Co-learning disaster resilience toolkit

A person-centred approach
to engaging with refugee narratives
and practices of safety

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Contents

Summary

What is this toolkit about?

People who are displaced and fleeing persecution are most of all seeking safety and protection. But, how do newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants in Australia learn about local natural hazards, such as bushfires, storms and flash flooding, and what do they do to feel safe and secure?

These questions were the starting point for a collaborative research project – *Resilient Together: Engaging the knowledge and capacities of refugees for a disaster-resilient Illawarra* – conducted by the University of Wollongong, Australia with Illawarra-wide institutions, councils and communities in 2017.

Through 26 in-depth interviews with people from Burma, Congo, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Syria and Uganda – currently living across the Illawarra region of New South Wales, Australia – the project adopted a person-centred approach to mapping refugee narratives and practices for disaster resilience.

Building on the project's methodology and findings, this toolkit explains 'co-learning disaster resilience' as a systematic process for informing, engaging and partnering with people based on their unique life experiences, strengths, challenges and needs.

Co-learning disaster resilience can contribute to grounding policy, programs and services in people's lived experiences and everyday practices for feeling safe and secure.

It is hoped this person-centred approach can spark innovations in the design and implementation of collaborative, accountable, responsive and empowering (CARE) programs and services *with* refugee and humanitarian entrants. The approach can also be relevant to engaging with migrants and internally displaced people.

Specifically:

Section I explains the concept and introduces a three-part process for co-learning disaster resilience, comprised of, but not limited to: a) facilitating thematic discussions, b) compiling resilience narrative maps, and c) operationalising appropriate stages and modes of engagement, elaborated in Sections II, III and IV respectively.

Section II offers guidance on facilitating thematic discussions for an in-depth understanding of refugee experiences, beliefs, and everyday practices for disaster resilience.

Section III showcases a person-centred tool – the resilience narrative map – to engage with refugee experiences, strengths, challenges and needs for disaster resilience. The tool is illustrated by seven examples from the Illawarra region of New South Wales, Australia encompassing three Local Government Areas – Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama.

Section IV recommends an operational framework for co-learning disaster resilience in three overlapping stages of informing, engaging and partnering with people from a refugee background.

Section V concludes with key findings and recommendations for the Illawarra, which could have wider relevance. Briefly, refugee and humanitarian entrants need systematic access to:

- hazard and risk information pre-arrival, on arrival and on a sustained basis;
- minimum standards for safe, secure and healthy housing on arrival; and
- in-home preparedness support from community volunteers who can clearly communicate hazard, risk and preparedness information in a culturally appropriate and relevant manner.

The findings also contribute to broader conversations on inclusive risk governance, community resilience, and safe and affordable housing.

Who is it for?

This toolkit has been primarily written for caseworkers in humanitarian settlement and multicultural services, and community outreach staff in local emergency services and city councils.

It will also be useful to humanitarian volunteers and community mobilisers working with displaced people in a range of contexts worldwide.

Future work can extend this person-centred approach by engaging with people who are temporarily or permanently displaced and living in varied conditions – in shelters, camps, vehicles, or on the streets.

How can it be used?

Section II (Thematic guidance), Section III (Person-centred mapping tool) and Section IV (Operational framework for co-learning resilience) will be most useful if applied in that order, although the three sections can also be applied independently in a variety of contexts.

The resilience narrative map template and legend (see Annex) can be adapted for wider use and dissemination.

Please write to Shefali Juneja Lakhina at **juneja.shef@gmail.com** with any questions or feedback on this toolkit.

To learn more about the 'Resilient Together' research process and outcomes, please see: **https://cc.preventionweb.net/illawarra/**
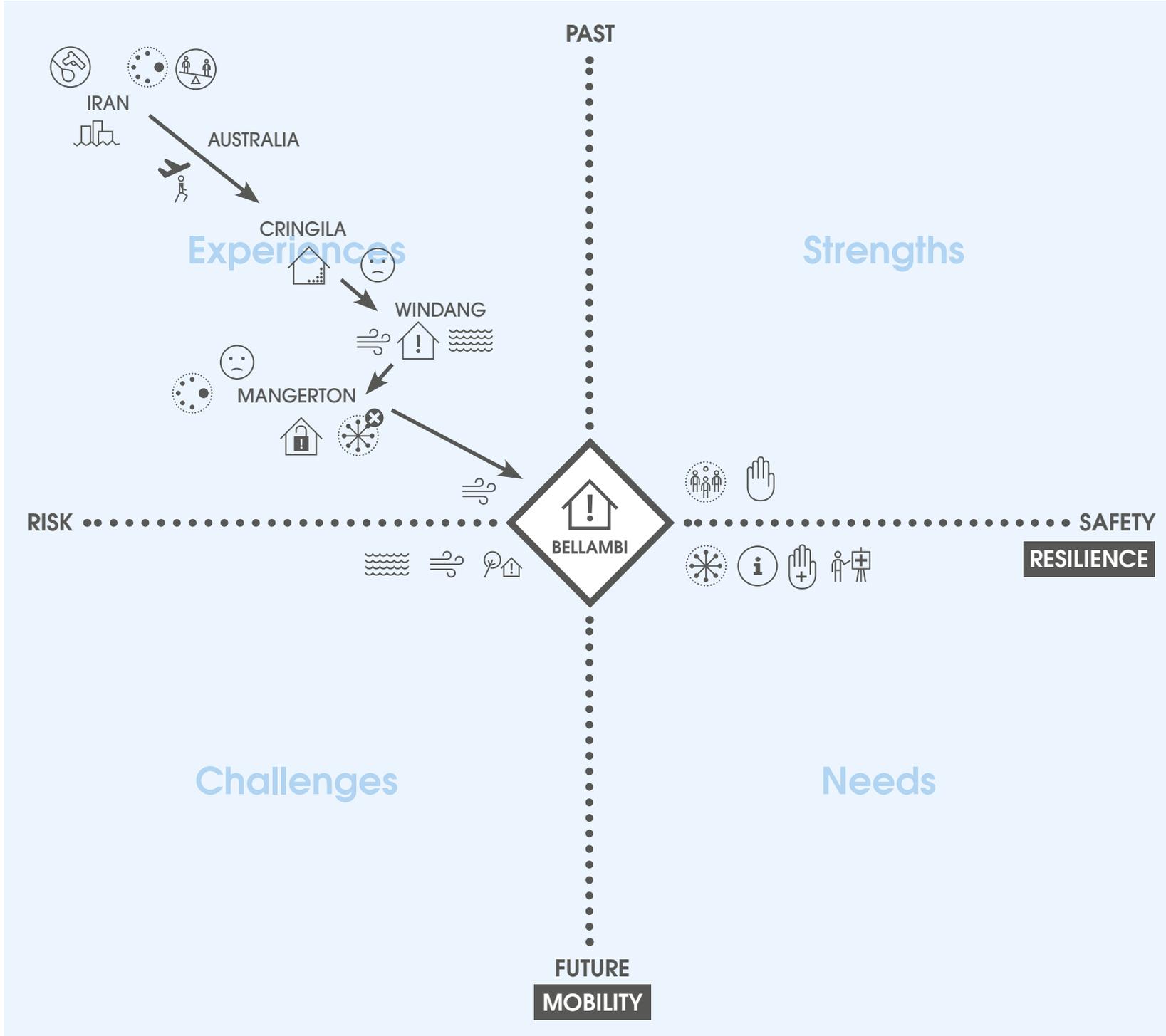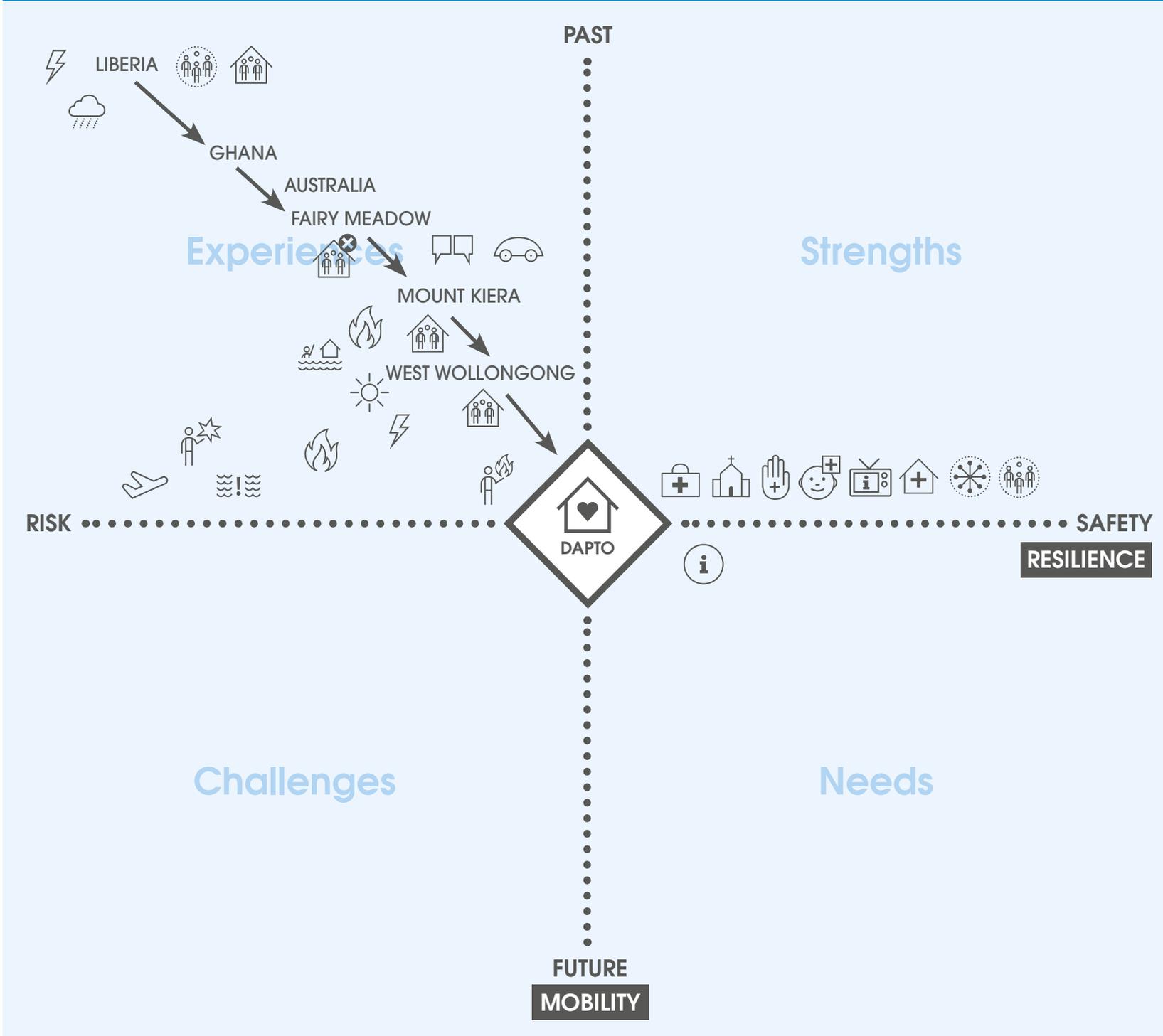
I. What is 'co-learning disaster resilience'?

Box 1: Definition of 'co-learning disaster resilience'

Co-learning disaster resilience can be understood as a systematic process for informing, engaging and partnering with people based on their unique life experiences, strengths, challenges and needs.

Global displacement trends and recent calls to action, such as expressed in *The New Urban Agenda 2016*, the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants 2016*, the *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework 2018* and the forthcoming *Global Compact on Refugees 2018*, underline the need for strengthening a whole-of-society approach for ensuring the safety of migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants.

Yet, current humanitarian and resettlement programs do not systematically inform newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants about personal safety and home preparedness for a range of local and natural hazards.

Commitments made in the *Hyogo Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2005-2015* and succeeded by the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, demonstrate wide recognition of the need to implement inclusive disaster resilience approaches that foster social cohesion and strengthen community resilience.

Yet, refugee and humanitarian entrants, generally remain excluded from the design and implementation of disaster preparedness and resilience initiatives.

Disaster resilience initiatives that do engage with culturally, linguistically and geographically diverse communities, focus on a two-pronged approach of disseminating safety information and conducting preparedness training.

However, this approach limits learning to a one-way flow of information and ignores the possibility of understanding people's life experiences, cultural beliefs and everyday practices for feeling safe and secure.

As a result, the need for safety and home preparedness among newly arrived and recently settled refugee and humanitarian entrants can often fall between gaps and remain unaddressed.

1 Facilitate thematic discussions

KEY ACTIONS
Conduct:
a. Personal interviews
b. Household interviews
c. Group discussions

2 Compile resilience narrative map

KEY ACTIONS
Step 1: Draw outline
Step 2: Plot quadrants
Step 3: Review and initiate consultations on mode of engagement

3 Operationalise framework for co-learning resilience

KEY ACTIONS
Adopt/implement appropriate modes of engagement:
Stage 1: Inform
Stage 2: Engage
Stage 3: Partner

Figure 1: Co-learning disaster resilience: Process flow and key actions.

