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Working Paper

Strengthening Anticipatory Action with the Early Warning, Early Action and Early Finance (AWARE) Platform: A Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Lens for Inclusive Resilience

Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu, Giriraj Amarnath, Mohamed Aheeyar,
Niranga Alahacoon and Sampath Kotuwegoda



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	Anticipatory Action
AWARE	Early Warning, Early Action and Early Finance
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CGIAR	Global research partnership for a food-secure future
CREWS	Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDMCU	District Disaster Management Coordination Unit
DM	Disaster Management
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EW4ALL	Early Warnings for All
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GN	Grama Niladhari (smallest local government unit/public servant)
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Summary

Anticipatory action (AA) is an emerging disaster management approach. AA consist of a set of actions to reduce the humanitarian impacts of a potential disaster before it occurs, or before its most acute impacts are felt. It strives to save lives and livelihoods and reduce losses and suffering. The AA approach demands proactive and integrated measures applied through well-coordinated institutional mechanisms within its key pillars: Early Warning, Early Action and Early Finance. As a component of overall disaster risk management strategies, AA aims to reduce disaster risk by strengthening community capacities and resilience. By supporting wider disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts, AA protects development gains.

The AWARE platform, a vital component of the CGIAR initiative on Climate Resilience ‘ClimBeR’ and CGIAR Climate Action Program, connects risk and vulnerability information, early warning systems and proactive measures for mitigating disaster impacts, and the mobilization of timely financial interventions to protect communities ahead of impending climate-related hazards. As a digitally enabled risk governance platform, AWARE is a powerful tool designed to facilitate connectivity between the stakeholders in the technical and decision-making institutions, humanitarian organizations and communities at risk for effective coordination of AA.

In the backdrop of escalating and multifaceted global crises—climate, conflict and economic—which demands a colossal amount of additional resources for humanitarian assistance, AA is gaining significant momentum globally. The effectiveness and equity of AA depend on the outreach to the most vulnerable groups in at-risk communities. This requires understanding and addressing the unique vulnerabilities and capacities of diverse groups within communities: women and children, ethnic and linguistic groups, people with special needs, migrants, gender and sexual minorities, youth and older people. These groups often face greater barriers in preparing for and recovering from shocks due to multiple forms of vulnerability, social discrimination and inequality that are simultaneously at play. Integration of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) aspects in planning and executing AA, therefore, is critical to maximize the effectiveness and equity of the interventions.

The importance of integrating protective, gender-transformative, and inclusive approaches in AA is well recognized and accepted at the conceptual level. However, in practice, these are not yet consistently applied due to gaps in commitment, awareness, capacity, resources and monitoring mechanisms. Vulnerability and exclusion issues remain critical underlying factors of consideration in the overall decision-making process for targeting, identifying early action and delivery, and making financial allocations.

Strategy for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

The GESI strategy consists of two main elements supporting the primary objectives of AA: inclusive participation, equitable access, meeting specific needs and capacities of diverse groups, addressing vulnerabilities and, most importantly, strengthening capacities of diverse community groups to manage disaster risk.

The first element refers to mapping the community considered for AA to identify the diverse groups who are vulnerable, and the key issues they face within a disaster context. This is followed by a social and gender analysis of the community supported with disaggregated data by sex, age, disability and prevailing social divisions. A social and gender analysis will identify vulnerabilities and capacities of the diverse groups in the community, social dynamics and barriers limiting their participation and access. Community mapping and analysis provides a robust basis to inform the activities carried out under each building block: Early Warning, Early Action and Early Finance.

A thorough social and gender analysis serves as a foundation for targeted and effective planning and execution of AA. The analysis can inform criteria development to eliminate exclusion biases, to engage diverse community groups and local institutions for identifying appropriate interventions that are inclusive and targeted at addressing barriers. Risk governance, a key requisite for GESI, is amply supported by the AWARE platform and acts as an enabler in advancing well-coordinated action. The engagement of vulnerable groups in risk assessment, and planning and execution lead to their empowerment with awareness and knowledge on risk management strategies and strengthened coping mechanisms.

Pre-arranging finances informed by a context-specific social and gender analysis can support resource mobilization and allocations for required technical expertise, inclusive programming and delivery, targeting action to meet the needs and capacities of diverse groups within the community, and for participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The GESI strategy is reinforced with a set of guiding principles assigned to each of the building blocks of AA. Guiding principles aim to support the planning, execution and monitoring teams, including the communities, to navigate the challenges for GESI integration and to seize the opportunities that the AWARE platform offers for inclusion and empowerment. Integrating the CGIAR AWARE platform with a GESI strategy aims to embed the dimensions of inclusion and equity, ensuring AA interventions are transformative and ‘Leave No One Behind’.

Strengthening Anticipatory Action with the Early Warning, Early Action and Early Finance (AWARE) Platform: A Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Lens for Inclusive Resilience

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1. Introduction and the Context

Anticipatory action (AA) is an emerging approach to disaster management that takes proactive steps to mitigate the impact of predicted hazards before they occur.

By preemptively assisting vulnerable communities, AA reduces suffering, protects livelihoods and enables faster recovery. However, to truly maximize the effectiveness and equity of these interventions, it is crucial to integrate a strong gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) lens. This entails understanding and addressing the unique vulnerabilities and capacities of different groups, including women and children, ethnic and linguistic groups, people with special needs, migrants, gender and sexual minorities, youth and older people. Without a GESI-focused approach, AA risks exacerbating existing inequalities and leaving the most vulnerable behind.

The AWARE (Early Warning, Early Action and Early Finance) platform offers a powerful tool to support GESI-responsive anticipatory action. AWARE is a vital component of the CGIAR Initiative on Climate Resilience (‘ClimBeR’), that supports a centralized hub for connecting early warning systems, proactive measures, and timely financial interventions to protect communities ahead of impending climate-related hazards, rather than afterwards. By integrating diverse data sources and facilitating collaborative planning, AWARE empowers stakeholders to design and implement inclusive AA strategies. It aims to empower decision-makers at various levels with timely information and resources to manage climate risks and minimize their impact proactively. AWARE targets government departments, agencies, humanitarian organizations and funders to better enable the identification of risks and formulation of plans (Amarnath et al. 2023b; Alahacoon and Amarnath 2023).

Anticipatory action (AA) refers to actions that are taken to reduce the humanitarian impacts of a forecast hazard before it occurs, or before its most acute impacts are felt. The actions are carried out based on forecasts and predictions (IFRC 2022). The decision to act is undertaken based on a forecast, or collective risk analysis, of when, where and how the event will unfold. It is a humanitarian approach that aims to save lives and livelihoods and reduce losses and suffering. It can take different forms and happens on a range of scales, depending on the:

- Mandate of the organizations involved
- Context in which people live

- Type of hazard(s) being faced
- Available forecasts and data for that hazard

Taking an anticipatory approach is a way to reduce humanitarian needs and minimize damage, and avert loss caused by a disaster. It can reduce the scale and severity of a potential crisis and possibly even prevent it (AATF 2022). More specifically:

- Acting before the onset of a forecasted hazard helps to protect the lives and livelihoods of those exposed and vulnerable to the hazard risk.
- Acting before a hazard becomes a disaster helps to build people’s resilience to future shocks and eases the pressure on strained humanitarian resources.

The timing of AA can vary depending on the type of hazard and forecasts available, carried out well ahead of the shock (for slower onset events), or just before the impacts are fully felt (for more rapid-onset events). The nature of AA is specific to the shock and location. No two AA frameworks are ever the same. The geographic, demographic, political, operational, cultural and socio-economic differences require AA to be carefully tailored to the place and people in each country (OCHA n.d.).

It is important to note that AA is part of the disaster risk management cycle. In particular, AA is an approach which systematically links early warning to early action and is essentially a proactive risk management tool. It should not be seen as a substitute for longer-term investment in disaster risk reduction; instead, AA aims to strengthen people’s capacity to manage risks (Anticipation Hub 2023; Schindler and Mapedza 2024). It is underlined that AA should complement longer-term investment in risk reduction and aim to strengthen people’s capacity to manage risks.

