

STEP 6 **Action planning**

Ensure that this last step is given enough focus and time. If vulnerabilities and capacities are assessed in relation to different hazards, but no action is taken to reduce risk, time is wasted, relationships can be damaged and disaster risks will remain.

It is important to carry out the action planning soon after the capacity assessment so that people will continue to engage with the process and can see the fruits of their work. The action plan should address the priority vulnerabilities and build the capacities for long-term and sustainable risk reduction.

CASE STUDY Action planning ideas in Malawi

Vulnerability and capacity assessments revealed that changes in weather patterns were resulting in food insecurity. The presence of HIV and AIDS is weakening the workforce and affecting the household economy. Ideas about action that could be taken to reduce the risk of disaster included:

- Grow more drought-resistant crops to ensure supply of food between harvests, if traditional crops fail.
- Improve farming techniques, such as conservation farming where rain water is collected and used efficiently.
- Use measures that both address current needs and reduce long-term vulnerability. For example, food or cash for work schemes during times of drought could be used to build small-scale irrigation systems.
- Do advocacy work to gain improved government services in health, agriculture, veterinary care and education.
- Investigate the introduction of savings and credit groups.
- Increase tree planting, both to protect homes from floodwater and to replace forests cut down for firewood or house construction.
- Investigate new income-generating schemes, including small livestock or vegetable cultivation.
- Train volunteers to monitor flood levels, set up early warning systems and learn First Aid.
- Link community plans with government disaster management plans.

In larger communities it is not wise to invite everyone to carry out the action planning. This may result in confusion and lengthy discussions without decisions being made. It may be more appropriate for representatives to carry out action planning. These could be a few members of the focus groups, community leaders and a limited number of other people who volunteer to participate.

Action planning should be connected as closely as possible to the work of an existing community based organisation (CBO), such as the local church. Action planning will work best if members of the church or CBO have been part of the facilitation team.

Through this approach, any new activities agreed will receive long-term support. From the church or CBO a 'Volunteer Task Force' with specific disaster-related responsibilities can be formed. If a church or CBO does not exist, then the Volunteer Task Force members should be elected by local people.

The effectiveness of activities will also be improved if the community receives support from the local government. If government officials have been involved in earlier stages of the PADR process, it may be appropriate for them to be involved in this decision-making step. Otherwise, opportunities should be found to discuss community action plans with government officials later on.



Photo: Caroline Iby, Tearfund

A Volunteer Task Force organises an evacuation drill.



Activities

- 1 Meet with the church, or community based organisation (CBO), to discuss the idea of them helping local people to take the action plan forward.
- 2 Organise a meeting with appropriate key informants and community representatives.
- 3 Briefly describe what has happened in the process so far, by referring to the Crunch model.
- 4 Explain that the purpose of the meeting is to draw up an action plan.
- 5 Explain the Release model and how this represents how the vulnerabilities are going to be addressed.
- 6 Remind people of the priority hazards and vulnerabilities and the main capacities that were identified.
- 7 Ask people to identify possible activities, solutions and approaches to address these priority vulnerabilities. Where appropriate these should be based on the capacities identified earlier.
- 8 Discuss past activities used to reduce the risk of disaster or to help recovery after a disaster. Discuss how effective these activities have been, and what changes or improvements could be made.
- 9 Ask people to complete the table on page 58 to show which of the possible activities could be carried out:
 - **Immediately, at little or no cost** and without external assistance (such as in a flood-prone area, painting flood-level height marks on buildings, trees or poles to indicate danger levels)
 - In the **medium term**, with or without external assistance
 - In the **long term**, with or without external assistance.

	WITHOUT EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE	WITH EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE	
		FINANCE	HUMAN RESOURCES
IMMEDIATELY			
MEDIUM TERM			
LONG TERM			

Encourage them to start with immediate activities that do not require external assistance. This will help to maintain enthusiasm and motivation.

- 10 Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each suggested activity, considering time, cost and practicality. Agree on activities that should be carried out. Ensure that suggested activities will not lead to new risks.
- 11 Once the activities are identified, a ‘Volunteer Task Force’ should be created with special disaster-related responsibilities. The church or a CBO should be encouraged to take leadership of this.
- 12 Decide which individuals will form the Volunteer Task Force. Select activities and draw up an action plan containing a schedule, roles and responsibilities of these people, and the means of accountability to ensure that each task is completed properly.
- 13 Check that the action plan links with any government disaster management plans.
- 14 Ensure that others in the community agree with the action plan. This may involve organising a public meeting.
- 15 Display the action plan alongside the Crunch model and Release model where everyone in the community can access it.
- 16 It may be appropriate to mark the start of the disaster risk reduction action plan with a celebration.
- 17 Take action!

EXAMPLE
Community action
plan in a flood-
affected area

Priority vulnerability	Person/Group responsibility	Activity	Schedule	Who is accountable
Low-lying areas affected by flood waters	Volunteer Task Force member	Paint flood levels on important structures	Within two days	Church / CBO or Community leader
Lack of coordination in disaster situation	Volunteer Task Force leader with members’ support	Develop community evacuation plan with regular practice drills	To be completed four weeks prior to the normal flood season	Church / CBO or Community leader
Lack of facilities for evacuees at local school	Volunteer Task Force leader	Negotiate with school or local government for improved facilities	Within three months time	Church / CBO or Community leader

External assistance

To challenge the pressures and underlying causes affecting the vulnerability of local people, action may need to be taken at local, national or international levels. External assistance may therefore be needed, such as from local government or NGOs. This can be in the form of:

FINANCE For example, finance for constructed risk reduction measures such as flood platforms, or for the introduction of drought resistant crops and raised tube wells. Measures that require external financial support are often provided on a food-for-work or cash-for-work basis to help encourage ownership and to provide employment.

