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# Child-led assessment of community resilience

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## TAGS:

### Themes:

Knowing our Dangers  
Deciding What to Do  
Reducing our Dangers  
Sharing and Taking Action

### Formal/Informal Settings:

Social Studies, History, Geography  
Fine Arts & Performing Arts  
Afterschool Clubs / Youth Groups

### Year Level:

Early Primary  
Late Primary  
Early Secondary  
Late Secondary

### Implementation

Facilitated / Teacher

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## Purpose

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This brief outlines an approach for children to lead their own assessment of community resilience in facing natural and other hazards. Indeed, no one better than children themselves understand the realities of their everyday life. It is therefore crucial that children provide their own views of what resilience means and entails. This constitutes an essential step towards meeting children's rights to participation in community disaster risk reduction and resilience. This brief provides practitioners and teachers with a flexible series of activities for facilitating such assessment processes.

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## Learning Objectives

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### Children will demonstrate research and advocacy skills by:

- Identifying dimensions and indicators of community resilience
- Designing and running their own survey
- Analysing their data
- Reporting to their peers and adults within and outside of the community.

### Facilitators/teachers will facilitate realization of children's rights to participation in community disaster risk reduction and resilience by:

- Developing their knowledge and skills in implementing participatory methodologies particularly regarding specific local contexts
  - Gathering and attending to input/feedback from children both during activities and in subsequent analysis and reporting.
  - Learning from the children's ideas and their research on what resilience means, in order to inform their own research and everyday practice of disaster risk reduction.
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## Background

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Children have the rights to participate in dealing with matters that affect them, including disasters. However, adults do not often seek their views, nor do they consider their inputs in making decisions towards reducing disaster risk. [Research shows that children's unique and organic contribution is critical to achieving resilience.](#) The approach outlined here fosters the use of participatory numbers (PN), often referred to as participatory statistics. PN refer to quantitative research information produced by those at the forefront of everyday development struggles. PN are often produced through participatory methods that quantify (PMQs) such as scoring and ranking ideas, counting assets and measuring distance on a map, and assessing strengths and challenges in matrixes. PN are useful for children to appraise and reflect upon their own perspective of resilience through a collective learning experience and based upon tangible, quantitative data. [The tangible and quantitative nature of the data also contributes to making children's knowledge and assessment of their community resilience trustworthy for adults and organisations that deal with disaster risk reduction, such as NGOs, government agencies and research institutes.](#)

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## Materials

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Materials required will depend on local availability and children's preferred approach to reporting. The early steps of the process geared to assessing resilience usually necessitate basic supplies found in the kit of any participatory activities' facilitator. These include large sheets of paper, cards, markers, masking tape, counters, pins, balloons, etc. Reporting may entail activities such as storytelling, drawing, photography, filming (as per the exemplar in the visual sequence of activities appended to this brief), singing, acting, etc. These entail a diverse range of relevant materials/devices, so facilitators/teachers need to make sure that all of these remain handy for children.

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## Facilitation and timeframe

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The subsequent activities should be taken as a loose template that is not bound by a rigid timeframe. In this perspective, facilitators/teachers should rely upon three key principles:

- Trust the children
- Hand over the stick
- Be flexible

From this perspective, facilitators/teachers should not force any tools and activities upon the children within any pre-defined timing. Facilitators/teachers should not take the subsequent activities as prescriptive and should rather empower the young people themselves to work things out and decide how to approach and implement these activities. However, children and facilitators/teachers should make sure, up front, that their expectations are in synch and that they agree upon a tentative timeframe that primarily suits the children's everyday life (Activity 1). This means that the duration of the assessment will be context-specific. It may take two days or six months. Facilitators/teachers should also adapt the tools to the local context and make sure that their overall toolkit is embedded within local culture.

