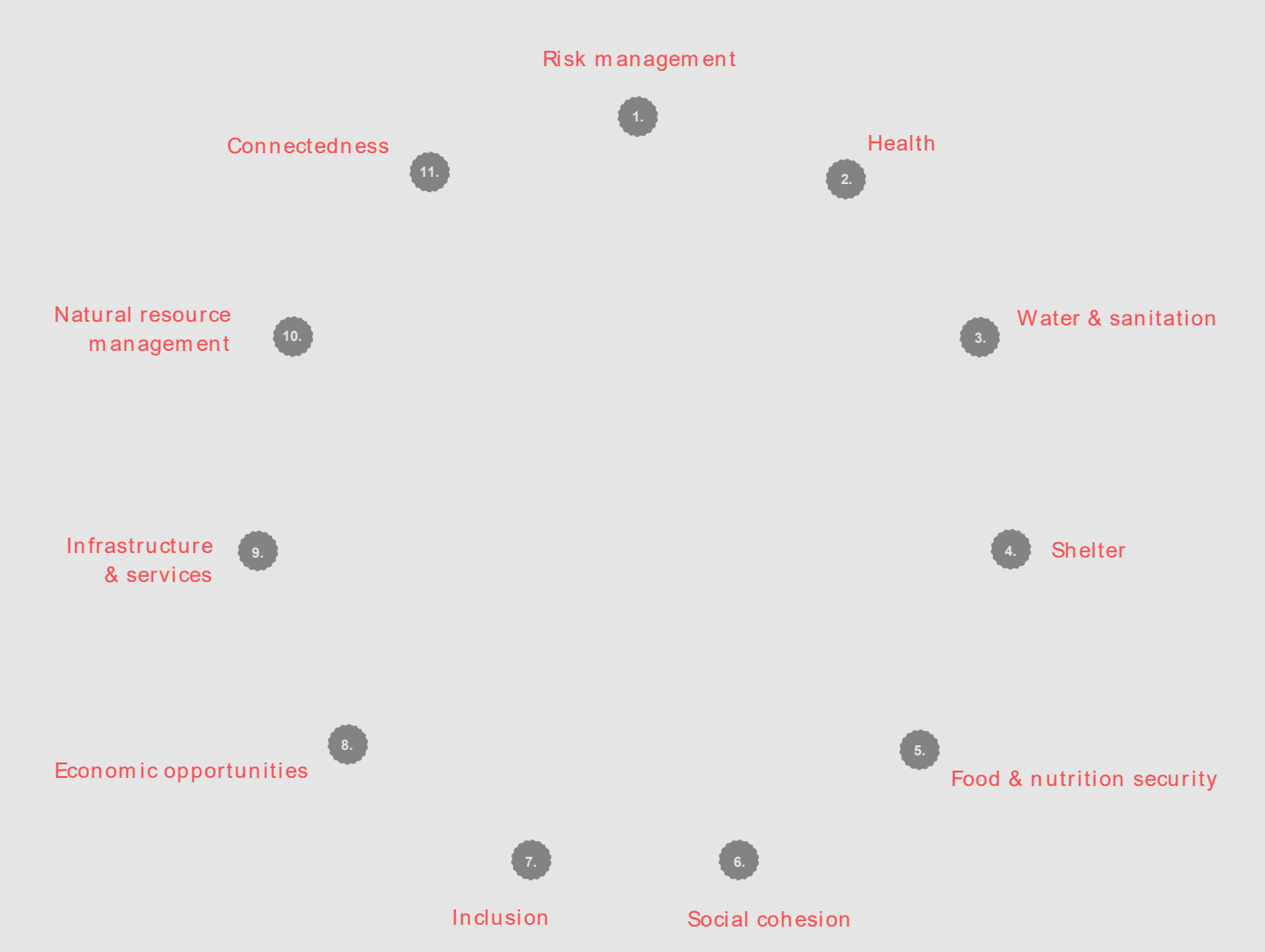
Facilitation guide Resilience Star

Version 3.0 | September 2019
2019

Prepared by Patrick Bolte (Banyaneer Consulting) for IFRC,



*Add an **alternative language** in this column*	***English***
	A. What is the resilience star? The resilience star is a group-based assessment of community resilience. It was developed by IFRC as part of its 'Road Map to Community Resilience (R2R) in 2017 and has been updated as part of the resilience dashboard initiative in 2019. The Star can be used as an initial quick assessment tool that can be the starting point for further in-depth assessments and planning. Although the dimensions have been updated compared to the original version of the Star (as described in the R2R manual), the same aspects are assessed as in the original version. This update was required to make facilitation easier. The table below shows how the eleven dimensions relate to the original six characteristics of a resilient community:

Six characteristics of a resilient community	Eleven dimensions of the resilience star
1. A resilient community knows its risks, is healthy, and can meet its basic needs in terms of shelter, food, and water/sanitation. 	**1. Risk management** [A resilient community knows and manages its risks]
	2. Health [A resilient community is healthy.]
	3. Water & sanitation [A resilient community can meet its basic water & sanitation needs.]
	4. Shelter [A resilient community can meet its basic shelter needs.]
	5. Food & nutrition security [A resilient community can meet its basic food needs.]
2. A resilient community is socially cohesive. 	**6. Social cohesion** [A resilient community is socially cohesive.]
	7. Inclusion [A resilient community is inclusive.]
3. A resilient community has economic opportunities. 	**8. Economic opportunities** [A resilient community has diverse economic opportunities.]
4. A resilient community has well-maintained infrastructure and accessible services. 	**9. Infrastructure & services** [A resilient community has well-maintained and accessible infrastructure and services.]
5. A resilient community can manage its natural assets. 	**10. Natural resource management** [A resilient community manages its natural assets in a sustainable manner.]
6. A resilient community is connected. 	**11. Connectedness** [A resilient community is connected.]

The resilience star has multiple benefits: it can be conducted as a relatively short three-hour exercise in the community. It is visual and engaging. And it can be used to mobilise communities and initiate processes to strengthen resilience. As a qualitative exercise, it also allows deeper exploration and probing of findings.

If a precise measurement is required that is based on a wider sample, the survey-based resilience radar is more suitable (see resilience radar chapter). The resilience radar and resilience star can be applied in parallel – thereby getting both broad patterns and deeper insights (if possible, apply the radar before the star – that way, you can refer to and explore radar survey findings through the star). Furthermore, another tool, the resilience scan, can be used to collect and summarise secondary data and information from local experts (such as staff of health facilities, schools, etc).

If you consider undertaking a more detailed measurement to

begin with, you should consider the eVCA. Guidance on conducting an eVCA process can be found here.

Before turning to the step-by-step facilitation guide, let us have a look at the eleven dimensions – after all, the facilitators will need to explain them when conducting the exercise.

B. The dimensions of resilience

The resilience star features eleven dimensions of resilience. These dimensions were established based on research and discussions with field practitioners and communities.[1] The general idea is that in order to "anticipate, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from the effects of adversity" (IFRC 2011), a community should feature certain characteristics. Each resilience star dimension represents such a characteristic.

1. Risk management

[A resilient community knows and manages its risks.]

This includes community-level risk preparedness (response teams, risk mitigation, early warning and evacuation systems), adaptation to hazard trends, as well as household preparedness (e.g. emergency kits and plans).

Communities that have effective early warning systems in place, for instance, are more resilient than communities that do not have such systems: if all households are warned of an upcoming cyclone, they can evacuate to safe places, reinforce their homes, safeguard important goods, prepare emergency food supplies, secure fishing boats, bring livestock to shelter, and perhaps even conduct an early harvest. As a result of these actions, communities can be expected to have lower damages and losses from the cyclone, and/or recover more quickly once the storm has passed. This is even more relevant given the increasing climate variability and more frequent weather extremes.

Risk mitigation can have similar effects: for instance, a dam around villages may prevent floodwaters from entering households. A house built with safe shelter principles in mind (e.g cross-bracing) is less likely to be damaged or destroyed by a major storm. Trained response teams can coordinate evacuations, rescue people, and provide First Aid.

2. Health

[A resilient community is healthy.]

This includes good knowledge of common diseases and basic actions to prevent them, healthy lifestyles and practices, and well as access to and use of health services.

A community whose residents are knowledgeable about common diseases tends to be rather resilient: knowing the symptoms, ways to prevent them (e.g. not having standing water around prevents mosquitoes from breeding, and reduces the risk of dengue fever, Malaria, and other mosquito-borne diseases),

[1] It should be noted that the ten dimensions are based on the original six 'characteristics of a resilient community'. However, the characteristics have been broken down to make the use of indices more user-friendly and informative.

and what can be done to get better. Use of health services is also important: getting check-ups or immunisations done reduces the risk of getting sick in the first place.

3. Water & sanitation

[A resilient community can meet its basic water and sanitation needs.]
This includes access to safe drinking water (at all times of the year), practices in water treatment, hand-washing and personal hygiene, as well as access to and use of hygienic latrines.

