

STEP 5 **Key informant interviews**

Before planning action, it is important to gain a wider understanding of vulnerabilities and capacities by talking to those who have an influence on local people. Some key informants may already have been identified, either by community leaders or because they were seen as 'pressures' in the vulnerability assessment or 'pressure releases' in the capacity assessment. There may be issues, concerns and pressures which influence their decisions.

Local government officials are crucial to the success of disaster risk reduction activities because they control many resources and have influence over development activities in the area. Ensure that local government officials are interviewed. Any community-based actions should complement local government development plans wherever possible.

By communicating with key informants, there will be an increased chance that activities to reduce vulnerability will be supported, or at least not challenged, by those in power.



Activities

The facilitation team, including local people, should carry out these activities.

- Identify key informants, using the advice of community leaders and the results of the vulnerability assessment.
- Develop questions for semi-structured interviews.
- Interview the key informants.
- Bring this information together and present it to the community (in some cases it may be possible or even necessary to invite the key informants, particularly government officials, to meet the community themselves to discuss vulnerabilities and possible actions).

Some guideline questions which could be used during the interviews are given below. These need to be adapted according to the key informant, and the situation in question. For example, if interviewing a school head-teacher, there may be more questions relating to the hazard impact upon the school, or the role of the school in times of disaster.

- How long have you lived or worked in the area?
- What is your role?
- What hazards affect local communities?
- Do these same hazards affect you? If so, how?
- Who do you consider to be the most vulnerable in the local area?
- What do you consider to be the priority vulnerabilities of local people?
- Why do these vulnerabilities exist?

- How do people cope in times of disaster?
- What services are provided by local/district/national government in times of disaster?
- What capacities exist in the local area to reduce vulnerability to hazards and how can these be strengthened?

Discuss with the key informants the differences between their priorities and focus group priorities. These findings will help to influence the action plan.