



Challenges and Opportunities for Mainstreaming Gender in Anticipatory Action Approaches within Refugee and Internally Displaced People Hosting Communities

Alexandra Schindler, Everisto Mapedza and Sandra Ruckstuhl

November 2024



Context

Approximately 110 million people are forcibly displaced globally, with women and girls comprising 50% of this population (UNHCR, 2022). In 2021, women and children accounted for 80% of new internally displaced people (IDMC, 2022: 71). Internal displacement due to disasters accounted for more than half of all new displacements in 2022 (UNHCR, 2022), with women and girls representing the vast majority of those displaced due to conflict (UNHCR and Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, 2022). About 83% of displaced individuals live in urban and peri-urban environments, where host communities and forcibly displaced people often live in close quarters, sharing limited resources. Displaced households are generally poorer and more vulnerable than non-displaced households, and in many contexts, female-led households are more common among forcibly displaced populations, exposing them to gender-based violence (GBV) and providing limited livelihood opportunities. The lack of sex-disaggregated data and understanding of gendered vulnerabilities in refugee and internally displaced people (IDP) hosting communities often leads to displaced women and girls suffering the worst effects of climate change and extreme weather-related events.

Key Messages

- Sex-disaggregated data is essential for informing anticipatory action and disaster preparedness approaches from a gender perspective.
- Disaster preparedness and prevention strategies must consider the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls to ensure sustainable and inclusive protection and solutions.
- Co-designing solutions through participatory research with both women and men is needed to determine indicators and design approaches that address the underlying causes of gender inequalities, rather than simply accounting for them. The goal is to positively impact gender norms, while providing sustainable solutions for the long-term resilience of the whole community.
- We are proposing a Gender-Integrated Host Community Vulnerability Framework (G-IHCVF), informed by our research on water and climate-related vulnerabilities in refugee and IDP hosting communities, to guide gender-inclusive anticipatory action approaches (Schindler et al., 2023).

Displaced Women and Girls: Vulnerability to Climate Change

Displaced women and girls are particularly vulnerable to extreme-weather related events and disasters. This is because they face specific challenges, including limited access to water and sanitation services, unequal resource distribution, greater care-taking responsibilities within the home, exposure to GBV, restrictive social norms, and insufficient sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. Displacement often compounds these vulnerabilities. Hence, more sex-disaggregated data is required to understand the effects of forcible displacement on gender inequalities over both the short and long term. Without effective and sustainable, gender-inclusive anticipatory action approaches, displaced women will continue to suffer the worst consequences of climate emergencies. Responses which are meant to build resilience might end up worsening the status of women and girls and vulnerable populations more broadly.

Forcibly displaced people—both refugees and IDPs, including those living in host communities—are uniquely exposed to disasters caused by extreme weather-related events due to poor living conditions, food and water insecurity, tensions with host communities, strained infrastructure and services, and limited assets and social networks. Women, in particular, are even more vulnerable as they often have less access to information and fewer resources to respond appropriately, making them 14 times more likely to die in disasters than men (Okai, 2022). Cultural norms and practices, largely centered on patriarchy, further limit opportunities for women to establish support networks. Furthermore, displaced women's livelihoods, especially those in agriculture, are often more susceptible to the effects of extreme weather-related events (Devkota et al., 2022).

“ Anticipatory action is fundamentally different from humanitarian response and development programming. Anticipatory humanitarian actions are those actions taken in advance of a crisis, before either the shock or its peak impact. Therefore, anticipatory action makes acting the default when risks, not needs, increase

OCHA, Anticipatory Action Toolkit

Anticipatory action (AA) refers to the actions taken to prevent or mitigate potential disaster impacts before a shock occurs, or acute effects are felt. These actions are carried out in anticipation of a hazard, based on predictions of how the event will unfold. AA is increasingly recognized as part of the solution for reducing the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events (IFRC 2020). Ideally, AA prioritizes early response and long-term adaptation investments that protect developmental gains and promote resilience. Women have a key role to play in AA design and implementation.

In the context of climate change and displacement, gender-inclusive approaches are essential to ensuring the safety, well-being, and resilience of women and girls following the negative impacts of disasters. Addressing unequal access to and control over resources and structural vulnerabilities can be achieved through five key factors:

- 1) inclusion and leadership,
- 2) economic empowerment,
- 3) well-being (i.e., mental health and sense of purpose),
- 4) sustainable clean energy access, and
- 5) protection of rights (UNHCR and Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, 2022).

