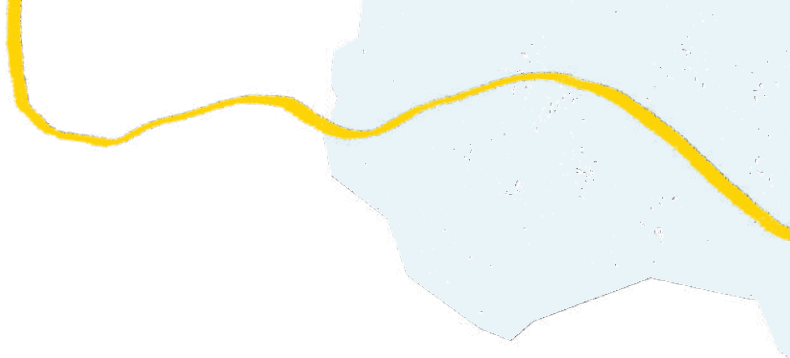
How do hazards and vulnerability combine to create a disaster?

A hazard is an extreme event that has the potential to cause loss of life or injury and damage to property and the environment. It may be a natural event – such as an earthquake, drought or cyclone – or it may be the result of human activity, such as conflict or accidental fire.

A disaster is the result of a hazard's impact on a vulnerable community, causing damage to life, assets or livelihoods in a way that exceeds the community's ability to cope.

Vulnerability is defined as the characteristics determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes that increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards. Vulnerability to a particular hazard affects people's ability to prepare for it, withstand it, respond to it, and recover from it.

Some people are more vulnerable than others and vulnerability is hazard-specific. Therefore, the impact a hazard has can vary across communities, households and individuals. The poorest and most marginalised people in society are often the most vulnerable.



Exposure – the location, attributes, and value of assets that are important to communities (people, buildings, factories, farmland etc) and that could be affected by a hazard.

Capacity – these are things a community has that help it cope with risk, problems and change.

What can be done to reduce the impact of hazards?

Some hazards can be prevented or reduced, eg less urban flooding through better drainage. Where this is not possible, action can be taken to reduce hazards' impact on communities. This is known as mitigation or disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Examples of mitigation activities include:

- building stronger houses to resist storms, floods or earthquakes
- growing crops that are more resistant to drought
- peacebuilding and reconciliation activities to reduce future conflict.

Communities can also predict what might happen when a hazardous event occurs, reflect on what they can do to cope with and recover from the event better, and then take action beforehand to reduce the negative consequences. This is known as preparedness.

Preparedness activities include:

- setting up early warning systems for floods that alert people early enough to protect their lives and possessions
- training community volunteers in first aid
- agreeing plans for moving people and livestock to safe areas. This should include vulnerable groups (for example, older people or those living with disabilities) who might need help to move.

Why does preparedness matter?

If a church and community are implementing a CCT process, a disaster can undo improvements in wellbeing that have taken years to achieve. Being prepared is essential if we want to see flourishing churches and communities.

Simple, practical things can be done beforehand, even by communities with limited resources, to help save lives, livelihoods and property. Good preparedness can reduce the impact of disasters and enable quicker recovery.

Preparedness is more important than ever because the number and severity of natural disasters is increasing globally¹ due to climate change. In the future, more floods, droughts and shifting rainfall patterns are predicted.

What role can local churches play?

The local church has a long-term presence, well placed to assist the community in becoming more prepared, using local knowledge, skills and materials. Churches can also help facilitate links for external support.

These preparedness activities are community-empowering, helping people understand cause-and-effect relationships and identify their own abilities to reduce vulnerability. The church can also help the community to identify and challenge injustices in social, political and economic structures that contribute to vulnerability.

Trained community-based facilitators will often be better placed to work with their communities to assess potential hazards and vulnerability than an external trainer. Facilitators should also consult with older community members who have experienced local disasters and may identify hazards that others miss.

Facilitators should receive both theoretical and practical training. The theory will help them understand disaster preparedness while practical training will help them gain the skills and confidence needed to effectively use preparedness tools in the community.

Preparedness is a continuous process. Facilitators should support communities to regularly reflect on hazards, vulnerability and preparedness, updating their plans.

1 [weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/natural-disasters-global-risks-2019/](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/natural-disasters-global-risks-2019/)

Theology of disaster preparedness

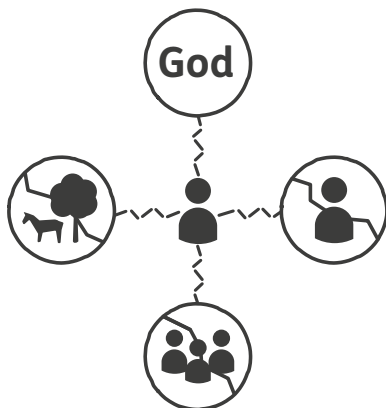
When God created the world, he declared it ‘very good’ (Genesis 1:31) and we know he is intimately involved in caring for it (Psalm 104). Since the Fall (Genesis 3), however, creation has been ‘groaning as in the pains of childbirth’ (Romans 8:22). For many communities this can mean the natural world is a hazardous place.

Our broken relationship with God can make us think we are on our own against ‘the forces of nature’ or ‘fate’, and our broken relationship with creation can make us apathetic to the impact of our actions on the environment locally and globally.

