

Improving effectiveness

5.1 Measuring effectiveness

The effectiveness of the PADR process should be measured by comparing the impact of any future hazard with the impact of the same hazard before PADR was carried out. Damage and needs assessment data can be used to do this.

In practice it may be difficult to say whether activities have reduced disaster risk because the hazards may be different in their characteristics from year to year and vulnerabilities may change too. For example, there may be a bad flood one year, but a less serious flood the following year. However, some improvement in the local situation should be evident, particularly if compared with other communities affected by the same hazard, which have not taken action to reduce risk.

The findings of these comparisons should be fed back into the ongoing activities in order to further reduce disaster risk.

Regular monitoring of activities is also needed as the scale and nature of the hazards and people's vulnerability to them may change. Activities may need to be adjusted to suit new circumstances.

It is advisable to repeat the whole PADR process every three years or so.

The PADR process can produce some other positive impacts. For example, the confidence of local people could be built, and people could become more caring. It is important to celebrate these impacts.

CASE STUDY Comparing the impact of floods in Bihar

The floods in Bihar, India, in July 2004 were considered by the local media to be the worst in 50 years. Over 21 million people were affected, 1.5 million hectares of agricultural land was flooded and 674,000 houses were destroyed, with many more being damaged. 585 people lost their lives.

Before these floods, Tearfund partner, The Discipleship Centre, worked with local people to identify disaster risk reduction activities. For example, a flood response team was set up. An evacuation procedure was developed. The most vulnerable members, including children, women and people with disabilities, were prioritised for transportation by boat to safety. They took shelter under temporary bamboo and plastic sheeting structures that had been assembled on high ground before the monsoon season. The difference between communities where disaster risk reduction activities had been carried out and others in the area that had not benefited from this approach was clear. Those communities without disaster risk reduction measures were disorganised when the floods came, resulting in more deaths and loss of livestock and household belongings.

5.2 Using PADR in different contexts

PADR may need to be adapted slightly for use in urban and post-disaster contexts and in situations of past or present insecurity.

Urban contexts

For urban contexts, three issues should be considered.

1 IN URBAN AREAS, A BETTER TERM FOR 'HAZARD' MIGHT BE 'THREAT'

People living in an urban slum might say that the greatest problems they face are:

- forced eviction from the slum due to illegal settlement
- riots and other forms of violence, such as domestic violence
- theft.

Rather than using the term 'hazard', people might prefer to use the term 'threat'. This is because people often feel threatened by the action of other people, rather than natural hazards. The facilitation team might therefore prefer to call STEP 2 'Threat assessment' rather than 'Hazard assessment'. Since threats can be less obvious to the whole community, different opinions may be expressed during the threat assessment. These threats should be prioritised carefully in order to gain ownership by the whole community.

However, there may be specific hazards in urban areas which people might call 'hazards'. For example:

- Fire, due to the houses being very close together.
- Flood due to the location of the settlement on marshy land, or because the presence of roads and other artificial ground surfaces gives less opportunity for the water to drain away.

EXAMPLE Using PADR in a slum in Delhi, India

Local people identified the following threats: malaria, fire, flood, crime and demolition. Malaria was selected as the most important.

During the vulnerability assessment, the following vulnerabilities were identified:

- Element at risk: human lives
- Vulnerable conditions: stagnant water in which mosquitoes can breed
- Pressure: local authority does not remove rubbish, which then blocks drains
- Underlying cause: the local authority will not take action because the settlement is illegal and likely to be demolished.

Action planning could involve local people clearing the drains themselves, education about making and using mosquito nets and advocacy with local authorities to legalise the settlement or provide suitable alternatives.

2 SOCIAL NETWORKS

There is often less co-operation and unity among urban people than in rural areas. This is because people are separated from traditional networks and other social capacities (such as village councils, farmers' cooperatives, informal social gatherings of women) when they move to urban areas. Urban slums often consist of people from many different places. Even when people have lived in an urban area for many years, they may find they have fewer connections with their neighbours than they had in rural areas. One key way to reduce vulnerability to disaster in urban areas can therefore be to encourage stronger social groupings.

3 CAPACITIES AND VULNERABILITIES

While people in urban areas may have fewer social capacities, they do have other capacities that do not exist in rural areas. For example, they are nearer to emergency services. Medical facilities may also be close by, along with schools and other government and NGO services.

However, there is a difference between 'availability' and 'access'. The facilities might be available, but people in urban slums may remain vulnerable if they are excluded from accessing them. People in slums may live near a health centre, but may be excluded from using it because they cannot afford the healthcare. Emergency services may exist, but a fire engine may not be able to access an urban slum if the streets are too narrow. Development of social capacities, such as a local Fire Committee, may be more effective in reducing risk from fire in slums.