In response to such conceptual and operational gaps, and guided by the 'Resilient Together' research project's findings, this toolkit introduces a person-centred approach to co-learning disaster resilience *with* refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Co-learning disaster resilience can comprise of, but is not limited to, a three-part process:

1. **Facilitate thematic discussions** to develop an in-depth understanding of refugee experiences, beliefs, and everyday practices for disaster resilience. See Section II: Thematic guidance: Experiences, beliefs and practices.

2. **Compile resilience narrative maps** to engage with refugees' unique experiences, strengths, challenges and needs for disaster resilience. See Section III: Person-centred mapping tool.

3. **Operationalise framework for co-learning resilience** by creating sustained opportunities for multi-scalar and cross-sector collaboration to inform, engage and partner with refugee and humanitarian entrants. See Section IV: Operational framework for co-learning disaster resilience: Inform, engage, partner.

This three-part process demonstrates how co-learning disaster resilience can contribute to centring refugee narratives and practices in the design and implementation of collaborative, accountable, responsive and empowering (CARE) programs and services. The approach can also be relevant to engaging with the experiences of migrants and internally displaced people.

Co-learning disaster resilience is not presented here as a final or complete solution, but as an assemblage of practices to build on, to spark further innovations in how policy, programs and services can engage with people's experiences and practices for feeling safe and secure.

II. Thematic guidance: Experiences, beliefs, practices

Box 2: Thematic guidance for co-learning disaster resilience

An in-depth understanding of refugee narratives and practices for disaster resilience can be guided by three themes:

Theme 1: Experiences of moving, settling and living in new places.

Theme 2: Beliefs, attitudes and experiences of natural hazards.

Theme 3: Everyday practices for feeling safe and secure.

This section contributes a person-centred approach to understanding people's experiences, beliefs and everyday practices for feeling safe and secure in new places.

This thematic guidance can be used to facilitate personal, household and group discussions.

Depending on the context being addressed, further questions can be added to each theme, or further themes can be added.

Research participants' observations and insights from the Illawarra region of New South Wales accompany each theme to show the breadth of refugee narratives and practices that can be engaged with this approach.

Theme I: Moving, settling and living in a new place

1. What do you most like about living in (....................)?

2. What are the kinds of things you had to adapt to, or learn about?

3. How have local institutions and services enabled you?

4. What kinds of local groups/clubs/community activities do you participate in?

5. Do you feel 'settled'? Would you call it home?

Note: Single quotation marks indicate responses that were spoken in the research participant's vernacular language and then interpreted by a community facilitator. Double quotation marks indicate the research participant's exact words as spoken.

Perspectives from the Illawarra

"I lived all my life in this situation. War after war after war. I'm here now, uh, want to start from the beginning. I feel, feel like ... I'm in dream. Kind of finding a new life."
Refugee from Iraq, female

"So, my coming here is like, Oh God, I am going in a new place, like, I know no one. It's only you I depend on. I know that he would carry me through, so, it was challenging, but, I make it to the end."
Former refugee from Liberia, female

'I come here, if they support me, I live well. If nobody supports me I think I will just die by myself, so I rely on the compassion and trust of the people that I know… how they support me… psychologically, especially.'
Elderly refugee from Burma, male

"Especially, I like the police, the way they work. There are rules. It's safety for us."
Former refugee from Congo, female

"It's very big problem to rent house in Australia."
Refugee from Syria, female

"I like to work ... with our people and help them… to know this country. And when I hear something, I will tell about (it to) the others also. This is, uh, I think it is in my body, this thing to help people. Everything I know, I must tell them. So if they have any trouble, uh, they can, uh, manage it. Sometimes, they called me to manage, uh, or solve their problems. When they have knowledge, they can use their mind to do many things. Without knowledge, they cannot do anything."
Elderly refugee from Iraq, female

Theme II: Beliefs, attitudes and experiences of natural hazards, the environment and climate

1. Did you hear of, or think about, any natural hazards or climate risks before moving here?

2. If yes, did you in any way prepare yourself for such hazards?

3. Have you or any family/friends ever experienced a storm, fire, flooding, or any other natural hazard (here or elsewhere)?

4. If yes, would you feel comfortable sharing some aspects of that experience?

   a. Did you receive an official warning alert or a message from your neighbour/family?

   b. How did you know what to do and how to respond?

   c. Were you helped by any local emergency response agencies/ did you call for help?

   d. Were you assisted by neighbours or volunteers?

   e. Did you in any way assist the authorities/neighbours/local community/volunteers?

   f. Is there anything you learned from that experience that would help you prepare, respond and recover from a similar experience, here?

5. What are the kinds of things that you think about, read about, or generally try to keep yourself informed of, with regard to natural hazards, the environment or the climate?

6. Are there particular places in your home or outside, times in the day, or depending on whom you are with, that make you feel more or less safe from potential hazards such as, bushfires, flooding or storms?

7. Are there any personal, cultural or religious objects, rituals or stories that help you to feel safe and secure, particularly in difficult times, such as during a disaster?

Perspectives from the Illawarra

"Yesterday you have lots of wind, but me think, where go? Maybe house broken. I have five daughters. Me not drive… near the sea, I feel unsafe. And after stealing (house break-in), I feel unsafe. I wish to make plan to make me safe at home and, first aid as well."
Refugee from Syria, female

'She's afraid of the wind even now. Her place is near the beach…. She's thinking, if that tree that is near the window falls into the window, she's thinking that she would die. It's not safe house. It's really, really old. She's saying, because of a wind it just shake like this. So, what happen if a tree fall down? She thinks that it's good and safe for them to cut the tree, yeah. She's saying that, I have no idea what to do after …or if there is a fire. So, what do you have to do?'
Afghani refugee from Iran, female

'… it has to do with the knowledge of the location… of the area where we live. Here, if there is flood, or there is a bush fire, I don't know where to run. I don't know to which direction, but from where I used to live or came from, I knew the location. If there was a flood on the other side I knew where to run, to which mountain, to which forest. And here we live in a city so where do I run if there is a natural disaster? … because I don't speak the language of the country. I don't read, so it's difficult. I don't know.'
Elderly refugee from Burma, male

"… the lava … is coming… with shaking… That was …very bad experience. And then ... it didn't ended there. It come and take all the town. …. You know, it's like a end of the world, when you are there and you experience that kind of thing... I call myself, I'm a survivor, me and my kids. You know?… That's why we say … you have a short time in life. If we can mend, it's better. Helping each other… supporting each other…
Don't just sit and say, Oh, it's their problem. It's for all of us."
(Experience of surviving the Nyiragongo volcanic eruption near Goma in 2002)
Former refugee from Congo, female

Theme III: Everyday practices for feeling safe and secure

1. Where do you get information on local emergency warnings and alerts?
2. Where do you get daily information on the weather, seasonal hazards, any local incidents?
3. Have you participated in any local preparedness trainings or community awareness workshops facilitated by the local emergency services, settlement services or community based organisation since your arrival?
4. Do you or any of your family volunteer for local organisations or participate in community events?
5. What makes you feel secure during your preparations for a fire, storm, flooding or other local hazard?
6. Who do you expect help from?
7. Would you be able to extend help to your neighbours or volunteer for the local emergency services if required?

Perspectives from the Illawarra

"If you don't have information, it's a risk. It's a high risk for you and your family, because you don't know what to do… you still think about your security, you've been in a country where you're not secure, so your priority is security…"
Asylum-seeker from Congo, male

'The people help each other because, you know, there is a certain degree of compassion for one another… people have lost everything overnight due to the natural disaster. So we cook rice … or sometimes we help to accommodate them in our own houses because they don't have any place to go and live and sleep, or share the clothes that you have because people have lost everything overnight…
(These comments were made with reference to multiple incidents of fire and flooding in a Thai refugee camp.)
Elderly refugee from Burma, male

"I only know that I have to run out of the house and leave the house. I have no idea what will happen after that."
Afghani refugee from Iran, female

"… when something happens, in my church, there are other people that come, and tell us what to do, like, uh, my church say it, like, uh, in the time of emergency, you have to prepare yourself. So you have to do a storage, like, uh, when you buy food, you make sure you don't just buy food, just for today. But when you buy food, you should be able to keep some, so that when there's an emergency, you can be able to have something in the home, to eat. I make sure I keep something. … from Africa I used to, when there is a storm, there, they pull the current off… so I make sure that ... (I have) the candle…"
Former refugee from Liberia, female

"For my understanding there's like, we need more people who can speak ... our own language… to make sure that ... ... people are listening. There should be more programme …at Churches … Like the government can, I don't know how … train the people and send them at different Churches. I think it's going to be more useful if they could get that information to Church."
Refugee from Uganda, female

"…we know the government, yes, they will come. But if we're helping ourself first, you know… that the way it is, in Africa."
Former refugee from Congo, female

III. Person-centred mapping tool

Box 3: Facilitating a resilience narrative map

Resilience narrative maps can be facilitated in three steps:

Step 1: Draw the outline (see Figure 2) or print the working template (see Annex).

Step 2: Plot the quadrants.

Step 3: Review and initiate consultations on appropriate mode of engagement.

The person-centred mapping tool responds to a need for innovations in combining physical and emotive mapping conventions to express a person's whole lived experience, beliefs and everyday practices for disaster resilience.

This section outlines how resilience narrative maps can be compiled during or after thematic discussions (described in Section II) with refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Resilience narrative maps can be hand drawn (see Figure 2) or compiled (see Annex) while facilitating a thematic discussion anywhere – at a kitchen table, in the park, or at a community workshop.

This flexibility will allow community outreach staff and caseworkers to facilitate in-depth conversations with people where and when they are most comfortable talking about their experiences, beliefs and practices for feeling safe and secure from a range of hazards.

Resilience narrative maps can also be compiled after thematic discussions, using the working template and legend of icons provided in the Annex. Accuracy can be ensured by taking extensive notes of thematic discussions and scheduling a follow-up discussion to review the map for accuracy of representation.

Step 1: Draw the outline

The resilience narrative map consists of two intersecting continuums resulting in four quadrants.
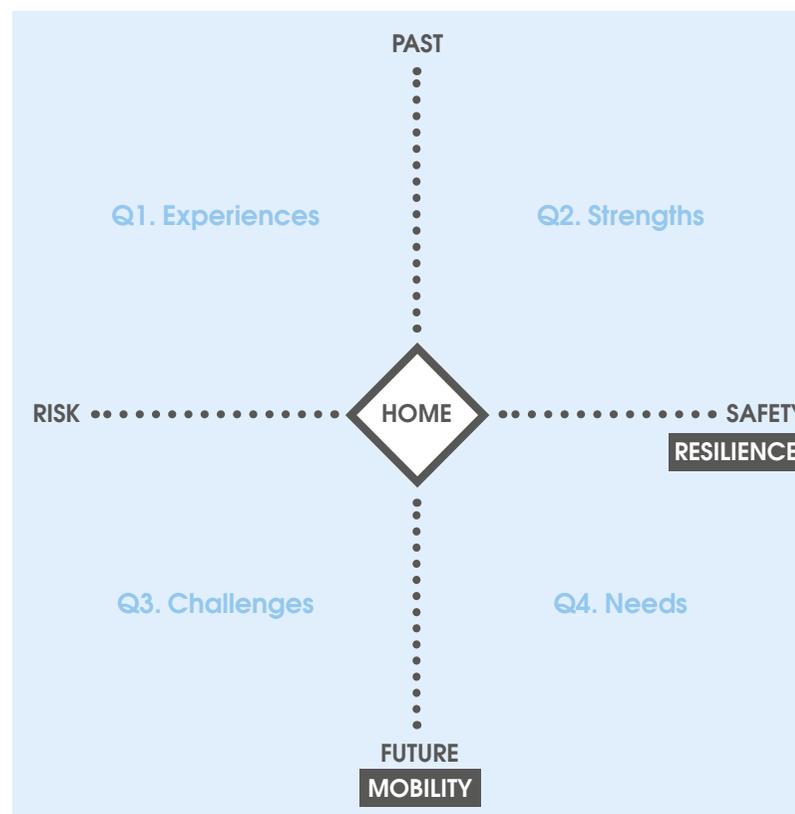

Figure 2. Resilience narrative map template.

The horizontal continuum of resilience plots the migrant's movements between conditions of perceived risk and safety. The vertical continuum of mobilities plots spatial and social movements, across places and relationships – past, current and future. The compass rose in the centre shows the current place of residence – the locus at which all past, current and future mobilities intersect with experiences, beliefs and practices for disaster resilience.

The two intersecting continuums of resilience and mobilities result in four quadrants: Q1: Experiences; Q2: Strengths; Q3: Challenges; and Q4: Needs.

Movements along the continuums and across the quadrants can reveal how people consistently strive to move from conditions of risk to conditions of safety, while relying on past experiences, strengths and relationships in and across places.

Step 2: Plot the quadrants

Use icons from the resilience narrative map legend (such as for home, family, neighbours, community, social exclusion, inequality, hazards, information, institutions, services) to plot refugees' experiences, beliefs and practices of disaster resilience across the four quadrants (also see Annex).

Specifically;

Q1: Experiences – In what ways has this person experienced major risks to life, property and dignity, forcing them to move towards safety?

Q2: Strengths – What kinds of beliefs, relationships and practices have enabled this person to find safety, in the past and current place of residence?

Q3: Challenges – What risks does this person experience to current and future safety?

Q4: Needs – What kinds of beliefs, relationships and practices is this person likely to rely on for feeling safe?

Step 3: Review and initiate consultations on appropriate mode of engagement

Review the quadrants and consider how local councils, settlement programs and emergency services can be more responsive to a person or households' experiences, strengths, challenges and needs for feeling safe and secure.

Specifically;

Q1: Experiences – How can these diverse geographical experiences inform the design and implementation of local disaster resilience practices?

Q2: Strengths – How can these strengths be engaged and further developed for personal, household and community resilience from local hazards?

Q3: Challenges – How can local institutions and services mitigate or reduce these risks?

Q4: Needs – How can local institutions and services be more responsive to these needs?

Taking guidance from the stages outlined in Section IV (Operational Framework) initiate consultations on the most appropriate stage and modes of engagement.

Cases from the Illawarra

Refugee and humanitarian entrants in the Illawarra have diverse personal and professional backgrounds – as nurses, lawyers, doctors, psychologists, educators, community mobilisers, farmers, childcare workers, day care owners, chefs, bakers and homemakers. Accordingly, they have diverse experiences, beliefs, and practices of disaster resilience. Based on the person's life experiences, some maps emphasise strengths while others will emphasise challenges and needs. See Annex for a legend of icons.

Along the horizontal continuum of resilience, the maps show that well-knit and cohesive families, neighbours and communities can be foundational for disaster resilience.

In the absence of strong governance and infrastructure in countries of origin, care for and by families, neighbours and communities, helps people survive multiple crises, not just natural hazards.
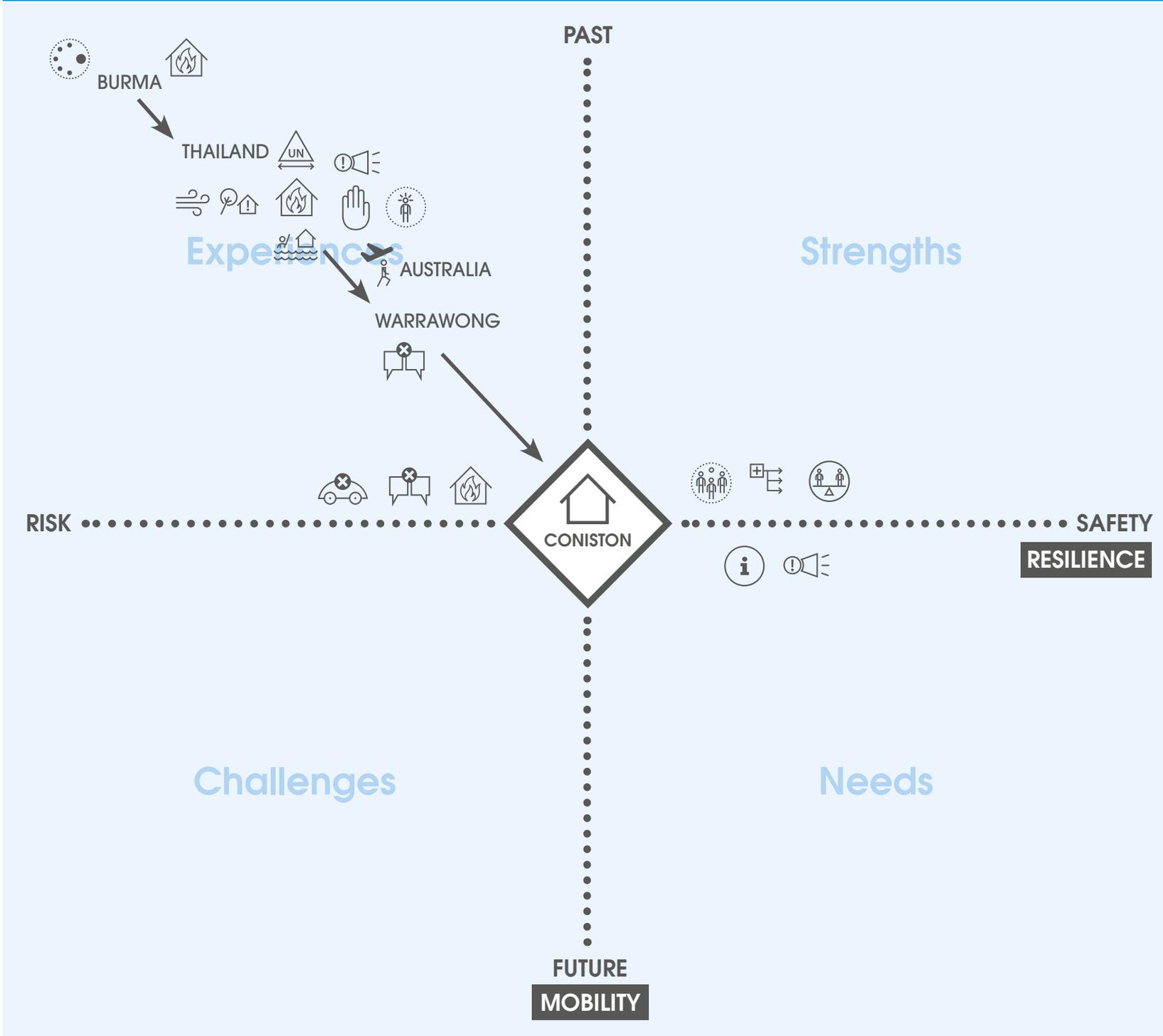
Figure 3. Resilience narrative map: Burma to Australia   11

Figure 3. Resilience narrative map: Burma to Australia

PAST

BURMA

THAILAND

Experiences

AUSTRALIA

WARRAWONG

Strengths

RISK

CONISTON

SAFETY

RESILIENCE

Challenges

Needs

FUTURE

MOBILITY

Figure 4. Resilience narrative map: Congo to Australia

PAST

CONGO

① RWANDA

② UGANDA

Experiences

AUSTRALIA

SHELLHARBOUR

Strengths

FIG TREE

RISK

SAFETY

RESILIENCE

Challenges

Needs

FUTURE

MOBILITY

Figure 5. Resilience narrative map: Iran to Australia — 13

Figure 5. Resilience narrative map: Iran to Australia

Figure 6. Resilience narrative map: Iraq to Australia

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Figure 6. Resilience narrative map: Iraq to Australia

PAST

Experiences

Strengths

IRAQ

TURKEY

JORDAN

AUSTRALIA

WINDANG

Challenges

Needs

RISK

WOLLONGONG CENTRAL

SAFETY

RESILIENCE

FUTURE

MOBILITY

Figure 7. Resilience narrative map: Liberia to Australia   15

PAST

LIBERIA

GHANA

AUSTRALIA

FAIRY MEADOW

Experiences

Strengths

MOUNT KIERA

WEST WOLLONGONG

RISK

DAPTO

SAFETY

RESILIENCE

Challenges

Needs

FUTURE

MOBILITY

Figure 8. Resilience narrative map: Syria to Australia

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Figure 8. Resilience narrative map: Syria to Australia