Broken relationships with others can directly cause disasters (eg conflict) or make some people more at risk to them (eg injustice, inequality and poverty), and our broken relationship with ourselves can mean we fail to recognise our responsibility or ability to act.

The four broken relationships are interconnected. For example, broken relationships with each other (conflict) can further break our relationship with creation (impact on the environment).

The four broken relationships



The Bible says we must not assume suffering is punishment (eg John 9:1–3; Job). Suffering saddens God, and the Bible invites us to express sorrow and anger in the face of it (eg Lamentations and Psalms).

After the Fall, God set in motion his plan to restore creation and bless all nations on earth (Genesis 12:1–3) through Jesus, who made reconciliation with God possible (Colossians 1:19–20). We live with the consequences of our broken relationships, but God’s will for us is to restore them. We have hope that God is renewing and restoring all things and will one day complete this work (Revelation 21:1–4).

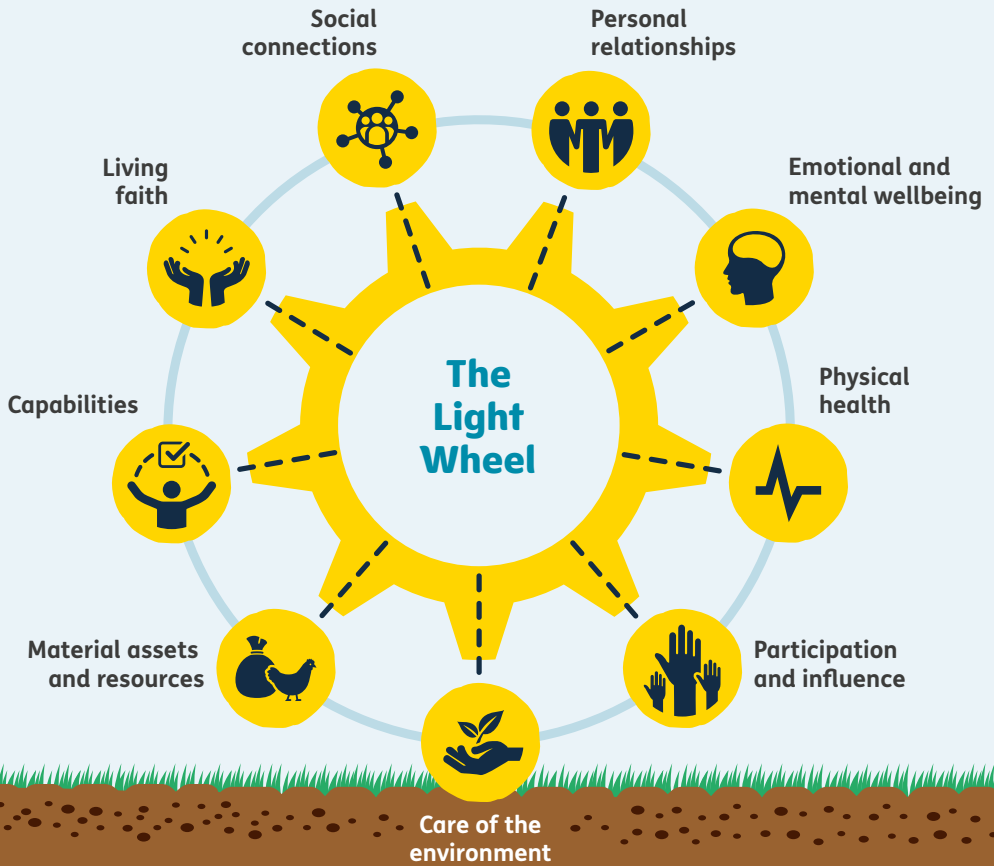
The four relationships restored



This hope gives us reason to prepare for disasters, inspiring us to be resilient.

- In restored relationships with God we know he cares about our daily lives, including threats that we face. The Bible gives accounts of God warning people of disasters and helping them prepare.
- In a restored relationship with creation we reclaim our role as carers of creation. We seek to restore our environment and ecosystem to reduce the hazards for everyone.
- In a restored relationship with each other we consider the impact of all our actions. We seek to work together to reduce the risks to all in the community and to challenge injustices that leave some more vulnerable to disasters.
- In a restored relationship with ourselves we reclaim our identity as children of God. We recognise that our actions make a difference and that God expects us to act wisely to prepare for the future (Proverbs 6:6–8, 21:20).

Ensuring that CCT is leading to holistic transformation



Context

These contextual factors will affect the impact of our work and must be taken into consideration when assessing change.




A holistic approach to vulnerability and preparedness

The Light Wheel is a practical framework showing the areas of life we must consider if we want to see relationships restored and lives fully transformed. It is made up of nine aspects of wellbeing that are depicted as spokes on a wheel to demonstrate their interconnectedness.

A church or community journeying towards CCT will carry out activities to grow the areas of wellbeing that most need attention for them to flourish. Positive change in one aspect of wellbeing often leads to positive changes in another area.

There will be times when communities or individuals face a disaster or hazard that threatens to undermine this positive transformation. To ensure progress is sustained, they need to be aware of vulnerability to disaster in different areas of their lives.

Let's use the analogy of the wheel and imagine it rolling along a road. If the road is smooth, the wheel will continue in the planned direction of travel. But if the wheel hits a pothole, its journey could be thrown off course. Disaster preparedness is about seeing the road ahead and planning for these potholes so that holistic transformation can continue and communities can be resilient and flourish.