Having access to safe water and good sanitation practices is important for resilience: both during normal times and in the aftermath of a disaster, the risk of people falling sick (e.g. with diarrhoea) is lowered. The resilience star covers access to water and treatment practices, hand-washing practices, and the use of latrines (noting that open defecation endangers the health of the community).

4. Shelter

[A resilient community can meet its basic shelter needs.]
This includes safe construction and placing of houses, as well as the provision of sufficient and adequate shelter for all community members.

Communities with safe shelters tend to be rather resilient – for instance, cross-bracing and storm straps make houses safer against storms and earthquakes (remember the sentence: earthquakes don't kill, buildings do). This may include well-enforced building codes and training standards for builders. Furthermore, this dimension is about the provision of adequate houses for all (consider the existence of squatters with minimal space and safety).

5. Food & nutrition

[A resilient community can meet its basic food needs.]
This includes availability, access to, and utilisation of food throughout the seasons, as well as healthy and nutritious diets for all.

Having enough to eat is essential for human health – and so it the type of food that is being eaten. A key question to ask is: does the community have sufficient food throughout all seasons of the year and a variety of nutritious food in their daily meals? People with enough nutritious food at all times tend to have stronger immune systems; amongst children and pregnant women, nutrition is a particularly important aspect for cognitive development and lifelong health.

6. Social cohesion

[A resilient community is socially cohesive.]
This includes mutual support and collective action, trust, sense of home, community organisation and groups, as well as safety and peace/conflict management.

One of the critical aspects that makes communities resilient is the way its members interact and support each other. The social dynamics of trust, organisation and of working together in solving common problems are key.

Imagine the aftermath of a devastating cyclone: a community whose members organise each other and mutually support the

recovery tends to be more resilient than one where everybody works on his/her own, or one where people steal material from each other.

7. Inclusion

[A resilient community is inclusive.]

This refers to decision-making and management of community affairs that is inclusive of all genders, persons with disabilities, and any ethnic, religious, or political sub-groups in the community.

Communities are stronger and more resilient if all of its members take part in public life and decision-making. For instance, if only men were to decide on items that should be stocked in evacuation shelters, they may not think of specific needs of women (or young children). Similarly, persons with disabilities can express their specific needs and capacities if included in decision-making.

8. Economic opportunities

[A resilient community has diverse economic opportunities.]

This includes diversity of livelihood sources, limited sensitivity to weather extremes, economic resilience measures (savings, access to credit, insurance), market access, and favourable value chains, as well as low debt-to-income and dependency ratios.

Resilient communities consist of households that have resilient livelihoods. Diversity is a case in point: imagine a household that only has fishing as the sole source of income. If the fishing boat sinks or the fisherman falls sick, there are no other resources that household can rely on. This becomes worse if the household has no savings, insurance, access to credit (to buy a new boat). More resilient households have several sources of income, and/or resilience measures in place.

Households that are highly dependent on natural resources (e.g. farming, livestock production) are also at greater risk from extreme weather events (storms, floods, heatwaves, drought) than households with some income from other sources, such as wages, pensions, labour, and business income.

9. Infrastructure and services

[A resilient community has well-maintained infrastructure and services.]

This includes reliable and robust infrastructure (roads, utilities, public buildings) as well as accessible basic services (education, health, public administration).

Resilient communities need good basic services that are accessible to all community members. For instance, if there was only one school in town that charged high school fees, many poorer families would not be able to send their children to school – those kids would not only be deprived of an education, but also of general prospects for life.

Furthermore, infrastructure should be reliable: if something is broken, it should be fixed. For instance, a village with only one access road is less resilient if the road is broken or unusable during the wet season.

10. Natural resource management

[A resilient community sustainably manages its natural resources.]

This includes good management of fields, forests, fish, other marine life, and groundwater in such a manner that resources are sustained for future generations.

Managing natural resources well is an aspect that is easily overlooked. The resulting local degradation can exacerbate risks and make life more difficult in future. Examples of bad practices are dynamite fishing (which bring good yield immediately but kill fish stock for others and future users), excessive sand digging in rivers (which increases riverbank erosion and flood risk), or excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers (which pollute groundwater and may make produce from fields unhealthy for consumption). To manage natural resources sustainably and protect them for everyone, resilient communities put systems in place – for instance, they have committees that make and enforce regulations).

11. Connectedness

[A resilient community is connected.]

This includes strong and supportive relationships with district government agencies and other external organisations, as well as access to information.

