CLIMATE RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

A step-by-step guide

'Jamii inaweza – Communities Can'

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World Vision

The climate risk and vulnerability assessment outlined in this guide is a simple and affordable community-facing methodology for understanding climate impacts on food security and nutrition and determining appropriate responses. It uses co-creation and participatory methods to analyse the nutrition-sensitive climate adaptation priorities of men, women, young people and children. It is intended for use by community members and those who work with and support them — including government, nongovernmental organisations, community-based organisations and research institutes — to understand the climate impacts facing nutrition and food security and develop inclusive community-led adaptation plans.

Acknowledgements

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Cover photo: Image displays a children's focus group in Tanzania completing the climate risk and vulnerability assessment for food security and nutrition.

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01 INTRODUCTION

Food security and nutrition have become increasing concerns for policymakers. Climate change has a direct impact on food security through increasing temperatures, changing precipitation patterns and through a greater frequency of extreme events, with evidence indicating an observed decrease in global mean yields of maize, wheat, soybeans, fruit and vegetables.[1] Progress on eliminating food security and nutrition challenges are also reversing, with the number of people going hungry increasing 20% to 122 million between 2019 and 2022,[2] and after decades of decline, the global prevalence of malnutrition is also increasing.[3] Climate change exacerbates the existing burden of malnutrition and food security challenges, undermining efforts to reduce hunger, as well as the resilience and coping strategies of vulnerable populations.[4] Decreased yields will likely lead to price increases, making food more expensive and inaccessible, reducing energy intake, leading to less healthy diets and increasing diet-related mortality.

But the impacts of climate change on nutrition have historically received less attention than the impacts on agricultural productivity, particularly cereal crops.[5] While focusing on certain staple crops can help build resilience for these crops and meet calorie deficits, focusing on too few crops can reduce dietary diversity, intake of nutritious foods containing essential vitamins and minerals, and understanding of the impacts of climate change on the food system. There exist knowledge gaps on climate risks to nutrition and how to effectively integrate the traditional objectives of agricultural development — production, productivity, food security and income —with nutrition. And although agriculture development is fundamental to nutrition security, availability and access to food does not automatically lead to good nutrition. To deliver on healthy diets, agriculture, including climate-smart agriculture, needs to ensure the sustainable production of a variety of affordable, nutritious, resilient, culturally appropriate and safe foods.[6]

It is increasingly recognised that climate impacts are felt differently across social groups, so processes need to identify the unique challenges faced by groups, particularly those that are marginalised, vulnerable,[7] and face intersecting disadvantage. Studies indicate that malnutrition has increased especially for Indigenous Peoples, small-scale food producers and low-income households, particularly impacting children, elderly people and pregnant women.[3]

It is therefore vital to foster greater understanding and collaboration between climate, agriculture, nutrition and equity sectors, and take a holistic and inclusive approach to climate adaptation that incorporates nutrition, agriculture and food security into effective climate responses. This assessment aims to address this gap by setting out an approach that brings together the climate, food security, nutrition and equity sectors.

Climate risk assessments can often be technical and complex, requiring professional support and reinforcing top-down decision-making should communities lack this expertise. This assessment shifts decision making to communities by providing simple exercises supported by clear language and drawings to reduce literacy barriers and maximise participation. The assessment listens to all diverse voices in a community, documenting how the different social groups — such as women, men, youth and children — experience climate impacts, identifying their priorities and solutions. Together, they collectively

develop a shared response by agreeing a nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan to determine pathways to nutritious, climate-resilient, culturally appropriate foods for all. These community adaptation plans can be supported and implemented by local and national governments, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), private sector actors and community members themselves. Communities lead the process, reflecting on their experiences, identifying the challenges, priorities and solutions, and are complemented by the expertise of climate, nutrition, agriculture, equity and development specialists.

The assessment, which is best facilitated in the community's preferred language, is targeted at organisations and communities with limited formal training or experience of building local climate resilience and conducting nutrition-sensitive climate risk assessments. It combines analysis of diets and cultural preferences with gender and social inclusion analysis, climate risk assessments and adaptation planning, in a practical step-by-step guide, simplifying these often-complex methods into four straightforward exercises. These build on one another, encouraging dialogue to inform more inclusive decision making, better long- and short-term planning, and more effective nutrition-sensitive adaptation responses to a changing climate.

The assessment has been developed and tested in two communities in a remote rural village in Northern Tanzania and an isolated community in the Solomon Islands. The design builds on previous community assessments and toolkits, IIED's Pamoja Voices,[8] ADB's Action on Climate Change in South Asia: Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) tool[9], the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security Tool (CCAFS)[10], and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis' Climate risk and vulnerability Assessment framework and toolbox (CLIMAAX)[11].

Community members and development practitioners worked alongside the authors to guide the design, approach and testing of this assessment. In each case, community members tested the exercises and provided feedback on improvements, which were incorporated. This has demonstrated the flexibility of the methods and exercises, which can be easily applied across a variety of contexts and adapted to suit user needs. We dedicate this assessment to the communities in Ngwamanota, Kishapu District, Tanzania, and Toroa, Makira Province, Solomon Islands, as it was their valuable direction, guidance and leadership that made it possible.

Image displays a focus group of older women taking part in the climate risk and vulnerability assessment in Tanzania.

Image displays a river in Makira- Ulawa Province, Solomon Islands, providing a source of food and nutrition to local communities.

02 APPROACH TO NUTRITION-SENSITIVE CLIMATE RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Examining how climate affects food security and nutrition, this assessment considers gender and intersecting disadvantages to understand the distinct roles, vulnerabilities, dietary needs and preferences of women, men, young people and children. It promotes inclusive community decision-making by ensuring the challenges of all groups — especially those who are marginalised or vulnerable — are recognised and addressed. It also identifies opportunities for nutrition-sensitive adaptation, outlining barriers and potential solutions. Designed for use by communities and supporting organisations, it has four main objectives:

1. Understand the major food types and frequency of consumption, nutritional knowledge and cultural preference, from the perspectives of men, women, youth and children
2. Identify the climate risks and vulnerability facing major food types and the challenges and opportunities to overcome these, from the perspectives of men, women, youth and children
3. Understand who makes decisions and who controls access to food and nutrition, and the barriers and opportunities faced by men, women, youth and children
4. Invite the community to listen and reflect on the challenges they face and identify collective solutions through a nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan.

The assessment process

Four interlinked exercises (see Table 1) are set out to achieve these objectives. This assessment uses safe spaces, co-creation and participatory methods to foster trust, inclusivity and the emotional safety of community members, inviting them to share their experiences in focus groups. Emphasis is placed on ensuring the voices of the marginalised are included and captured within these focus groups.

Image displays a facilitator explaining the purpose of the exercises to a focus group in Tanzania.

Table 1. Exercises in the nutrition-sensitive climate risk and vulnerability assessment

Exercise		Overview	Format
1	**Analysis of food resources, diet and cultural preferences**	Aims to map and understand the typology of main food types consumed in the community (both grown and purchased) and determine the level of nutritional knowledge of food and intentionality on nutrition, frequency of consumption and cultural preferences.	Each group (men, women, young men, young women, children) conducts Exercises 1–3 in their respective focus groups
2	**Climate risk and vulnerability assessment**	Builds on Exercise 1, using the same major food types to determine the climate impacts, the severity of those impacts, current coping strategies, their effectiveness and suggestions for adaptation strategies.	
3	**Gender and social inclusion analysis**	Building on Exercises 1 and 2, the first part of exercise 3 invites focus groups to indicate who makes decisions and who controls resources and access for food production, consumption and nutrition. The second part of exercise 3 invites focus groups to reflect on the information from the above Exercises 1, 2 and 3.1, and list the main climate, food security and nutrition challenges they face as a group (e.g. as young women), and their solutions to overcome these challenges.	
4	**Nutrition-sensitive community adaptation planning**	Presents a summary of challenges and solutions identified during Exercises 1–3 back to all groups. Unpacking the barriers and challenges faced, the community collectively agrees solutions and how to implement and monitor them, creating a nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan.	All groups come together in one community meeting

Exercises 1–3 are conducted by dividing the community into separate focus groups, as determined by the organisers. Based on community feedback and preferences, this assessment had five focus groups: older men, older women, younger men, younger women, and children (aged 7–14 years). But focus group composition can vary depending on community preferences. The aim of dividing into separate groups is to create participatory and inclusive spaces for discussion, while capturing the differing perspectives of the various groups, particularly voices that often go unheard or are marginalised in a community, and that face intersecting disadvantages. During Exercise 4, the groups are brought together in a single room to reflect on the challenges and solutions identified in the previous exercises. The community then collectively discusses and agrees actions to be undertaken as part of the nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan.