These questions can be used to help people reflect on their areas of strength and potential vulnerability in different aspects of wellbeing.

1. How could a disaster impact upon each of the nine aspects of wellbeing? (You could work through a real-life example you or your community has faced).

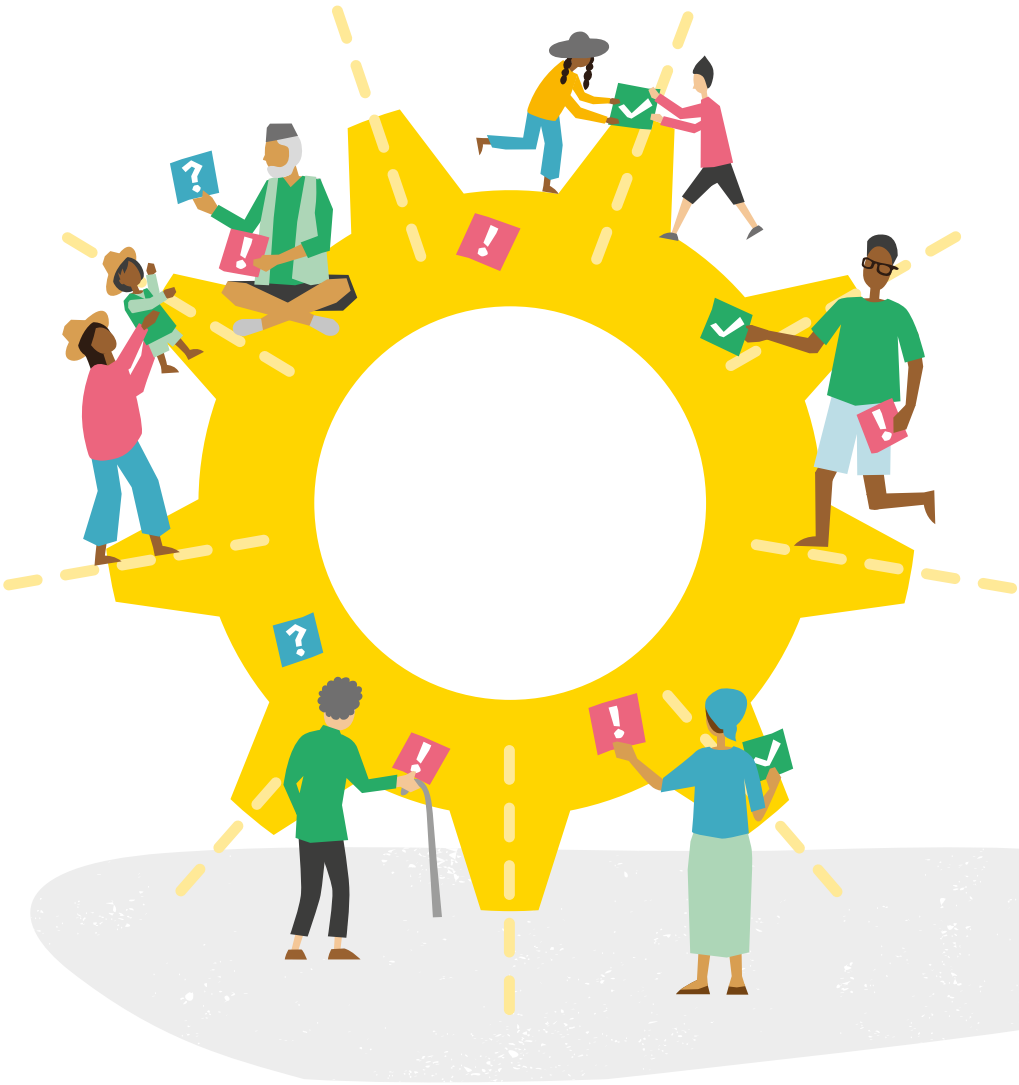
- How might a negative change in one of the aspects of wellbeing negatively impact another?

2. What could increased resilience in each of the nine aspects of wellbeing look like?

- How might preparedness in one aspect positively impact another? (eg saving up money may then improve emotional wellbeing during a crisis)

3. Think about the nine aspects of wellbeing in relation to your own life, your church and community:

- In which aspects of wellbeing are you strongest and most resilient to potential disasters? Why is this?
- In which aspects of wellbeing do you feel weakest and more vulnerable to potential disasters?
- Which aspects of wellbeing do you need to prioritise to be more prepared for future disasters?
- Reflect on the CCT process you are using. How could you ensure that disaster preparedness is considered?



Considering preparedness throughout a CCT process

The need for preparedness activities should be identified by the church and/or community as part of your CCT facilitation. Preparedness should be seen as a community issue rather than a separate, technical issue introduced by outsiders.

Envisioning

- 1. When developing the church and community vision, use the lens of disaster preparedness to ensure resilience to disasters is considered. Be specific.**
 - Reflect on the ways that inadequate disaster preparedness could hinder the achievement of your vision.
 - Are people aware of the local disaster risks?
- 2. Compare the desired church and community versus the current church and community:**
 - Consider the different types and frequency of disasters. What could the ideal church and community look like if these disasters didn't happen?
 - How could mitigation of or preparedness for disasters help the church and community move from the present to the desired situation?