Connectedness is very important both during normal times and in times of crisis: after all, a community cannot master every task on its own. For instance, ongoing good relations with a township or district-level agency may mean that better targeted support to a community can be given – especially if community members have expressed and advocated for their needs. One aspect of connectedness is access to information: the more connected a community is (e.g. radio, TV, phone coverage, internet), the better it can be informed (e.g. of market prices, government programmes, long-term weather forecasts) and can make decisions accordingly.

Prepare your team

To conduct a resilience star exercise, you will need to have a team of at least four persons:

- Two facilitators (female and male)
- One assistant (who places cards on the dimensions), and
- One note-taker (who summarises the main points of the discussion.

Ensure that all team members are familiar with the dimensions and the process throughout the exercise. You should have read this complete guide before going to the field. It is also a good idea to run a 'dry test' in the meeting room – gather some volunteers who should act as regular community members.

Step-by-step guide

A. Before the exercise

A.1 Select the communities you want to work in.

A.2 Inform the community leaders and appropriate authorities on your plan and purpose.

A.3 Specify the date and time of the planned sessions.

A.4 Ask volunteers or community leaders to invite at least 20 people to the exercise (10 women, 10 men). Ideally, you should take a map of the community and divide it into ten squares that are roughly of the same size. Invite one man and one woman

from each square. That way, you will avoid that only the well-connected or friends of volunteers are selected. After all, the sample should be as representative of the wider community as possible.

A.5 Prepare the material. You will need:

- The resilience star game kit (if you have) and a small watermelon (or similar fruit, 1 kg in weight)
- Alternatively, ten strings (250cm) for each dimension, as well as one round circle (40-50 cm in diameter) for the centre
- 80 green cards and 80 pink cards (A6 size), as well as 20 yellow cards (A5 size).
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Large tarpaulin for participants to sit on (if conducted outside) – you'll need around 7x7 meters of space.
- If you provide snacks for participants, consider a) that they are nutritious and b) that no packaging waste (especially plastic) is left behind.

A.6 Go to the location and try to arrive at least 30 minutes before the agreed meeting time. This allows you to set up the exercise and meeting place.

B. During the exercise

B.1 Welcome participants and ask them to sit in a circle. Wait until at least 10 participants are present.

B.2 Introduce yourself, the purpose of your visit, and ask participants for their name and background (10 minutes).

B.3 Explain resilience and the dimensions. If possible, play the resilience star game.

The **resilience star game** is a 15-minute tool to illustrate resilience. Use a resilience star game kit (you can make your own).

- Ask for 12 volunteers and give them T-shirts to wear (11 have the dimensions written on it, one has the word 'hazard' on it). The eleven 'dimension volunteers' should stand up in a circle.
- Place the kit in the middle of the circle. The kit is made of a bicycle tyre that has eleven flexible ropes attached to it. The inside of the tyre is covered with strong textile or plastic.
- Ask each of the volunteers to hold one rope in such a way that all ropes are tight.
- Explain that the bicycle tyre represents the community, and the ropes the several dimensions of resilience.
- You can use this moment to go around each 'dimension volunteer' and briefly explain what each dimension means.
  → *See the cheat sheet: Discussing the Dimensions*
- Now bring in the 'hazard volunteer' and ask him/her to stand in the centre of the circle. Make sure that all 'dimension volunteers' hold their ropes tight.
- Ask the 'hazard volunteer' to drop the watermelon from a height of one meter onto the community.
- The intended effect is that the bicycle tyre/community sinks down due to the impact of the water melon, but then bounces back up again to its original position. Ask the participants what they observed.
- Explain that the vertical movement of the community is the 'outcome perspective': when we talk about resilience, one of the key ideas is that communities bounce back/recover quickly. However, it is almost impossible to measure this

dimension. Therefore, whether we want to measure or to reinforce community resilience, we need to look at the ropes: how tight are the ten ropes? This is referred to as the functional perspective.

- Now ask the 'dimension volunteers' to let the ropes loose (so that they are not tight). Ask the 'hazard volunteer' to drop the melon again.
- The intended effect: the community bounces back more slowly but stays in a lower position (having the weight of the watermelon on it). Ask the participants what they observed.
- The intended message: if the ropes are loose, the community does not bounce back fully. If the ropes are tight, the community bounces back better. Therefore, to strengthen resilience, we need to work on tightening the ropes (the dimensions).