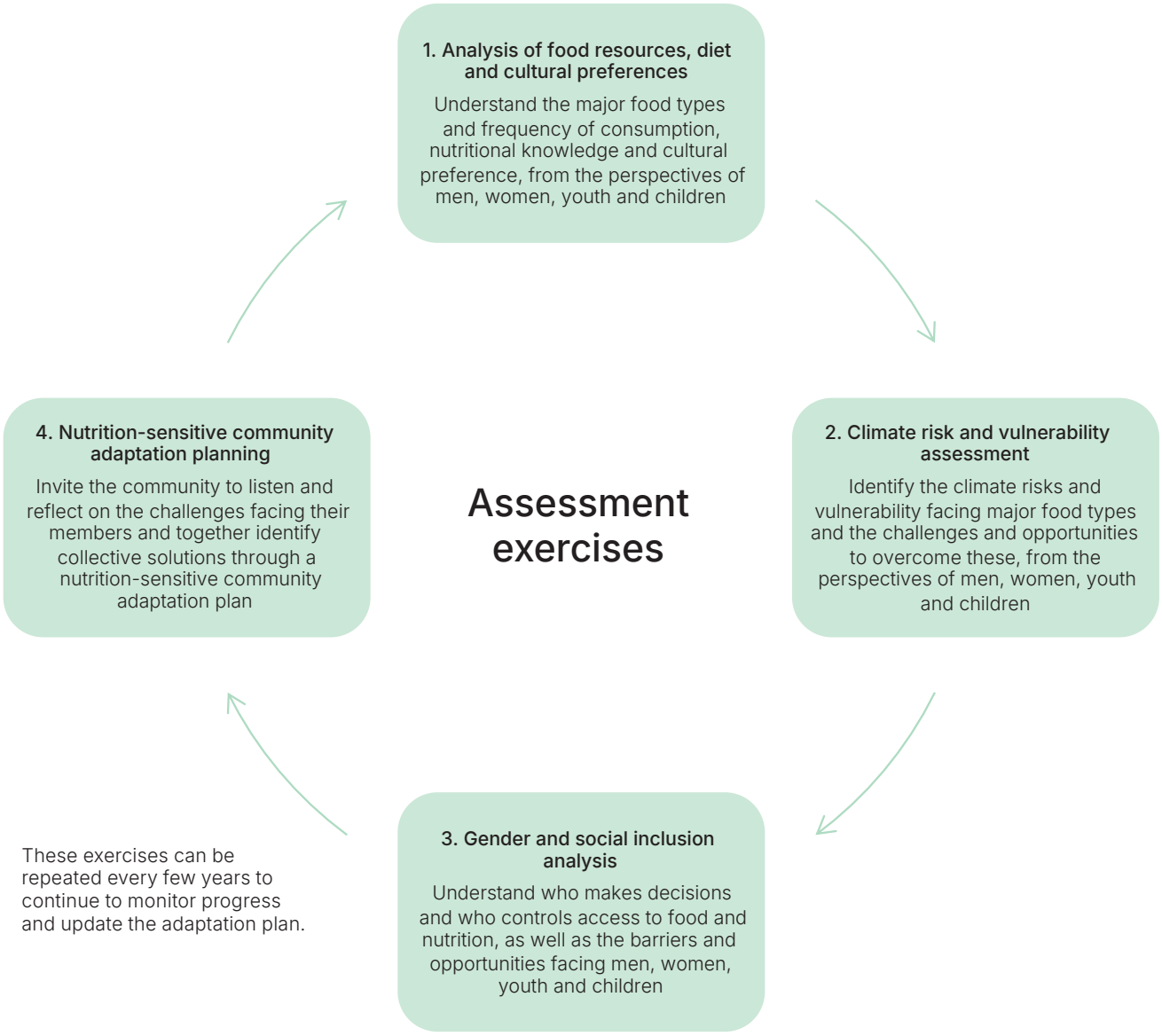
We held focus group discussions with community members to test the assessment and gather initial feedback, which helped us improve and refine the four exercises. We also shared drafts with key stakeholders to gather inputs and further improve and strengthen the assessment, to ensure it meets expectations and is appropriate for a wide number of users.

Figure 1: Displays the over-arching aim of this assessment, the elements involved and users, and provides an outline of the four exercises

Aim: Develop a nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan, understanding climate impacts facing food security and nutrition, especially for the most vulnerable- ensuring all perspectives are equally heard and addressed

Elements: Four simple exercises using safe spaces and facilitated dialogue over 2–3 days, ending with a collectively agreed nutrition-sensitive adaptation plan to address challenges facing all members

Assessment users: Communities and those supporting them, including government, NGOs, community-based organisations, private sector actors and research institutions



Why is this assessment needed?

The impact of climate change on nutritional outcomes is frequently overlooked and climate adaptation actions often fail to address this vital issue.[12] Most research has focused on agricultural productivity and climate impacts on certain crops, such as rice or wheat.[13] While these crops can be vital staples, it is important to consider all major food groups to determine climate impacts and support dietary diversity and access to nutritious foods in the face of a changing climate.

It is increasingly recognised that climate impacts are felt differently across groups, so processes need to identify the unique challenges they face, particularly among groups that are marginalised, vulnerable[7] or face a multitude of intersecting disadvantages. Marginalised groups — such as women, youth and children — should not be regarded as victims. It is important to acknowledge and value their agency and the solutions, leadership and strategies they can offer.[8]

This assessment aims to create space for everyone to provide their inputs and directions by sharing the unique challenges they face and their proposed solutions. Evidence indicates that communities working together have a positive influence on adapting to climate change,[7,14] creating strong social relations and social capital that can provide much-needed support in times of crisis. Enhancing understanding of the unique climate impacts facing different groups within a community, and working together to address and overcome these, presents an important adaptation strategy in and of itself.[8]

This assessment outlines simple exercises that can be undertaken together with or by communities to determine climate impacts facing food and nutrition security and co-develop effective responses through nutrition-sensitive adaptation plans. The exercises enable all voices and priorities — women's, men's, youth's or children's — to be heard and facilitate the collective identification of solutions to climate impacts, food and nutrition insecurity and gender and social inclusion constraints.

Who can use this assessment?

The assessment is designed to be used by community members and organisations working with communities across the climate, food security, nutrition and equity sectors that are interested in a multi-disciplinary approach that brings sectors together and facilitates broader and deepened community engagement and leadership. Table 2 summarises the different uses for different actors.

Table 2. How different actors might use this assessment

Actor	Use of climate risk assessment
Communities	• Creating a space for discussion, generating knowledge, understanding unique food security and nutrition challenges facing different groups within the community and collectively identifying solutions • Evaluating climate change impacts on major food types, reviewing current coping strategies and identifying long-term adaptation strategies • Evaluating decision-making structures and gender and social inclusion challenges and opportunities, noting and addressing any gaps • Developing a community-led adaptation plan to overcome food security and nutrition challenges resulting from climate impacts as well as gender and social inclusion constraints • Informing decision making at all levels in a community to recognise and advocate for appropriate support for effective climate change strategies

Actor	Use of climate risk assessment
NGOs and community-based organisations	• Establishing climate risk and gender baselines to better inform nutrition and food security programmes working with local communities • Supporting communities to integrate climate risk and vulnerability assessments into their planning and development interventions • Supporting national governments to assess the impacts of climate change on food security and nutrition • Supporting governments to assess gender and power dynamics within communities regarding access to food and nutrition, and identify suitable actions to overcome these challenges
National governments	• Implementing climate change, food security, nutrition and gender policies and programmes supporting the emergence of food-secure, nutrition-sensitive, climate-resilient communities • Implementing climate action plans and strategies, including nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans that support food-secure, nutrition-sensitive, climate-resilient communities • Providing guidance on climate change adaptation awareness-raising, planning, management and strategy implementation for food security and nutrition in local communities • Evaluating gender and social inclusion considerations and representation of women's, men's, youth's and children's priorities in communities and decision making to promote more inclusive approaches and reduce the vulnerability of marginalised groups
Donors, development partners and funders	• Incorporating climate risk assessment and gender considerations into local-level food security and nutrition programmes, ensuring the priorities of women, men, youth and children are equally heard and addressed • Supporting local partner food security and nutrition programmes to incorporate climate risk and vulnerability assessments and gender and social inclusion into their programme design • Using the recommendations that arise from applying this assessment to inform the improvement of climate and gender aspects of development cooperation programmes, particularly those focused on food security and nutrition
Academia, research and development institutions	• Guiding participatory research practice in inclusive approaches to climate planning, research studies and baseline analysis • Providing a joint approach working in partnership with communities to understand climate impacts on food security and nutrition and work together to identify solutions
Private sector actors and financial institutions	• Providing a community adaptation plan that notes areas where additional support is required to strengthen resilience in the community • Informing programmes that provide financial support to communities about climate risks to food security and nutrition, and solutions to address these challenges • Informing programmes that provide financial support to communities about gender and social inclusion challenges to food security and nutrition, and solutions to address these challenges

Time and resources required

It should take two to three days to carry out the four exercises in one community, though this depends on there being separate areas to conduct focus groups in parallel. If space is limited to a single area, then three to four days may be required. We would also recommend a planning and training day for staff before community engagement to practice applying the assessment together and prepare, and a one-day debriefing afterwards. It is therefore possible to conduct the entire exercise within a one-week period. A further five to seven days should also be allocated to produce the reports and write up notes from the exercises conducted. Table 3 outlines the human resources required to conduct the exercises in an ideal scenario. But it is possible to undertake the assessment with fewer facilitators and rapporteurs.

Table 3. Human resources to conduct the assessment in an ideal scenario. Note it is possible to undertake the assessment with fewer facilitators and rapporteurs

Role	Number	Tasks/responsibilities
Facilitator	4 (2 female, 2 male)	Leading and facilitating exercises for each of the five focus groups (older women, older men, younger women, younger men, children) Leading and facilitating exercises for the group consensus
Rapporteur	4 (2 female, 2 male)	Taking extensive notes during each exercise Documenting outputs and taking photographs of charts and diagrams Collecting the notes and writing the final report
Coordinator	1	Overseeing the process and exercises (especially when happening in parallel) to ensure their smooth operation Providing additional support to facilitators and rapporteurs as needed Taking important notes and reviewing the report
Translator (if required)	2 (1 female and 1 male)	Helping with translation if the facilitators, rapporteurs or coordinator do not speak the local language

Ideally, each focus group (older women, older men, young women, young men and children) should have around ten participants, meaning that if undertaking five focus groups, the process will engage with around 50 people. It is recommended that the exercises take place as close to the community as possible, using universally accessible venues such as a local school, community hall or other suitable location.

Image displays a local school, which was used as an accessible venue to conduct the exercises in Tanzania, close to the community.

Image displays a member from the children's focus group engaging in the climate risk and vulnerability assessment exercises in Tanzania.

03 STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Before you start

Creating safe spaces for the focus groups

This assessment will use safe spaces to ensure the voices of all are heard and captured when considering nutrition and food security challenges and opportunities. Embedding various perspectives in risk and vulnerability assessments can help identify previously unknown root causes of multiple risks to food security and nutrition, because different groups experience food security, nutrition needs and climate risks differently. Creating a truly inclusive and safe space where people feel they can be heard and their opinions valued may yield not only some unexpected answers and challenging insights, but also new ideas and solutions. See chapter 4 for detailed guidance on how the team should prepare for the assessment.

Upon arrival in the community, the assessment team should meet with the relevant community leaders and members to begin conducting the exercises.

Divide participants into focus groups of no more than ten people each. When testing the assessment, we had five groups: children, older men, older women, young men, and young women. It is encouraged that focus groups include individuals that represent different intersectional perspectives, such as children with disabilities. The team and community are free to define focus groups in terms of age, depending on the local context. For example, some countries define youth as being aged 18–35, while other countries have different definitions. The team and community can define the age of groups based on what makes most sense for their context.

Facilitator tip: We recommend that female facilitators and rapporteurs work with the older women and young women focus groups and male facilitators and rapporteurs work with the older men and young men focus groups. Both a male and a female facilitator can work with children's group. This helps create a comfortable and safe space for discussion.

Introductions

Now the community has been divided into focus groups, as a facilitator, it is important to put focus group participants at ease from the outset. To do this, you should:

- Start by introducing yourselves and your organisation, before inviting participants to do likewise
- Explain why each team member (organiser, facilitators, rapporteurs, translators) is there and the overall purpose of the exercises, taking care not to raise unrealistic expectations and being honest about the relative impact of the work
- Emphasise that the exercises aim to create a safe space for everyone to be heard and will involve working with all participants to capture their knowledge
- Thank the participants for their time and explain that this is a safe space
- Inform participants that all inputs will remain

confidential, there are no right or wrong answers, the exercises are voluntary and everyone is free to leave at any time

- Ask participants if they have any questions before the exercises begin.

Agreeing the ground rules

A useful first activity is to agree **a set of ground rules** for everyone to follow during all the exercises. To do this, invite participants to suggest possible ground rules. Examples include:

- Do not interrupt when someone is speaking
- Respect the opinions of others even when there is a disagreement, and
- Agree to keep all discussions confidential and not share information outside of this room

Drawing these up will help put participants at ease and establish that everybody is adhering to the same rules, supporting the creation of an inclusive safe space for the subsequent exercises. Write the ground rules on a flipchart and place them somewhere visible throughout the exercises as a reminder of the agreements reached.

Having established safe spaces and set the ground rules, you can now start Exercise 1.

Image displays a facilitator in Solomon Islands with members of the community introducing and outlining the exercises.

Exercise 1: Analysis of food resources, dietary needs and cultural preferences

Overview

The purpose of this exercise is to understand the main types of food consumed, which food is grown for nutritional benefit and what food is culturally preferred, by drawing visuals on a flipchart. The purpose of this is to establish the typology of food consumed and food preferences across the different focus groups.

The use of drawings — rather than writing — allow all participants to engage in the exercise and helps overcome any illiteracy gaps.

Objectives

- Understand the variety of foods consumed in the community
- Understand the cultural preferences of children, older men, older women, younger men, and younger women regarding food types
- Establish which foods have higher nutrition benefit, how different groups understand nutrition, which foods they eat more frequently, which they prefer, and whether there is any variance in preference between the groups.

Steps

1. The facilitator puts flipcharts on a wall that can be easily viewed by all participants.

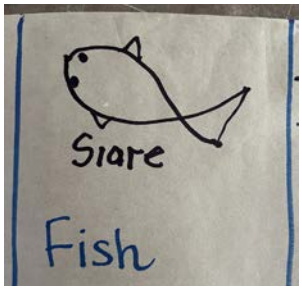
2. The facilitator invites participants up in turn to draw on the flipchart, from left to right, the main food types they consume on a regular basis. Participants will draw one main food type each, each taking their turn, with around 8-10 main food types expected.

3. Before drawing the food on the flipchart, the participant says out loud the food they want to draw, and the facilitator checks with the other participants if this is a main food. Once there is agreement, the participant proceeds to draw. This will help prevent them from drawing items that are not a main food type consumed in the community.

Facilitator tip: To include participants who cannot read or write, encourage them to draw, rather than write. Participants are invited to draw the image on the flipchart, to ensure they are drawing from their own perspective, but if anyone does not wish to draw or feels uncomfortable doing so, you can draw the image under their guidance.

Image in the left displays the children's focus group in Tanzania drawing an image of a main food type on the flip-chart.

4. Once everyone who wants to has had a turn at drawing and there are 8-10 food types, the facilitator checks that all main food types have been captured before moving on to the next step.



5. The facilitator then reviews the food images, asking the questions in Table 4 and recording responses in each row under each food type. They can use symbols to record responses (+ for positive responses; – for negative ones) and record any further explanations in text next to these symbols on the flipchart. Rapporteurs should record the more detailed responses in their notes.