Tearfund's Quality Standard on resilience says, 'We are committed to helping people understand, reduce and manage the risks they face as well as to address the causes of vulnerability'. Disaster preparedness starts with communities and individuals being aware of the disaster risks they face, many of which are made worse by climate change and environmental degradation.

Mobilising the church

Take time to explore how the church views disasters. Use Bible studies that focus on disaster preparedness. Explore what being prepared means in practice for a church and for the households of the members. Suggested questions:

- In what ways does integral mission (living out our faith in all areas of life) require us to be better prepared for disasters?
- How and when do you talk about historical hazard events?
- What is your vulnerability to the impacts of hazards?
- In what ways could taking action reduce the impact of disasters, and protect property and lives?
- How could being more prepared help sustain your progress in wellbeing?

- Who can take responsibility for planning and implementing activities?
- How could you coordinate and support preparedness work locally?
- Are the people mostly likely to be impacted included in learning about and planning for disasters?
- Is there an early or timely warning system for identified disaster risks?
- Are people able to carry out the plan?

These discussions can help the church see the benefits of setting up a disaster preparedness team to promote preparedness and take ownership of the plans. It is important to help the church reflect on how it is part of the wider community and can serve and collaborate to more effectively reduce vulnerability.

Resource mobilisation

Think about different categories of resources.

- Which resources can help increase your preparedness for disasters?

Engaging the community

Unless there is strong representation from across the whole community, the actions resulting from preparedness planning will have limited impact, and those who are most vulnerable will not be effectively prepared. High levels of participation enable the unique vulnerabilities in each community to be properly discussed and assessed. This produces more appropriate preparedness actions and stronger community ownership.

Consider:

- How can you use the network of relationships and connections in the community to increase the effectiveness of disaster preparedness?
- How can these networks be strengthened?
- How can you ensure that these actions are sustainable?
- How could you include more community members in your disaster preparedness planning?

History mapping tools:

- Which disasters has the community experienced?
 - How have these disasters impacted the community?
- Reflect across each of the nine aspects of wellbeing.

Current day mapping tools:

- Use the seasonal calendar to map the pattern of disasters. Identify what the risks and vulnerabilities are at different times of the year.
- Who in the community are the most vulnerable to different hazards?

Ensure equal representation and participation from different groups in the community, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable to hazards. Think about power dynamics and what barriers might prevent the full community participating.

Focus on any risk that the community wants to discuss, even if this is not what the facilitator or outsiders consider essential.

Evaluate:

- Are the assessments of hazards and vulnerability strongly owned by the community?
- Are their plans to improve preparedness realistic?
- Are there any relevant sensitive or taboo issues that are not being discussed?
- Who might have helpful additional information or expertise? Are there local people with technical experience or links to the government?
- What is the facilitator's role in ongoing support and encouragement to make plans happen?



Bible study

The people and the land: Numbers 13 and 14

Part 1: Preparing to face the future

Objective: Participants are able to consider their own contexts and appropriately prepare for disasters.

Read Numbers 13:1–3 and 17–24 and answer the following questions:

1. What did Moses instruct them to assess?
2. How can this help you understand your own context?
3. Moses told the spies to find out if the land was 'good or bad'. Usually places are neither all good or all bad. How could you assess both the opportunities and risks in your community?
4. How could getting to know your community help you be better prepared to face the future?
5. Sometimes communities ignore potential hazards. Why do you think this is? How does this Bible story encourage you to think differently?
6. What actions will you take as a result of this Bible study?



Leaders' notes

This Bible passage is engaging and full of drama. It could be read out by someone who will bring it to life, by a narrator with other people reading different characters' speech, or could be acted out by the group.

In this story of the Israelite spies exploring Canaan, God gives the people the responsibility of exploring the land, taking stock of the good things and the challenges or risks. God had promised this land to their ancestors (or forefathers). They had a choice as to how to act in response. A few want to enter the land, trusting God is with them. Most are overwhelmed by the challenges, stop trusting God and want to turn back. Their fearful response has consequences for an entire generation: they will spend 40 years wandering in the desert.

This history of the Israelites is unique, but God is involved in the history of all people and the places they live (Acts 17:26). As we think about disaster preparedness in our own communities, the story suggests the following:

- God knows the challenges our community faces, including the potential hazards.
- God has given us responsibility to prepare for the future.
- We should take opportunities to identify hazards, taking action in response.
- We can trust God is with us: preparing for the future is not a lack of faith!
- Our action or inaction may have consequences for years to come. However, God remains faithful and compassionate.

Part 2: Attitudes to taking action

This study explores how attitudes and beliefs can impact people's action (or inaction).

Read Numbers 13:25 to 14:9 and answer the following questions:

1. What different attitudes do you see among the men who have explored the land?
(Numbers 13:30–31)
2. How does the negative attitude spread and impact the wider community?
What choice do they face?
(Numbers 13:32–14:4)
3. In your community what different attitudes do people have towards hazards?
4. Are there attitudes or beliefs that discourage people from identifying hazards and acting to reduce their impact?
5. What can encourage people to identify hazards and take action?
6. As the church, does your understanding of God and his purposes make a difference to your attitude and actions in planning for potential hazards?
7. What actions will you take as a result of this Bible study?



Leaders' notes

These questions are an opportunity to discuss attitudes and beliefs both in the church and wider community.

