



GENDER AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS: PERU

Early warning systems that do not explicitly consider gender are likely to increase the marginalization or vulnerability of marginalized gender groups. Research in Peru explores the interaction between gender and flood early warning systems, extracting key findings, and distilling a checklist for gender-aware, -sensitive, and -transformative early warning systems.

KEY FACTS

- Research focused on five aspects of an EWS where gender is most influential: vulnerability, participation, dissemination, response, and power and decision making.
- 90 per cent of respondents think that women are more impacted by flooding and mudslides than men.
- Women are more involved in the EWS than men: 54 per cent of women have participated in community risk mapping, compared with 20 per cent of men.
- Women are not as well connected for information and immediate warnings: only 52 per cent of women own a mobile phone, compared with 84 per cent of men.
- 96 per cent of women think authorities need to do more to consider gender-based needs in the EWS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All marginalised gender groups need to be provided with training and knowledge which meets their needs. This should include support to protect livelihood assets, stress management and counselling, and technical training.

All marginalised gender groups need to be able to access warnings directly. Redressing the imbalance in mobile phone ownership and access will be vital in ensuring that people of all genders have equitable access to immediate information.

An emphasis on long-term preparedness and clear household level decision support tools may support women to be confident in taking the lead and responding. Exploring options to reduce the risk of loss and damage to property may encourage men to evacuate promptly.








All marginalised gender groups need to be effectively represented in community, local government, and national level structures. The promotion and endorsement of people of all genders as authoritative voices is vital for their participation in groups, committees, and agencies to be active and meaningful.

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CHECKLIST FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE EWS

	Gender aware: Explicitly acknowledge, assess, and document the ways in which disasters and EWS impact different gender groups in different ways.
	Acknowledge: Explicitly acknowledge gendered impacts
	Assess: Undertake gender analysis
	Examine: Examine gendered assumptions (including stereotypes and cisnormativity)
	Listen: Make proactive efforts to hear from marginalized gender groups
	Intersectionality: Understand how intersectional vulnerabilities exacerbate gendered vulnerabilities
	Vulnerability: Understand how gender impacts on vulnerability
	Participation: Understand how gender impacts on participation
	Dissemination: Understand how gender impacts on dissemination
	Response: Understand how gender impacts on response
	Power and Decision-making: Understand how gender impacts on decision making
	Gender sensitive: Adapt project actions (across all areas of the EWS, with proactive consideration of participation, power and decision-making) to improve the effectiveness of EWS for marginalized and vulnerable gender groups.
	Gender transformative: Design policies, approaches and actions to ensure the EWS works effectively for people of all genders. Consider how all aspects of the EWS (including participation power and decision making) can support the reduction of gender-based inequalities.

CASE STUDY: CECILIA*

Cecilia* is an 83-year-old woman with visual impairment from Chosica, Peru. Cecilia has experienced flooding in her neighbourhood since 1978. She sees women as having a vital role in supporting the community during flooding. Women stay in the community longer, whereas men often migrate for work, and women have more opportunities to talk with neighbours and educate and inform other women about the risks they face and what actions they must take to prepare.

Cecilia is not part of the response brigade herself because of her

visual impairment, but she participates in the meetings and is well informed. *‘Nowadays women are more confident than before. The women who participate in the brigades are easier to approach. They are more accessible when they talk to their neighbours and explain what to do.’*

She sees men as being less likely to share their knowledge: *‘Authorities always look for the [male] leaders. But women are better leaders. They talk directly and demand what is needed. When women are together, we do not let ourselves get pushed around by the authorities.’*

She believes that the alert system has made the biggest difference for the elderly, because they generally stay inside their homes and do not always have good communication with their neighbours, so are vulnerable to missing out on key information. The signs that have been installed, the activation of the siren, and the solar-powered monitoring systems give Cecilia and her neighbours peace of mind.

Note: * indicates that names have been changed

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References and Further Reading

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Practical Action/Flood Resilience Alliance (2019a) Gender Transformative Early Warning Systems: Lessons from Nepal and Peru, Rugby: Practical Action Publishing.

Practical Action/Flood Resilience Alliance (2019b) Missing Voices: Experience of Marginalized Gender Groups in Disaster in Nepal and Peru, Rugby: Practical Action Publishing.

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