PAST

SYRIA

LEBANON

Experiences

AUSTRALIA
SYDNEY

Strengths

BERKELEY

CRINGILA

RISK

WOONONA

SAFETY

RESILIENCE

Challenges

Needs

FUTURE

MOBILITY

Figure 9. Resilience narrative map: Uganda to Australia   17

PAST

UGANDA

Experiences

AUSTRALIA

Strengths

RISK

BARRACK HEIGHTS

SAFETY

RESILIENCE

Challenges

Needs

FUTURE

MOBILITY

Once in Australia, having access to responsive institutions and services, laws and rules that are clearly stated and justly enforced, dedicated services with clearly stated emergency plans and procedures, greatly contribute to perceptions and practices of safety.

Additionally, acts of prayer and places of worship, centres of training and learning, and community-led organisations, provide tremendous daily support for people's experiences of security and well-being as they settle into the Illawarra. These findings are significant because they show that disaster resilience is often a relational capacity.

The maps also reveal that timely access to hazard and risk information, and safe, secure and healthy housing remain significant needs for refugee and humanitarian entrants settling in the Illawarra. These challenges and needs are further discussed in Section V (Case of the Illawarra).

Further applications

The resilience narrative map is an iterative tool. Some resilience narrative maps will have more information plotted than others. This is simply indicative of the depth of thematic discussion facilitated with a person, household or group. If there is scope for further discussion and follow ups, additional details can be continually added to the resilience narrative maps.

The resilience narrative map is a multi scalar tool and can facilitate an understanding of the collective experiences, strengths, challenges and needs narrated by a household, group or community (as described here in Sections II and III).

IV. Operational framework: Inform, engage, partner

Box 4: Operational framework for co-learning disaster resilience

Co-learning disaster resilience can be operationalised in three overlapping stages:

Stage 1: **Inform** pre-arrival, on arrival and on a sustained basis

Stage 2: **Engage** recently settled, most isolated with focus on safe homes

Stage 3: **Partner** with community mobilisers, volunteers and organisations

Co-learning disaster resilience is a multi-scalar and cross-sectoral process that involves all of society. The process will ideally involve community leaders and volunteers, national and local settlement services, multicultural councils, community-based organisations, regional and city councils, local emergency services, university/ research institution, places of worship, among others.

After facilitating thematic discussions (Section II: Thematic guidance), compiling the resilience narrative maps and initiating a process of review and consultations (Section III: Person-centred mapping tool) this section provides indicative guidance on how to operationalise an appropriate stage and mode of engagement.

Depending on context, other relevant and culturally appropriate modes of engagement should be considered for each stage.

Stage 1: Inform

Refugee and humanitarian entrants need to be systematically informed of local natural hazards and emergency management arrangements, pre-arrival, on arrival and on a sustained and ongoing basis.

1. Pre-arrival:

Before arriving in a new country, it can be important for refugee and humanitarian entrants to know where they will live, what potential hazards exist in their new environment, and how to keep safe.

Modes of engagement

Pre-arrival orientation programs delivered worldwide by Consulates and the International Organization for Migration, can work with national and state emergency management agencies in countries of resettlement to:

a. Incorporate an overview of geographic, climatic, hazard and risk information in existing orientation modules. For example, list any major historic or recent disasters.

b. Prepare a short video in relevant languages regarding major hazards and standard procedures for accessing assistance before, during and after a household, local or regional disaster.

Such pre-arrival information can help to psychologically prepare refugee and humanitarian entrants and reduce the risk of triggering anxiety and trauma in the event of a local hazard event on arriving in the country of resettlement.

2. On arrival:

On arrival, refugee and humanitarian entrants need to be systematically informed about local hazards, the role of various emergency services, and where to access relevant information, trainings and insurance-related assistance before, during and after a disaster.

As the first and most familiar point of contact for refugee and humanitarian entrants, local settlement services, multicultural services, community-based organisations, places of worship and centres of learning can provide timely access to local and seasonal risk information.

Modes of engagement

Depending on existing information and outreach programs, the following could be delivered in partnership with local emergency services and community volunteers:

a. Short videos introducing the range of local, seasonal and other hazards, with practical information on how to keep safe.

b. Information sessions to clarify the role of local emergency services, and introduce newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants to local services and institutions that can provide relevant information, trainings and insurance-related assistance before, during and after a disaster.

c. Local area GIS map or a free rental phone app that clearly informs refugee and humanitarian entrants about local by-laws and building codes, health and safety standards, and neighbourhoods/local areas that are known to be at high-risk from crime, violence, drug abuse, or in the direct path of natural hazards.

It will be important to pay attention to who will present these information sessions, in what language/s and in what kind of venue/s. The aim is to make hazard and risk information available to newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants in a timely, relevant and culturally appropriate manner.

3. Sustained:

On an ongoing and sustained basis, local emergency services can provide awareness and outreach programs in schools, vocational training and learning institutes, multicultural centres, places of worship, community centres and events, youth trainings, among others.

Modes of engagement

a. Conduct regular information sessions for recently settled refugee and humanitarian entrants about volunteering opportunities with local emergency services.

b. Organise community awareness programs on seasonal hazard and preparedness information in places of worship.

c. Regularly disseminate hazard and preparedness information on vernacular radio and media.

d. Use various local and alternative media, art and theatre performances to inform recently settled refugee and humanitarian entrants of seasonal risks and preparedness.

Attending to the right entry points for informing recently settled refugee and humanitarian entrants can usher in a more systematic and streamlined process of engaging and partnering with new and emerging communities for disaster resilience.

Stage 2: Engage

As refugee and humanitarian entrants settle in, they will need to be continually engaged on personal safety and home preparedness.

Integrating disaster resilience and preparedness planning in the work of local humanitarian settlement and multicultural services can be foundational for sustained engagement.

Modes of engagement

Building on existing programs and partnerships, recently settled refugee and humanitarian entrants can be engaged in some of the following ways:

a. Organise regular focus group discussions, facilitated in relevant languages, to seek input from community leaders, liaisons and volunteers on the range of experiences, strengths, challenges and needs for feeling safe and secure.

b. Community volunteers can provide in-home preparedness support (which could include conducting thematic discussions and facilitating resilience narrative maps) especially to socially and physically isolated households.

c. Facilitate regular and informal contact with local emergency services through cultural and social programs with the police and emergency services. For example, a visit to the fire station, an open day for coffee chats with the police, or a neighbourhood safety fete.

d. Facilitate informal disaster support meet ups or chat groups to discuss safe housing, seasonal home preparedness needs, review evacuation plans, clarify insurance and recovery assistance related issues, among others.

Stage 3: Partner

Engaging refugee and humanitarian entrants for personal safety and home preparedness on a sustained basis will require a systematic approach to partnering with community volunteers and community-based organisations.

Humanitarian settlement services and emergency services do not reach everyone at all times. There are many who can be left out of the settlement services support net even in their initial months of arrival. This is particularly the case with members of community who may be socially or physically isolated. Women, the elderly and the disabled can be at particular risk of being left out of information sessions and training conducted by local institutions and services. In such cases, it is often community volunteers, particularly former refugees who respond to critical needs, and provide daily care to newly arrived and especially socially and physically isolated households.

Modes of engagement

Partnerships with emerging communities can be organised in some of the following ways:

a. Former refugees, community leaders and volunteers from emerging communities can be offered streamlined training by local emergency services.

b. A cadre of experienced community volunteers from emerging communities can be designated as surge capacity for responding to emerging communities in the event of a regional disaster.

c. Neighbourhood watch groups can be designated to identify seasonal and emerging risks, organise in-home preparedness and extend daily care to socially and physically isolated households.

V. Case of the Illawarra

The case of the Illawarra in New South Wales, Australia reveals important insights that can have universal implications for how local councils, settlement services, and multicultural and community-based organisations engage with newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants.

The analysis presented here is based on research interviews conducted with 26 refugee and humanitarian entrants, including former refugees living in the Illawarra, and consultations with 12 institutions, including three city councils, that provide critical services and support to refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Key findings

Experiences and strengths

1. Well-knit and cohesive families, neighbourhoods and communities can be foundational for disaster resilience. Care extended by and for families, neighbours and community, helps refugee and humanitarian entrants through multiple crises, including natural hazards.

2. Access to dedicated settlement institutions and services, justly enforced laws and rules, and clearly stated emergency plans and procedures, greatly contribute to perceptions and practices of safety among refugee and humanitarian entrants in the Illawarra.

3. Placing faith and trust in acts of prayer, places of worship, and community services, provide tremendous daily support for experiences of security and well-being as people settle into the Illawarra.

4. Past experiences with natural hazards and crises can significantly contribute to refugee and humanitarian entrants' attitudes, beliefs and everyday practices for disaster resilience. Eighteen of the 26 research participants experienced at least one, and in some cases, multiple natural hazards before coming to Australia.

Challenges and needs

1. Refugee and humanitarian entrants do not have systematic access to local hazard and risk in-formation.

   - Ten of the 26 research participants reported being caught unaware by bushfires, flash flooding, hail, heavy rain, lightning and strong winds in their first years of arriving in the Illawarra.

   - Prior to arriving in Australia, refugee and humanitarian entrants;

     - with access to a smart phone or a computer are likely to look online for information about the Illawarra landscape, climate and sea-related hazards.

     - with family and friends already settled in Australia are likely to receive some anecdotal information on bushfires, flooding, sea-related hazards or other local incidents.

   - On arrival, refugee and humanitarian entrants;

     - are likely to receive at least one information session on fire safety (kitchen/house fire) and water safety (beach hazards) from the local settlement service provider.

     - studying a vocational course or learning English are likely to receive at least one training related to first-aid, fire safety (kitchen/house fire), water safety (beach hazards).

     - who do not speak English, are unemployed, elderly, disabled, or at home, rely on their school-going children for information on fire, sun and water safety and any warnings or alerts.

   - Although all research participants were aware of '000', none understood the organisation of emergency management services in New South Wales or how to access help from the appropriate agency in the event of a natural hazard.

2. Refugee and humanitarian entrants do not always have access to safe, secure and healthy housing on arrival.

- Nine of the 26 research participants reported having lived in what they perceive as unsafe, insecure and unhealthy housing within the first weeks and months of arriving in the Illawarra.

- Experiencing a natural hazard in the first year of arrival is closely related to the perceived quality and location of housing in the first year of arrival.

3. Refugee and humanitarian entrants do not have systematic access to culturally and linguistically appropriate resources or training on personal safety and home preparedness.

- Socially and physically isolated households, especially elderly research participants with lack of transport and female research participants with lack of child care support find it particularly difficult to access information sessions, trainings and workshops.

- Elderly research participants do not find information sessions useful if they cannot understand the interpretation, style and pace of presentation.

- All elderly research participants and most female research participants with young children, prefer in-home preparedness training and support in their vernacular language, from a member of their own community.

- Some Church groups in the Illawarra occasionally discuss emergency preparedness for seasonal hazards. There could be an opportunity to expand such preparedness sessions and disaster support networks to systematically cover all places of worship in the Illawarra.

Recommendations

1. Provide systematic access to hazard and risk information:

Refugee and humanitarian entrants need systematic access to hazard and risk information pre-arrival, on arrival and on a sustained basis. It will be important to attend to the right entry points for disseminating timely and culturally appropriate information. As the first and most familiar point of contact, the humanitarian settlement services, multicultural councils and services, community services, places of worship, and centres of training and learning, may be best positioned to ensure that newly arrived people are informed of local hazards and how to prepare for them.

2. Ensure access to safe housing on arrival:

While current policy discourse is focused on affordable housing, this research points to the need for enforcing common minimum standards for safe, secure and healthy housing for newly arrived families to feel safe, secure and a sense of well-being. Developing a free phone app for refugee and humanitarian entrants can help them make more informed choices on where to live, based on hazard and risk information, and the opportunity to view feedback/reviews from previous tenants/neighbours.

3. Prioritise in-home preparedness support:

Receiving regular information and in-home training from a community volunteer who speaks the vernacular language, is trained in emergency preparedness, response and recovery, and can assist with regular follow-ups will be paramount to achieving home preparedness for socially and physically isolated households in the Illawarra. Former refugees, volunteers and leaders in emerging communities care for newly arrived and recently settled refugee and humanitarian entrants in many important ways. They can be a critical partner for systematically engaging recently settled refugee and humanitarian entrants in personal safety, home preparedness and neighbourhood disaster support networks.

4. Integrate resilience planning across the board:

It will be important to incorporate disaster resilience principles and strategies in the core development and planning work of cities, regional forums and development partnerships across the Illawarra. Resilience planning can also help address 'wicked problems' – regional land use planning, transport and highway networks, and safe and affordable housing – all of which currently impact the quality and delivery of services to refugee and humanitarian entrants. As a priority, integrate disaster resilience and preparedness planning in the work of local settlement and multicultural services.

