

Additional questions for

Focus Group Discussions and Semi-Structured Interviews

The following are suggestions elaborated by VCA practitioners from different parts of the world to adapt or improve particular aspects of the EVCA tools. While basic aspects of these sectors have been mainstreamed into the revised tools, we recommend you also look into the following proposed additions related to the following areas:

- Climate change adaptation
- Gender and diversity
- Urban contexts

These should be read and used as a complementary note to the steps described in [the focus group discussion](#) tool or the [semi-structured interview](#).



Climate change adaptation¹

Climate change-related questions to consider in interviews for focus group discussions during an EVCA

Early Warning Early Action

As our climate changes, it becomes more important than ever to ensure communities have access to disaster-related early warning information. Questions focus around:

- Where do communities get their early warnings from?
- Who receives the warnings?
- Is it only short-term warnings of immediate dangers (1-5 days), or also more long-term seasonal forecasts?
- Is anyone in the community responsible for sending out early warnings? What happens if the person isn't there?
- How do they currently use weather information e.g. forecasts broadcast on radio?
- Are the forecasts understood?
- Identify whether any organisations that the community and households have access to are responsible for disseminating early warnings. If not, could they be?

¹ [Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. How can climate change be considered in Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments? 2012.](#)

- Are there organisations that could be conduits for early warning information e.g. schools, religious institutions?
- Are there weaknesses in the system that could be addressed?

Traditional/historical knowledge

- What traditional signs warn of bad weather or a change of season? Who holds this knowledge?
- What seasons does the community typically plant crops by? Has this changed?
- Is the knowledge still relevant?
- When do certain problems occur? Has this changed over time (decades) at all?
- Have there been occupations, buildings or services which have been abandoned / moved due to changes in the surrounding environment or climate?
- Have the temperature or rainfall patterns changed?
- Have you noticed any changes in wildlife and fish stocks/ time of year of the catch?
- Has the level of the sea changed?

Livelihoods

- What are the changes you noticed which are resulting in positive outcomes for the economic activities in your community? (Eg. crops that can now be planted, improvement of animal health, development of trading centres with increased business opportunities...)
- What are the changes you noticed that are resulting in negative outcomes on the economic activities in your community (deforestation, crops and livestock (e.g crops failure, livestock health, increased prevalence of pests and diseases...) or other economic activities?
- In what ways are the crops you plant dependent on the weather? Which weather warnings do you use to know when to sow or harvest crops? Or what type crops and varieties to use according to forecast? If none, what is the reason?
- What changes have occurred over time in your family's way of earning income?
- How might climate change-induced changes in the seasons (e.g. durations) affect your livelihood(s)?
- How has the seasonality of your livelihoods / economic activity been modified over time?
- What are coping strategies used by people in relation to the hazards identified?
- Describe how have the changes in the number and severity of extreme events modified coping strategies? (Eg. How long/often do men have to move away to find work)? What impact does this have on the family?

Health

- Are there some diseases that are more common during certain times of the year?
- Have you found that some diseases have been increasing or decreasing in the last 5-15 years?
- Are there some diseases that are more common when it rains?
- Are there some diseases that are more common when it is dry?
- If the answer is 'yes' to any of the above, ask these questions:
 - o Which ones?
 - o Why do you think that is?
 - o Who is most affected?
 - o What actions are people / the community taking?
 - o If you know that it will rain / be dry / a certain season is approaching when a disease is more common – what do you do?
 - o What could you do differently?
 - o From which source do you receive most of your information about health problems?

Questions that can be used during the analysis of the information given by a community

- How do weather and climate extremes affect the community? Is the frequency of weather and climate extremes increasing? Are they becoming more severe?
- Are there longer term, slower changes such as flowering or harvesting times that are affecting the community?
- Are some groups (men, women, children, farmers etc) in the community more vulnerable to climate change and extreme weather events? In what ways?
- What capacity does the community have to address problems they face? How can these be used to work on the problems you have identified?

For more resources on how to incorporate climate change considerations, see:

- [Integrating Climate Change and Urban Risk into VCA pages 82-91](#)
- [3CA toolkit developed by CADRIM pages 67-81](#)



Gender & diversity²

Gender and diversity related questions to consider in interviews for focus group discussions during an EVCA

² [Gender and diversity sensitive Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment \(VCA\). IFRC.](#)

- What are the biggest needs/risks for women in your community? And what are these for men, girls, boys, adolescents, people with disabilities and different groups?
- Are there some groups in the community that have special challenges and needs? Who are these groups and what are their challenges / what are their needs?
- Does the community know organisations or individuals in the community who can provide services specific to their needs/risks?
- Do those services meet the needs/risks discussed (for men/women and distinct groups)?
- How does information reach female community members, how does information reach male community members?
- Does the community feel the National Society prepares and responds to the different needs and capacities within the community, based on priorities?
- Do women, men, adolescents and people from different groups feel able and welcome to participate in community activities? Specifically related to risk reduction?
- Do men in the community see the benefit of women's participation?
- What has been done so far to increase the participation of women and marginalised or specific at-risk groups?
- Who is deemed most at-risk in the community? Do those groups agree with this?
- What are the traditional roles of women and men in the community? Are these changing?



Urban contexts

Questions to consider in interviews for focus group discussions during an EVCA in urban contexts

- What is the level of availability, reliability and accessibility of basic infrastructure services in your neighbourhood, i.e. water, sewerage, rain and waste collection systems?
- Who provides these services? Are the prices affordable compared to other parts of the city?
- What is the average number of stories in residential buildings?
- What is the general level of construction quality? Are they self built (informal settlements) or built by professionals?
- How close is your neighbourhood to the industrial, commercial centres? What are the main means transportation?

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