Post-disaster contexts

PADR is not only appropriate for use before a disaster. It can also be used after a disaster in order to improve the quality and sustainability of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction work.

Traditionally, disaster relief agencies carry out damage and needs assessments after a disaster. The aim is to try to save lives and help repair the damage. However, there are problems with this narrow approach:

- It focuses on short-term needs, rather than addressing the underlying vulnerabilities that led to the disaster
- Local capacities can be damaged as people are often treated as helpless victims
- Relief dependency is often created because people begin to rely too much on outside help
- If the disaster is not understood, relief work can sometimes encourage the very risks that enabled the disaster to happen, or create new risks.

By using PADR after a disaster, traditional approaches to relief can be replaced with more effective 'developmental relief'. This involves looking at long-term reduction in vulnerability of local people. The table on page 66 highlights the key differences between a traditional and a developmental approach to relief.

Traditional and developmental approaches to relief

TRADITIONAL RELIEF	DEVELOPMENTAL RELIEF
People are treated as helpless victims	People are treated as survivors with strengths and resources
People are passive beneficiaries of external aid	People's capacities are built on through their active participation
Damage and needs assessments are carried out quickly by external experts	Assessments are carried out with local people
The focus is on the provision of humanitarian aid (such as food and shelter) and technical solutions	Assistance also includes addressing social and other aspects of people's vulnerability
Focus is on the individual	Focus is on the community and the way it is organised
Donors decide what is needed	Local people participate in decision-making
Provision of aid is the responsibility of the relief agency	Disaster management is everybody's responsibility and the relief agency plays a supportive role
The goal is to meet immediate needs and get things back to the way they were	The goal is to reduce people's vulnerability to future hazards in addition to meeting immediate needs

When carrying out PADR after a disaster the following points should be considered:

Timing The PADR process of identifying vulnerabilities and capacities in relation to all the hazards experienced in the local area should not be carried out until there is no immediate risk to people's lives, basic needs have been met and people are feeling less traumatised.

The community leaders should decide when the time is right to begin PADR.

Participation Ensure people are as fully involved in the process as possible. Relief workers may need to change their style and approach as they usually focus on the speed of aid delivery.

Hazards People may find it difficult to think about potential future hazards, as the hazard which caused the recent disaster will be at the front of their minds. Even though people might be at higher risk of other hazards in the future, it may be best to carry out the assessment for this hazard first and carry out PADR for other hazards in a few months' time. For example, in Gujarat, India, people affected by an earthquake which killed 20,000 people, prioritised the earthquake hazard above drought, even though earthquakes do not happen very often and drought affects lives and livelihoods each day.

Capacities Emphasis should be placed upon identifying and discussing local capacities, as these may be less evident after a disaster and are often overlooked by relief agencies. People may find it particularly hard to recognise their capacities after a disaster, so the facilitator should emphasise positive aspects to start discussions. For example, they could ask the question: ‘You have survived a dangerous event; how did you do this?’

CASE STUDY
Using PADR after
the tsunami in
Banda Aceh,
Indonesia

In Banda Aceh, Indonesia, PADR was carried out five months after the tsunami disaster. People were interested in taking part in the process because their livelihoods were not yet restored and so they had more spare time. People felt that storms and earthquakes presented the greatest risk in the future. All the groups agreed on the safest local place – a piece of ground on a hill. Findings of the assessment were used in the planning of the shelter, livelihoods and education components of the relief programme.

Post-conflict or insecure environments

Where violent conflict exists, PADR should be used with caution. An experienced facilitator should be used. Key principles include:

- sensitivity, especially if people begin to think of painful memories.
- neutrality, so that PADR is not seen to be helping one side or the other. Seek to gather information from opposing groups.
- confidentiality, not revealing any information that may give an advantage to the opposing side, or put individuals in danger.

In extreme cases, it may be best to first address the conflict using specific conflict analysis tools and appropriate peace-building responses.

In a post-conflict situation or where there is little insecurity, PADR can be an effective tool in helping people to understand their situation and move towards peace. This is because PADR encourages community members to work together and identify common aims. The community may identify insecurity as a factor influencing vulnerability and seek to address this during the action planning step. However, facilitators should ensure that this is done in a healthy way. If the PADR process seems to be making tensions worse, it should be stopped and appropriate conflict analysis or peace-building tools should be introduced.

Focus groups Facilitators should be aware that community members or powerful people may be suspicious of focus groups. It is important that everyone linked to the community is aware of the PADR process and what it involves so they do not feel threatened by it.

It may be wise to choose an appropriate time and place for focus groups to meet in private in case they want to discuss sensitive issues. Ensure that such discussions are for the benefit of strengthening peace and not an opportunity for the focus groups to discuss how they might increase tensions.