Methodology

The methodology for developing the GESI strategy for AA consists of reviewing relevant literature, conducting community and stakeholder consultations, and validating the proposed strategy.

Literature review

The document review focused on the literature on AA, disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation and on GESI issues in a disaster risk context. The review included key global and regional initiatives related to AA, as well as relevant policies and practices in Sri Lanka. Key research papers and publications of IWMI, Anticipation Hub (2024), United Nations, reports and case studies on AA by stakeholder organizations and other relevant documents were reviewed with the aim of capturing the conceptual basis, policies, practices, best practices and challenges. The literature review led to identifying the current issues and key questions concerning GESI and DRR broadly as well as concerns specific to AA.

Community and stakeholder consultations

Communities in the anticipatory action pilot sites in Galenbindunuwewa (Dunumadalawa/Weheragala) in Anuradhapura District (Amarnath and Alahacoon 2024), and Chrystlers Farm estate in Kotagala, Nuwara Eliya District (Amarnath et al. 2023b) were consulted, with a focus on the hazards and disaster risks that affect them, the coping strategies adopted, gender division of labor, and the prevalent gender and social inclusion issues.

Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted with the *Grama Niladhari* (GN) and the District Disaster Management Coordination Unit of the respective two districts, officials of the Agrarian Services Department, Galenbindunuwewa, District Secretary (DS), Nuwara Eliya and with the management of the Kotagala estate on disaster risk management concerns, advisory services and support provided to the communities.

The main elements and guiding principles for the GESI strategy were derived from the triangulation of information from community consultations, KIIs, literature reviews and other relevant secondary sources. Guiding principles were validated with the community in the Kotagala estate in Nuwara Eliya, which participated in a simulation exercise on AA for flood preparedness. The validation discussion is presented in Annex 1.

1.1 Relevance and the Need for Anticipatory Action

The Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) report 2023 states that SDG achievements are far behind the timeline, off track, and at risk. Termed as ‘stagnation in the face of multiple crises’, SDG progress in 2023 shows a mere 12% of the targets to be on track, while progress on 50% is weak and insufficient. Most dismally, the advancement of more than 30% of the SDGs has stalled or even reversed (United Nations 2023a). Escalating disaster and climate risk, and humanitarian crises continues to inhibit the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. The COVID-19 pandemic and climate related disasters (and the war in Ukraine) have been established as main contributory factors that are diminishing the advances in SDGs in the past three years (United Nations 2023b). Further, the world economy has slowed down, leading to inflation, loss of livelihoods, and debt tightening with compounding impacts on poverty, and food security (UNCTAD 2023).

Growing humanitarian needs associated with the global food crisis, climate crisis, and depleting resources to support multiple concurrent shocks (conflict, climate, economic) demand more effective approaches to mitigate crises and build resilience. Assessment of the status of global humanitarian assistance indicates that with new shocks compounding existing crises, the vulnerabilities of affected people increase, while their coping capacities diminish. In 2022, three-quarters of all people in need of humanitarian assistance faced at least two risk dimensions: conflict, climate and/or socio-economic vulnerability (Development Initiatives 2023). IFRC estimates that an additional USD 20 billion may be required annually to support the international humanitarian response to climate-related disasters (Chaves-Gonzalez et al. 2022).

With recent advances in forecasting, humanitarian and development organizations have been able to anticipate and respond ahead of crises. Anticipatory approaches have gained significant momentum over the past decade and are being developed in over 60 countries alongside the Red Cross and Red Crescent network and the pioneering work on forecast-based financing by the World Food Programme. Similarly, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been developing AA frameworks since 2019, reaching approximately 2.2 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia and Bangladesh. AA frameworks are in place in six other countries to reach a further 2.3 million people if triggers occur (Chaves-Gonzalez et al. 2022). Climate Risk and Early Warnings (CREWS) and Early Warnings for All (EW4ALL) are initiatives that facilitate and support AA, with advancements in forecasts and outreach, especially in the least developed countries. They aim to ensure universal protection from hazardous weather, water or climate events through life-saving early warning systems by the end of 2027.

The AWARE platform brings together three essential components that help countries overcome the challenges and respond to impending climate events from early warning to early action and finance advancement to protect people before a disaster. Its ‘Early Warning’ capability enables authorities to access indicators related to environment, crop price, disease, nutrition, and population-displacement to anticipate and monitor the impacts of climate shocks. The ‘Early Action’ facility includes actions to be taken under specific scenarios indicated by the platform’s ‘Early Warning’ tools. The ‘Early Finance’ mechanism facilitates institutional access to funding at the early stage of an unfolding climate

event, helping, for example, evacuations to be undertaken smoothly, food security to be maintained, and both lives and livelihoods to be protected. The AWARE platform is targeted for use by government departments and agencies, humanitarian organizations and funders (Amarnath et al. 2023a).

1.2 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion – A Global Consideration

Gender equality has been at the forefront of the economic and social development agenda for several decades. In many societies, prevailing social, economic and political relations result in girls and women being systematically disadvantaged and discriminated against. Social systems are largely guided by patriarchal values, as are the institutional and legal systems.

Social inclusion refers to the process of improving people's ability and opportunity to participate in society on equal terms, regardless of their origin or identity (Develop Diverse 2024). People become marginalized in social, economic and political processes due to a range of factors, most commonly by their sex, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and poverty. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underlines 'Leave No One Behind' as a guiding principle. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction promotes a 'whole of society approach' for DRR and resilience building.

Gender-based discrimination cuts across all marginalized groups. The overall lower social status of women and girls limits the choices available for education, employment, ownership, access, and control of productive assets. Due to these gender-based asymmetries, women have fewer opportunities for participation in the formal economy. Their contribution to family and the economy often remains unrecognized and invisible. This excludes women from spaces where they can contribute their skills and experiences to influence planning and strategic decision-making. These limitations are further aggravated by societal restrictions on women's mobility and the prevalence of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence.

Gender-based inequalities, in their totality, lead to a complex status of vulnerability across all social and age categories of women, placing them at greater degrees of disaster risk. It is important to recognize women are not a homogenous group and that inequalities relating to age, race, class, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, and other forms of differences can create very complex forms of intersecting vulnerabilities, especially when combined with the overall status of subordination (Duryog Nivaran and Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre 2021)

A survey conducted by the United Nations on the theme of gender equality and sustainable development at the threshold of setting the SDGs affirmed the immense social,

economic and environmental consequences of climate change, the loss of essential ecosystems and their effects felt in floods, droughts, and devastated landscapes and livelihoods (United Nations 2014). The survey stated that among the most affected are women and girls, given the instability of their livelihoods, the burden of securing shelter, food, water and fuel that largely falls on them, and the constraints on their access to land and natural resources. The survey asserts the central role of gender equality for bolstering sustainable development.

The Gender Snapshot 2023 observes that 1 in 10 women live in extreme poverty (10.3%). If current trends continue, over 340 million women and girls—an estimated 8% of the world's women—will live in extreme poverty by 2030, and close to 1 in 4 will experience moderate or severe food insecurity (UN Women and UNDESA 2023).

The Global Gender Gap Index annually benchmarks the current state and evolution of the gender parity across four key dimensions: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The 2024 Index indicates that while gender parity is slowly inching forward, the pace is such that full parity remains beyond reach for another five generations, and beyond the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal targets, due to the lack of meaningful, widespread change.

Active resistance to gender equality and chronic underinvestment are identified as key factors in the slow progress and, in some cases, reversals of gains already made. Without explicit gender equality objectives and a requisite budget, the interventions may in fact exacerbate existing gender inequalities instead of mitigating it (World Economic Forum 2024).

These existing inequalities are further aggravated during times of crisis. Disasters disproportionately impact vulnerable groups, with women, children, persons with disabilities, and those living in poverty often bearing the brunt of the impacts. For example, women may face increased risks of gender-based violence in the aftermath of disasters, while persons with disabilities may struggle to access essential services and evacuation support. Therefore, a GESI-focused approach to anticipatory action is critical to ensure that early warning systems and pre-emptive assistance reach those that are most in need and that interventions do not inadvertently reinforce existing inequalities.

