4.4 COMMUNITY FACTORS ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

Introduction

The community and structural context provides the context within which to understand and interpret the individual and household/family factors. Community factors refer to the immediate physical and social surroundings of individuals and households/families that either increase or decrease an individual's likelihood of experiencing violence, exploitation or abuse before, during or after migrating. This toolkit provides guidance on how to assess the ways in which community-level factors influence an individual's vulnerability by using the assessment tool provided.

Use of the community factors assessment tools will only provide part of the contextual information necessary to interpret the individual and household/family factors – the structural factors are also an important element of this contextual analysis. Refer to Parts 2, 3 and 5 for information on conducting assessments of the individual, household/family, and structural factors.

This toolkit contains: (a) a discussion of different community-level factors and how they influence vulnerability; (b) an assessment tool to be used to gather, structure and present the information needed to assess the impact of community-level factors on migrant vulnerability; and (c) guidance on how to apply and adapt the assessment tool.

Community factors

The list of factors described in this section are based on existing literature on vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse, as well as research conducted using the IOM determinants of migrant vulnerability framework. The community factors discussed in this section can be assessed through use of the assessment tool provided in this toolkit.

Individual status, identities, beliefs and orientations

There are a number of identities, statuses, beliefs and orientations that either increase or decrease vulnerability to violence, exploitation or abuse before, during or after migrating. These include: racial identities, ethnic identities, religious identities, linguistic identities, sex (male, female or intersex), gender and gender identities, sexual orientations, social class, socioeconomic status, jobs, marital status, education, familial or kinship linkages, being older/elderly, and being younger (a child or an adolescent).

Analysis of this factor requires: (a) understanding the impact of these characteristics on an individual's status within the community; (b) understanding how people are treated based on this status; and c) how this status and treatment impacts their vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse. For example, in some communities, individuals' whose sexual orientation is anything other than heterosexual (or is perceived to be anything other than heterosexual) are marginalized – through denial of access to shelter, services and employment – and this treatment may incentivize them to engage in risky behaviours or migration practices that expose them to risk. They may also be specifically targeted for violence, exploitation and abuse.

Community beliefs, practices and expectations in relation to particular groups

There are multiple community beliefs, practices and expectations about particular groups of people that increase vulnerability for individuals who are part of those groups. These include beliefs, practices and expectations towards people based on their age, for example a belief that the eldest child is responsible for earning money to contribute to the upbringing of their younger siblings, even if this entails risky migration. It also includes beliefs, practices and expectations based on sex, for example a belief that a daughter should marry young so as to reduce the financial burden on her family. Other examples include beliefs, practices and expectations based on health, such as the practice in some communities of hiding a person with a disability or forcing them to undertake unwaged domestic labour; and those based on race or caste, such as the belief in some communities that certain types of jobs should only be performed by members of certain castes.

Analysis of this factor requires: (a) elaborating what beliefs, practices and expectations in a particular community lead to greater vulnerability; (b) analysing their prevalence; and c) understanding how they impact an individual's vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse.

Livelihoods and employment opportunities

Adequate financial resources – and therefore access to livelihoods and employment opportunities – is a key protection factor as it allows individuals to meet their needs and responsibilities. Conversely, poor or no access to such opportunities makes it difficult for individuals to meet their needs and responsibilities, exposing them to various forms of insecurity and increasing their likelihood of engaging in risky behaviour to earn income.

Analysis of this factor requires: (a) an understanding of the availability of decent work in the community, in both the formal and informal sectors; and (b) an understanding of which groups within the community, if any, are excluded from access to decent work, and the extent of that exclusion. This analysis therefore captures potential generalized vulnerability arising from an overall lack of decent work in the community, as well as the vulnerability of particular groups whose situations might be worse than the overall one.

Environmental and climate factors

The natural environmental and climate of a community can shape access to food, shelter, and livelihoods and employment opportunities. Environmental degradation, climate change and natural disasters can increase the vulnerability of community members when they disrupt normal social interactions, destroy crops and livelihoods, and cause injury and illness. Natural disasters are also associated with displacement.

Analysis of this factor focuses on the extent to which the natural environment and climate introduces risk for communities, including the risk of displacement.