You can also go through each dimension one by one without the resilience star game, using the explanations and examples listed earlier in this manual. Ask participants how they understand each dimension: What does 'connectedness' mean to you? Before proceeding further, participants should have a good understanding of the ten dimensions.
→ *See the cheat sheet: Discussing the Dimensions*

Identifying hazards
(30 minutes)
Before discussing the eleven dimensions further, you shall identify hazards to the community. Threats are external factors and must not be confused with community-internal weaknesses or gaps. For example, hazards could be extreme weather events (floods, storms, drought), political upheavals, conflicts, insect infestations, animal diseases, price fluctuations, or disease outbreaks.

B.4 To identify hazards, ask the women to sit in one area and the men in another. Ideally, have a female facilitator for the women's group and a male facilitator for the men's group. This part of the process is gender-disaggregated a) because women and men may perceive different threats, and b) because it often makes it easier for women speak up and join the discussion in an all-female group.

B.5 Brainstorm on hazards to the community with each of the groups: what are external factors that pose a threat to the community? Write each of the threats on a yellow card.

B.6 Ask each group to rank the hazards. Which is the most severe hazard, second-most severe, and so on? Let people vote on these hazards to rank them. Each group should come up with the top five hazards.

B.7 Now bring the groups together again into the circle. Men and women each present their identified threats, and all participants should now decide on the top five hazards from the pool of 10 total hazards (5 from the female and 5 form the male group).

B.8 Ask the participants to place the top five hazard cards on the star: which dimensions are primarily affected by the hazard? For instance, droughts may be best placed on the 'economic opportunities' dimension; or political upheaval on

connectedness, social cohesion or inclusion.

How tight are the ropes? Assessing the dimensions
(120 min; on average 11 minutes per dimension)

B.9 Now go through the dimensions one by one (complete the discussion of one dimension, then turn to the next). Ask the participants again to describe the dimension, to ensure that the dimension is well-understood.

B.10 Introduce the green cards (capacities/strengths) and pink cards (vulnerabilities/gaps). Relating to the dimension, what capacities does the community have? Write each on a green card and place them close to the inner circle (working outwards). Write vulnerabilities on pink cards and also place them on the band/rope, starting on the outside (working inwards).

B.11 When all cards are placed, ask the participants to rate their strength on this dimension. Ten points is the highest (very strong), zero points the lowest rating. Mark the agreed rating on the band (you should have ten marks on each band/rope, with equal distances between them (25 cm on a 250cm rope).

B.12 Ask the group: what can the community do to 'tighten' this rope – i.e. to develop capacities further and to address vulnerabilities/gaps. Make sure that these ideas are recorded – they can be a foundation for the development of community action plans later on.

B.13 Repeat steps B.10 - B.12 for every dimension.

B.14 Conclude the exercise by returning to the hazard cards: what dimensions are affected the most by these hazards? Given the identified capacities, what can the community do to better prepare for these hazards? Make sure to document this discussion. Thank the participants for their time and inputs.

General advice for facilitation

- Moderate and encourage: Any group has a certain dynamic – some participants are more active than others. Ensure that everybody gives input. Moderate the most active participants and encourage the more passive ones to contribute to the discussion.
- Holistic perspective: Resilience has many dimensions – and covers all humanitarian 'sectors'. Although facilitators may have particular experience in one such sector (e.g. they have previously worked on disaster preparedness), they need to cover others too in the discussion. Facilitators need to understand all dimensions well – otherwise, there is a risk that the entire discussion is geared towards the dimension they are experienced in.
- Alternative option: You can conduct the resilience star as a threat-specific exercise: having identified the treat cards, run multiple rounds for each specific threat. This will take more time but may lead to more detailed results.

C. After the exercise

C.1 Take a photo of the result and make sure that all cards are legible on the photos.

C.2 Review the notes of the note-taker and fill out the

	documentation template, which is available here: → *Documentation template Resilience Star* **C.3** Print the completed template and share it with the community. This can be referred to later on. **C.4** Follow up. The resilience star exercise is intended as a starting point for resilience programming with the community. Following up should include: • Conducting additional in-depth assessments: You may wish to carry out specific, more detailed assessments, and the results of the resilience star can give you an indication or priorities. For instance, if livelihood is a particular concern, you could use the seasonal calendar or other specific tools. • Facilitate planning: the results of the resilience star, as well as those of any in-depth assessments, can form the basis of a community action plan. As much as possible, try to harness and build on local capacities. • Monitor progress: a (shortened) re-application of the resilience star can be useful to engage the community in monitoring: Use the results of the initial exercise and reassess. "One year ago, you gave 6 points for risk management – is this still appropriate or has it changed? If so, how and why?"
	Resources *Cheat Sheet: Discussing the Dimensions* *Documentation template Resilience Star*