

Overview of PADR process

PADR is a methodology for use at community level. It involves active engagement, with the community, in a process to explore the risks they face and the factors contributing to those risks. This process of exploration is important, as the community begins to understand both its vulnerabilities and the capacities it possesses to prepare for and respond to disaster.

The end product of PADR is a risk reduction plan developed with the community and owned by the community. Implementation of that plan may need the support of an NGO, or the resources of local or national government, but the foundations should lie in the capacities found within the community itself, and within its families.

PADR is not a training course for the community, although NGO staff may have to be trained to use the methodology. PADR is not a needs assessment exercise, because 'needs' are those things required to preserve life and health in the present moment. PADR deals with the deeper factors which cause vulnerability and make people and assets more at risk from hazards. It also emphasises the capacities found within communities which increase their resilience to hazards.

3.1 Description of the methodology

PADR is based on the components of the Crunch Model described in Section 2.3. The Crunch Model describes how a hazard and vulnerabilities come together to create a disaster. Vulnerabilities are increased or reduced by the dynamic pressures (social structures and processes) at work in the community (Section 7.1). These pressures are influenced by underlying causes – a combination of political, economic, cultural, religious and environmental factors.

The Crunch Model also shows how the impact of a hazard is reduced by the capacities which a community possesses. Capacities enable individuals and families to prepare for, withstand and recover from the hazard impact.

The PADR methodology must therefore discover:

- the types of hazard facing a community – and information about those hazards
- the impact of these hazards on different aspects of community life
- the vulnerability factors which allow that impact to happen, and who in the community is most vulnerable
- the capacities which help the community (and families and individuals) to resist hazards
- the dynamic pressures which may either increase or reduce vulnerabilities and have an effect on local capacities
- the underlying causes, found in politics, economics, culture, beliefs and the environment, which influence the dynamic pressures.

When these factors have been explored and understood, appropriate activities can be developed with the community to reduce hazard impact, minimise the losses, reduce vulnerability and build up local capacities.

The PADR process is carried out by interaction with focus groups and by interviews with key individuals. Questionnaires are used, linked with participatory tools (Section 4.2).

3.2 Categories of analysis

PADR uses five categories of analysis. Together, these include all the different assets present in the community. An asset is a strength or an attribute used in everyday life that can improve well-being. The presence of an asset gives the family or community a capacity with which to cope with a hazard. The absence of an asset, or a restriction of access to it, may create a vulnerability to that hazard.

The methodology ensures that all aspects of life are included, and helps to avoid domination by the facilitator or by the special interests of powerful community members. For example, a facilitator with experience in social work may focus on social aspects of disaster impact, but he/she may ignore economic activities or natural resources. Similarly, an engineer in the community may want to concentrate discussion on roads, bridges or flood defences, but not pay adequate attention to indigenous skills or the social impacts of disasters.

The five categories described here are based on the five types of capital (or assets) described in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.⁷ It is best to avoid lengthy arguments about where a particular asset belongs within these categories. It is possible for an asset to be placed within more than one category. Take for example the local school, which could fit into three places:

- The school has a building – a physical asset.
- The school provides a place where children, parents and teachers come together – it serves a social function.
- The school is a place of learning, where new skills and knowledge are gained – it can therefore also build up human capacity.

The most important thing is to ensure that no aspect of life is forgotten, because hazards affect all these areas in different ways.

INDIVIDUAL (MALE / FEMALE) ASSETS

Individual assets include people's skills, knowledge, literacy, experience, training, ability to work and physical health. It is essential to recognise gender throughout the analysis, as vulnerabilities and capacities for men and women will be different.

SOCIAL ASSETS

Social assets consist of relationships and networks that exist within the community and with people outside. They include the extended family, particularly those members living outside the area affected by the disaster, and the various groups, clubs and cooperatives which exist in the community. Membership of networks can expand an individual's access to wider sources of information (eg through a farmer's cooperative) and make more resources available. Cooperating with others increases everyone's ability to cope with the shocks of disaster.

⁷ DFID *Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets*



Bob Hansford / Tearfund

Physical asset: Bridges, like this one in the Brahmaputra valley, Assam, India, provide an important means of escape from rising flood waters.

NATURAL ASSETS Natural assets are the natural resources available to the community, such as forests, rivers, grazing areas, wild fruits and minerals. Sometimes these assets appear to be available, but in practice, access to them is denied – because of conflict, land tenure, social divisions or cultural practice. Natural resources provide the raw materials for many livelihoods.

PADR also investigates trends in the quality and availability of natural assets, particularly changes which can be attributed to environmental degradation (eg erosion, tree cutting) or to climate change (eg less rain and lowering of the water table).

PHYSICAL ASSETS Physical assets include all structures which are man-made. The category includes basic infrastructure such as houses, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, electricity cables, cross-dams and wells. Livelihood tools and agricultural equipment are also included, along with transport and communication.

As with the natural assets category, access to physical assets may be a critical issue: a cyclone shelter in theory is a powerful asset, but in practice, it may fill up quickly or allow access only to particular social groups.

ECONOMIC ASSETS Economic assets relate to household income, livelihoods and possessions that can be turned into money. For example, animals and jewellery are economic assets which can be traded or sold when the household needs cash in times of disaster. Salaries from jobs or casual earnings fit into this category, plus any remittances coming from overseas. Savings and the availability of credit are also important.

Questions of access and control are also present in this category. It is often the men who control the money – but in many cases they do not use it well. Those without the control, especially women, become more vulnerable as a result.

3.3 Scope of PADR

PADR is designed primarily to assess the risks associated with natural hazards, such as floods, droughts, earthquakes or wildfires. It works best in places where a hazard is well known and recurrent, like the river floods of Bangladesh or the droughts of northern Kenya.

It is also a good tool to use in areas where climate change is increasing the risk of weather-related disasters. PADR looks at the nature and impact of hazards in the past, and looks for trends (in frequency and intensity) which help predict hazards of the future. Community action plans can then take into account this changing disaster scenario.

PADR can also be used in areas where the main hazards are 'man-made', for example, slum communities facing fires or evictions, or villages living in the shadow of chemical factories or oil installations.

However, PADR has some limitations in situations where conflict is the predominant hazard and physical security the main concern of the population. It has sometimes been used in conflict areas (eg Sri Lanka), but 'hazard' has to be defined in terms of 'falling bombs' or 'landmines', and modifications made in some other aspects of the tool. There are other tools available for use in situations of open conflict (see Section 9.3).

PADR can be used successfully in areas where communities experience low-level, localised conflict on a less frequent basis. In such cases, the conflict may represent an additional vulnerability factor which denies people access to water, firewood or 'famine foods'. Such communities have a reduced capacity to cope with a natural hazard.

PADR can be a useful tool for uncovering vulnerabilities in areas where there is a high HIV infection rate. People living with HIV, and their families, are much more vulnerable to natural hazards. People living with HIV may be less mobile or less able to work in agriculture. The economic pressures on the family may be very great, as resources are spent on drugs and medical care. As a result, the family may have few capacities and be unable to withstand the additional stress of a flood, drought or another hazard.

3.4 Steps of PADR

PADR is a multi-step process, beginning with preparation of the team and community, and ending with the development and implementation of risk reduction plans. The five steps are:

Step 1 Preparation

Step 2 Hazard assessment

Step 3 Vulnerability and capacity assessment

Step 4 Dynamic pressures and underlying causes

Step 5 Risk reduction planning

STEP 1 PREPARATION

This includes the training and equipping of the facilitation team, and the work done in the community to prepare for the assessment.

The team need to know how to use the methodology and how to facilitate community focus groups for discussion. They also need some knowledge of participatory tools often used in community development and an understanding of possible actions which a community can take to reduce risks associated with the hazards of that area.

In the community, various logistical arrangements have to be made, involving liaison between staff and community leaders, such as the identification of community members to participate in the process. More details are in Section 4.

STEP 2 HAZARD ASSESSMENT

This step is mostly done in the community and includes the identification of main hazards and the intensity of those hazards. The assessment of trends is also important, as the frequency and severity of some disaster types is increasing. Secondary sources such as weather records or scientific data can provide valuable additional information.

Hazard assessment also determines the geographical area affected by the hazard, the season when the hazard is most likely to appear and any warning signs which precede its appearance. More details are found in Section 5.



A community map prepared during a PADR workshop in Afghanistan. Similar maps were developed in the community to assist with Steps 2, 3 and 5 of PADR (see page 35).

STEP 3 VULNERABILITY AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT (VCA)

Vulnerabilities and capacities are assessed together through interaction with community focus groups, and by semi-structured interviews with key informants. Appropriate question sets should be prepared beforehand, to probe the five areas of community life – human, social, natural, physical and economic. The impact of the hazard on these five areas is also assessed.

As well as questions, participatory tools are practised beforehand and deployed in the focus groups to increase interest and participation. Visualising the community in different ways can greatly increase the community's understanding of both vulnerabilities and capacities. These tools can also help in developing appropriate actions for emergencies – for example, maps will show the safe areas and facilities available. VCA is covered in Section 6.

STEP 4 DYNAMIC PRESSURES AND UNDERLYING CAUSES

The specific dynamic pressures and underlying causes operating in a community can be quite difficult to determine: people who live within a culture do not always see the beliefs, values and processes going on within it. Social structures, and government policies and programmes, are perhaps easier to uncover.

Most of the information in this step comes from the key informants, often by probing or clarifying comments made in the focus groups. Pastors, school teachers and government officials are very useful sources of data. For more detail, see Section 7.

STEP 5 RISK REDUCTION PLANNING

The final result of the PADR process is a community-owned risk reduction plan based on the risks uncovered in Steps 2–4. Specific actions are identified, within a time-frame, which could reduce hazards, bring down vulnerabilities or increase capacities.

There are essentially three types of activities in the plan:

- those which the community can do using its own resources
- those which need the intervention of an NGO for knowledge or resources
- those which involve exerting pressure upon power holders to bring about change (ie advocacy).

The risk reduction plan requires leadership and the assignment of tasks to specific people in the community. It must also be monitored, reviewed and updated regularly. For further detail, see Section 8.