Negative attitudes might arise from fatalism ('what will be will be'), traditional beliefs and culture, particular understandings of God, disempowerment and hopelessness etc. Positive attitudes can also result from traditional beliefs and culture, understanding of God, experience of being empowered etc.

We are part of God's story of restoration, and hope gives reasons for us to act. Therefore we should not just sit and wait for God to intervene but we are called to be active participants in his mission. God has given us wisdom and resources and we are called to use these to participate in his story; this includes understanding our contexts and preparing for disasters.

There is a balance between trusting God, but also taking action using the wisdom that he has given us.



Bible study

Noah: Lessons in preparedness

Why use this Bible study?

This Bible study helps us learn – from Noah’s preparation for the flood – how we can prepare for disasters.

Preparing for disaster

Read Genesis 6:5–8:22.

The story of an extensive flood is found in the Bible and in other religious texts and cultural stories. According to Genesis, 40 days of rain flooded the land to a depth of seven metres. The flood lasted for 150 days. The human population and land animals were all destroyed, except for those with Noah in his boat.

Key points

- Many people think that disasters are ‘God’s will’ or ‘his judgement’ on us. Whilst the world is broken because of sin, the Bible teaches that God sends warnings of disasters and wants us to prepare for and learn from them.



Questions for discussion

Read Genesis 6:5–7.

The Bible describes the flood as God's punishment of bad human behaviour.

- Do people today sometimes hold this view of disasters?
- Taking account of other Bible teaching, is there any justification for this view?

Read Genesis 6:11–17.

Noah was warned by God that a flood was going to happen. God also gave Noah precise instructions about building a large, waterproof boat, described as an ark.

- What warnings do we get that disaster is coming?
- What traditional knowledge or signs do people use to predict disaster?

Read Genesis 6:18–22 and 7:1–4.

God gave other instructions to Noah about the birds and animals and food for them.

- How did this prepare for the period after the floods had gone down?
- What are the things we most need to keep safe during times of disaster?

Read Genesis 8:3–5 and 8:13–19.

When the flood water went down, the ark rested on a hill and Noah and his family were able to make a fresh start, living on higher land.

- What opportunities do disasters bring for a fresh start and reduced risks?
- What actions will you take as a result of this Bible study?

Bible study

Joseph and his response to drought

Preparing for drought

Read Genesis Chapter 41.

Joseph, who was in prison at the time, was called to interpret some vivid dreams of the Pharaoh. His explanation of what God was saying through these dreams was so convincing that Pharaoh put him in charge of Egypt. Joseph organised the storage of all surplus grain during the seven years of good harvests. He asked that one fifth of each year's harvest should be required from farmers and stored on behalf of the government. The grain was stored in warehouses in nearby cities.

At the beginning of the drought, the warehouses were opened and people allowed to buy grain. As the situation got worse, livestock, labour and land were accepted in exchange for grain (Genesis 47:13–21). People from neighbouring countries were allowed to buy grain too (Genesis 42:1–5).

At the end of the seven years of drought, Joseph gave seed to people for planting. Because all the land in Egypt now belonged to Pharaoh, Joseph asked that a tax of one fifth of the crops produced should be given to Pharaoh. The remaining four fifths of the harvest belonged to the people.



Key points

- Joseph had the skills of good management. He was guided by God and so able to plan carefully, and to predict what was likely to happen. In order to carry out his clear planning, he needed authority and power. Anyone put in charge of a disaster management programme also needs authority to make and carry out quick decisions that others will respect and obey.
- Joseph's plan seemed good to Pharaoh and all his officials (Genesis 41:37). The local leadership accepted and trusted his plans. Joseph had the trust of all the people. In emergency situations there needs to be that trust in the leadership. People are under great strain and need a leader they can trust.
- One fifth of the harvest was taken from the farmer for a food reserve. Joseph developed a new pattern of land use. Certain things that are developed in an emergency can become regular patterns of life.
- The way in which the grain was stored and distributed spread the work and responsibility all around the country. Instead of having one huge centre, Joseph encouraged each region to set up warehouses.
- Egypt was the only land that was prepared for the famine in the Middle East. It met its own needs as well as those of neighbouring countries. Good disaster planning can have far-reaching benefits.
- No indication was given that this drought was a judgement from God on Pharaoh and Egypt. It appears to have been a natural calamity. But God used the disaster relief project to save Jacob's family and the future nation of Israel. Disaster planning can be used by God to do good and achieve his purposes in the world.

Questions for discussion

1. How much can be learnt from Joseph's management skills that could help us in our own day-to-day management of our work?
2. What changes could you make in order to prepare your community to meet any possible difficulty or disaster? Do you have discipleship and leadership training programmes, for example?
3. What actions will you take as a result of this Bible study?

Discuss and pray together about possible plans and improvements you could make in your community.



Activity

The need to prepare: Reducing the effects of disasters

Why use this activity?

This activity helps people understand that we can reduce some of the causes of disaster and can often do a lot to prepare for disasters.



You will need

- An empty cardboard box
- A chair



Timeline

This activity takes up to 2 hours.

Explaining the words we use:

- **Hazard:** an extreme event that could injure people or damage property and the environment
- **Vulnerability:** how much people are likely to suffer serious loss, damage, injury or death as a result of a hazard
- **Disaster:** a disaster occurs when a hazard affects vulnerable people who are unable to cope with its impacts

1. Before you start, find a volunteer.

- Describe the activity so they can choose whether to volunteer.