1.3 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion – A Sri Lanka Snapshot

Sri Lanka has made significant strides in gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), particularly in areas like education and health. The country boasts high literacy rates for both men and women and has made progress in reducing maternal and child mortality. However, deep-rooted inequalities persist, hindering the country's overall

development and resilience to shocks. Women remain underrepresented in political and economic spheres, facing barriers to leadership and equal pay. Discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, disability, and other factors continues to marginalize certain groups, limiting their access to opportunities and services.

While considerable progress has been achieved (specifically in the areas of education and health) over the last several decades—demonstrated in indicators such as adult literacy (90%), secondary and tertiary education (73%), maternal mortality (26¹), adolescent birth rates, and average life expectancy (77 years)—there are significant gaps in the areas of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Women-headed households account for 25.8% of households in Sri Lanka (Government of Sri Lanka 2021). Implications of this situation also include increasing women's care responsibilities to those living with a disability. Women-headed households are socially marginalized, less empowered and have to work harder to access shared resources (Government of Sri Lanka 2013).

The gender equality context and status in Sri Lanka mirrors the global depiction for several key parameters. The World Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum ranked Sri Lanka among the top 20 countries (out of the 115 assessed) in 2006². However, the country's ranking has descended to 122 out of 146 countries in 2024 (World Economic Forum 2024). A further indicator, the Gender Inequality Index (GII), a composite measure of gender inequality using three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment and the labor market—for Sri Lanka is high, ranked at 90 in 2022, by the Human Development Report (UNDP 2024). The decline in the gender gap ranking and the high GII value is attributed to a low share of seats (5.3%, Statista 2024) in the parliament occupied by women, and a low female labor force participation, 29.7% as opposed to 70.7%³ for men. Despite achievements in primary and tertiary education, Sri Lanka has the 14th largest gender gap in labor force participation globally.

An assessment by USAID highlights that social integration is a challenge for the approximately 8–10% of people living with disabilities in the country. They are among the poorest and the most marginalized people in Sri Lanka. Targeted assistance and services are lacking both from the government and civil society organizations (CSOs). Persons with physical and mental disabilities have limited access to healthcare, education and employment due to

the associated social stigma. The assessment highlights that according to the 2011 national census, 34% of children with disabilities do not receive any education. Over 70% of people living with disabilities above the age of 18 are not engaged in any economic activity. While a 3% quota has been established for people living with disabilities within government jobs, this, however, is not being filled since people living with disabilities are not actively recruited (USAID 2020).

Further, it is reported that 12.3% of the population in Sri Lanka is aged 60 or older, making the country with the highest proportion of older adults in South Asia (Solano 2021). According to the estimates, in 15 years, 25% of the population will be over 60, leading to economic, health and social challenges. Poverty rates among the elderly are estimated to be higher than other age groups, and systematic social security systems to aid the elderly are lacking in the country (Solano 2021).

With reference to the status of poverty, a World Bank assessment indicates poverty in Sri Lanka has risen since 2019, from 11.3% to 12.7% in 2020, adding over 300,000 newly poor in that period. It continued to increase in 2021, and then doubled between 2021 and 2022, from 13.1% to 25.0% (USD 3.65 per capita, 2017 Purchasing Power Parity). This increase has pushed an additional 2.5 million people into poverty in 2022. The assessment has shown that households experiencing food insecurity are reducing their spending on health and education (World Bank 2023).

1.4 Risk Governance - A Key Requisite for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

While the challenges in the face of disaster risk remain widely accepted, there is increasing recognition for the need to strengthen disaster risk management (DRM) by bringing together multiple factors, stakeholders and institutional mechanisms. Disaster risk governance⁴ as an umbrella for this purpose is clearly reflected in the global agreements of 2015, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda.

Inclusion is underscored as paramount in disaster risk governance, corresponding with 'Leave No One Behind', the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs. A major reason for people being abandoned is persistent discrimination,

¹ Maternal mortality ratio (per 1,000 live births), 2014.

² Gender Gap Index reflects four dimensions — Political Empowerment Gap, Economic Participation and Opportunity, Education Attainment and Health and Survival Gap. Source: <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-slips-in-global-gender-gap-rankings-wef-36501/>.

³ Percentage aged 15 and older.

⁴ Disaster risk governance: The system of institutions, mechanisms, policy and legal frameworks and other arrangements to guide, coordinate and oversee disaster risk reduction and related areas of policy. Source: <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster-risk-governance>.

including gender-based, which leaves individuals, families and whole communities marginalized and excluded (UNSDG n.d.).

GESI, while accepted as central and essential for DRM and building resilient communities, is in practice sluggish and protracted in advancing. Disaster risk governance approaches necessitate the integration of climate and DRM, and sustainable development sectors with the social sectors, bringing the perspectives and priorities of all stakeholders, particularly those at higher risk and specifically vulnerable, proactively into the planning and implementation processes.

Inclusive disaster risk governance approaches aim to be shaped by policies, programs and partnerships that bring the perspectives and priorities of all stakeholders, including those at higher risk, into discussion and

decision-making. Further, it gives marginalized groups the opportunity to participate and engage, fostering a sense of ownership as well as responsibility, contributing to their risk reduction capacities in the long term.

In this context, the AWARE platform facilitates the coordination and cooperation among the institutions responsible for strengthening disaster risk governance mechanisms. It does so by adopting a holistic and integrated approach that considers multiple hazards, thresholds and triggers for timely and early action. Integration of socio-economic factors provide insights of risks and their impacts across sectors. The engagement of multiple stakeholders vertically from the national to local level, and horizontally across the development and social sectors, enables the planning and decision-making processes to be better informed and accountable.

2. The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Anticipatory Action

2.1 Anticipatory Action - A Window of Opportunity for GESI

Multiple crises exacerbating the existing vulnerabilities throw light on the root causes of disempowerment and exclusion; consequently, the inequalities arising from socio-economic disparities and gender and age-related discrimination are being highlighted like never before. In this context, GESI is underlined as a strategic imperative for strengthening resilience. This applies to key development sectors such as agriculture, food security and livelihoods, health, water and sanitation.

The primary target group of AA is people vulnerable to hazard risk. Vulnerable people and communities are not homogeneous. A person's sex, gender identity, age, physical ability, race, and nationality are key factors influencing vulnerability and exposure to disaster risk. Factors of vulnerability often intersect, leading to more complex vulnerabilities exacerbating their marginalization in disaster situations. Further, how people perceive risk, prepare and respond to crisis situations, and adapt and recover are shaped by vulnerabilities and capacities distinct to them. The experiences, needs and capacities are different, specific and changing over time. Gender relations are a key consideration in determining vulnerabilities and capacities to disaster risk.

The groups and individuals at greater risk in times of crisis are often the ones that face the highest inequalities in

everyday life. These include people living in rural areas, indigenous peoples and speakers of indigenous languages, women and children, ethnic and linguistic groups, people with disabilities, migrants, gender and sexual minorities, youth and older people. These groups may face greater obstacles in preparing for and recovering from shocks because multiple forms of vulnerability, discrimination and inequality are at play simultaneously (FAO 2020).

Gendered inequalities become barriers and challenges across all areas of early-warning systems and forecast-based early action. Barriers include exclusion in planning, decision making and training due to conflicting care and household responsibilities and the exclusion of gender identities. Further, there is often disregard for gendered differences in literacy, access to information and communication technology in information dissemination strategies, cultural restrictions and mobility.

Disregarding gender differences in roles and responsibilities can also mean that opportunities are being missed, such as not utilizing women-led community support groups and/or informal dissemination networks. Marginalized gender groups have an important capacity and valuable perspectives in finding new solutions and innovations.

Early warning as a key building block of AA opens practical and concrete opportunities to address GESI issues related to disaster vulnerability. Notably, reaching out to the most vulnerable groups in a community at risk being a primary

objective of AA, encourages and enables disaggregation and targeting at two stages in planning and execution: (i) identification of barriers and opportunities by diverse groups of men and women in the community for accessing warning information and for their response capabilities and (ii) dissemination and communication early warning information through methods appropriate for diverse vulnerable groups.