- Key informants** Ensure that key informants are drawn from people on all sides of the conflict, so that differing views can be heard and understood. Be aware that sometimes, national government or international groups seek to use or to increase local tensions in order to achieve their own objectives.
- Capacity assessment** Some local capacities may have been negatively affected by the insecurity. For example, traditional grazing lands may no longer be available, or areas where firewood can be gathered may become too dangerous. Encourage people to identify these lost capacities as well as the ones they currently have. Ensure that part of the action planning aims to re-build the capacities they have lost.
- Action planning** If there is no established group to take the action plan forward, it may be necessary to focus planning on the household level rather than the community as a whole. Once relationships start to be built, it may become possible to identify a Volunteer Task Force.

5.3 Mainstreaming important issues

There are some important issues that should be mainstreamed into the work we do. In other words, they should become an integral part of all our work and influence the way things are done. In relation to best practice in disaster management, we need to be particularly aware of the following:

- HIV and AIDS
- climate change
- gender sensitivity
- child sensitivity.

These subjects have already been highlighted in this book. The paragraphs below describe why this is important and how this has been done.

HIV and AIDS

Millions of people are living with HIV and AIDS around the world, and many millions more are affected in some way. The majority of people living with HIV are in southern countries.

HIV and AIDS are devastating life, increasing poverty and making communities unstable. As a result, people are becoming more vulnerable to natural and man-made hazards.

While HIV and AIDS increase the vulnerability of people who face disaster, they are also a hazard in their own right. Poor people are often least able to cope with the hazard of HIV and AIDS, leading to long-term disaster. Disaster response tends to happen when hazards hit local people over a short time. However, since HIV and AIDS are a less obvious disaster, which happens over a long period of time, responses are taken less seriously. As a result, the underlying causes that make people vulnerable to HIV and AIDS are rarely addressed.

Natural and man-made disasters around the world are making people vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. For example, conflict can increase the spread of HIV through rape as a weapon of war and because partners are separated for long periods of time. Making a response to HIV and AIDS becomes even more challenging in times of disaster. If HIV and AIDS are not taken into account when planning responses to disaster, levels of infection could increase because people may be forced into risky behaviour in order to survive.

Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS

Efforts to reduce disaster risk should take account of those living with, and affected by, HIV and AIDS. This involves including them in decision-making about the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of activities to reduce disaster risk.

HIV and AIDS should be considered as important factors that make households vulnerable to disasters. By addressing HIV and AIDS, the impact of a future hazard on these households could be reduced.

Disaster mitigation measures should take account of the needs of people living with HIV and AIDS. For example, evacuation plans could ensure that those who are sick with AIDS are evacuated first, along with the elderly and others lacking mobility.

After a disaster, the reconstruction phase should be carefully designed so that people's vulnerability to HIV is not increased. For example, if people are moved away from their homes while infrastructure is rebuilt, efforts should be made to keep families together and provide income-generating opportunities so that women are not forced into commercial sex work.

HIV and AIDS are increasingly being recognised as a key issue by many aid agencies and policy-makers. The following guidelines have been developed to help organisations mainstream HIV and AIDS in disaster mitigation and response:

- UNAIDS, *Guidelines for HIV interventions in emergency settings*.
- Sphere Project's *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*.

Climate change

Climate change is discussed with regard to the different hazards that face people, and how weather-related hazards are becoming more frequent and severe. This is increasing the risks to vulnerable people and is also generating new risks to which people need to adapt. Advocacy work is vital. For example, countries should be encouraged to reduce gas emissions that generate harmful atmospheric effects such as global warming.

Gender sensitivity

Women are often given a lower status in society than men. Decision-making is often carried out by male community leaders. Women's household duties can be lengthy and exhausting, ranging from childcare, cooking and cleaning to the fetching of water and doing hard manual labour.

Gender inequality can have a negative impact on women's vulnerability to hazards. For example, in many cultures, women do not know how to swim because it is seen as unacceptable behaviour. Women are therefore very vulnerable during floods.

PADR should be carried out with focus groups of women, in order to ensure that their different perspectives are heard and understood. Action planning should take account of gender issues and can be a powerful challenge to day-to-day gender inequalities in the community.

Child sensitivity

Children can be particularly vulnerable in times of disaster. They are dependent on others for protection, as they are less able to care for themselves until they reach a certain age and maturity. If they become orphans, perhaps after losing their parents through AIDS, they will be especially vulnerable. When times are particularly difficult for a household, children are sometimes exploited sexually or economically.

It is important that the PADR process encourages an understanding of the views and experiences of children. It is therefore helpful to have a focus group consisting of only children. Some of the questions and participatory tools may need to be adapted so that they are appropriate for children.

Children should not be forgotten during action planning as they can play an important part. For example, children are often eager to learn about what to do in an earthquake and can be effective in passing on such messages to their families and other children.

*Picture of tsunami
drawn by children
in Banda Aceh,
Indonesia.*