2. In front of the whole group, ask your volunteer to sit on a chair.

- Explain that you are going to hold a box above this person's head and that the box is a hazard.
- Tell everyone to pretend the box is very heavy so this person is vulnerable if it falls. (The box should not be heavy, just pretend that it is.)
- Explain to the group that if the hazard (the box) is dropped on the vulnerable person, this will be a disaster. Pretend to drop it on their head.

3. Now ask the group some questions about the 'falling box disaster':

- **Responding to the disaster:** What could the group do to help the person once the box has fallen on him or her?

Examples: taking the person to hospital; providing care for them; taking a collection to help them.

- **Preparing for the disaster:** What could be done to prepare for the falling box?

Examples: wearing a hard hat; a system to warn the person and community of a falling box; preparing medical aid, eg first aid boxes, a clinic or cycle ambulance; setting up a big net to catch the box; training people in the potential dangers of falling boxes.



- **Preventing the disaster:**
What could the community do to prevent this disaster?

Examples: pushing the box away; cutting the box up into small pieces; replacing the big box with lots of smaller boxes; building a platform to support the box; catching the box; moving the person away to safety.

4. Next, ask the group about the main disasters they face.

- What disasters affect you and your community?
- What things disrupt your lives or cause loss of life?



5. Refer back to the box illustration to explore what the community can do:

- For each disaster the group has mentioned, ask:
- What causes the disaster?
- How do people's actions make the disaster worse?
- How could the community respond to the disaster when it happens?
- How could they prepare for the disaster?
- How could they prevent the disaster?
- Once you have discussed every disaster type the group identified, encourage some discussion on fatalism.
- Do we see disasters as out of our control because we think they are caused by God, or do we see the opportunities God has given us to reduce the impacts of disasters?

Activity

Getting to know our community (mapping and transect walk)

Why use this activity?

Community mapping helps a group to think about their environment and who lives there, and to record different land uses, buildings, economic activities and natural resources.

A brief description

This tool is in three parts. Part 1 is a community mapping exercise where people draw a map of their community onto paper. Part 2 is a transect walk, where a group walks through a community along a planned route, noting what they see. Part 3 is a time of discussion to analyse the findings of the mapping and transect walk.



You will need

- Large pieces of paper
- Pens



Timeline

This activity takes up to 3 hours.

What to do

Before starting: Depending on how much time you have available, you may ask half of the participants to carry out Part 1 (community mapping) and half to carry out Part 2 (the transect walk) at the same time. Be aware of anyone who will be unable to carry out the transect walk and ensure that they are included in the community mapping group, or if the whole group does the transect walk, that they are given the option to undertake a separate activity.

Part 1: Community mapping

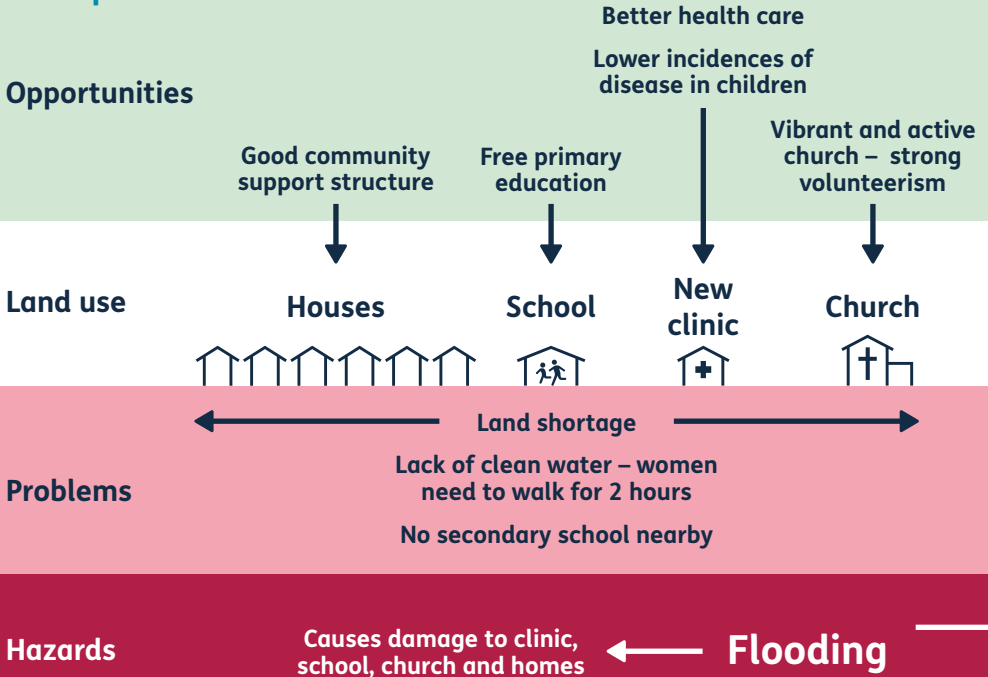
- Put some large pieces of paper together on tables, the floor or a wall: allow the group to choose. This is where the map will be drawn.
- Divide the group into smaller groups according to gender and age. Each group will draw their own map. The more groups you have, the more space you will need and the more you will need to facilitate (especially with groups of children).
- The map should show:
 - Natural resources and how they are used: rivers, forests, grazing land, water sources, fields for crops.
 - Physical or man-made features: areas of housing, roads, bridges, churches, mosques, schools, clinics, markets etc.