As shown in Figure 1, the exclusion of marginalized women—actively or passively—from the AA design and implementation process, directly affects the success and sustainability of preparedness activities, both in the short and long term. Given the current displacement trends (for both refugees and IDPs), the projections of future displacement, and the compound effects of climate change (Clement et al., 2021), gender-inclusive AA protocols are urgently needed, especially for forcibly displaced women and girls, who are among the most vulnerable populations in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCS). Furthermore, the lack of inclusion of forcibly displaced individuals in national climate and development strategies leaves hosting communities especially vulnerable during climate emergencies.

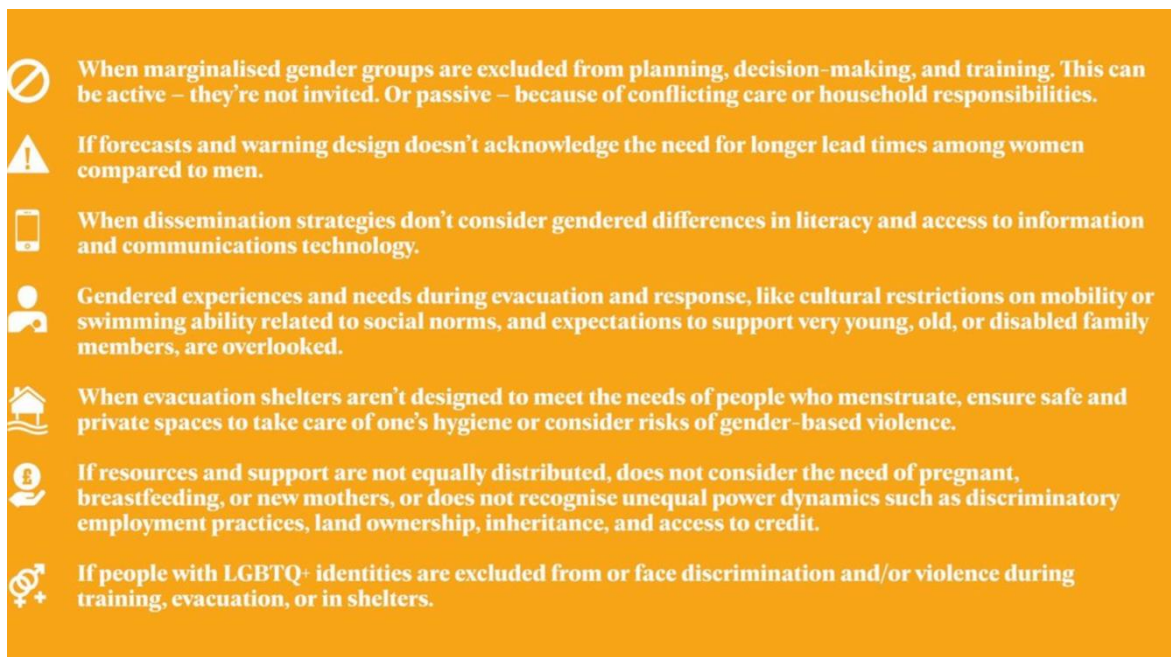


Figure 1: How does gender manifest in early warning and early action?

Source: *Anticipation Hub*, 2023

Gender-Integrated Host Community Vulnerability Framework (G-IHCVF)

The Anticipatory Action in Host Communities for Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Mitigation (AHEAD) protocol, under the CGIAR Fragility, Conflict, and Migration (FCM) initiative, addresses these vulnerability challenges through case studies in a diverse set of host communities in a series of countries—Ethiopia, Jordan and Pakistan (at the time of publication). This brief will enrich the Integrated Host Community Vulnerability Framework (IHCVF), one outcome of AHEAD, with a Gender-Integrated Host Community Vulnerability Framework (G-IHCVF), to inform more inclusive AA strategies.

The proposed enriched framework includes gender as a main indicator of vulnerability across these different dimensions (agency, power relations, and social institutions) and spheres (individual, household, and community) to develop a G-IHCVF that can address the structural determinants and root causes of gender inequality. This framework can provide valuable and timely information to guide the development of AA policies and strategies that integrate gender holistically, using a systems and inclusive approach. A gender-inclusive approach to AA offers a sustainable and inclusionary pathway to build equitable access to information and resources that benefits both host communities and forcibly displaced individuals. This approach is likely to foster sustainable and inclusive solutions towards addressing climate-induced vulnerabilities.