The Early Warnings for All (EW4All)⁵ Initiative called by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2022 reinforces addressing GESI with AA. It underlines that to be effective, early warning systems should not only have a sound scientific basis and reliable technology, but they must also be people-centered, trustworthy and accessible to all. Consideration of the unique needs and capacities of different groups, including marginalized people and specifically vulnerable situations, is underlined. Each of the four pillars of the EW4All, the cornerstone of the initiative, therefore, needs to consider the following GESI aspects:

Disaster risk knowledge and management: Hazard, risk, exposure and vulnerability assessments need to be disaggregated by sex, age and disability criteria as a minimum to obtain accurate profiles of at-risk people for better planning and targeting purposes.

Detection, observation, monitoring, analysis, and forecasting: Aim for impact-based forecasting and warning with the use of hazard, exposure and vulnerability data in their forecasts. Similar to the first pillar, exposure and vulnerability analysis requires the consideration of GESI aspects for meaningful implementation, and reaching out to diverse groups at risk, including the most vulnerable.

Warning dissemination and communication: Act on the last-mile connectivity to ensure that warnings reach the people at risk in time so they can act. Addressing the needs and capabilities of diverse communities at risk, men and women of different age groups and levels of literacy, and those with special needs, is paramount and requires attention.

Preparedness and response capabilities: Focus on early warning and early action, also known as anticipatory action or forecast-based action. For this pillar to be effective, identification of the diverse groups at risk and their specific needs, priorities, and capacities is a must. Consultation of men, women and other genders marginalized due to social, cultural, and economic factors and their meaningful engagement in the planning and execution of AA is crucial.

Protection is another critical issue in addressing disaster vulnerability. Issues of gender-based violence, the safety and protection of women, girls and adolescents are identified as key considerations for AA programming. GESI, therefore, are essential elements of consideration in reaching out to vulnerable communities with AA. The Working Group on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in Anticipatory Action⁶ details as follows (Anticipation Hub ToR n.d.):

- Gender and diversity are about addressing discrimination and understanding people's different needs, risks, and capacities.
- Inclusion means actively addressing exclusion by meaningfully involving and engaging excluded, disabled, and hard to reach people.
- Protection means preventing, mitigating, and responding to violence, notably gender-based violence (GBV), to keep people safe from harm.

2.2 Challenges and Opportunities for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Anticipatory Action

While there is increasing recognition over the importance of integrating protective, gender-transformative, and inclusive approaches in anticipatory action, these are not yet consistently applied and lack the capacity, resources and monitoring mechanisms to ensure successful prioritization and implementation. Therefore, it is vital to further embed these dimensions in AA approaches and build an evidence and advocacy base (Anticipation Hub ToR n.d.).

Vulnerability and exclusion issues remain critical underlying factors of consideration in targeting, identifying early action and delivery, and making financial allocations in the overall decision-making process to ensure participation and access of the diverse, vulnerable groups. Therefore, GESI considerations need to be incorporated from the beginning and throughout the entirety of the AA process; from risk and vulnerability identification to impact monitoring.

As an integral aspect of the DRM process, AA is bound by institutional coordination and governance mechanisms. DRM being a cross-cutting area, institutional linkages for AA broadly include disaster and climate risk management, social security and development sectors. The layers of governance may expand from national to subnational to local.

⁵ EW4All aims to ensure universal protection from hazardous hydrometeorological, climatological and related environmental events through life-saving multi-hazard early warning systems, anticipatory action and resilience efforts by the end of 2027.
Source: <https://earlywarningsforall.org/site/early-warnings-all>.

Challenges

GESI being a global commitment over the last several decades (Annex 2)⁶, at the national level, there are some institutional mechanisms, conceptual frameworks, programs, and indicators of progress for gender-responsive and socially inclusive DRM/CCA. Enabling policies and strategies, and the level of awareness and practice on GESI, however, vary widely at the sectoral and institutional level and across the governance layers; national, provincial, district and local. The Sendai Framework Monitor and the SDG progress reviews indicate that GESI is an area that displays inconsistent and inadequate progress in many countries (UNDRR 2023; United Nations 2023b). More specifically, limitations are observed in the following areas:

Policies and Legislation: GESI commitments are inadequately supported within both the DRM and CCA policies and strategies, as reflected in risk governance and program implementation mechanisms. Further, policy frameworks largely fail to reflect the complementarities between DRM and social protection. There needs to be greater coherence between DRM and social security policies and strategies which can enable provisions for social protection systems in disaster response.

Awareness and Capacities: Knowledge as a resource for gender-responsive and socially inclusive planning and implementation remains low at all levels: national, subnational and institutional. Therefore, GESI aspects are not adequately integrated into the DRM processes and often relegated to being an ‘add-on’ element.

Gaps in disaggregated data, analysis and application: In addition to the gaps in policy, awareness and capacities on issues of marginalization, availability of disaggregated data by sex age, and disability is limited, leading to early warning systems, response and recovery programming that disregard GESI concerns.

Bottlenecks in targeting: An emerging body of evidence indicates that using safety net tools in humanitarian programming, such as cash transfers and in-kind transfers and integrating them into other social protection and public works programs, can have positive effects on gender equality and women’s empowerment (UNDP n.d.). However, targeting women with safety net and insurance-related measures is obstructed by several structural and

systemic barriers, including a lack of data and records, systems for cash transfers, access to banking, and other issues such as limitations in literacy and mobility.

Systemic challenges: GESI are systemic issues; their acceptance can be challenging from social, cultural, political and individual/personal perspectives of the stakeholders. These challenges vary and are largely context-specific, which may require tailor-made approaches.

Opportunities

- AA has the conceptual clarity and strategic scope to seize the momentum of the strongly recognized need for GESI in addressing the multiple crises of the current times; climate related disasters, migration, and the global economic crisis.
- AA is a window in the DRM continuum and has demonstrated speedy outcomes in building the capacity of the vulnerable, leading to strengthened resilience to face future hazards.
- There is an existing and increasing body of work to build upon, including guidelines, expertise, tools, training curricula and programs on GESI.

Given the close linkages of the work on gender and social inclusion in DRM, the Working Group on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in Anticipatory Action (Anticipation Hub ToR n.d.) aims to facilitate greater technical exchange, as well as advocate for and disseminate resources, good practices, lessons learned, and solutions on the integration of protection, gender and inclusion in AA.

It also aims to improve coordination between all the actors involved and the mechanisms and instruments set up by governments, communities, humanitarian and development actors at the global, regional, national and local levels. This is expected to enable AA processes to build on the available technical resources, lessons and good practices.

Annex 3 presents a few case studies based on available literature and field observations, depicting examples of approaches applied for GESI incorporation in AA. It also presents lessons and recommendations for the way forward.

⁶ All 2015/16 global agreements reiterated GESI commitments in DRR, CCA, resilience building, including in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Paris Agreement for Climate Change, Agenda for Humanity and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

3. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy for Anticipatory Action

3.1 Potential of the AWARE Platform for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

The effectiveness of anticipatory action (AA) is often challenged by the lack of coordination and connectivity between its key components: Early Warning, Early Action and Early Finance. As a digitally enabled governance platform, AWARE enables connectivity between the key building blocks for effective AA ahead of climate shocks. Risk governance, a key requisite for gender equality and inclusion supported by the AWARE platform acts as an enabler in advancing action in this direction (Amarnath and Mascarenhas 2023).

The AWARE platform empowers stakeholders by emphasizing multilevel coordination and collaboration for effective responsiveness. The involvement of the decision-makers and stakeholders associated with the three building blocks of AA—the government officials, emergency response managers, humanitarian organizations and the local communities at risk—enable examining the technical aspects of early warning along with the social aspects of access, appropriate communication, the barriers and

opportunities distinctive to the vulnerable groups at programmatic and planning levels. Elements of risk governance associated with multilevel coordination processes promote transparency and accountability for actions and results, supporting GESI advancements.

Vision for GESI within anticipatory action

The DRM community is committed to advancing GESI in planning, financing and implementing anticipatory action that aims to reduce disaster risk in the long term.

The mission for GESI within anticipatory action

GESI becomes an integral component of anticipatory action initiatives, ensuring inclusive outreach and access by the socially, economically and politically marginalized groups, including women and girls.