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## Steps

*(see visual sequence attached)*

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### **Activity I: Making sure that children and facilitators are on the same page**

*Group discussion – Overall introduction to the assessment activity (or group 'project')*

- Facilitators welcome the children and introduce themselves
- Children introduce themselves through a culturally-appropriate game
- Facilitators present the 'project' in broad terms

*Carousel/Merry-go-around/Roundabout/Bus stop – Expectations check*

- Facilitators prepare four large sheets of paper (i.e. stations) with one key question each:
  - what do you expect from this 'project'?
  - what may be the obstacles to make this 'project' worthwhile?
  - what do you expect from the facilitators to make this 'project' worthwhile?
  - what will you contribute to make this 'project' worthwhile?
- Children move, in small groups, from one carousel/merry-go-around station to another and answer the four questions
- Children and facilitators discuss their respective expectations and make sure that they are all in synch

*Group work – Timeframe of subsequent activities and housekeeping*

- Children and facilitators agree upon a suitable timeframe
- Children and facilitators discuss housekeeping matters

### **Activity II: Keeping your family safe, healthy and happy – Community survey development**

*Self-Organising System On The Edge of Chaos (SOSOTEC) – What is important to keep you and your family safe, healthy and happy? (i.e. what is resilience?)*

- Children write down or draw pictures on cards things that matter to their safety, health and happiness. To make the following steps easier, children are encouraged to have one idea per card.
- Children sort and group the cards to make themes emerge. These themes are the different dimensions of resilience.

*Carousel/Merry-go-around/Roundabout/Bus stop – Identification of key indicators for each theme*

- Children move, in small groups, from one carousel/merry-go-around station to another and list down possible indicators for each of the themes.

*Card writing and vote – Survey questions writing and selection*

- Children individually write down on cards questions associated with each indicator of resilience.
- Children come together and vote for the most relevant cards/questions for each indicator for each theme/dimension of resilience.

*Card sorting and group work – Preparation of the questionnaire*

- Facilitators discuss with children how to organise questions into a coherent questionnaire (e.g. no personal/intrusive questions up front, always start with easy-to-answer objective questions, prepare multiple-choice answers if relevant).
- Children eventually structure their own questionnaire by sorting selected cards and numbering them once the order has been finalized Children write down their questionnaire on either sheets of paper or a computer if available.

### **Activity III: Community survey**

*Face-to-face interviews with residents – Questionnaire survey*

- Children test their questionnaire with a few parents and amend any questions that may prove problematic. If appropriate, this can also been done as an interactive role play to help children develop their confidence in approaching community members to complete the survey.
- Facilitators discuss sampling strategy with children, and the children organise who they will survey.
- Facilitators assist children in ensuring there are enough questionnaire copies, either by printing the typed-up questionnaire or photocopying the questionnaire if they are handwritten.
- Children eventually run their questionnaire survey within their neighbourhood/village, in a manner that ensures the safety of children in the local context and culture (e.g. in groups with adult or youth supervision).

### **Activity IV: Survey data analysis and recommendations**

*Group work – Questionnaire data tally*

- Each child takes a small pile of questionnaires
- A child facilitator calls out all questions and possible answers one by one
- Children with the piles of questionnaires tally answers by raising their hand(s)/fingers.

*Group work – Identification of strengths and 'weaknesses'*

- Children go through all questions and assess whether aggregated answers constitute a 'strength' or a 'weakness' (term to be considered carefully) – terminology to be discussed/adjusted to the context – by raising their hand(s).

*Force Field Analysis – Assessment of opportunities and challenges to enhance resilience*

- Each 'strength' and 'weakness' is written down on a colour-coded card (e.g. in an urban context, green for capacities and red for vulnerabilities)
- Children plot the cards close or far from a central line, depending on how significant 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' are. For example, significant 'weaknesses' are plotted far from the central line while limited 'strengths' are close to the line
- Facilitators discuss with the children how challenging/easy it would be to enhance these 'strengths' and address these 'weaknesses'.

*Carousel/Merry-go-around/Roundabout/Bus stop – Identification of actions to enhance resilience*

- Children use cards to identify actions to enhance these 'strengths' and address these 'weaknesses'
- Children return to the initial carousel/merry-go-around and move, in small groups, from one station to another to plot action cards relevant to each dimension of resilience.