ADVOCACY This may involve gaining support for local plans from government officials and other 'powerful' groups. At a national level, this might involve incorporating disaster awareness in school curricula. Internationally, it might involve advocacy on policy issues such as fair trade or debt relief.

TRAINING At regular intervals (such as quarterly) the facilitation team may carry out training or motivation activities with the Volunteer Task Force and other appropriate local people in order to maintain interest and enthusiasm.

Where external assistance is needed, the facilitation team should try to help the Volunteer Task Force to obtain such assistance.

Advocacy

Advocacy is often necessary to challenge the pressures and underlying causes affecting vulnerability. People are often cautious about advocacy work because they associate it with aggressive campaigns targeting government departments. However, this is only one type of advocacy work. In many cases, collaboration is more appropriate and effective than confrontation.

Even by following the PADR process, advocacy is being carried out. This is because the PADR process:

- exposes and analyses underlying causes of people's vulnerability
- engages with local government officials and others with power and influence through semi-structured interviewing of these key informants.

Other forms of advocacy include writing letters and reports, involving the media, planning campaigns and prayer.

Government will not necessarily be the only target of advocacy work. Other powerful groups such as wealthy landowners, religious groups and business people may need to be influenced.

Advocacy work could be carried out by community members alone. However, they may gain more influence by inviting the local church, CBOs or development organisations to work with them.

CASE STUDY
Advocacy with
landowners in India

In Bihar, Tearfund partner, The Discipleship Centre, advocated on behalf of poor rural villagers living on low-lying land which is regularly flooded. Before the advocacy work, villagers had no safe evacuation route when the floodwaters rose, because the safest route meant going across land owned by others. They were not allowed to trespass on this land. The Discipleship Centre was able to gain permission from 47 landowners to build a raised evacuation path across this private land. Relationships between poor villagers and wealthy landowners have improved since this intervention.



Photo: Caroline Iby, Tearfund

Children practising a flood evacuation across a raised escape route.

CASE STUDY
Access to credit
in Malawi

One of the causes of food insecurity in Malawi is the inability of poor farmers to afford the high cost of fertilisers. They are unable to obtain low-interest loans with which to buy the fertiliser. An NGO approached a local credit institution, and after some discussion, the management agreed to provide loans to farmers at affordable rates. Advocacy brought success!

How to organise advocacy work

This table shows the steps that should be taken to organise advocacy work.

TOPIC	CONSIDER
ISSUE / PROBLEM	What is the problem? This will have been identified during the hazard and vulnerability assessments.
EFFECTS	What are the effects of the problem? The PADR process will have provided a lot of information about how the problem is affecting local people. This will be understood in terms of economic, natural, constructed, individual and social effects.
CAUSES	What are the causes of the problem? The vulnerability assessment will have identified the pressures and underlying causes.
POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS	What needs to be done? What are possible solutions? Ideas may have been discussed already during action planning. What are their advantages and disadvantages? Are the ideas realistic? What will be the indicators of success?
TARGETS	Who has the power to do something to bring about change? This is likely to be the government officials but may also include churches, businesses, community leaders and Community Based Organisations. The PADR process should have helped to improve relationships between local people and these groups. Therefore, they may be very willing to discuss ideas, and advocacy work may be quite easy.
POTENTIAL ALLIES	Who is trying to address the issue at the moment? Is it appropriate to work with them? Is their activity effective? Are there people who are not yet addressing the issue, but could be persuaded to help?
RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS	What risks are there in getting involved in this advocacy work? How can these risks be reduced? What are the consequences if the issue is not addressed? Have we made any assumptions about the underlying causes of people's vulnerability and about those in power? If so, who should we speak to in order to understand the reality? Do the facilitation team and local people have the ability to address this problem?
METHODS	What methods can be used? Can these methods be carried out confidently? Have they worked before? Are there alternatives? Do the necessary skills and resources exist?

As advocacy work is planned, it can be helpful to fill in the table below to summarise the work that will be carried out, and to show when it will happen and who will be responsible.

EXAMPLE OF AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY: resettlement of flood-affected households in the Philippines

GOAL	Prevent resettlement of residents to inland areas following devastating flood
OBJECTIVES	Protect fishing livelihoods of affected population by ensuring new houses are built close to the coastline
SUCCESS INDICATORS	Government willing to reconsider alternatives
EVIDENCE	Invitation by government to contribute to debate
TARGETS	Provincial and national government departments
ALLIES AND OPPORTUNITIES	Local government officials (Mayor) Local NGOs Local church
METHODS AND ACTIVITIES	Collect signatures of local residents opposed to resettlement Represent local residents in government debates
RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS	Resettlement on coastline is half-hearted and homes are built on areas at risk from natural hazards
TIME SCALE	Three months for change to resettlement plan
RESPONSIBILITY	Volunteer Task Force with support from NGO

For more information on carrying out advocacy work, see the *Advocacy toolkit* (ROOTS 1–2), which can be ordered from roots@tearfund.org or downloaded from www.tearfund.org/tilz.