Figure 1 presents a strategic framework for incorporating GESI aspects into the AWARE platform, outlining a systematic and a consistent approach along with the actions required under each of the key AA building blocks. The key principles and guiding values to follow in ensuring inclusive AA are detailed in the sections below.

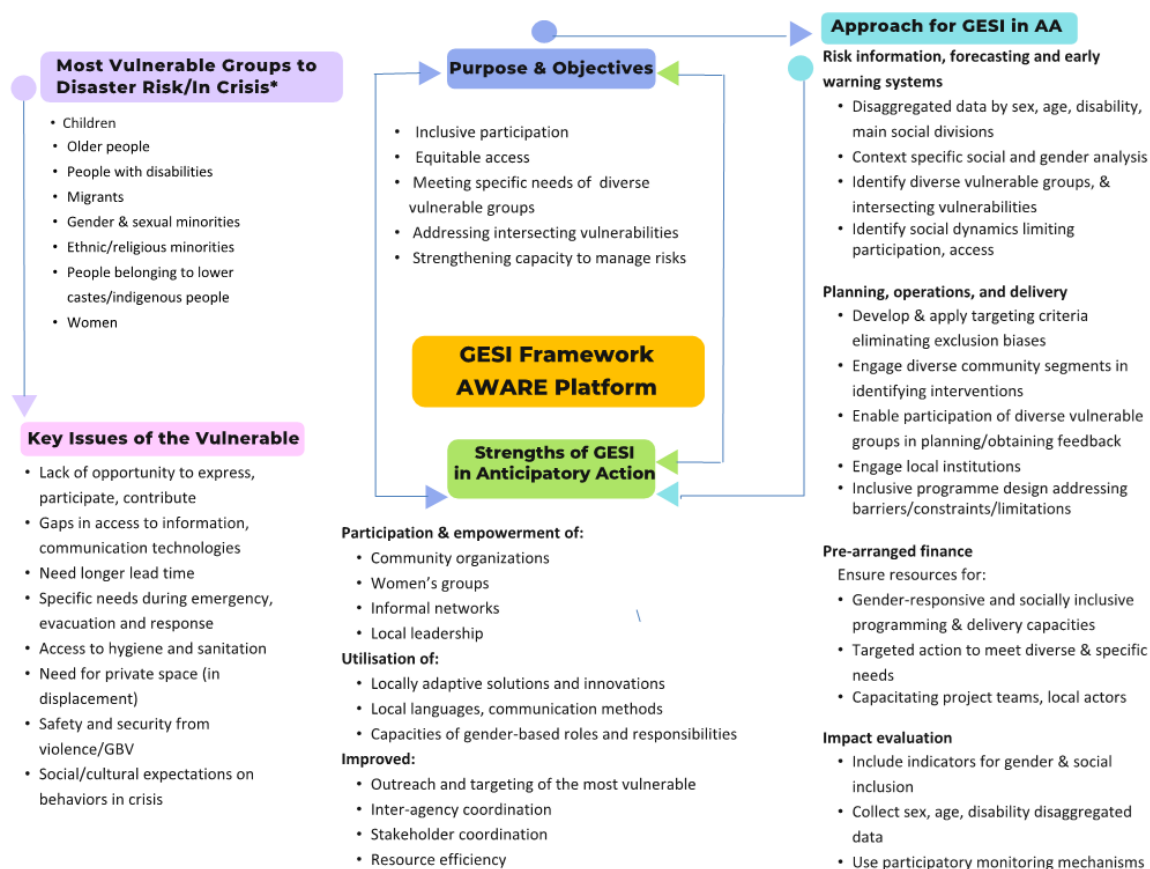


Figure 1. Strategic Framework for Gender Equality and Socially Inclusive Anticipatory Action - AWARE Platform.

*Most vulnerable groups mentioned are not an exhaustive list, the groups can vary with the context.

Source: Author's creation

The GESI strategic framework, consisting of two main segments, supports achieving the main objectives of AA: inclusive participation and equitable access; meeting the specific needs and capacities of diverse groups; addressing vulnerabilities; and most importantly, strengthening the capacities of diverse community groups to manage disaster risk.

The first segment is mapping the community considered for AA and the key issues they are faced with in a disaster context. The second is conducting a social and gender analysis with data and observations disaggregated by sex, age, disability and prevailing social divisions. Social and gender analysis enables the identification of diverse, vulnerable groups in a community, the vulnerabilities and capacities particular to them, and the social dynamics and barriers limiting their participation and access. Thus, a social and gender analysis provides a robust base to inform the activities carried out under each building block of AA: Early Warning, Early Action and Early Finance.

To conduct a gender and social analysis of the communities in a location selected for AA intervention, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods needs

to be employed, to examine the prevailing gender division of labor, gender roles, power dynamics, inequalities in areas such as access to resources, and the socio-cultural factors that are vital for GESI. The factors and processes that act as barriers also need to be determined⁷.

The AWARE platform, guided by the GESI strategic framework is designed to transform AA by ensuring no one is left behind in disaster preparedness and response. It achieves this by enabling targeted interventions that cater to the specific needs of diverse groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups⁸. By fostering inclusive participation and encouraging meaningful community engagement, AWARE enables stakeholders to create and execute AA strategies that tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability. This inclusive approach ensures that the voices and needs of all segments of society, especially the most marginalized, are considered. This ultimately promotes greater resilience in a more equitable manner. Additionally, it fosters a just and effective disaster response framework, resulting in better and more sustainable outcomes. Box 1 presents key features of the AWARE platform that support GESI-integration in AA.

Box 1. The AWARE Platform as an Enabler for GESI in Anticipatory Action.

The recommended action for enabling gender equality and social inclusion in anticipatory action correspond with the key features of the AWARE Platform (Amarnath et al. 2023a):

- Takes a holistic approach, addressing underlying risk drivers, anticipating future hazards and considering long-term climate uncertainties and vulnerabilities.
- Promotes proactive risk reduction and resilience-building, facilitates anticipatory actions, early preparedness and adaptive capacity building, and fosters a culture of resilience to minimize hazard impacts.
- Enables proactive preparedness and response measures by providing warnings and triggering actions before a hazard occurs.
- Incorporates a forward-looking risk assessment, climate and disaster risk information, and considers emerging risks and uncertainties in seasonal climate change.
- Emphasizes early actions, finance and response, bridging the gap between warning and action.
- Engages stakeholders to develop preparedness and response plans, ensuring actionable measures to mitigate risks and reduce impacts.
- Promotes multisectoral collaboration and coordination, integrating knowledge, expertise and resources across sectors and communities to enhance preparedness and response for locally led adaptation strategies.
- Aim to be accessible to a wide range of users by prioritizing clear communication, intuitive interfaces and user-centric design.
- Prioritizes two-way communication and stakeholder engagement, facilitating dialog, feedback loops and participatory processes. It aims to ensure that information is not only shared but also understood, contextualized and acted upon collaboratively.
- Utilizes shared resources and technological advancements and emphasizes the integration of existing resources, knowledge and expertise within a multistakeholder framework to maximize collective capacity.

⁷ Key resource for reference in conducting gender and social analysis include: Food and Agriculture Organization, Field level handbook - Socio Economic and Gender Analysis Programme, 2001. <https://www.fao.org/4/ak214e/ak214e00.pdf>; International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITCILO), Building Block, Useful Gender Analysis

⁸ Frameworks, Block 6: https://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_content/external_files/BB6.pdf. Harvard Analytical Framework.