Anticipatory Action Steps and Gender Considerations

AA aims to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks by mobilizing resources and acting before a disaster or an extreme climate event occurs (Figure 2). Table 1 identifies the necessary gender considerations and suggested questions for each AA step.

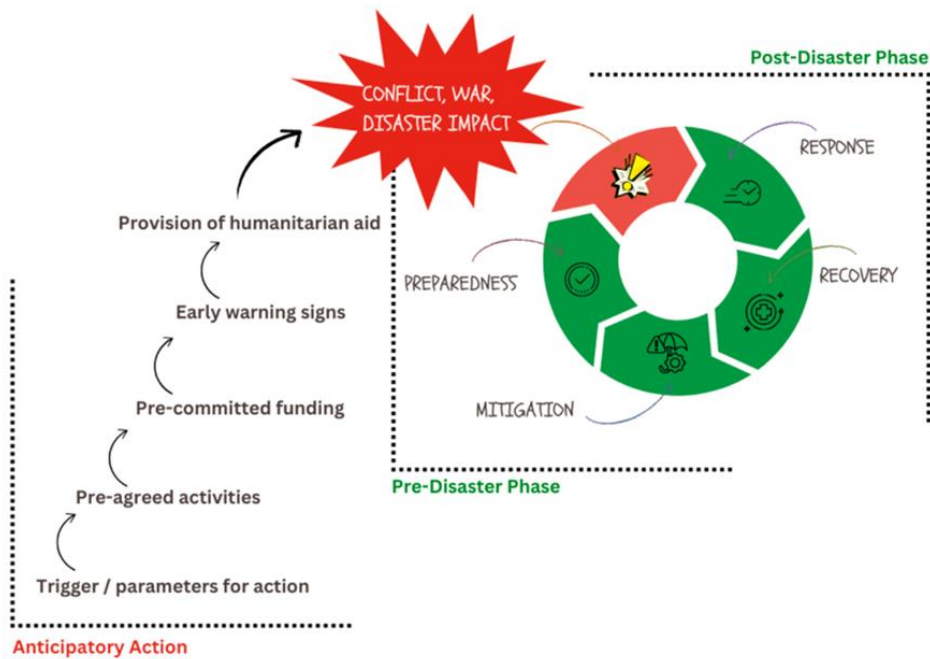


Figure 2: Pre-disaster similarities between anticipatory action and the disaster management cycle

Source: Schindler et al., 2023

Table 1: Gender considerations and suggested questions for each anticipatory action step

Anticipatory Action Step	Gender Considerations	Suggested Questions
Trigger/parameters for action	Set protection-sensitive triggers by engaging women’s organizations to ensure their voices are represented in preparedness work. Trigger time frames must consider gendered differences.	What programs and social protections already address gendered differences? What are the current gendered inequalities within the community?
Pre-agreed activities	Understand existing gender inequalities and effects on access to resources, including finances, information, and technology. Provide activity profiles based on sex-disaggregated data. Design activities that consider existing gender inequalities and serve the specific needs of women and girls, with the goal of supporting the entire community in disaster preparedness.	What sex-disaggregated data is available or easily attainable? Who has access to resources, including financial, information, and technological resources?
Pre-committed funding	Conduct context-specific gender analyses to ensure funding strategies and mechanisms prioritize the disaster-related needs of women, including vulnerabilities related to GBV, water,	What vulnerabilities do women experience in the community, including GBV, WASH, and limited mobility? How would those

	<p>sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), limited mobility during evacuation, and lack of access to emergency information.</p> <p>Ensure women have both access to and control over community funding.</p>	<p>vulnerabilities be exacerbated during a disaster?</p> <p>Who has access to or control over funding for gender-related programs and social protection activities?</p>
Early warning signs	<p>Engage women’s organizations to incorporate early warning signs (EWS) based on existing local climate knowledge and empower women in the community to voice their opinions and participate in preparedness activities.</p> <p>Citizen climate and EWS need to be sex disaggregated to ensure that women’s knowledge systems are considered and acted upon.</p>	<p>What local climate knowledge already exists?</p> <p>How is knowledge shared within the community? Are women’s knowledge systems part of this exchange?</p>
Provision of humanitarian aid	<p>Conduct a gender-specific analysis to ensure humanitarian aid reaches women in the community and addresses their specific vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Implement gender-intentional humanitarian interventions with monitoring to ensure provision of humanitarian aid does not harm vulnerable women before or during the disaster.</p>	<p>How is humanitarian aid distributed during and after disasters? Who does it reach and who does it exclude?</p> <p>Who is monitoring implementation for gender-sensitivity, and how is this being reported?</p> <p>Is there evidence of humanitarian aid causing harm in previous disasters?</p>

Rapid Assessment Tool for Gender and Anticipatory Action: Gender-Integrated Host Community Vulnerability Framework (G-IHCVF)

The rapid assessment tool provides essential information about gender roles and responsibilities, capacities, and vulnerabilities in disaster contexts.