Facilitator tip: It is important to reassure participants that the drawings need not be perfect and that simple drawings are fine. Clapping or praising those who volunteer can help encourage participation and thank them for taking part. Writing local names for the foods beside the drawings can help ensure all drawings are accurately named and understood.

Image in the top left displays a drawing of a fish alongside the local name (siare) in Solomon Islands and name in English written underneath.

Image in the bottom left displays a child participant in Solomon Islands undertaking Exercise 1, drawing a main food type on the flip-chart.

Table 4. Focus group questions, Exercise 1

Questions	Notes
Frequency row	
Which foods do you eat most often and why?	Mark + or – under each food mentioned and write summary of reason why next to each
Which foods do you eat least often and why?	
Which foods do you grow yourself and which foods do you buy?	Make a note which foods they 'grow' and which they 'buy'.
Nutritional value row	
Which foods are more nutritious for you/Which do you consume specifically for their nutritional value?	Mark + under each food mentioned
What nutritional value does the named food give to you? (eg protein)	Write the responses next to each
Which foods are not as nutritious for you?	Mark – under each food mentioned
Preference row	
Which foods do you like to eat and why?	Mark + or – under each food mentioned and write summary of reason why next to each
Which foods do you not like to eat and why?	
Are there any foods you would like to eat more of? What is stopping you?	Write the reasons in text
Are there any foods you would like to eat less of? What is stopping you?	

Table 5 shows what the flipchart should start to look like by the end of Exercise 1. The focus groups may not know the answer to some questions, such as those on nutritional value. It is fine to leave these sections blank or marked with 'unsure'. Not every question requires a response under all food images — for example, the questions on preferences may only have one or two responses.

Table 5. Sample summary table from Exercise 1, with six food types

Focus group: young women							
Main food types		Rice	Maize	Tomatoes	Onions	Sweet potato	Mangoes
Exercise 1: Analysis of food types, nutrition and cultural preferences	Frequency	- (expensive) Buy	+ (available) Grow	+ Grow	Buy	+ (cheaper) Buy	- (seasonal) Grow
	Nutritional value	+ Unsure	- Unsure	+ Vitamins and minerals	+ Unsure	+ Carbohydrates	+ Unsure
	Preference	+ (like taste) Would like to eat more but expensive				– (don't like taste) Would like to eat less but cheaper	+ (like taste) Like to eat more but seasonal

Key: + positive – negative

This example shows that the group of young women consider rice, maize, tomatoes, onions, sweet potato and mangoes as the main food types. They grow maize, tomatoes and mangoes, and buy rice, onions and sweet potato. They eat maize and sweet potato more frequently, and have some basic knowledge on nutrition, but this could be improved. They would prefer to eat more rice, but it is too expensive, and would also like to eat less sweet potato, but it is cheap.

This completes Exercise 1. The facilitator then moves directly on to Exercise 2, which builds on Exercise 1 to focus on climate risks and vulnerability aspects to the food types mentioned.

Image displays focus group participants in Tanzania reviewing the information collected as part of Exercise 1.

Exercise 2: Climate risk and vulnerability assessment

Overview

This exercise invites the focus groups to discuss and rank the severity of the major hazards affecting the food types identified in Exercise 1, their current coping strategies and potential adaptation strategies. To avoid repetition, it uses the same flipchart and information gathered in Exercise 1, with additional rows to capture this information.

Objectives

- Determine the key climate hazards affecting the main food types noted in Exercise 1.
- Rank the severity of hazards (from least to most severe) based on their impact on food types.
- Identify current short-term coping strategies and suggestions for long-term adaptation strategies for dealing with these hazards.

Steps

1. Using the flipchart from Exercise 1, the facilitator asks focus groups to identify — based on their past and present experience — climate-related hazards that affect each food. These can include, for example, drought, heavy rains, flooding, strong winds and pests.

2. Once the group has identified a hazard, the facilitator invites one participant up to draw an image on behalf of the group— for example, a sun for a drought or dry spell, rain and clouds for heavy rain — under the affected food in the hazards and severity row. Not all food types may be affected by hazards, and this is ok. Participants should just note those that are impacted, choosing the image they would like to draw so it is based on their perspective.

3. Once all hazards have been captured on the flipchart, the facilitator invites participants to rank each hazard on a scale of 1–5, with 1 representing the least severe impact on the food and 5 the most severe. This number is written next to the hazard image in the same row.

4. The facilitator goes through the flipchart where hazards have been identified, asking participants about coping strategies and noting their responses in the coping strategies row.

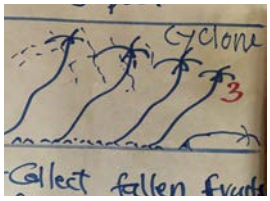


Image displays a drawing of a hurricane or cyclone as a major hazard in Solomon Islands, with an impact rating of 3.

Useful questions include:

- What strategies do you use to cope with or respond to this hazard?
- Are they helping?
- Why/ why not?

5. The facilitator then asks participants what strategies they would like to use over the longer term that could reduce the impact of the hazards, capturing their responses in the adaptive strategies row. Useful questions include:

- What could you do/would you like to do in future to reduce this hazard?
- What do you need/what would help you achieve this?
- What is stopping/preventing you from doing it today?

Some coping strategies currently being used may already be effective, with the community planning to continue these into the longer term. If this is the case, this can be noted in the adaptive strategies row.

Image displays a focus group participant in Tanzania undertaking Exercise 2, drawing a hazard affecting a main food type on the flip-chart.

6. The facilitator then invites participants to reflect on their answers, selecting the top three hazards they face and the top three adaptive strategies they have come up with, marking these with a tick (✓). These will be presented to all focus groups in Exercise 4.

Table 6 outlines what the flipchart may start to look like after Exercise 2. In this example, maize is affected severely by drought and strong winds, and sweet potato is severely affected by heavy rain. Coping strategies for both crops are limited to replanting or accepting the loss of the crop, but future adaptation strategies include having access to irrigation for maize, and to more tolerant varieties for sweet potato. Mangoes are affected by strong winds, though this is less severe. The current coping strategy is replacing affected trees, and a future adaptation strategy is to plant a windbreak to protect younger trees and seedlings.

Image displays a focus group of young men in Solomon Islands taking part in Exercise 2, drawing hazards on the flip-chart that affect their main food types.

Table 6. What the flipchart should start to look like at the end of Exercise 2

Focus Group: Young Women							
Main food types		Rice	Maize	Tomatoes	Onion	Sweet Potato	Mangoes
Exercise 1: Analysis of food types, nutrition and cultural preferences	Frequency	– (expensive) Buy	+ (available) Grow	+ Grow	Buy	+ (cheaper) Buy	- (seasonal) Grow
	Nutritional value	+ Unsure	– Unsure	+ Vitamins and minerals	+ Unsure	+ Carbohydrates	+ Unsure
	Preference	+ (like taste) Would like to eat more but expensive				– (don't like taste) Would like to eat less but cheap	+ (like taste) Would like to eat more but seasonal
Exercise 2: Climate risk and vulnerability assessment	Hazards and severity		5 √			5 √	3 √
	Coping strategies		Replant after maize is destroyed by drought			Loss of crops in heavy rain	Replant after strong winds blow seeds and fruit trees away
	Adaptive strategies		Access to irrigation √			Access to tolerant varieties √	Plant windbreak to protect seedlings √

***Key:** + positive – negative*

Strong winds *Drought* *Heavy rain*

This completes Exercise 2. Before moving on to Exercise 3 with the same focus group, the facilitator can give participants a break or do a quick energiser to refresh energy levels in the room.

Exercise 3: Gender and social inclusion analysis

Overview

Building on Exercises 1 and 2, this exercise aims to understand who in the household makes decisions and controls resources regarding food and nutrition. It is broken down into two parts. Exercise 3.1 unpacks who decides which food the family will eat, who grows the food, who prepares it and who is responsible for selling and buying any additional food. Exercise 3.2 then invites participants to reflect on what their group has discussed across all the exercises so far and consider any challenges they face (as older/younger men/women or children) and propose solutions they would like to suggest or bring forward to tackle these challenges.