Part 2: Transect walk

- Plan the route of the transect walk beforehand. The route should pass through areas of different land use. Ideally walk from one side of the community to the other. In a rural context this may mean from one side of the village to the other. In an urban context it might mean a physical place bounded by a road or river. Decide in consultation with the community.
- Plan how this activity will be carried out. Will it be one big group, mixing women, men, girls and boys? Or would it be better to divide into smaller groups with men and women doing the walk separately?
- Explain the activity to the group(s). Explain where the transect walk will start and describe the route. Ask the group(s) to draw or note everything that they see as they walk directly on the line they

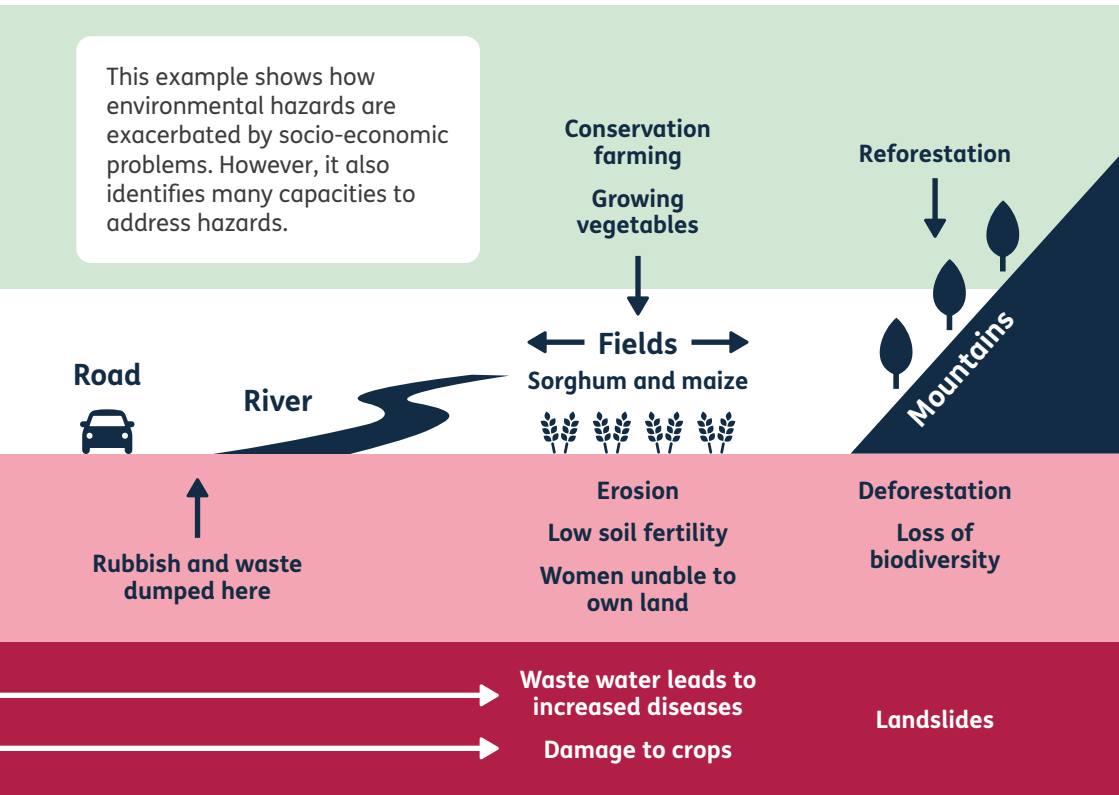
Example Transect walk



are following, or up to an agreed distance either side of it. They will already be familiar with the surroundings, but ask them to record everything they see, even very obvious things. Include features such as slopes, tree cover, crops, houses, waste sites, buildings and water sources. Ask the group(s) to also record issues that they know about, such as soil fertility, waste disposal, crop failure, land tenure, weather biodiversity or disease.

- Accompany the group as they walk. Ask questions to help encourage observation.
- Once the walk is completed, allow time for the group to draw or re-draw their findings.
- A transect walk is usually drawn as a 'side-on' view – as if you had cut away the land and were looking at it from the side (see example below).

This example shows how environmental hazards are exacerbated by socio-economic problems. However, it also identifies many capacities to address hazards.



Part 3: Discussion and analysis

- Bring everyone together with all of the maps and pictures they have drawn. Allow each group an opportunity to explain their map, and encourage discussion. You could use the following questions:
 - How do the maps and the transect walk pictures compare?
 - What are the differences between them? Why are these differences there?
 - What are the similarities between the maps and pictures?
 - What new things have we learnt about our community through these activities?

The different results can be very revealing. Use all the information to make a final detailed map. Keep hold of all of the maps so that a record of the detail, and differences, is kept.





Activity

Prioritising our actions

Prioritising which actions to take

This is a process of using the map to identify capacities and vulnerabilities to then prioritise which actions to take, using voting.


Tools to enable identification of the vulnerabilities and capacities can be found in the 'Understanding vulnerability and capacity' PDF.²

Why use this activity?

With the information produced so far, this activity helps the community to begin to identify the actions they might want to take in order to:

- **Reduce the vulnerabilities**
 - Explain that **vulnerability** is about how likely people are to suffer serious loss, damage, injury or death as a result of a hazard. Explain that a **disaster** occurs when a hazard affects **vulnerable** people who are **unable to cope** with its effects. Damage is done to various aspects of life, livelihoods, property and the environment.