This rapid assessment tool seeks to answer the following three questions:

1. **What are the gendered-related vulnerabilities in a given context?** How do unequal gender relations, gendered discrimination, subordination, and exclusion influence climate-related vulnerabilities during a disaster? How do these vulnerabilities intersect with other areas of discrimination based on factors such as ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability, and citizenship status?
2. **How will gender relations affect the achievement of sustainable results?** For example, if the project's sustainable result is increased participation in AA design and implementation among female community members, then gendered norms in community planning may significantly influence outcomes before, during and after a disaster.
3. **How will proposed results affect the relative status of men and women?** Will the project exacerbate or reduce inequalities?

Rapid Assessment Tool Worksheet

1. Are women participating members of community decision-making associations?
2. Do women generally have access to their own mobile phone and/or internet access?
3. What percentage of women are literate?
4. Do women have restricted or limited mobility? If so, what are the specific limitations (e.g., related to area, family, day/night)?
5. What percentage of women know how to swim (specific to flooding risk)?
6. Is it common for women in the community to be responsible for the care of young or elderly family members?
7. What livelihood opportunities are available to women in the community?
8. What precautions are needed to ensure safe and adequate access to WASH facilities for women, including those who are pregnant, breast-feeding, or menstruating?
9. What measures are needed to ensure safety from GBV? For example, what type of evacuation shelters are provided?
10. What are the community gender norms around finances and money? Will women have access to cash or food aid when it is distributed?

The Way Forward

To ensure that AA initiatives are truly gender-inclusive, gender considerations must be integrated into each step of the AA process. This includes setting triggers for action, defining pre-agreed activities, allocating pre-committed funding, identifying early warning signs, and planning for the provision of humanitarian aid. Each of these steps, along with relevant gender considerations, has been outlined in this brief. This brief recommends using a rapid assessment tool to gather essential information on gender roles and gender-related vulnerabilities within particular contexts. This data supports the development of successful and sustainable AA strategies that ensure the well-being, safety, and resilience of the entire affected community, including women and girls.

While mainstreaming gender across AA components is essential, the long-term aim should be a gender-transformative approach (GTA). A GTA addresses the root causes of gender inequality by considering power imbalances, gender norms and roles, unequal formal and informal rules, and gender discriminatory legislative and policy frameworks. Such an approach will most likely result in better gender relationships which will improve power dynamics between women and men within AA and in the broader societal development arena. The proposed G-IHCVF advances inclusive approaches to water and climate risk reduction and contributes to broader gendered societal transformation.