Objectives

- Understand the different roles played by older men, older women, younger men, younger women and children regarding food, including who decides what food is grown and consumed, who is involved in growing and preparing the food and who sells or buys additional food
- Reflect on the exercises and analysis undertaken across all the exercises so far and discuss any specific challenges faced by focus group members and possible means of overcoming them.

Exercise 3.1. Analysis of decision making on food and nutrition

This is the first part of Exercise 3 and will use the flipchart created in Exercise 2, with an additional row to capture decision making on food and nutrition in the household.

The facilitator invites the group to review the flipchart and asks a series of questions about roles around food and nutrition, using images to represent older men, older women, young men, young women and children alongside the corresponding keyword to record their responses (Table 7). If participants would like to draw some of the images, the facilitator can invite them to do so.

Table 7. Questions and keywords for Exercise 3.1

Question	Keyword
Who has access to or owns the land on which this food is grown?	Access
Who decides which food the family will eat?	Decides
Who grows the food?	Grows
Who prepares/cooks the food?	Prepares
Who is responsible for selling any (surplus) food?	Sells
Who buys any additional food?	Buys

The flip-chart will then begin to start looking like Table 8. In this example, the young women in the focus group indicated that older men have access to land, decide which food is grown and buy additional food; young women grow the food; older women prepare and cook the food; and young men sell any surplus food.

Once the facilitator has asked and recorded the responses to all the questions in Table 7, this completes Exercise 3.1. The facilitator can thank participants for their time and a job well done before moving onto Exercise 3.2, which represents the focus group's final task.

Table 8. What the flipchart should look like after completing Exercise 3.1

Focus group: young women							
Main food types		Rice	Maize	Tomatoes	Onion	Sweet Potato	Mangoes
Exercise 1: Analysis of food types, nutrition and cultural preferences	Frequency	– (expensive) Buy	+ (available) Grow	+ Grow	Buy	+ (cheaper) Buy	– (seasonal) Grow
	Nutritional value	+ Unsure	– Unsure	+ Vitamins and minerals	+ Unsure	+ Carbohydrates	+ Unsure
	Preference	+ (like taste) Would like to eat more but expensive				– (don't like taste) Would like to eat less but cheap	+ (like taste) Would like to eat more but seasonal
Exercise 2: Climate risk and vulnerability assessment	Climate hazards and severity		5 √			5 √	3 √
	Coping strategies		Replant after maize is destroyed by drought			Loss of crops in heavy rain	Replant after strong winds blow seeds and fruit trees away
	Adaptive strategies		Access to irrigation √			Access to tolerant varieties √	Plant windbreak to protect seedlings √
Exercise 3: Gender and social inclusion analysis		Access	Decides	Grows	Prepares	Sells	Buys

Key: *+ positive – negative*

Older men *Older women* *Young men* *Young women* *Boys* *Girls*

Strong winds *Drought* *Heavy rain*

Exercise 3.2. Identifying challenges and solutions

This is the second part of Exercise 3 and involves using a new flipchart to capture overall reflections on Exercises 1–3.1.

Steps

1. The facilitator places a new flipchart on the wall, next to the chart produced in the previous exercises. The new flipchart should have a table drawn with two columns, labelled 'challenges' and 'solutions'. The facilitator then invites participants to reflect on the existing flip-charts and their work in the previous exercises, and discuss any specific challenges they face as a focus group (for example, as young women) around food and nutrition security and coping with and adapting to hazards.

2. The facilitator writes each challenge in the appropriate column on the new flipchart, inviting participants to suggest any solutions they feel would help overcome or address each challenge, noting these under the 'solutions' column. Participants may not have any solutions to suggest for some challenges — in this case, the area can be left blank on the flipchart.

3. Once the group is happy with the main challenges and any solutions identified, the facilitator summarises the challenges and solutions that have been discussed and invites the group to identify the three challenges and solutions they think are the most pressing or important. They do not need to rank these. The purpose is merely to choose the three main challenges from the list according to their perspective.

4. The facilitator can simply tick (√) or add a star (*) next to the top three, for ease when reviewing this information later. The top three will be presented to all the focus groups during Exercise 4.

This completes Exercise 3, and the focus group activities. The facilitator should thank participants for their useful and extensive contributions to Exercises 1–3 and let participants know when the final Exercise 4 will take place.

The final exercise involves all focus groups coming together to listen to the information gathered across all groups and agree an effective nutrition-sensitive climate adaptation plan for the community.

Exercise 4: Nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan

Overview

For Exercise 4, the five focus groups are brought together into a single room to hear a summary of the hazards, coping and adaptive strategies and challenges and solutions as perceived by each focus group. Meeting together in this way allows the community to listen as a collective to the challenges facing their members, before agreeing on the actions they will take to overcome them, who will be responsible for such actions and the timeline for their completion. The outcome of the meeting will be a nutrition-sensitive community climate adaptation plan produced by and for the community that includes priorities and perspectives from across all the different groups.

Objectives

- All groups hear the challenges faced by community members regarding food security and nutrition, and the proposed solutions for overcoming them.
- All groups hear the climate hazards affecting major food types identified by community members, as well as current coping strategies and long-term adaptation strategies proposed to address them.
- All community members reflect on these challenges and, based on consensus, agree a nutrition-sensitive community climate adaptation plan, with clear actions, assigned responsibilities, timeframe for completion and how the actions will be monitored.

Preparatory steps

Once Exercises 1–3 have been completed for all focus groups, the coordinator, facilitators and rapporteurs meet to review the results of the first three exercises and work out key findings to prepare for Exercise 4.

1. The facilitators, rapporteurs and coordinator review the flipcharts from all the focus groups, discussing and summarising findings from each group into bullet point summaries on separate flipcharts (e.g. children focus group summary on one flipchart, older men on another flipchart and so on).

2. Facilitators also prepare flipcharts for the nutrition-sensitive climate adaptation plan, with a seven-column table to capture challenge, solutions, community commitments, external support required, responsibilities, timeframes and how to monitor (see Table 9). This may need to go across one or two flipcharts for space.

3. Facilitators and rapporteurs select the 'top three' coping and adaptive strategies to climate hazards identified in Exercise 2 by each focus group. If there are five focus groups, with the top three taken from each group, the total number should not exceed 15. If some groups identified the same challenges and strategies, duplicate entries can be combined. It is fine if some challenges do not have suggested adaptive strategies as this will allow the rest of the groups to brainstorm possible solutions together.

4. Under the challenges column in the table, facilitators and rapporteurs should list the climate impacts and coping strategies, and corresponding adaptive strategies under the 'Solutions' column in the table. If possible, it is suggested to not list all three from one group followed by three from another, but instead to mix up the entries, for example, the first coping and adaptive strategy could come from the children's group, followed by the second from the young women's group, and so on. This helps present suggestions as collective inputs from across the community (unless this is obvious in the point itself and cannot be avoided). This way, groups are less likely to attach themselves to their strategies over others, encouraging a more holistic view of the challenges facing the community. Use as many sheets as necessary to accommodate all the coping and adaptive strategies.

5. The same exercise should be undertaken for the 'top three' challenges and solutions identified in exercise 3.2 from across focus groups. These challenges and solutions should be listed in the same table under the same columns for 'challenges' and corresponding 'solutions' (though you may need more flipcharts for space). Again, the various challenges and corresponding solutions should be mixed up in the table from across the focus groups, with no reference made as to which group identified which point (unless this is obvious in the point itself and cannot be avoided).

6. Some groups may have identified the same challenges. Again, where this is the case, duplicate challenges can be combined into a single entry, rather than writing it out multiple times in the table.

Once completed, the table and flipcharts will list all the challenges (coping strategies) and solutions (adaptation strategies) from all the focus groups, as well as the specific gender and social inclusion challenges faced by focus groups regarding climate impacts, food and nutrition security and suggested solutions. Some examples of what the table will start to look like has been included in table 9. Once this is completed, the flipcharts can be safely stored in preparation for Exercise 4.

Image displays the coordinator, facilitators and rapporteurs reviewing the information collected from focus groups, in preparation for Exercise 4.