3.2 Key Guiding Principles for Ensuring GESI in Anticipatory Action

A strategic shift from responding to shocks, to anticipating their impacts and acting early can break the cycle of growing dependence on aid and can contribute to building the resilience and coping capacities of vulnerable people. The underlying primary objective of anticipatory action is that the most vulnerable, diverse groups can contribute, access and benefit, and that the program activities address their specific unmet needs and priorities. The following are key guiding principles that can support realizing this objective:

- i. Collect disaggregated data at the outset by sex, age, literacy levels, people with special needs and social divisions: Ensure that baseline data is collected and/or accessed from the available sources for informing risk and vulnerability analysis and for review and monitoring purposes. Consistent data collection and analysis are essential to monitoring the outcomes of action and informing subsequent implementation.
- ii. A social and gender analysis of the at-risk community: The planning and execution of AA processes need to be informed by context-specific and nuanced social and gender analysis, identifying power dynamics and behavior patterns to enable greater outreach, address intersecting vulnerabilities and broaden the scope for participation.
- iii. Consultation and participation of the at-risk community in assessments and planning: Engagement of the community organizations, women, youth groups, and the local experts is vital in the risk assessments and in the design of the interventions. This contributes to more accurate targeting, identifying the specific needs and concerns of the diverse groups.
- iv. Connect with national institutions and government bodies focal for women, social affairs and social security: It is vital to look into the prevalent policies and mechanisms supporting gender equality and social security, to connect AA with existing schemes and programs, and avoid any duplications and overlaps.
- v. Engage with the local governance institutions: It is important to connect with and build on the existing national and local DRM/response plans and programs, and work through the existing institutional mechanisms to eliminate ad hoc interventions and establish greater coordination for upscaling and continuity.
- vi. Avoid/minimize standalone interventions: The aim should always be to integrate AA with ongoing initiatives that contribute to DRR in the long term. Actions such as supporting livelihoods and cash transfers, therefore, need to connect with the existing disaster contingency, social protection, and social security programs.
- vii. Enable local action, strengthen local capacities: Participation and engagement of communities at risk and the local institutions in the AA planning, execution and monitoring is vital, both for utilizing and enhancing existing capacities at the local level, as well as for reducing dependency and building capacities for risk management.
- viii. Tailor and prioritize action: Considering the possibility of the presence of multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities, context-specific customizing and targeting is important to reach the diverse vulnerable groups identified in the social and gender analysis effectively, and in a nondiscriminatory and equitable manner to guarantee access, participation and dignity.
- ix. Protection should be an integral aspect of AA: Protection concerns need to be duly identified and systematically integrated, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) aspects.
- x. Maintain sensitivity to local cultural and gender norms: This is a critically important concern throughout the planning and delivery processes to ensure that AA does not unintentionally reinforce gender inequalities or cause harm to already vulnerable groups.
- xi. Ensure actions do not exacerbate existing inequalities: When planning and execution processes are not adequately informed, possibilities of creating undue stresses within the community can arise. Therefore, at the very least, 'do not harm strategies' should be considered and followed.
- xii. Use local languages: It is necessary that consultations and engagement with the local institutions, experts, leaders and communities, as well as the communication of AA delivery plans and mechanisms, are carried out in local languages.
- xiii. Consult communities in obtaining feedback: In reviewing progress and assessing the impact of the interventions, feedback from the community organizations can provide valuable insights into achievements, as well as any remaining gaps in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.
- xiv. Include GESI indicators in program monitoring: Program review and evaluation plans should include indicators for GESI and require

disaggregation of monitoring data (sex, age, disability, etc.) to support the analysis.

- xv. Allocate finances for the systematic incorporation of GESI concerns: For effective and consistent GESI outcomes, finances need to be available to secure/develop required expertise, inclusive consultation processes, and delivery mechanisms.

The guiding principles were validated with the community, estate welfare officer, estate management, and DDMCU Officials at the Chrystlers Farm estate in Kotagala, Nuwara Eliya District, presented in Box 2 and Annex 1. This community belongs to the pilot program implementing restoration, early warning and anticipatory action for flood preparedness and mitigation, as outlined in the AWARE early action plans.

Box 2. Guiding Principles for GESI in Anticipatory Action - A Case Study in Sri Lanka.

- Identifying diverse vulnerable groups in the community and the support needed with a gender and social analysis conducted using baseline data disaggregated by sex, age, social divisions, disability, etc.
- Inclusive engagement of women and men in the community, estate management and local disaster management officials in conducting risk assessments and AA planning.
- Accessing climate and weather information and the timely dissemination of early warning messages to the community.
- Setting up a community-based early warning mechanism, where selected community members engage in monitoring of weather information and dissemination of early warnings (with the support and guidance from the estate management and local disaster management officials).
- Making prior arrangements for safer and appropriate temporary locations to evacuate people in the event of flooding.
- Use of local languages in consultations and in engaging local institutions, experts and leaders, as well as in communicating AA delivery plans and mechanisms.
- Engaging the local governance institutions including Grama Niladhari (GN), DDMCU Centre, to eliminate ad hoc interventions and to establish continuity, by building on existing national and local DRM and response programs appropriate for the location.
- Obtaining technical, advisory, financial and other assistance from the DDMCU, technical officers, local government authorities as and when needed, with sensitivity to gender and inclusion issues.
- Setting up of a local/community level institutional mechanism represented by men and women, inclusive of financing and community-based early warning, to enable readiness and planning for anticipatory action with regular, consistent seasonal updates, and for sustaining community engagement.
- More accurate targeting, identifying needs and risks specific to diverse segments of the community through active stakeholder engagement.
- Enhancing skills and capacities of diverse groups of men and women in the community through their active engagement in planning, executing and progress monitoring of AA.
- Renewing AA practices with regular meetings and drills/simulations led by the local/community institutional mechanism, engaging the DDMCU.

4. Recommended Action for GESI in Anticipatory Action

Specific objectives and actions for ensuring that AA remains gender responsive and socially inclusive are presented under the three major building blocks. Box 3 contains ‘Key actions for identifying and addressing GESI issues in AA’.

- i. Early Warning: risk information, forecasting and early warning systems
- ii. Early Action: planning, operations and delivery
- iii. Early Finance: pre-arranged finance

Box 3. Key Actions for Identifying and Addressing GESI Issues in Anticipatory Action.

- Acknowledge and proactively consider gender-based and social inequalities and differential impacts - Requires GESI awareness and commitment of the planning officials/teams.
- Collect disaggregated data by sex, age, disability and social divisions from the outset - Provides visibility to diverse groups/segments of men and women in the community, and to intersecting vulnerabilities.
- Conduct context-specific social and gender analysis - Examines the causes of vulnerability, limitations and barriers including gender stereotypes, access and response capacity issues that need addressing.
- Enable and ensure participation of women, youth groups, community organizations and the local experts in risk assessments, planning and implementation - Contributes to more accurate targeting, identifying the specific needs and capacities including early warning dissemination to diverse groups.
- Maintain sensitivity to local cultural and gender norms - Enables and encourages participation, contribution, and capacity enhancement of men and women in diverse groups.
- Include protection, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as an integral aspect of AA - Requires awareness, recognition and necessary measures by the planning officials/teams.
- Include GESI indicators in program review and monitoring - Require disaggregation of baseline and monitoring data by sex, age, disability and social divisions to support analysis.
- Factor in budgetary requirements for ‘build financing’ and ‘fuel financing’ to support GESI expertise in the teams, and for execution of AA - Requires allocation of financial resources for the entire cycle, from planning to monitoring.

The main objectives of the first building block, **Early Warning: risk information, forecasting and early warning systems** from the GESI perspective are: (i) to identify the diverse and most vulnerable groups within a community at-risk and (ii) to determine the factors of inequalities, constraints and barriers, and the support required to strengthen their coping capacities (Figure 2). This entails risk assessments and disaster impact analysis to fully understand the vulnerabilities and exposure of people in specific locations. More specifically:

- » An in-depth, nuanced understanding of vulnerability, including gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities across the life cycle, inclusive of social and gender analysis to determine issues of marginalization related to ethnicity, age, migration, geographical location and other relevant dimensions.
- » Actively engage diverse community members, community organizations, and CSOs in data collection for risk assessments, to enhance and ensure the accuracy and validity of data and observations.
- » Identify the most vulnerable and at-risk groups in the community and the barriers and inequalities

they face; specific constraints, coping strategies and unmet needs to cope with hazards and disaster risk.

- » Examine the existing social dynamics and how they may affect participation in AA. This includes an understanding of gender relations specific to a location and context, i.e., how existing gender norms define the way men and women are expected to behave and act in the community.
- » Obtain an understanding of how intersecting factors—gender, sex, age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, physical abilities, etc.—lead to vulnerability, and the extent to which diverse groups can participate, access and benefit from AA.
- » Provide opportunities for women to actively participate, ensuring their voices are heard, and address any structural barriers that limit their involvement.
- » Ensure that women staff/team members are present in conducting community consultations, interviews and FGDs with women wherever possible (and where required).