### **Activity V: Reporting**

*Card writing, scoring and ranking – Identification of reporting method*

- Children use cards to identify possible methods for reporting the results of their survey
- Children use counters to score all these proposed methods and eventually rank them from their favourite to less-favoured method.

*Group work – Video reporting (exemplar)*

- Facilitators discuss with children the different steps in preparing a video report
- Children work in small groups to design/draw a storyboard and script for their video report
- Facilitators discuss with children the basics of film shooting either using a camera, a smart phone or

- a tablet
- Children go to the locations identified in their storyboard and use their script to shoot footages
- Children, with the support of facilitators, stitch all their footages together
- Children design/draw an opening billboard and closing billboard on a large sheet of paper or on a computer (e.g. using a PowerPoint slide) and attach these billboards to their footages.

*Community meeting – Reporting of results to parents and other adult neighbours*

- Children present the rationale, the methods and data analysis of their survey to the community.

*Media event – Reporting of results beyond the community*

- Facilitators organise a media event to showcase student’s assessment of their community resilience.

### **Activity VI: Actions to enhance resilience**

*Long-term knowledge ownership and transfer*

- Children retain ownership of their knowledge
- Other stakeholders use children’s knowledge as legitimate information in decision making/project design and implementation/community based DRR
- Other stakeholders include children’s voices in high level conversations.

### **Activity VII: Monitoring and evaluation**

*Continuing assessment of whether actions have been taken and progress towards resilience made*

- For a detailed description of how to proceed with this activity see, for example, [this report](#). Fostering children’s participation in monitoring and evaluating progress towards resilience may follow a process similar to that described in this guidesheet. Children can develop their own questionnaire and run their own survey and analysis to assess whether activities conducted since the initial evaluation of resilience have led to any improvement in the areas they think matter to their safety, health and happiness.

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## **Notes**

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- The foregoing approach for child-led assessment of community resilience in facing natural and other hazards was trialed in Fiji as part of a Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction project run by Save the Children Fiji and Save the Children New Zealand in partnership with researchers from the University of Auckland. The project is funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).
- This approach must be flexible and suitable to the local context. The proposed sequence of activities is only tentative, and the actual running of activities need to consider children’s priorities, choices and the overall momentum of the activities.
- Children should be encouraged to contribute ideas on the specific details of how each step run. For example, they may come up with an approach for voting on what questions are relevant. Facilitators should support this wherever possible, while having suggestions at hand as a backup.
- Workshops within which the activities are run need to be short and playful.
- This process may take long and requires continuing facilitation from adults/teachers.
- Continuity in children attendance is essential to ensure a smooth proceeding of activities and to make sure that stages follow on and build upon each other.
- Children may be grouped by age at different stages to address power relations.
- The translation of the questionnaire quantitative data into a qualitative analysis is a key stage and children and facilitators need to take enough time to fully capture the scope of the data so that subsequent activities follow on smoothly.
- The proposed sequence of activities suggests a video report. However, reporting may take the form of drawing or photo exhibits, performing arts shows, or singing contests. In any case, the method chosen by the children must be applicable to the local context, that is that, if children choose to use a video report, devices and facilitation capability have to be available locally.

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## Resources

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### Background publications

- [Gaillard J.C., Cadag J.R.D., Gampell A., Hore K., Le Dé L., McSherry A. \(2016\) Participatory numbers for integrating knowledge and actions in development. \*Development in Practice\*, 26\(8\): 998-1012.](#)
- [Hore K., Gaillard J.C., Johnston D., Ronan K. \(2018\) Child-centred disaster risk reduction. Research-into-Action Brief, Save the Children/Risk Frontiers, Melbourne/St Leonards.](#)

### Manuals and handbooks for facilitating children's participation

- [Chambers R. \(2002\) \*Participatory workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities\*. Earthscan, London.](#)
- [Pretty J.N., Gujit I., Thompson J., Scoones I. \(1995\) \*Participatory learning and action: a trainer's guide\*. International Institute for Environment and Development, London.](#)

### Exemplar of video report

- [Video report produced by the children from Kalekana as part of Save the Children Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction project in Fiji.](#)

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## **Visual sequence of activities conducted in Kalekana, Fiji, in 2017-18**

Project led by Save the Children Fiji, Save the Children New Zealand and the University of Auckland through funding from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**Brainstorming:** what is important to keep you and your family safe, healthy and happy?