Table 9. Sample table listing coping and adaptive strategies from the different focus groups, as well as gender and social inclusion challenges identified by focus groups, in preparation for Exercise 4

	Challenges (including current coping strategies)	Solutions (including adaptive strategies)	Community commitment	External support	Who is responsible?	Timeframe	How to monitor
Addressing climate risks to food security and nutrition	Replant maize after destroyed by drought	Access to irrigation					
	Loss of sweet potato crops in heavy rain	Access to tolerant varieties					
	Strong winds blow mango seeds and fruit trees away, replant	Plant windbreak to protect seedlings					
Addressing gender and social inclusion challenges	Women and youth are not involved in decision making on food consumed	Everyone in the household is part of decision making on food consumed based on availability and nutritional value					
	Lack of knowledge on nutrition	Older women share their nutritional knowledge with rest of the community					

Set up and introductions

Before starting Exercise 4, facilitators and rapporteurs should display the flipcharts representing the key findings of Exercise 1–3 in a place that is visible to all.

There should be two facilitators of both genders, who will pay particular attention to ensuring all participants — especially marginalised voices — have the opportunity to speak in this collective setting.

Facilitators start by thanking all the participants for their time and valuable contributions to the focus group exercises, and explain the purpose of Exercise 4 is to hear a summary of the key challenges and solutions with regard to climate impacts on food and nutrition security from across the community. It is useful to remind participants at this stage (and to continue making the point as needed) that the overall purpose of the assessment is to ensure that all voices are heard and brought together in pursuit of solutions that work for everyone.

As this is the first time all groups have been brought together, facilitators must be aware of, and manage, any power dynamics in the room. They should be clear from the outset that:

- These exercises aim to hear from all groups present
- Every voice is welcomed and valued during discussions, and
- Time will be made available to hear from and listen to all.

Steps

1. Facilitators begin by thanking the participants for their active contributions to the previous exercises, then outline the day's purpose and the time required for the exercises.

2. Facilitators have the option of inviting one or two participants to read out a summary of the findings from the focus groups on the flipcharts. If no one wishes to volunteer, the facilitator can read the summary to the room.

Image shows facilitators and community members in Tanzania brought together during Exercise 4, with flip-charts displaying summaries of previous discussions.

3. The facilitator will ask the participants of each focus group if they are happy with the information captured. If the participants wish to adjust the findings, they should be allowed to do so.

4. Once all focus groups have gone through and validated all the key findings from Exercises 1–3, facilitators invite them to start the adaptation planning exercise. The facilitators add the flipcharts to the wall, displaying the table they prepared as part of the preparation session showing the challenges and solutions from across the focus groups and covering coping strategies, adaptive solutions and the gender and social inclusion challenges and solutions.

5. Facilitators go through each challenge and solution (where provided) in turn, inviting participants to discuss and agree the action to be taken to implement the solution. Where feasible, this includes what the community can do themselves to address the challenge, what external support is required, such as government, NGOs, private sector actors and other supporting organisations or individuals. Both male and female facilitators must be mindful of group dynamics and encourage space for marginalised groups to speak, including women, youth and children. It is important the discussion is not dominated by any one group or certain individuals.

6. Facilitators list agreed actions in the table on the flipchart, emphasising identifying tangible and realistic actions. If actions require external support, participants should identify who within the community is responsible for asking for support (for example, the village chief will speak to the agricultural district officer). For monitoring purposes, it is helpful to incorporate a clear timeframe for actions and specify how the community will monitor completion of this action.

7. Facilitators will continue to go through the table row by row discussing each challenge and solution in turn, completing the table and listing the agreed actions, placing emphasis on identifying tangible actions and solutions, noting who is responsible, timeframe for when the action should be completed and how the action will be monitored. Table 10 shows examples of entries in the nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan.

Table 10. Sample table produced in Exercise 4, listing components of a nutrition-sensitive community climate adaptation plan

	Challenges (including current coping strategies)	Solutions (including adaptive strategies)	Community commitment	External support	Who is responsible?	Timeframe	How to monitor
Addressing climate risks to food security and nutrition	Replant maize after destroyed by drought	Access to irrigation	Provide area and labour	Training and finance from Ministry of Agriculture	Village Chief to approach Ministry of Agriculture	December 2026	Village Chief to share progress at community meeting
	Loss of sweet potato crops in heavy rain	Access to tolerant varieties	Identify resistant varieties and share cuttings	Seed provision	Community to identify and share cuttings Community agriculture liaison to approach Ministry of Agriculture	December 2026	Progress noted each quarter by community agriculture officer
	Strong winds blow mango seeds and fruit trees away, replant	Plant windbreak to protect seedlings	Identify trees and seeds to share as windbreak	Seed Provision	Community agriculture liaison to approach district agriculture officer for support	February 2027	Progress noted each quarter at community meeting

	Challenges (including current coping strategies)	Solutions (including adaptive strategies)	Community commitment	External support	Who is responsible?	Timeframe	How to monitor
Addressing gender and social inclusion challenges	Women and youth are not involved in decision making on food consumed	Everyone in the household is part of decision making on food consumed based on availability and nutritional value	Household heads involve everyone in decision making	Knowledge on nutrition from NGOs	Village Chief to reach out to NGOs to determine access to nutrition training	October 2026	Community meeting-updates from households and Village Chief
	Lack of knowledge on nutrition	Older women share their nutritional knowledge with rest of the community	Older women share their knowledge on nutrition	None required	Older women to share knowledge each quarter after community meeting	November 2026	Village Chief to record number of meetings held

8. Once all the challenges have been discussed and actions incorporated into the plan, facilitators ask the community how they can undertake overall monitoring of all these actions to ensure they are implemented, who will be responsible for updating the plan with any new challenges requiring consideration, and how often this should take place (for example, every two years), making a note of suggestions and agreement reached on frequency on the flipchart.

9. Facilitators leave the nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan and flipcharts with the community as a reminder of the discussions and agreements made. Rapporteurs will have made a record of all discussions and tables and taken photos of the flipcharts, capturing all the information needed for a detailed report. Facilitators explain how the information will be used, when this work will be completed and whether participants will be invited to any additional activities. If applicable, they explain that technical experts from supporting organisations working with the community will add food security, nutrition, climate or equity inputs to help implement the plan and ensure it does not cause any unintentional harm — for example, from actions that could bring about maladaptation — and that the final version will be brought back to the community for validation.

10. Once all the exercises are complete, facilitators thank participants for their excellent contributions throughout the process and invite them to provide feedback on the exercises and areas for improvement.

Image displays a community member in Tanzania providing their inputs and solutions to the nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan.

04 ASSESSMENT PREPARATION GUIDES

This chapter outlines some areas to consider in advance of applying this assessment, especially for organisations that are visiting a community to conduct the exercises. It has been adapted from previous toolkits, including Pamoja Voices and Ada Consortium's Resilience Toolkit.[8,15]

Guide for organisers

Permission: if you are an external organisation, seek permission from the community before using this assessment. To avoid unduly raising expectations, clearly outline the purpose of the assessment — whether to inform research, policy or a programme — and the number of days required to carry out the exercises.

Timing: once the community has given permission, ask when is most appropriate to complete the exercises. Community members should decide whether it is best to carry out the exercises in the morning or afternoon, bearing in mind their daily chores and tasks any given day. This may vary for different focus groups — for example, women may prefer the afternoon, while men may prefer the morning. Once you have the most suitable times for each group, develop an agenda and agree it in advance to minimise disruption.

Facilitators: selecting the right facilitators is vital. Priorities should include being able to speak the local language, being trained in gender and equity considerations, understanding the power and cultural dynamics operating in a local context, and ensuring a mixture of male and female facilitators. In many cases, external facilitators rather than community members are preferred, to help create a safe and neutral space and maintain confidentiality. It is best practice for female facilitators to work with female focus groups and male facilitators to work with male focus groups.

Focus group selection: separate focus groups — such as older women, older men, young men, young women and children — are required for Exercises 1–3, each with no more than 10 individuals. Take extra care if working with children, ensuring consent is obtained from them and their parents or guardians. To avoid local bias in focus group selection, it is a good idea to develop criteria that facilitates a more representative sample in advance. Such criteria can also help the assessment capture differences (intersectionality) within the community, not only in terms of gender and age, but also, where appropriate, ethnicity, caste, wealth, social status, disabilities and health conditions.[16] This helps ensure the voices of marginalised members are heard. Community representatives often assume organisations or individuals wish to speak to the most powerful, articulate or educated community members. To avoid such assumptions, focus groups should include a greater proportion of people from poorer and marginalised backgrounds than from more privileged backgrounds.