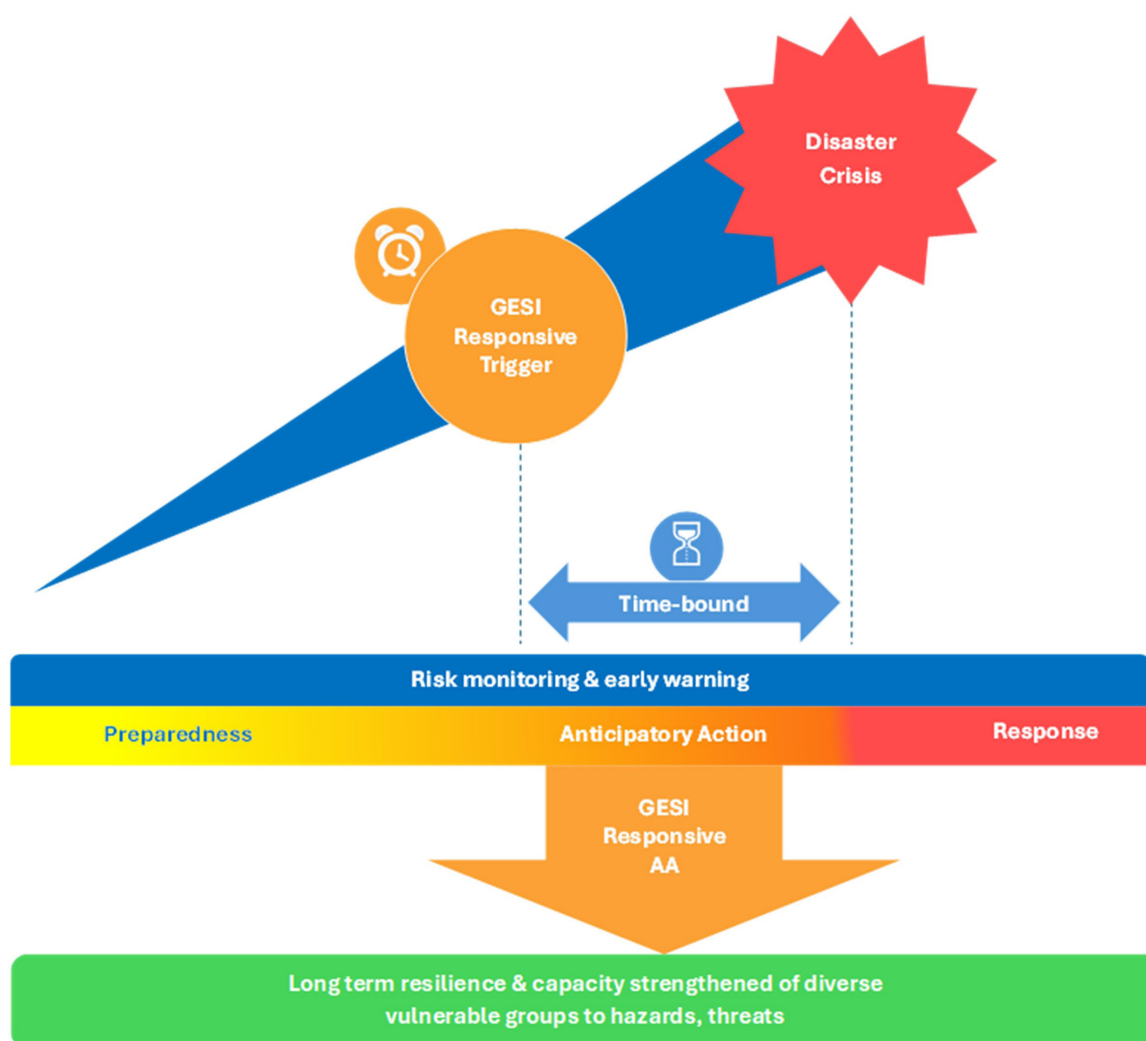


FIGURE 2. Key Characteristics of GESI Responsive Anticipatory Action.

Source: Adapted from ASEAN 2022

- » Engage local expertise in gender and social inclusion in risk and vulnerability assessments, planning and execution. Local experts have better experience on the local social norms and dynamics. Local expertise can be complemented with external expertise where appropriate and as needed.
- » When conducting community consultations and FGDs, address cultural sensitivities and language barriers.

In the second building block, **Early Action: planning, operations, and delivery**, the main objective is to incorporate GESI concerns into program design, action plans, and delivery mechanisms. The following are the key activities required for ensuring GESI considerations in early action⁹:

- » Building on the risk assessment and vulnerability analysis conducted under the first building block, develop targeting criteria, considering the possible

exclusion biases—political, minority, age, gender, etc.—and the protection needs to ensure access and minimize exclusion.

- » In designing program interventions, such as communication of early warning information, proactively take an inclusive approach, addressing the constraints and barriers faced specifically by vulnerable diverse groups.
- » Prioritize interventions proposed by communities, proactively engaging diverse groups in the community for which the AA is aimed for.
- » Recognize and address needs, priorities and realities of men and women in the program design and delivery.
- » Engage the main stakeholders in the planning and execution of AA, building partnerships across line ministries and governance levels: of the government,

⁹ A further resource: Guideline - IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action, The Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action, February 2018.

nongovernmental organizations and CSOs, private sector and the community.

- » Engage the main institutional partners, such as those in DM, social welfare/social protection, relevant local/provincial authorities associated with development planning, to ensure interventions are aligned and integrated with the existing social protection and welfare programs.
- » Leverage the local community organizations by directly engaging women, youth and other community-based organizations to develop sustained capacities for longer-term DRR.
- » Ensure information on early warning and delivery mechanisms is provided in local languages in partnership with the local organizations of women, youth, persons with special needs and other vulnerable groups.
- » Prepare the team members to act responsibly in the communities with which AA is executed. This requires developing knowledge and awareness of the team members on context-specific issues of vulnerability and exclusion, access and protection.
- » To prevent the exclusion of diverse groups, include expertise on social and gender issues and conflict-sensitive approaches in the teams that interact with the communities.
- » Ensure that team members understand the social norms of the location and cultural sensitivities.
- » Build the awareness and sensitivity of the team on the prevalence and prevention of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- » Obtain frequent feedback from community representatives, specifically from diverse vulnerable groups/community organizations, in progress review and monitoring.

Building block three is Early Finance: pre-arranged finance.

The availability of pre-arranged finance is a necessary condition for executing planned anticipatory actions. AA investments are geared to support two main components of pre-arranged finance: ‘build funding’, directed to strengthen anticipatory systems that enable AA and reduce risks, and ‘fuel finance’, a subset of pre-arranged finance, to support the operational aspects of AA (UNDRR 2024; SIDA 2024).

Pre-arranged finance needs to strive to ensure that flexible financial resources required for consistently supporting gender-responsive and inclusive action are available. This entails two main aspects: finances for obtaining gender and social inclusion expertise and capacity building of the main stakeholders; and finances for inclusive program execution and monitoring.

Finances for GESI expertise:

Inclusion of gender and social analysis expertise in the planning, execution, and monitoring teams, falls within the small percentage of anticipatory finance released on a first trigger for ‘readiness’, specifically to pre-position goods and staff/volunteers (UNDRR 2024):

- » Early finance mobilization plans need to factor in the required financial resources to obtain expertise, for conducting gender and social assessments, and for stakeholder capacity building. Further, these team members need to be assigned due authority to effectively contribute to the entire process from planning, design and execution to monitoring of AA initiatives.
- » It is necessary to mobilize and allocate finances to ensure the availability of GESI expertise in both the planning and implementation phases. Addressing vulnerability and exclusion issues requires consistent attention and inputs from planning and implementation to progress reviews.
- » Ensure gender and social integration are not treated as an add-on, secondary, or isolated aspect in the planning and execution process. Embedding gender and social analysis expertise in the project teams, especially in decision-making positions, will lead to better-informed plans and implementation mechanisms and enhance the AA teams' overall awareness of social issues critical for successful initiatives.
- » Further, resource allocation needs to factor in the finances required for the inclusion of women in conducting community consultations, risk and vulnerability assessments, and in program monitoring.
- » It is strongly recommended to consider the financial resources for developing teamwide awareness on GESI aspects in AA. Teamwide understanding of social issues broadens the scope for GESI as a key criterion in all phases of AA, thus supporting the overall advancement of social inclusion.

