



Research report summary

# Child-centred hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessment and planning in urban settings

A scoping study and needs assessment  
April 2018

# Summary

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To help develop Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction (CCDRR) in urban areas, this report provides new elements for practitioners to better use Hazards, Vulnerabilities, and Capacities Assessment (HVCA) tools.

In youth groups and in urban contexts, a wide range of HVCA methods and toolkits are already being used. Despite examples of good practice, more detailed critical analysis of processes, problems and opportunities when applying HVCA guidance must be conducted. This report examines the challenges of enabling children's participation and helps create space for their voices to be heard.

## The report is divided into the following sections:

1. What HVCA toolkits currently exist? What do they contain?
2. How do organisations decide how best to use their toolkits?
3. Suggestion for a process tool to analyse how to best implement existing toolkits.

This section contains important operational questions for practitioners to answer with their teams before conducting a HVCA in an urban setting. This will help practitioners plan better for their projects and provide the flexibility needed in different contexts.

## Annexes:

- A) Review of current pre-assessment processes
- B) Note on the potential for technological innovation in HVCAP for urban children
- C) Scoping matrix of existing HVCA toolkits (Excel spreadsheet)

This section has a table summarising the 20 HVCA toolkits reviewed as part of this research. Practitioners can use this table to select specific tools (or a combination from a number of toolkits) to address project needs.

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# Background

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To develop effective approaches to CCDRR in urban contexts, this report scopes existing approaches and toolkits currently being used by practitioners. We focus particularly on the Asian continent and the interventions used to reduce children's exposure to hazards and disasters in urban settings.

The analysis reviews useful methods and successful approaches to best inform the urban CCDRR approach. It will help further adapt and develop tools to identify vulnerable children in urban settings. And it will also help in understanding the hazards they face and their vulnerabilities and capacities. The scoping exercise includes methods for engaging adults and children in identifying risks, planning, reducing risks, and building resilience.

## Methods and measures

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This report combines a scoping exercise and a needs assessment. The scoping exercise analyses 20 toolkits acquired through literature searches and key informant referrals. The toolkits were designed by a variety of organisations, including ten different NGOs, one government and one advisory organisation. World Vision and Save the Children featured prominently with four and three HVCA toolkits respectively.

The needs assessment was conducted with NGO practitioners involved in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), urban development practitioners, and youth-centred development, and practitioners and researchers with experience in developing and testing HVCA tools.

Between February and April 2017, 23 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with Save the Children staff in a variety of roles at different levels, and with staff in other child-focused agencies and other specialists.

This report also identifies and analyses the processes in place in preparation for conducting each HVCA. This supports our recommendation that designing and trialing an assessment process tool is the next logical and critical step to design effective and comprehensive child-centred urban HVCAP tools appropriate to their context.

In Annex B, the report focuses on using new technology and the potential for technology to be adapted and utilised in the HVCAP process.

## Findings

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- There is limited evidence of how HVCA tools help users consider and address the risks and vulnerabilities that are more prominent in urban contexts. This is particularly relevant when risks identified by urban dwellers are not associated with natural hazards.
- Existing HVCA toolkits do not actively engage with or help users and recipients to consider the decisions they make during the HVCA process.
- Many HVCA toolkits take a prescriptive and linear approach. The range of fixed tools are used in a set order, with limited flexibility when choosing, applying and modifying individual methods to the changing urban contexts.

# Recommendations

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- Developing and testing a HVCA and planning (HVCAP) process tool enables users to plan their approach more effectively. This integrating approach could be applied using multiple existing tools/toolkits and across operational contexts. This ensures that practitioners go through the same robust decision-making process in HVCA planning, but allows for flexibility when choosing, applying and modifying individual methods and tools.
- Emphasising the ‘planning’ component means treating HVCAP as an empowering tool. This will help practitioners and end-users produce more contextual and action-oriented outputs.
- HVCAPs must be ‘child-centred’. They must both facilitate engagement with children as participants as well as look at urban risks from children’s point-of-view.
- It is important to understand that urban areas are continuously changing. Informants stated that it was not only difficult to produce a satisfactory definition of what ‘urban DRR’ is, but also that it was unhelpful and counter-productive to do so. Instead, it would be more useful to develop an urban DRR approach that mirrored Sphere standards through creating a set of principles that apply to the context and indicators to measure these.
- Save the Children and other INGOs may have experience in urban programming, but country programmes need staff who are specialised in dealing with urban complexities in the DRR/ resilience context. For example, this could be linking DRR or protection with other aspects of intervention in urban areas, and with more fundamental underlying problems such as housing and land rights.
- Adopting a city-wide view of hazards, risks and vulnerabilities, rather than automatically focusing on slums, could be an important base upon which to conduct the rest of a HVCAP. Part of this could be conducting secondary reviews of city-wide disaster events or accessing a vulnerability atlas, if available. Some Save the Children field experience suggests it could be valuable to link CCDRR with other areas of intervention such as school safety and solid waste management, and with current Save the Children initiatives like Child Protection in Emergencies (CPIE) and Education in Emergencies (EiE). The USAT could provide crucial information and insight into specific urban areas of vulnerability. Any urban-focused HVCAP should be implemented closely with the USAT to ensure a comprehensive assessment is completed.
- Save the Children and other INGOs could establish a community of practice on HVCAP (urban and rural) where staff from across the organisation can share ideas and experiences. This could give HVCAP a stronger, broader foundation across each organisation. A starting point for these discussions could be innovation in HVCAP (methodological, technological and attitudinal) and how it occurs. At the national level, an open stakeholder community of practice for child-centred HVCAP could foster exchange. It could also build confidence among disaster management and urban duty-bearers that governmental, non-governmental and other partners are working towards developing best-practices towards a common goal.