Monitoring and evaluation: the assessment places strong emphasis on identifying solutions within the community where possible, so they can use existing resources to implement some actions to address current challenges even in the absence of external support or funding. It is important to identify who will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the actions and the overall plan. This can be a trusted community leader or government/NGO representative.

Preparing for the exercises: it is helpful for the community to know in advance what resources are required to undertake the exercises. This includes, for example, two rooms each capable of holding 10 people for focus groups and a room capable of holding 50 people for Exercise 4. It is the organiser's responsibility to gather flipcharts, sticky tape, pens and notebooks, and organise refreshments and lunch for focus group participants, should the budget allow. Below is a (non-exhaustive) list of materials needed to carry out the exercises:

- Flipcharts
- A variety of coloured marker pens
- Sticky/Post-it notes
- Masking tape, white tack or Blu Tack
- Notepads and pens for facilitators and rapporteurs.

Practice applying the assessment: the team should meet in the days before visiting the community to review this step-by-step guide and practice carrying out the exercises together. The organiser should clarify roles for the coordinators, facilitators and rapporteurs in advance, and the team should agree who will cover each exercise and focus group. If enough facilitators, rapporteurs and rooms are available, they can conduct the focus groups in parallel. During this preparation session, the team can also check focus groups and ensure they are representative of the community, include vulnerable and marginalised groups, and avoid elite capture. They should also check the translation of terms to local language and prepare flipchart materials for the exercises at this stage. It may also be useful to use this time to prepare a brief background or information session on the basics of climate change, including terminology and definitions, some of which are included in Appendix 2. In total, these preparations can be completed over 1–2 days.

Final preparations: in the days before the visit, it is useful to check in with the community to confirm that everything is proceeding according to plan, focus groups have been selected, the timeline is still suitable, and to reconfirm lunch and stationery arrangements and which facilitators and rapporteurs will be undertaking the exercises.

On arrival: facilitators and rapporteurs should aim to arrive at the venue at least 30 minutes before focus groups are due to start, to set up the rooms and meet community members as they arrive.

Image displays a member from the older men focus group in Tanzania undertaking the climate risk and vulnerability assessment exercises.

Organiser's checklist

- [ ] Obtain permission from the community to carry out assessment
- [ ] Identify suitable dates and times from community members
- [ ] Select male and female facilitators and rapporteurs who speak the local language, have received gender and social inclusion training, and understand local power and cultural dynamics
- [ ] Select focus groups using criteria, as much as possible, that obtains a representative sample, paying particular attention to including marginalised voices
- [ ] Inform the community of logistical and informational requirements, including space required for each exercise
- [ ] Gather equipment for exercises (flipcharts, sticky tape, pens, notebooks) and organise lunch and break arrangements
- [ ] Obtain final confirmation from the community, checking that everything is proceeding according to plan, focus groups have been selected, and the timeline is still suitable
- [ ] Review the exercises outlined in this step-by-step guide and practice their application
- [ ] Check translations to local language are clear
- [ ] Prepare flipchart materials for the exercises in advance
- [ ] Clarify coordinator, facilitator and rapporteur roles for the exercises
- [ ] Understand climate change terminology and definitions outlined in this guide
- [ ] Ensure the team arrives at the venue at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start time

Guide for facilitators

Good facilitation is critical to the success of this assessment. But it is not an easy role and requires patience, skill and practice. As facilitator, you are responsible for introducing, guiding and managing the flow of the exercises in this assessment. So, you must know when to probe for further details, while being mindful that discussions keep to time and remain relevant. You must also ensure everyone in the room is heard, creating a safe space in which quieter voices feel valued and able to contribute to discussions. The following points (adapted from Ada Consortium[12]) provide useful guidance for the facilitator before, during and after the exercises.

Before the exercises

Put yourself in the participants shoes: ask yourself: How would you feel if a stranger came into your community and began asking questions about your daily life and the challenges you face? Some communities may have had a bad past experience with other exercises, surveys or researchers, and some participants may be afraid of speaking openly about their lives. Others may tell facilitators what they think they want to hear, perhaps to be polite or because they hope to benefit in some way. It is best, therefore, to keep discussions as informal and relaxed as possible, and to avoid making promises of future action you are not in a position to make happen.

During the exercises

Learn from them: throughout the workshop, remind participants of the purpose of the exercises, what the information will be used for, and that you are there to work with, not against, community members. Make it clear that the participants are the teachers, and that you have come to listen and learn from them. There are no right or wrong answers; you want to know what they think, feel and have experienced.

Create a 'safe space': make it clear to everyone in the room that certain ground rules apply during the exercises. These include that everyone should be able to speak without fear of punishment, negative consequences or being mocked or made fun of, and that everyone should appreciate and respect each other's input. In essence, the room represents a 'safe space'. Throughout the exercises, remind participants that the information they provide is confidential and will remain anonymous when reported, and that they are free to leave the room at any time, without giving a reason.

Ask open questions: where possible, avoid closed questions. Instead of asking, "Do you do this activity?", ask, "Which activities do you do?" Such open questions allow participants to provide more detailed explanations and responses. Using the words 'how', 'what', 'where', 'when', 'who' and 'why' is a good way of ensuring you are asking open questions.

Be conscious of your own opinions: it is easy to facilitate discussions that confirm your own point of view. As such, you must be mindful of the influence your behaviour, background and assumptions may have on the questions you are asking and the opinions you are engaging with. Asking open questions helps address this issue by generating a wider range of answers. Express interest in participants' opinions and be prepared to accept opinions that are different from your own. If a participant says something surprising, this probably means you are learning something new about the community. The underlying principle should be to always learn more about community members' views, rather than attempting to convince them they are wrong. If a community lacks knowledge on nutrition, this is a finding in and of itself, and you should not correct their answers as this risks preventing further inputs and discussions.

Be conscious of nonverbal and verbal communication: be aware of your body language and demonstrate interest in what participants are saying by maintaining eye

contact (if culturally appropriate), pausing to show you are listening, and smiling or nodding to show encouragement. Keep your tone of voice soft and welcoming.

Actively listen and be curious: listen carefully to what participants say and encourage them to speak more, asking follow-up questions if you need further information or clarification. This helps discussions 'flow' more easily, with participants doing most of the talking.

Manage dominance — allow the quiet to speak: while it may be helpful to have talkative, dominant individuals who can express their opinions clearly and lead a discussion group, the ultimate aim is to solicit a wide range of opinions from different people in the community. You should therefore try to avoid one or two individuals dominating the discussion, politely but firmly asking them to pause so that others can have their say and actively inviting less vocal participants to speak so their opinions are captured.

Manage disagreement: a lot can be learned about a community when participants disagree about issues and actively engage in lengthy discussion. But disagreements can become too heated, causing the group atmosphere to become unpleasant and hostile. Manage such tensions as they arise, reminding participants of the 'safe space' principles agreed and reassuring them that everyone's opinion will be heard and noted down.

Allow discussions to flow: if participants start discussing and questioning issues with each other, do not interrupt them, as this offers an opportunity to listen to contrasting community opinions and gain understanding of different points of view, who holds them and why. But if such discussions become too heated or head in an irrelevant direction, intervene to steer the conversation in a calmer or more relevant direction.

Do not rush or force engagement: do not worry overly if the exercise concludes without obtaining all the information needed. Keep the tone of the discussion as informal and conversational as possible to facilitate engagement, but if participants become tired or unresponsive, do not force them to continue, as sometimes, groups simply do not want to talk. Take care to respect participants' privacy. If questions raise personal, painful or emotionally sensitive issues (such as significant losses of income or crop losses), which participants do not wish to discuss, be sensitive to this and not push participants to discuss anything they would prefer not to.

Use examples from real life: the exercises require participants to consider aspects of their environment or culture they may not have thought about before. So, some of the ideas and words used may be new or unusual for them. If participants appear unable to understand what you are saying, it may help to use practical examples from their everyday life. Use technical words such as 'resilience', 'climate adaptation' and 'climate change' sparingly and carefully, particularly if you are using translators.

At the end of each exercise

Thank participants for their time: at the end of each exercise (and the beginning of the next), thank participants for their time and active engagement. Community members are often busy people with many responsibilities, and it is important to make them feel appreciated.