Existence and accessibility of services (education, health care, financial services, decent housing and other social services)

Access to education, health care, decent housing, as well as financial services (such as money transfer services and savings opportunities) and social services (such as police and fire services and job training) is in general associated with decreased vulnerability. This is because all of these services are linked to more positive living circumstances, including being better-informed and more empowered, as well as having better employment prospects, health and living conditions, and services that tend to be associated with a higher standard of living.

Analysis of this factor then focuses upon: (a) understanding if these important services are sufficiently and equally available to the various segments of the community; and (b) whether and to what extent the level of access impacts vulnerability.

Social networks and civic engagement opportunities

This factor focuses upon opportunities for social engagement, meaning opportunities for social interactions such as those in community centres, cafes or public spaces, and for civil engagement, meaning opportunities for organizing and coming together for political and non-political purposes to address community concerns and issues. A lack of such opportunities tends to be associated with greater vulnerability due to social isolation or an inability to engage collectively on civic issues.

Analysis of this factor seeks to ascertain: (a) whether there are numerous, diverse and equitable opportunities for social and civic engagement overall in the community; and (b) if and to what extent any particular groups are excluded from such opportunities and thereby rendered more isolated and vulnerable.

Prevalence of violence, including from criminality, organized crime and political conflict

Violence is associated with greater generalized vulnerability for the members of the community in which it occurs. It is also associated with particular vulnerability for individuals who are targeted, as well as for their household/family members by virtue of their being potentially exposed to violence as well as called upon to offer support and protection.

Analysis of this factor involves exploring: (a) what, if any, types of violence are present in the community; (b) the prevalence of violence; and (c) if and to what extent violence contributes to displacement or migration.

Guidance for applying and adapting the community factors assessment tool

Purpose

This assessment tool is intended to be used to assess the ways in which community-level factors influence migrant vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse. It should be used together with the structural factors assesment tool (see Part 5) to provide information on the context within which migrants are vulnerable or resilient to violence, exploitation and abuse, thereby complementing information gathered through the individual and household/family questionnaires (see Parts 2 and 3). Further, if such data is gathered over time and linked to data from other geographic locations, it can inform understanding of larger trends regarding migrant vulnerabilities in a particular community, as well as regionally. As such, it can potentially inform programming by governments as well as national and international organizations and service providers.

Using the assessment tool to gather data

The assessment tool is meant to guide and structure the data collection process and to present it in a standardized format. It can be used in either paper-based or electronic format. The data gathered should be transcribed into an electronic version in order to ensure the durability of the data collected and the ability to use it to understand changes over time, as well as for comparison purposes with other contexts and locations and therefore to be able to devel an evidence base for national, regional or global analysis.

Unlike the individual and household/family questionnaires, which focus on data collection from the individual migrant or potential migrant and his or her family themselves, this assessment tool can be used to gather and structure data from a variety of data sources and through a variety of data collection processes.

Group interviews

The assessment tool can be used to conduct group interviews with key informants who are knowledgeable about the target community and who can analyse the situation generally and assess trends, rather than focusing on anecdotal information.

Participants for the group interviews should be selected on the basis of their knowledge about sociological, economic, political and environmental concepts, as well as of the actual practices and belief systems in the specific community. Suitable interviewees could include a combination of: community leaders (both men and women); academic experts; and representatives of civil society organizations, NGOs (both national and international), international organizations and/or United Nations agencies, and local or national governments. The key criterion is that there should be a diverse group of interviewees.

Group interviews are preferred to individual interview in order to combine different perspectives and create a more complete and more nuanced portrait of the community, leading participants to come to a collective consensus on the responses to the questions. Each group interview should include three to five interviewees, as any fewer and there will not be enough diversity of perspectives, and any more and it will be extremely difficult to arrive at a consensus and to allow all interviewees to participate equally. At least two group interviews should be conducted, as this will serve as a triangulation mechanism to reduce the impact of potential bias when conducting the analysis.

Groups can be convened to discuss all of the seven topics covered in the assessment form, or they can be convened to focus only on topics on which the participants are especially knowledgeable. In either case, each topic should be discussed by at least two groups.

Each topic requires between 30 and 90 minutes for a full group discussion. If a group is convened to discuss all seven topics, this is a significant demand on their time. Discussion sessions should be scheduled to take this into account – for example, by holding a series of shorter sessions or two longer sessions. For groups that are convened to discuss only two or three topics, the discussion session should take between two and three hours.