Bibliography

- Anticipation Hub. 2023. *Gender in early warning and early action: why do we still need to talk about it?* Available at <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/news/gender-in-early-warning-and-early-action> (accessed on December 10, 2023).
- Clement, V.; Rigaud, K.; De Sherbinin, A.; Jones, B.; Adamo, S.; Schewe, J.; Sadiq, N.; Shabahat, E. 2021. *Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration*. World Bank, Washington, DC. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/36248>
- Cole, S.M.; Kaminski, A.M.; McDougall, C.; Kefi, A.S.; Marinda, P.A.; Maliko, M.; Mtonga, J. 2020. Gender accommodative versus transformative approaches: A comparative assessment within a post-harvest fish loss reduction intervention. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 24(1): 48–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718524.2020.1729480>
- Devkota, R.; Pant, L.P.; Odame, H.H.; Paudyal, B.R.; Bronson, K. 2022. Rethinking gender mainstreaming in agricultural innovation policy in Nepal: A critical gender analysis. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 39: 1373–1390. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-022-10326-1>
- FAO, IFAD and WFP. 2020. *Gender transformative approaches for food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture: A compendium of fifteen good practices*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb1331en>
- FAO, IFAD, WFP & CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform. 2023. *Guidelines for measuring gender transformative change in the context of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture: At a glance*. Rome, Italy: FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc7940en>
- Hillenbrand, E.; Karim, N.; Mohanraj, P.; Wu, D. 2015. *Measuring gender-transformative change: A review of literature and promising practices*. CARE USA. Working Paper.
- IDMC. 2022. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022: Children and youth in internal displacement*. Available at <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2022/#download> (accessed on November 23, 2023).
- IFRC (International Federation of the Red Cross). 2020. *World Disasters Report 2020: Come heat or high water – tackling the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis together*. Available at <https://www.ifrc.org/world-disasters-report-2020> (accessed on November 23, 2023).
- Okai, A. 2022. *Women are hit hardest in disasters, so why are responses too often gender-blind?* UNDP. Available at <https://www.undp.org/blog/women-are-hit-hardest-disasters-so-why-are-responses-too-often-gender-blind> (accessed on November 23, 2023).
- Schindler, A.; Singh, R.; Adam-Bradford, A.; Laauwen, M.; Ruckstuhl, S. 2023. *Anticipatory action in communities hosting refugees and internally displaced persons: An assessment of current approaches*. Colombo, Sri Lanka: International Water Management Institute (IWMI). 24p. (IWMI Working Paper 212). <https://doi.org/10.5337/2024.200>
- UNHCR. 2022. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022*. Geneva: UNHCR. Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022> (accessed on November 23, 2023).
- UNHCR and Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. 2022. *Gender, displacement and climate change*. Geneva: UNHCR. Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/5f21565b4.pdf> (accessed on November 23, 2023).

Authors:

Alexandra Schindler is a consultant with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and is based in Alexandria, Egypt.

Everisto Mapedza is a Senior Researcher at IWMI and is based in Pretoria, South Africa.

Sandra Ruckstuhl is Senior Researcher at IWMI and Co-Lead of the CGIAR Initiative on Fragility, Conflict, and Migration.

Suggested citation

Schindler, A.; Mapedza, E.; Ruckstuhl, S. 2024. *Challenges and opportunities for mainstreaming gender in anticipatory action approaches within refugee and internally displaced people hosting communities*. Colombo, Sri Lanka: International Water Management Institute (IWMI). CGIAR Initiative on Fragility, Conflict, and Migration. 10p.

Contact: Sandra Ruckstuhl, IWMI, s.ruckstuhl@cgiar.org

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the many staff members of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) who reviewed and provided comments on this publication: Noura Abdelwaheb, Andrew Adam-Bradford, Mohsin Hafeez, Novaira Junaid, Winnie Kasoma-Pele, Sidra Khalid, Mitchell McTough, Munyaradzi Mutenje, Ngowenani Nohayi, Charity Osei-Amponsah, Juan Carlos Sanchez Ramirez, Radhika Singh, and Kanwal Waqar. The authors also gratefully acknowledge the feedback from Laura Simphiwe Stewart at the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and Katrina Kosec at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

This work was carried out under the CGIAR Initiative on Fragility, Conflict, and Migration, which is grateful for the support of CGIAR Trust Fund contributors (<http://www.cgiar.org/funders/>).

Project

This research study was conducted under the Anticipatory Approaches in Host Communities for Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Mitigation (AHEAD) project as part of the CGIAR Initiative on Fragility, Conflict, and Migration.

Donors

This study was carried out under the CGIAR Initiative on Fragility, Conflict, and Migration in collaboration with the HER+ Initiative which are grateful for the support of the CGIAR Trust Fund contributors (<https://www.cgiar.org/funders/>).

Disclaimer

This publication has not been independently peer reviewed. Responsibility for editing, proofreading, and layout, opinions expressed, and any possible errors lies with the authors and not the institutions involved. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IWMI, CGIAR, our partner institutions, or donors.

CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future. CGIAR science is dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. Its research is carried out by 13 CGIAR Centers/Alliances in close collaboration with hundreds of partners, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, development organizations and the private sector. www.cgiar.org

We would like to thank all funders who support this research through their contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund: www.cgiar.org/funders.

To learn more about this Initiative, please visit [this webpage](#).

To learn more about this and other Initiatives in the CGIAR Research Portfolio, please visit www.cgiar.org/cgiar-portfolio

© 2024 IWMI. Some rights reserved.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License ([CC by 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)).



International Water
Management Institute



INITIATIVE ON

Gender Equality



INITIATIVE ON

Fragility, Conflict,
and Migration