Leave flipcharts and exercises with participants: make sure you leave the physical records produced in the exercises — especially the nutrition-sensitive adaptation plan — with community members. Rapporteurs should take photos of the flipcharts to write up their contents in their report.

Guide for rapporteurs

The rapporteur (or note-taker) has one of the most important jobs of all, as without detailed notes, the time spent on the activities may be wasted and any findings lost. Make sure you record all discussions taking place, not just general points or conclusions. Write down who in the group holds particular views, noting whether they could be representative of a wider group in the community or if there are opposing opinions. This is especially important during the group consensus meetings during Exercise 4. Throughout all the exercises, be ready to pause discussions to clarify whether you have correctly heard and understood what has been said.

Capture notes in a language you are comfortable with, translating them later if necessary. It is normal for different people to have their own note-taking style and techniques, perhaps using shorthand or abbreviations. But you must be able to accurately decipher what you wrote during the exercises. It may help to review your notes at the end of each day, filling in details while they are still fresh in your mind. After the exercises, expand your temporary notes into a format that is comprehensible to the report writer.

Guide for translators

Translators may be required if facilitators, rapporteurs or organisers do not speak the same language as the participants. Even if you are experienced, you should spend time with the organisers before the workshop, reviewing your role and expectations of how you will work. In particular, you should agree to the following basic principles:

- Your role is to be a 'mouthpiece' for what is being said. This means you should translate what is being said as accurately as possible. Thus, when a participant says, "I think that ..." you should translate this as "I think that ..." rather than "He says that ..."
- Translate the facilitator's questions exactly, avoiding phrases such as "He wants to know if ..." or "They want to find out whether ...".
- Translate everything that is said, regardless of whether it seems irrelevant or obvious. Such pieces of information may be crucial to understanding the particularities of certain points.
- Translate frequently and at regular intervals. If you wait too long, you will inevitably have to summarise what was being said. It is not your job to summarise. If participants are talking too fast, or if you do not understand, halt proceedings and seek clarification.
- Be mindful of introducing your own bias into the translation.

Image displays a member from the children's focus group in Tanzania undertaking Exercise 2.

Image displays a home and garden in Makira- Ulawa Province, Solomon Islands where this assessment was developed, with guidance, feedback and direction from the community.

07 CONCLUSION

This assessment outlines simple exercises that can be undertaken together with or by communities to determine climate impacts facing food and nutrition security and co-develop effective responses through nutrition-sensitive adaptation plans. The exercises enable all voices and priorities to be heard- whether those of women, men, youth or children, and to facilitate the collective identification of solutions. As well as communities, this assessment can be used by NGOs, community-based organisations, research, financial institutions and national and local governments when working with communities to support the achievement of these aims. The exercises create a safe space that allows all voices and priorities to be heard, bringing all voices together to overcome identified climate impacts, food security and nutrition insecurity and gender and social inclusion constraints, facilitating the collective identification of solutions.

Enhancing cooperation, equity and inclusion within a community presents an important adaptive strategy when dealing with climate change. This assessment aims to support more inclusive approaches, by ensuring the most vulnerable contribute equally and meaningfully to decision making on the unique climate, food security, nutritional and equity challenges they face, so these can be overcome.

The assessment is intended to be a living document, available to be updated and adapted by a range of users. As such, it is important to make time for reflections, and this is always welcomed to further improve the document and process.

These exercises outlined in Chapter 3 provide a practical step-by-step guide on how to conduct a climate risk and vulnerability assessment for food and nutrition security in a way that ensures community ownership from the beginning and provides community-led solutions to address the key challenges they face.

This document is intended as a guide only, and users are welcome to adapt the exercises and the number and make-up of focus groups based on community needs and the context they are operating in. While the exercises focus on creation of a community led nutrition sensitive adaptation plan, there are many more rich and additional insights gained from each exercise in addition to the plan itself, that could be useful in informing baseline studies and understandings regarding nutrition knowledge, food preferences and security, as well as overall equity challenges faced across focus groups. We hope this guide will provide helpful and practical ways to bring together climate, nutrition, food security and equity considerations into one nutrition-sensitive community adaptation plan for effective action.

Image displays a vegetable garden in Kishapu District, Tanzania, where this assessment was developed, with guidance, feedback and direction from the community.

APPENDIX 1: GUIDE FOR A CHILDREN'S FOCUS GROUP

This focus group brings together 10 boys and girls aged 7–14 to discuss food consumption patterns, preferences and knowledge of climate change and its impacts. The facilitator can use the questions in this appendix to adapt the exercises for a children's focus group discussion.

Overview

This focus group discussion aims to give a voice to children to reflect on the food they commonly eat at home, their food preferences, how they understand climate change and how it manifests. Like other groups, children will use drawings to express their views on food, nutrition and climate change and follow the same steps in Exercises 1–3, with the difference being that questions have been adapted to suit children. It is also recommended that between each exercise, the facilitator includes a break or does a quick and fun energiser, to refresh energy levels in the room.

Objectives of the children's focus group discussion

- Understand the different cultural food preferences of children
- Establish which foods they prefer and eat more frequently
- Understand the children's perceptions and experiences of climate change and food consumption

Questions to use with children

Exercise 1: Analysis of food types, dietary needs and cultural preferences

1. Which foods do you like to eat and why?
2. Which foods do you not like to eat and why?
3. Which foods do you eat most often?
4. Which foods do you eat least often?
5. Which foods do you think are healthier, or better for you?
6. Are there any foods you would like to eat more of? What is stopping you?
7. Are there any foods you would like to eat less of? What is stopping you?

Exercise 2: Climate change risk and vulnerability assessment

1. Have you heard about climate change? If yes, what have you heard or what do you know about it?
2. If you look at the environment in your family or community, have you noticed any changes? What changes have you noticed?
3. How have those changes affected the food that your family produces and eats?
4. How does your family ensure that the changes in climate do not threaten the main foods you eat? What does your family do to ensure the foods you like are available?

5. What more can your family do to protect your main foods from the impacts of climate change? Of the things you have listed, which are your top three (not in order, just the top three)?

Exercise 3: Gender and social inclusion analysis

Exercise 3.1: Analysis of decision making on food and nutrition

1. Who decides which foods your family grows?
2. Who decides which gardens at home to work on (garden for crops for sale and garden for home consumption crops)?
3. Do you make any decisions on the types of food and amount you eat at home?
4. What decisions would you like to see change to ensure more healthy food is available at home?

Exercise 3.2: Identifying challenges and solutions

1. Reflecting on the answers to previous questions and the drawings on the flipcharts, what challenges do you currently face with food and nutrition?
2. Can you think of any solutions to the challenges you have listed?
3. Of those you have listed, which are the three biggest challenges (not in order, just the top three)?

In preparation for exercise 4, the top three priorities for addressing climate impacts, and the top three gender and social inclusion challenges are captured from the children's focus group. These are placed into the table for the nutrition sensitive adaptation plan alongside the inputs received from the other focus groups. In exercise 4, all focus groups are brought together into one room to validate and discuss findings and finalise their nutrition sensitive climate adaptation plan.

APPENDIX 2: CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY OF TERMS

There is an opportunity to strengthen climate change knowledge among participants as part of the preparation undertaken by the organisers, facilitators and rapporteurs before visiting the community. The climate change terms in this appendix, defined according to the IPCC glossary of terms,[17] can help with this understanding.

Adaptation: in human systems, adaptation is the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate change and its effects, to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities

Adaptation strategy: a strategy to adjust to potential damage, take advantage of opportunities or respond to consequences over the longer term

Climate: the average weather over a 30-year period

Climate change: changes in the mean and/or the variability of climate properties that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer, due to natural internal processes, external forcings or persistent anthropogenic (human) changes in the composition of the atmosphere or land use

Climatic risk: a measure of the probability of harm to life, property and the environment that would occur if a hazard took place

Coping strategy: a strategy using available skills, values, beliefs, resources and opportunities to address, manage and overcome adverse conditions in the short to medium term

Resilience: ability of a system and its component parts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover from the effects of a hazardous event in a timely and efficient manner, including by ensuring the preservation, restoration or improvement of its essential basic structures and functions

Vulnerability: degree to which a system can be adversely affected by climate change.

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