Individual interviews

It is also possible to conduct a series of individual interviews, if group interviews are not feasible. However, this will require more time and more interviews, as each respondent will not be confronted with differing opinions or perspectives that could spark deeper reflection. The length of each individual interview will depend on if all topics or only a subset of topics are covered. In general, it is anticipated that each topic will take between 15 and 45 minutes to complete. As individual interviews should generally not last much more than 90 minutes, it may be necessary to schedule two interviews with a respondent. At least three respondents should be consulted for each of the topics.

Desk review

Information gathered through interviews should be complemented by a desk review of key documents and data related to the social, political, economic, environmental and other characteristics of the community. This again serves as a triangulation mechanism and can help to complement, validate or revise the information obtained through group and individual interviews. Examples of such data sources include research reports, newspaper and magazine articles, analytical papers, academic commentaries, human rights reports, United Nations reports and national statistics that are disaggregated to the community level.

Filling out the assessment tool

Most of the questions include both closed and open fields. Many of these require a description, while others require a description followed by a ranking. In the latter case, a discussion of the description should be undertaken first, and only then should the interviewees be asked for a ranking, which should be based on the previous discussion. For example, interviewees may be asked to describe the availability and accessibility of educational services. They may say that there are good educational services, but that these are only accessible to the wealthy, or that public (State-provided) schools are accessible to all socioeconomic groups but are of low quality. The response to the follow-up question ("to what extent does the level of access to educational services increase vulnerability") should reflect this inequality of access.

Once data collection is complete, the information gathered should be synthesized, summarized and assessed in order to arrive at a combined set of responses that has been verified through the various sources. For each of the questions, the source of the data used to devise the combined response should be noted. If the data source is an interview respondent (either individual or group) indicate the names and positions of each of the interviewees. If the data source is a document, include a full citation for the document.

Adapting and explaining the assessment tool

Unlike the individual and household/family-level questionnaires, it is not expected that this assessment form will require sociocultural adaptation, as interviewees will be key informants with expert knowledge and should be open to discussing sensitive topics. However, they may or may not be familiar with all the terms. It is recommended that the interviewer provide some concrete examples of hypothetical situations to guide the discussions. For example, when discussing the accessibility of services, the interviewer could ask, as a clarification or if the discussion does not cover the issue, whether children with disabilities have equal access to schools, or access to specialized services, and whether these are affordable for all the population.

Community factors assessment tool

Topic 1: Individual status, identities, beliefs and orientations

1.1a What if any racial identities confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.1b To what extent are people ascribed low-status racial identities more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.2a What if any ethnic identities confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.2b To what extent are people ascribed low-status ethnic identities more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.3a What if any religious identities confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.3b To what extent are people with low status religious identities more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.4a What if any linguistic identities confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.4b To what extent are people with low-status linguistic identities more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.5a What if any sexes (male, female or intersex) confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.5b To what extent are people of a low-status sex more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.6a What if any genders and gender identities confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.6b To what extent are people of low-status genders or gender identities more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.7a What if any sexual orientations confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.7b To what extent are people with low-status sexual orientations more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.8a Does being from a particular social class confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.8b To what extent are people from low status social classes more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.9a Does socioeconomic status confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe how this is applicable (if not relevant, say "not applicable"):

1.9b To what extent are people with a low socioeconomic status more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.10a What if any types of jobs confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.10b To what extent are people occupying low-status jobs more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.11a What if any marital statuses confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.11b To what extent are people whose marital status is considered low status more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.12a Does education level confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe how this is applicable (if not relevant, say "not applicable"):

1.12b To what extent are people with a low status level of education more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.13a What if any familial or kinship linkages confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.13b To what extent are people with low-status kinship or familial linkages more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.14a Does being older/elderly confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe how this is applicable (if not relevant, say "not applicable"):

1.14b To what extent are older/elderly people more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.15a Does being young confer high or low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe how this is applicable (if not relevant, say "not applicable"):

1.15b To what extent are younger people more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

1.16a Are there other key characteristics that de-mark status and particularly low status in this community?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

1.16b To what extent are those people ascribed or having these characteristics more likely than others to be subjected to violence, exploitation and/or abuse?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

Summary:

Sources of information:

Topic 2: Community beliefs, practices and expectations in relation to particular groups

Guidance

2.1a Are there any community beliefs, practices and expectations for people of a particular age (young or old) that lead to increased vulnerability?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

