

Why this game?

In the past decades, there has been a sharp increase in weather-related disasters.



There is an **urgent need** to better manage the rising risk.

Playing this game helps communities think about location specific disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction. In specific:



Balance competing priorities

Create an early warning early action contingency plan

Also, this game allows for a discussion about inclusiveness in planning.



Link with Climate Change

Climate change will increasingly influence how, when and where many extreme events will occur.

This means good preparedness become increasingly important!

Game overview

Description: An innovative way to have focused conversations with communities around location-specific disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction. This is a physical game that is most effective using a realistic scenario for the participants.

Learning outcomes: Balancing competing priorities in a disaster situation; Creating an early warning / early action contingency plan; Optional: exploring an element of inclusion in planning.

Facilitator skill level: ★★ Somewhat challenging, needs careful facilitation, check if this is appropriate for the group

Intended audience: Community members. The game can also be played with disaster managers/volunteers/ branch officers etc.

Number of players: Teams of 4-8 players (minimum 2 teams)

Time needed for gameplay/discussion: 30 - 60 minutes (more for extended debrief)

Playspace Requirements: A large open space, at least 20 by 20 meters. Agree the boundaries of the game area in advance.

Materials (per team of 4-8 players):



1. 8 (coloured) index cards / paper per team



2. notebook/ blank sheets



3. markers / pen(cil)s



4. 20 beans (per team)



5. 20 dice (per team)



6. timer



7. Optional: prizes



8. 1-3 co-facilitators

Want to know more?



See video link



See link to more resources

Facilitation guide

Rules and game play:

Phase 1: Team Brainstorm and Ranking

1. The facilitator must first select an emergency that the game will simulate. If you play for real with a disaster-prone community, carefully select a realistic locally applicable scenario so the game will lead to discussions on real early actions to use in their disaster preparedness planning.

Example: "The weather agency reports heavy rains in the mountains upstream and the river is rising. It is very likely we will have severe floods in this area within the foreseeable future. What will you do to make sure your household and community is prepared?"

2. The community is divided into teams of 4-8 players (you can have as many teams as needed).

2b. Inclusion option: If you like to show how certain groups with important ideas for preparedness are left out of the decision making, you can (without announcing this beforehand) take an in between step here. You can assign roles to everyone in the groups. You will then use the same roles across the competing teams, for instance: 1. Community leader; 2. Widow with 3 children; 3. Landowner; 4. Illiterate Farmer without own property; 5. Student; 6. Disabled old man; 7. School teacher; 8. Mother of 5 children under 18. Please note the difference between the odd and even numbers. In the end you will surprise all when you say that you have counted only points from the odd numbers. In reality we often see that not everyone has access to the decision-making tables, so some people's voices are left out in this game.

3. During their brainstorm, each team must come up with as many early actions as they can think of to complete in the event of the emergency scenario given. To get a wide variety of actions, you can give each team a different lead time, for example: 2 days, 1 week, or even 1 month. The team leader should write down all of the actions on a piece of paper.

FACILITATOR: generate some competitive spirit by having the teams see who can come up with the most early actions; each team must come up with at least 8 early actions. Also, it is important to instill a sense of time pressure, e.g. by exclaiming: "One more minute!", or an actual countdown.

4. The teams will then select the 8 most important early actions from the list they have brainstormed. They write each action onto one piece of paper (thus creating eight pieces of paper with one action each). Note – if in illiterate settings, the transfer to the early action cards may be done using simple icons/drawings everybody acknowledges; allow some extra time for this compared to when writing.

4b. Inclusion option (see 2b): Ask everyone to write the number of the person who invented the action in the upper right corner of the card. (If one person invented multiple actions, ask the team to divide the action cards in the group – each can take one and write the number of their role in the upper right corner.

5. Each team is given 20 beans. These beans are used to indicate relative *priority* for each early action. Teams assign each action at least 1 bean, and then assign the rest of the beans to designate the priority of each action. So the more important the action, the more beans it gets. Each team must use *all* 20 beans, assigning at least 1 bean per action. Teams record the number of "priority beans" on each early action card; **draw a circle around the level of priority.**



Beans of priority by Margot Curl, 2016

6. Using the same process as step 5, with the beans, each team uses the 20 dice to assign the relative *difficulty* of each action. If you are playing this game without dice for cultural appropriateness, replace dice by beans here. Note: there should be at least one bean per action; the most beans go to the early actions that are most difficult to carry out; teams have to assign *all* 20 beans amongst the 8 early action cards. Finally, teams record on each card the number of dice assigned to that action; and **draw a rectangle around the level of difficulty.**

Facilitation guide



Rules and game play:

Phase 2: Play!

1. While the facilitator explains next steps the co-facilitators distribute all the early action cards in the larger play area; place each card with the dice on top of it – put as many dice as the difficulty number indicates.

Each action card should be far enough away from other cards, so players might want to run from action to action.

2. Explain how to win: the team with the **highest total of priority action points (“beans”)** at the end of the game wins.

3. Players have **one minute** to complete as many actions as possible. However, if playing in a community with a larger group of people, who will search and collect early action cards over a larger area, you may allocate 2 minutes. At the end of the allocated time, explain that only the cards that are in the hands of the facilitator at the end of the countdown, count toward the total of priority action points.

4a. Option with dice: In order to complete an action, a player must roll the die attached to that action until she rolls a 1. Tip! Demonstrate this action. Even if an action has multiple dice, the player may only roll one die at a time, using one hand. Several team members can work on one action at a time.

4b. Option without dice: In order to complete an action and collect the early action card, a player must run in circles around the early action card (placed on the ground) 5 times for each “difficulty point” (= number of difficulty beans placed on the cards). Change direction for each bean, so players do not get dizzy :). Tip! Demonstrate this action. Similarly, several team members can work one one action at a time.

5. When a player completes an action, they must collect the early action card, as well as the dice or beans and continue to next card, or return to base.

6. When the time is up, all the players in a team bring their collected early action cards together. Each team adds up the total of all *priority* numbers recorded on each action they completed. The team with the highest total priority points wins.

6a. Inclusion option (see 2b and 4b of phase 1): If you have added the inclusion and diversity element to this game, make sure you deduct the points derived from the ‘even cards’. Also, include below suggested debrief question for the inclusion and diversity element,



PfR India, Bihar, 2014 (Knud Falk/Climate Centre)

Debrief:

The debriefing is a crucial part of the game experience as this is where the shared learning takes place. Example questions:

1. What did you experience during this game?

2. Were there any important actions that teams did not complete? What would happen in real life if this was not done?

3. What did you realize about your current level of preparedness (in the game and in real life)?

4. Share one insight you have gained from this game.

5. Inclusion option: How did you experience the fact that some cards did not count? (How) does this relate to reality? Is there something that can be done to ensure all community voices are heard in a risk plan?

The debriefing and discussion can end here if time is short but if planned the game can serve as the starting point for a participatory planning of a community contingency plan; these steps are described on the next page.

Facilitation guide



Extended Debrief, leading to an “early warning - early action” plan

Part one

1. The winning team is invited to *line up their early action cards on the ground* and then put them *in the chronological order*

they would typically be implemented. Use all 8 cards for this activity.

2. When lined up, the team reads out loud their cards in sequence.

3. Then, one by one, the other teams are invited to add their cards to the list in the right order (insert among others where relevant); Remove duplicates. The teams read out loud any new cards added to the main line.

4. Facilitator leads a discussion on the appropriate order of the actions. Ask if now, when all see the total list, there are possibly any important steps missing? Any missing steps can be added on separate new cards.

5. Discuss how the plan now is ready for the *known* disaster scenarios, and ask if there could be extra or other actions that could be relevant if the next disaster event should happen to be more severe than any past records?



Early Warning / Early Action plan, 2014 (Knud Falk/Climate)

Part two

1. The facilitators hand out around 15 blank cards (any colour) to each of the groups.

2. The facilitator explains that now we will work on defining at least one piece of information that will serve as the trigger for *doing* each of the actions. These bits of “early warning” information are going to be noted on blank cards distributed to the groups.

3. The facilitator reads out each early action card, starting from the top – one at a time. Ask the groups to discuss for *1 minute* what piece/source of information they would need that would trigger that particular action (“what early warning would trigger the early action?”). Each group writes down 1 piece of information or source on a card (e.g. “storm warning mentioned in radio news”) – and each group *places their early action card on the ground, to the left of the relevant early action card*.

4. At the end the facilitator reads out all the unique ideas (not duplicates) for early warnings to trigger each early action.

5. The facilitator now asks if there could possibly be any early warnings for the **first** early actions that would be *available even earlier than those now listed* from the brainstorm? (Could the first early action steps be triggered even earlier, e.g. if seasonal forecasts were available, or if upriver rainfall measurements were somehow available/communicated to the communities?).

6. Refining the information and actions further may not be relevant to do in plenary, so at this stage the facilitator may explain (and have pre-agreed) that the “DRR committee” (or relevant group in the community volunteering/assigned to facilitate DRR efforts) will help compile all these ideas into a written plan and disseminate the details through awareness to all households soon.

7. If time and energy allows, you may play a second round of the game, using any long-term or short term “early warnings” that were identified in the discussion above. Playing a second round goes much faster now people know the game, and new ideas for appropriate early actions may come up after the discussions.

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