

Community risk assessment

The risks facing households and communities in developing countries are very diverse: natural hazards such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and droughts, as well as other threats such as environmental health risks, epidemics or conflict. Communities have the capacity and local knowledge to assess the risks they are facing but often lack the resources to effectively reduce these risks. It is crucial that at-risk communities actively participate in the risk assessment, planning process and implementation of risk reduction measures. Community Risk assessment (CRA) focuses specifically on identifying the most vulnerable groups in a community, and explores what local capacities can be used to enhance the resilience of the community members.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Japan, 2005) strongly endorsed community participation in disaster risk reduction and made it clear that sustainable human development, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and risk reduction are inextricably linked.



Photo: Philippines Red Cross

Documenting CRA methods and experiences

Over the last two decades a diverse range of community level risk assessment methods have been developed and field tested, mainly by NGOs and community based organisations. At an international workshop hosted by Provention and IFRC in May 2004, CRA practitioners and experts underlined the need to document and analyse different methods and collect good practice case studies.



The screenshot shows the website for the Community Risk Assessment Toolkit. At the top, it says "Working in partnership to build safer communities and reduce disaster risk". Below that are navigation tabs: About us, Partners, Activities, Resources, and News & Events. The main content area features the CRA Toolkit logo and a "CRA toolkit menu" with the following items:

- Collection of methodologies and case studies
- Search tool
- Glossary
- Additional links to CRA, CQDM and Participation materials
- More resources on risk analysis and application
- Provention project: Tools for Community Risk Assessment and Action Planning

Below the menu, there is a description of the toolkit and its features:

The Community Risk Assessment (CRA) Toolkit is part of the wider Provention-supported 'Community Risk Assessment and Action Planning' project which aims at strengthening current community level risk assessment practice and advocates for local level risk assessment that will inform and influence disaster risk management decisions, policies and plans at sub-national and national levels.

The Toolkit contains four main features:

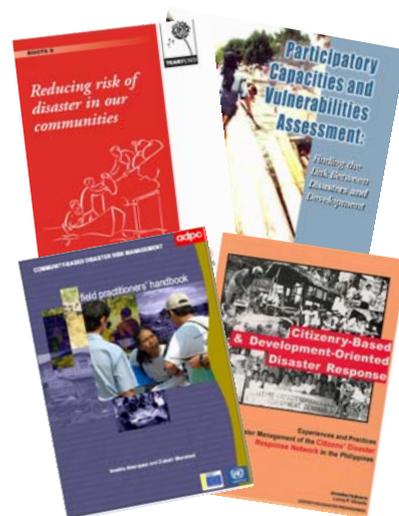
- A register of methodological resources and a compendium of case studies. For most methods and case studies a guidance note has been developed. Each note provides a detailed analysis of the method and case study concerned and also presents a brief abstract. Guidance notes are 3-6

Provention, together with the Disaster Mitigation Programme for Sustainable Livelihoods (DiMP) at the University of Cape Town, and Dr. Ben Wisner, launched the CRA toolkit in May 2006. This web based tool documents various CRA methods and applications and assists users in identifying a method or case study of particular relevance to their context. It strongly promotes participation of local people to identify potential risks, conduct action planning, study, design and implement risk reduction activities and to monitor and reflect on outcomes to build safer communities.

Toolkit features

Currently over 25 different community based risk assessment **methods** and 35 **case studies** from around the world make up the CRA Toolkit. These resources include comprehensive manuals, step-by-step manuals that describe “how to” do a community assessment, guidelines, overviews and training manuals. Guidance notes on each of the methodologies provide a short summary and allow users to identify the most appropriate assessment methodologies and its applications. Materials are mainly available in English; some are in Spanish.

Additional support material includes a **search tool** that allows users to carry out searches in methodologies and case studies according to a wide range of predetermined categories such as the hazard risk type, geographic location, and scale of assessment. A **glossary** gives brief definitions of key terms used in the guidance notes and in the search tool. Further information about community based disaster risk management and participatory tools is provided through **additional links**.



Target audience

The CRA Toolkit is designed to assist international NGOs and their partner organisations, local government staff, risk researchers and community based organisations, active in developmental and/or humanitarian work.



Photo: Philippines Red Cross

The CRA Network

The Community Risk Assessment (CRA) Toolkit has been informed by an expanding network of over 160 global risk experts and practitioners and is part of the wider ProVention-supported 'Community Risk Assessment and Action Planning' project. The project aims at strengthening current community level risk assessment practice and advocates for local level risk assessment that will inform and influence disaster risk management decisions, policies and plans at sub-national and national levels.

The ProVention Consortium is a global coalition of international organisations, governments, the private sector, civil society organisations and academic institutions dedicated to increasing the safety of vulnerable communities and to reducing the impacts of disasters in developing countries. It provides an informal forum where different actors and constituencies can dialogue on risk issues, address critical problems, catalyse new ideas and collaborative initiatives, and share knowledge and experience.