2.1b How prevalent are those beliefs, practices and expectations?
1- high prevalence
2- medium prevalence
3- medium/low prevalence
4- low prevalence
5- not applicable

2.2a Are there any community beliefs, practices and expectations for people of a particular sex that lead to increased vulnerability?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

2.2b How prevalent are those beliefs, practices and expectations?
1- high prevalence
2- medium prevalence
3- medium/low prevalence
4- low prevalence
5- not applicable

2.3a Are there any community beliefs, practices and expectations for people with health issues that lead to increased vulnerability?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

2.3b How prevalent are those beliefs, practices and expectations?
1- high prevalence
2- medium prevalence
3- medium/low prevalence
4- low prevalence
5- not applicable

2.4a Are there any other community beliefs, practices and expectations that target particular groups within society and that lead to increased vulnerability?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

2.4b How prevalent are those beliefs, practices and expectations?
1- high prevalence
2- medium prevalence
3- medium/low prevalence
4- low prevalence
5- not applicable

Summary:

Sources of information:

Topic 3: Livelihoods and employment opportunities

3.1 Overall, is there good availability of decent work in the community?
Specify and briefly describe availability of decent work, including key factors contributing to this situation (such as lack of access to land for farming):

3.2a What groups if any are more excluded from decent work opportunities in the community?
Describe groups that are more excluded, if any:

3.2b To what extent are those groups excluded?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

Summary:

Sources of information:

Topic 4: Environmental and climate factors

4.1 What if any environmental and climate factors (including natural disasters) that are present in the community impact negatively upon access to food, shelter, livelihoods and employment opportunities as well as other basic needs?
Specify those that are applicable (if none, say "not applicable"):

4.2 To what extent do those environmental and climate factors (including natural disasters) impact negatively upon access to food, shelter, livelihoods and employment opportunities as well as other basic needs?
1- strong impact
2- medium impact
3- medium/low impact
4- low impact
5- not applicable

4.3 Do those environmental and climate factors (including natural disasters) cause members of the community to be displaced or to have to leave the area and if yes how frequently?
1- often
2- occasionally
3- rarely
4- never

Summary:

Sources of information:

Topic 5: Accessibility of services (education, health care, financial services, decent housing and other social services)

5.1a Are educational services sufficiently and equally accessible in the community?
Describe accessibility of educational services:

5.1b To what extent does the level of access to educational services increase vulnerability?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

5.2a Are health-care services sufficiently and equally accessible in the community?
Describe accessibility of health-care services:

5.2b To what extent does the level of access to health-care services increase vulnerability?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

5.3a Is decent housing sufficiently and equally accessible in the community?
Describe accessibility of decent housing:

5.3b To what extent does the level of access to decent housing increase vulnerability?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

5.4a Are financial services sufficiently and equally accessible in the community?
Describe accessibility of financial services:

5.4b To what extent does the level of access to financial services increase vulnerability?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

5.5a Are other social services sufficiently and equally accessible in the community?
Describe accessibility of social service:

5.5b To what extent does the level of access to other social services increase vulnerability?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

Summary:

Sources of information:

Topic 6: Social networks and civic engagement opportunities

6.1a Are there numerous, diverse and equitable opportunities for social engagement in the community?
Describe opportunities for social engagement, focusing on their number, diversity and accessibility to different groups in the community:

6.1b What groups, if any, are more excluded from such opportunities?
Describe groups that are more excluded, if any:

6.1c To what extent are those groups excluded?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

6.2a Are there numerous, diverse and equitable opportunities for civic engagement in the community?
Describe opportunities for civic engagement, focusing on their number, diversity and accessibility to different groups in the community:

6.2b What groups if any are more excluded from such opportunities?
Describe groups that are more excluded, if any:

6.2c To what extent are those groups excluded?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

Topic 7: Prevalence of violence, including from criminality, organized crime and political conflict

7.1 What types of violence are at medium or high levels?
Specify and briefly describe those that are applicable, being sure to specify groups that are particularly vulnerable:

7.2 Does the violence contribute to displacement or migration more generally?
Describe how violence contributes to displacement or migration (if not relevant, say "not applicable"):

7.3 To what extent if at all does violence contribute to displacement or migration more generally?
1- to a high extent
2- to a medium extent
3- to a medium/low extent
4- to a low extent
5- not applicable

Summary:

Sources of information: