

Capacities and Vulnerabilities Assessment Framework (CVA)

The CVA is designed on the premise that people's existing strengths (or capacities) and weaknesses (or vulnerabilities) determine the impact that a crisis has on them, as well as the way they respond to the crisis.

Capacities: This term refers to the existing strengths of individuals and social groups. They are related to people's material and physical resources, their social resources, and their belief and attitudes. Capacities are built over time and determine people's ability to cope with crisis and recover from it.

Vulnerabilities: This term refers to the long term factors which weaken people's ability to cope with the sudden on-set of disaster, or with drawn-out emergencies. They also make people more susceptible to disasters. Vulnerabilities exist before disasters, contribute to their severity, make effective disaster response more difficult, and continue after the disaster.

In the context of the CVA, immediate needs are often addressed by short term, practical interventions (e.g relief food). Addressing vulnerabilities in contrast, requires longer term strategic solutions which are part of development work.

For instance, those who experience regular flooding /mud-slides/earth quakes may have needs for temporary shelters and medical attention. On the other hand, their vulnerabilities are linked to those factors which directly contribute to the suffering caused by the event (lack of disaster preparedness programs/social inequalities perpetuated by gender and other forms of exclusion etc.).

Three Categories of Vulnerabilities & Capacities

1. Physical or material Capacities and Vulnerabilities

These include features of the climate, land, and environment where people live, or lived before the crisis; their health, skills, their work; their housing, technologies, water and food supply; their access to capital and other assets. All of these will be different for men and women (would be good to highlight the intersectionality in the context of Nepal). While women and men suffer material deprivation during crisis, they always have some resources left, including skills and possible goods. These are capacities which agencies can build upon.

Key Questions to consider:

- What were/are the ways in which men and women in the community were/are physically or materially vulnerable? (or are the vulnerabilities and capabilities same for different groups of men and women in Nepal?)
- What productive resources, skills, and hazards existed / exist? Who (men and/or women) had/have access and control over these resources?

2. Social or organizational capacities and vulnerabilities:

This category refers to the social fabric of a community, and includes the formal political structure and the informal systems through which people make decisions, establish leadership, or organize various social and economic activities. Social systems include family and community systems, and decision making patterns within the family and between families.

Gender analysis in this category is crucial, because women's and men's roles in these various forms of organization differ widely. Decision making in social groups may exclude women or women may have well developed systems for exchanging labor and goods. Divisions on the basis of gender, race, class, or ethnicity can weaken the social fabric of a group, and increase its vulnerability.

Key questions to consider are:

- What was the social structure of the community before the disaster, and how did it serve them in the face of this disaster?
- What has been the impact of the disaster on social organization?
- What is the level and quality of participation in these structures?

3. Motivational and attitudinal capacities and vulnerabilities

These include cultural and psychological factors which may be based on religion, on the community's history of crisis, on their expectation of emergency relief. Crisis can be a catalyst for extraordinary efforts by communities, but when people feel victimized and dependent, they may also become fatalistic and passive, and suffer a decrease in their capacities to cope with and recover from the situation. Their vulnerabilities can be increased by inappropriate relief aid, which does not build on people's own abilities, develop their confidence, or offer them opportunities for change.

Key Questions to consider are:

- How do men and women in the community view themselves, and their ability to deal effectively with their social / political environment?
- What were people's beliefs and motivations before the disaster and how has the disaster affected them? This includes beliefs about gender roles and relations.
- Do people feel they have the ability to shape their lives? Do men and women feel they have the same ability?

3 Categories of Capacities & Vulnerabilities Analysis Matrix

	Vulnerabilities	Capacities
Physical / Material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What productive resources, skills and hazards exist? 		
Social/ Organizational <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the relationships between people? What are their organizational structures? 		
Motivational / Attitudinal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the community view its ability to create change? 		

Example: CVA Matrix disaggregated by gender

	Vulnerabilities		Capacities	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Physical/material				
Social/organizational				
Motivational/attitudinal				

Example: CVA matrix disaggregated by class/caste ethnicity?

	Vulnerabilities			Capacities		
	Rich	Middle	Poor	Rich	Middle	Poor
Physical/material						
Social/organizational						
Motivational/attitudinal						

CVA Matrix: Key Questions and Gender Analysis Methods/Tools

	VULNERABILITIES	CAPACITIES
<p>PHYSICAL / MATERIAL</p> <p>DEFINITION: The productive resources, skills and hazards that exist</p> <p><u>Key Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were/are the ways in which men and women in the community were/are physically or materially vulnerable? • What productive resources, skills, and hazards existed / exist? Who (men and/or women) had/have access and control over these resources? <p><u>Method:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Profile • Access/Control Profile 	<p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall more marginalized women die than men • Women bearing burden of caring for sick • Time Poverty: e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More work in field due to drought and untimely rainfall; ○ Increasing forest fire – loss of fodder, fuel wood ○ More incidences of pests/weeds ○ More time for collection of water ○ Less time to seek medical help • Increase in calorie deficiency 	<p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and experience – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of medicinal plants for family care; ○ Food and water management – storage, preservation, economize • Increase in tasks for family care • Adapting agricultural practices/switching to other crops • Adapting diet
<p>SOCIAL / ORGANIZATIONAL</p> <p>DEFINITION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Relationships between people • Their organizational structures <p><u>Key Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the social structure of the community before the disaster, and how did it serve them in the face of this disaster? 	<p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited land rights • Limited access to information, services, technologies, local relief /dev. related networks particularly for marginalized women (Note: most of the advantaged and women in leadership position are gatekeepers-so u may want to highlight this as this is one of the critical issues in resource 	<p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's user groups, networks • Leadership skills • Local knowledge of NTFP , forest (as daily/frequent users of forest), agriculture

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been the impact of the disaster on social organization? • What is the level and quality of participation in these structures? <p><u>Method:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Mapping • Time Line • Daily Activity Charts 	<p>sharing/distribution during disasters).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited mobility • Limited decision making in social groups (e.g.FUGs, local council committees) • Male out-migration = women headed households 	
<p>MOTIVATIONAL / ATTITUDINAL</p> <p>DEFINITION: How the community views its ability to create change.</p> <p><u>Key Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do men and women in the community view themselves, and their ability to deal effectively with their social / political environment? • What were people's beliefs and motivations before the disaster and how has the disaster affected them? This includes beliefs about gender roles and relations. • Do people feel they have the ability to shape their lives? Do men and women feel they have the same ability? <p><u>Methods:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnographic tools (observation, open-ended interviews etc). 	<p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in domestic violence against women • Suffering from conflicts over resources (marginalized groups and women face high exclusion - Women and men leaders practicing exclusive leadership • Limited time for education/training for income generation • Lack of participation in CC negotiations, planning and activities • Women-specific priorities neglected 	<p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selling of assets and services – also opportunity to learn and use new technologies and techniques) • Social networks and groups • Organization of women • Women leaders from advantaged and marginalized groups