² res.cloudinary.com/tearfund/image/fetch/https://learn.tearfund.org/-/media/learn/resources/series/reveal-2/2022-tearfund-reveal-step-4-understanding-vulnerability-and-capacity-en.pdf

- 
- To understand vulnerability we need to ask **why** it would be possible for a hazard (the wind, earth tremor, flood water etc) to cause so much damage. Vulnerability might be difficult to see, because it is often linked to something that is absent or not accessible to some members of the community.
 - **Strengthen the capacities**
 - Explain that as well as vulnerabilities, a community will possess **capacities** or **strengths** that help to **reduce the impact** of the hazard. Capacities may consist of knowledge or skills, including traditional ways of coping with hazards. They may also include alternative crops or livelihoods, or extended family support mechanisms. Capacities are the things that will help the community to anticipate, prepare for, cope with and recover from a disaster.

A brief description

A facilitated discussion and ranking exercise in order to prioritise actions to take to prepare for disasters.



You will need


- A community map already drawn by the group
- Small stones or bottle tops (6 for each participant)
- Paper and pens



Timeline

This activity will take 1–2 hours.

What to do

- Remind the participants of the previous activities done during the vulnerability and capacity analysis.
 - Ask the following discussion questions:
 - What actions could be taken without help from outside the community to reduce our vulnerabilities, and to strengthen existing capacities or build new ones? Encourage the group to be creative about solutions.
 - What actions are required by people or institutions (eg NGOs or government) to help reduce our vulnerabilities, and strengthen and build capacities?
 - Ensure that input from women is encouraged, especially in contexts where there is cultural separation between genders and men tend to dominate.
 - Make a note of all of the actions suggested. Write them on pieces of paper. Ask the group to rank them.
 - First, ask everyone to vote for which change would have the **biggest impact**.
 - Second, ask people to vote for which change is **easiest for them to make**.
 - **Ensure both mitigation and preparedness actions are included (see Tool A2: Understanding how we respond to disasters (the disaster cycle)).**
 - Select as many of the changes as the group thinks is possible to follow up.
 - Draw out the table opposite onto large pieces of paper. Fill in the table based on the results of the discussion.
- 

Many natural hazards cannot be prevented. However, it is possible to take practical action beforehand to reduce the potential impact of hazards on a community so that the risk of a disaster is reduced. This is known as mitigation.

Preparedness is a set of activities preparing for the impact of a hazard – activities that will help the community members to cope and to recover.

Action	Who is responsible?			Deadline
	Community	NGO	Government or other	

Next steps: We suggest that you do the **Minibus planning exercise** after this activity in order to develop a more comprehensive action plan.



Case study

Integrating preparedness into the church and community mobilisation process

The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) began training their churches in the church and community mobilisation process (CCMP) in 2012. A serious drought hit the country in 2015 and EFZ received many requests for relief aid. They realised they needed to do more through CCMP to help communities prepare for disasters so they started a pilot preparedness initiative in five communities.

CCMP facilitators were trained on preparedness and mitigation approaches using Tearfund's participatory assessment of disaster risk (PADR) tool.³ Recognising that this technical training alone would not effectively incorporate these approaches into CCMP, EFZ developed Bible studies to demonstrate the connection between the technical issues and integral mission.

A church member involved in the pilot says: 'When the drought hit in 2015, we thought dependency on handouts was our only way out. However, these new Bible studies helped us realise that God has already provided us with many resources that we can use to prepare for and overcome the drought.'

The trained facilitators were able to help communities develop preparedness plans to deal with common hazards they faced. The plans included preparedness activities such as:

- creating links between the communities and meteorological services so that the communities are more aware of forecasted weather related hazards

3 learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/series/roots-guides/reducing-risk-of-disaster-in-our-communities--a-roots-guide



📷 Farmer Nicholas Ncube, who is on the Foundations for Farming programme, walks past a field of maize with his daughters. Photo: Eleanor Bentall/Tearfund

- promoting traditional indigenous knowledge to predict approaching weather-related hazards. This particularly helped communities not reached by TV, radio, telephone or internet services
- establishing emergency funds as part of the routine activities of self-help groups.

When asked what advice he would give to others planning similar preparedness training as part of CCMP, EFZ's Stanley Hanya identified the following:

- Combine theory and practical training to give confidence to facilitators. Continue to accompany the facilitators to strengthen the application of their training.

- Preparedness is a multi-stakeholder issue. Involve technical experts in the training (for example, from relevant local government departments) to explain issues to facilitators so they can then communicate concepts in a way that is understandable for community members.
- Create links between the facilitators so that they can continue to help each other after the formal training has finished.
- Good facilitation is needed to develop and implement quality preparedness plans, particularly to ensure adequate ownership of different stakeholders.

‘I have learned that the best way to succeed is to find ways of making the community do the things themselves. Then they will produce the information and strategies themselves.’

Community facilitator, Zimbabwe

learn.tearfund.org

Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, United Kingdom

☎ +44 (0)20 3906 3906 ✉ publications@tearfund.org

Registered office: Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE. Registered in England: 994339.
A company limited by guarantee. Registered Charity No. 265464 (England & Wales) Registered Charity No. SC037624 (Scotland) 00752-(0922)

tearfund