SOSOTEC: Self Organising System on the Edge of Chaos

**Grouping of ideas to identify key themes**



**Identification of key dimensions of each theme**



Carousel

**Survey questions writing**



Card writing

**Survey questions selection**



Vote

**Survey questions ordering**



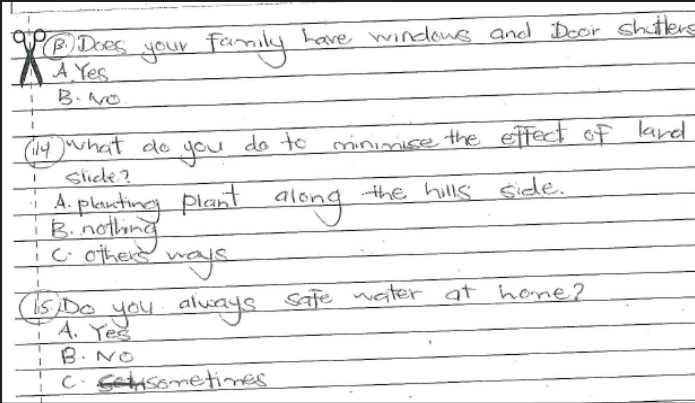
Card sorting

## Preparation of the questionnaire



Group work

## Questionnaire survey



Face-to-face interviews with local residents

## Questionnaire data analysis



Group work

## Identification of strengths and 'weaknesses'



Force field analysis

## Assessment of opportunities and challenges to enhance resilience



Force field analysis

## Identification of actions to enhance resilience



Carousel

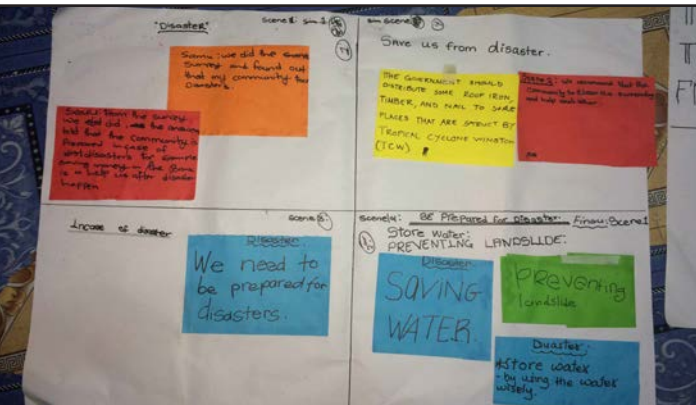


## Identification of reporting method



Card, scoring and ranking

## Storyboard design for video report



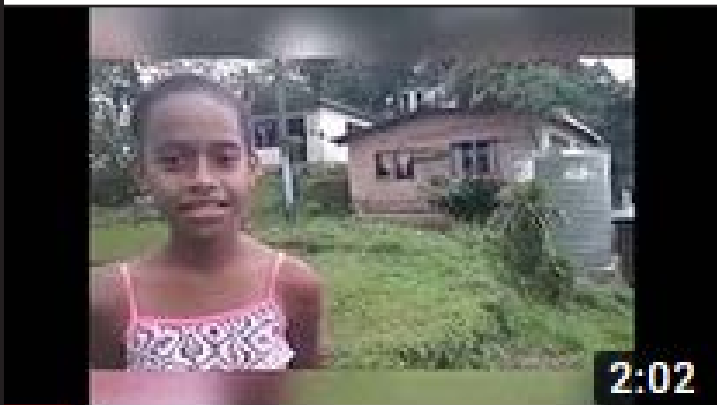
Group work

## Shooting of footages for video report



Group work

## Editing of video report



Group work

## Reporting of results to parents and other adult neighbours



Community meeting

## Reporting of results beyond the community



Media event (photo by FBC News)