5. Adopt a systematic approach to co-learning disaster resilience:

Delivering responsive services to refugee and humanitarian entrants will require moving beyond a silo approach to hazards management and a generic approach to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Instead, adopt multi-scalar and cross-sector approaches to collaboratively design and implement inclusive programs and services with refugee and humanitarian entrants. Where possible, adopt a person-centred approach to co-learning disaster resilience through a systematic process of informing, engaging and partnering with refugee and humanitarian entrants, based on their unique experiences, strengths, challenges and needs for disaster resilience. Specifically, organise regular focus group discussions to seek input from community leaders, liaisons and volunteers on how to improve disaster resilience planning with refugee and humanitarian entrants and emerging communities across the Illawarra.

Annex

This is a working template for compiling resilience narrative maps. It is easy to use:

1. Print the resilience narrative map template and legend of icons.

2. To plot the quadrants on the map template, refer to the legend and:

   • draw icons in the relevant quadrants, or;

   • cut out the icons and paste in the relevant quadrants.

Refer back to the Co-learning disaster resilience toolkit: Section III for detailed guidance on how to compile resilience narrative maps.

PAST

Experiences   Strengths

RISK • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •   HOME   • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • SAFETY
                                                                  RESILIENCE

Challenges   Needs

FUTURE
MOBILITY
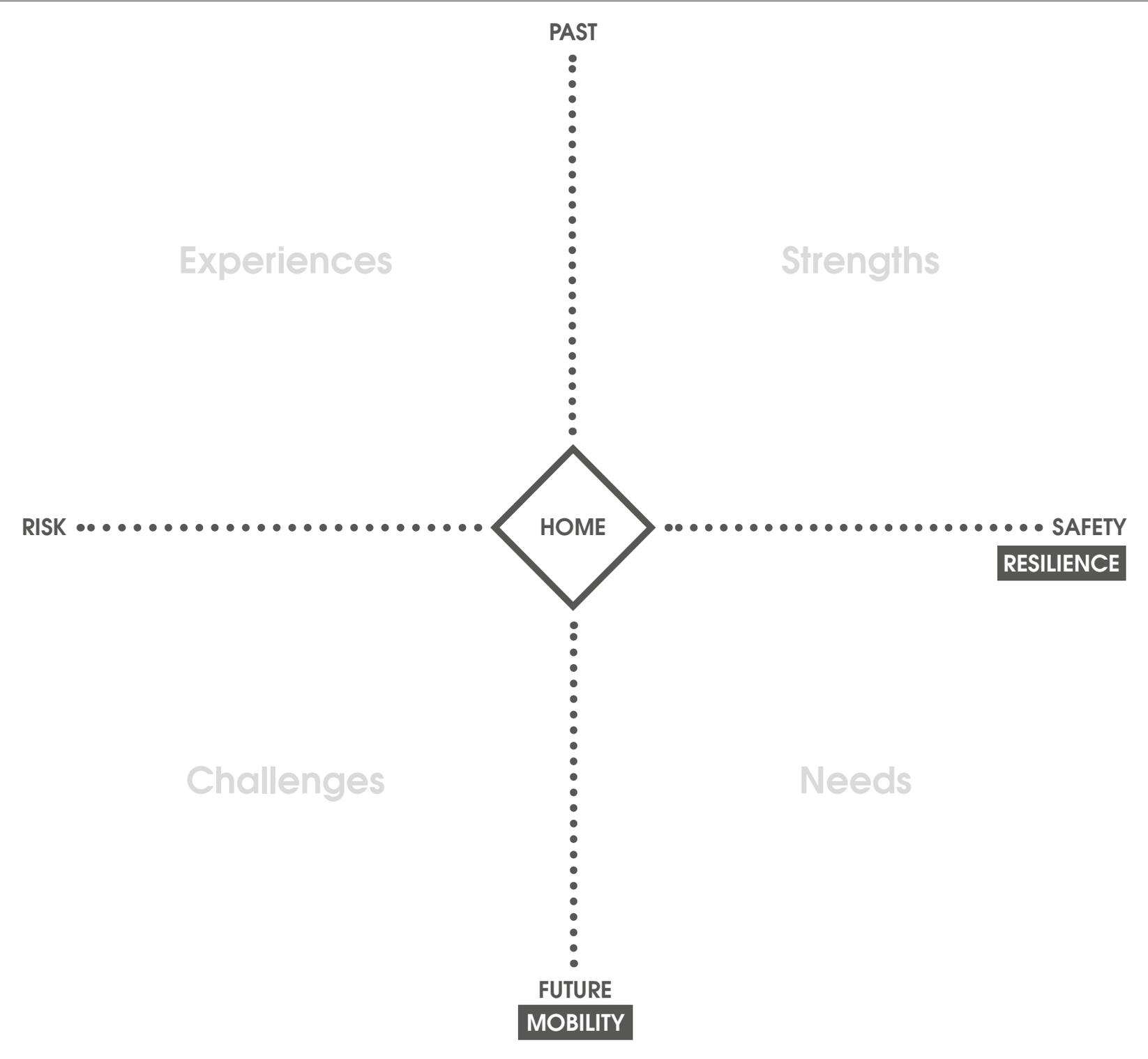
Legend of icons

Hazards

- arson
- bushfire
- earthquake
- falling tree
- fire cracker
- flood
- heat
- heavy rain
- house fire
- house fire in transitory camp
- lightning
- remote mountainous region
- rip
- sea related
- spider
- strong winds
- volcano

Experiences

- community leader
- crisis (violent/civil)
- damp/mould
- depression
- discrimination
- drug abuse in neighbourhood
- elderly
- equal before law
- fled, by foot/ on road
- fled, by air
- fled, sponsored by family
- imprisonment/ torture
- killings
- lack of transport
- language/ communication
- personal qualifications
- poverty
- social exclusion
- television as a source of information
- transitory site/ shelter
- UN camp
- violent crime

Strengths

- children disaster prepared
- church
- city council
- cohesive neighbourhood
- community
- community and support services
- early warning
- emergency plans/ procedures
- family
- family, separated
- laws and rules
- prepared household
- police
- school preparedness
- trained nurse/ care provider
- trained volunteer
- volunteer experience

Challenges

- children at risk
- insecure housing
- language barrier
- unaffordable
- unsafe structure

Needs

- early warning
- emergency management training
- home preparedness
- information
- recognition of skills and personal qualifications
- training as a volunteer

Key readings

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (2018)
http://crrf.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/120

Global Compact on Refugees, forthcoming (2018)
http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/refugees-compact

Hyogo Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters 2005-2015.
https://www.unisdr.org/2005/wcdr/intergover/official-doc/L-docs/Hyogo- framework-for-action-english.pdf

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016)
http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1

The New Urban Agenda (2016)
http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/10/newurbanagenda/

The Noun Project
https://thenounproject.com

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf

Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030
(See Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable)
http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/

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