Finances for inclusive program execution falls under finances for ‘activation’:

Make finances available for targeting the most vulnerable diverse groups with necessary adaptations to meet the specific needs of the elderly, disabled, adolescents, pregnant, lactating mothers and young women. This may include:

- Specific products and equipment/kits, as well as particular delivery processes¹⁰.

- Provision of additional support for diverse groups to meet their specific needs.
- Communication in local languages.
- » Factor in the financial requirements for taking measures for protection, including GBV.
- » Provide finances for executing effective and timely anticipatory action at scale, targeting diverse, vulnerable groups.

¹⁰ Specific gender responsive financing criteria and options widely vary depending on the prevailing social, economic and institutional context of a community. Some options that can be considered are women-led adaptation initiatives; financial/credit schemes that address barriers limiting access. See: Nahar J, Gender Responsive Finance and Budgeting, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bangladesh, 2023. Source: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Bangladesh_GENDER-%20Responsive%20Finance%20and%20Budgeting.pdf. World Bank Blogs, From Rhetoric to Action: Empowering Women Through Gender-Responsive Budgeting, March 2024. Source: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/governance/rhetoric-action-empowering-women-through-gender-responsive-budgeting>.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework

Monitoring and evaluation are key to understanding whether and how AA initiatives are achieving the GESI objectives that they have set out. The following can be identified as key requirements for M&E of gender and social inclusion elements in AA:

- » Include GESI expertise with social and cultural awareness and sensitivity in the M&E teams.
- » Collect disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data by sex, age, disability status and other context-specific social characteristics, at the risk assessment, action planning, implementation, and monitoring stages.
- » Identify appropriate indicators to assess GESI in each of the three building blocks, referring to the vulnerable and excluded groups ascertained in the gender and social analysis.
- » Ensure the inclusion of required indicators to measure participation in assessments and AA planning, contribution to decision-making, access to the support provided, meeting the specific needs, strengthening risk management capacities, etc.
- » Based on the baseline assessment, identify both qualitative and quantitative indicators and aim to track them throughout the program cycle.

- » Include indicators to assess the capacity enhancement outcomes of the local networks and community organizations, the partnerships established between the local governance mechanisms and the community organizations/CSOs, as pointers for strengthening risk management capacities.
- » Incorporate participatory mechanisms in the M&E methodology such as community scorecards, feedback mechanisms and participatory impact evaluations.

The availability and collection of sex, age and disability disaggregated data related to DRM, especially in response planning, has been identified as a challenge, both due to time and financial constraints. Accessing baseline data available for the relevant locations at the local government/administration departments to fill in any remaining gaps is an option to be considered at the planning stages.

Partnering with organizations working on GESI at the national and local levels in monitoring and evaluation can be mutually beneficial in terms of accessing and sharing tools, methodologies, and data.

Annex 4 provides a set of guide questions for evaluation, and suggestions for documenting monitoring outcomes.

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Annex 1. Validation of Guiding Principles: GESI in Anticipatory Action.

Chrystlers Farm estate, Kotagala Anticipatory action for Flood preparedness and mitigation

Introduction

Chrystlers Farm estate, located in Kotagala, Nuwara Eliya District is prone to frequent flooding of a canal running through the tea estate. As a result, dwellings of the population living along the canal are flooded, leading to their displacement. IWMI Sri Lanka is working with the Kotagala estate community to minimize the risk of flash floods and establish an anticipatory action (AA) programme. This is a pilot site selected for developing AA for flood hazards¹¹.

As part of the early action, structural flood mitigation solutions appropriate for this location have been carried out. Based on a technical assessment, and in consultation and participation of the community living along the canal, a part of the canal has been cleaned, and debris has been removed as a structural flood mitigation measure, specifically to improve the flow of rainwater coming from the upstream.

In July 2023, an AA drill followed by alerts from early warning mechanisms has been conducted, engaging the community at Chrystlers Farm estate. This was considered as a first step in flood mitigation, strengthening awareness and resilience of local communities, as well as building local ownership.

Background and context of the estate community

There are in total 452 families living in the Kotagala tea estate, with a sex distribution of 733 males (47.44%) and 812 females (52.2%). About 7% are persons over the age of 65 years, and 3% of the community are people with special needs. The main occupation of the community is labor work in the tea estate. Estate labor force consists of 17% of the working family members (Table A1).

There is no sex-based discrimination in the labor payments; both men and women receive a minimum payment of LKR 1000 per workday¹². Additional payments are made to the workers per kg of extra tea leaves plucked.

According to the welfare officer, there is no reportable abuse of alcohol/drugs in the community—mainly due to the high costs involved in obtaining these substances (this may need further verification).

TABLE A1. Population statistics of the community in the pilot project area.

Number of working families	223	
Number of nonworking families	229	
	Male	Female
Family members (in working families)	531	605
Family members (in nonworking families)	202	267
Number of estate laborers	79	113
People over 65 years of age	44	63
Youth (Approximately 16–25 years of age)	112	126
Children under 5 years	51	54
School-attending children	169	217
People with disabilities	11	12
People who are dependent due to sickness, etc.	10	11
Families headed by women		19
Pregnant women (according to the information available)		08
Families with livestock (cows/goats)		36
People engaged in other income generating activities		32

¹¹ A collaborative effort between IWMI, World Vision Sri Lanka, the Disaster Management Center (DMC) of the Nuwara Eliya District, the Sri Lanka Red Cross, local District Secretariat, National Building Research Organization, National Disaster Relief Services Centre and Department of Agrarian Development. A detailed account of the pilot project activities is available in: <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/helping-communities-help-themselves-early-warning-systems-help-save-lives>.

¹² Determined in tripartite discussions by the Plantation companies, trade unions and the government.

As population statistics indicate, the community in the project area consist of persons with varying socio-economic characteristics, with reference to employment status, age and sex. The elderly and the persons with specific needs are approximately 10% of the community, while 6.7% are children under 5 years. Of the total households, 4.2% are female-headed. Planning and execution of AA must consider the needs and priorities from the perspectives of those who have specific considerations, specifically:

- i. Men (44) and women (63) who are over 65 years (7% in total)
- ii. Children under 5 years — 51 boys and 54 girls (6.7% in total)
- iii. Men and women with special needs — those who are dependent and those with disabilities
- iv. Families headed by women (4.2%)
- v. Pregnant women

Each of the above groups comes with specific requirements that need to be met in accessing and responding to early warning messages, in flood preparedness, and in flood response. Therefore, it is critical that these specific requirements are identified and incorporated into AA planning and execution mechanisms. As a rule, community members extend their help to those with special needs in the times of need. However, it is important to identify these groups and their needs to take appropriate measures in planning AA. It is also important to engage the diverse groups in the community in executing the actions.

Further, it is important that all groups listed in Table A1 are consulted, specifically male and female youth, to identify the AA that are locally relevant and enable their participation and consistent engagement.

Guiding principles

The guiding principles for conducting AA, presented in Section 3.2, Box 2 were discussed and validated for supporting GESI for flood mitigation in the Kotagala estate. The discussion for validating the guiding principles was held on September 9, 2024 with the representatives of the community, the estate management and the welfare officer, GN, and the DDMCU officials.

- i. Identify vulnerable groups: Collection of and/or accessing relevant data was undertaken from the available sources, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and social analysis. This helped identifying diverse and vulnerable groups and the support they need (Table A1).
- ii. Community participation in risk assessments and planning: Men and women in diverse groups in the community, estate management (including the welfare officer), local disaster management officials were consulted at the planning stages as well as in assessing progress. This helped in more accurate targeting, identifying the risks and the needs specific to diverse groups.
- iii. Community-based flood warning: DDMCU official agreed to provide rainfall gauges and to train the members of the early warning committee on installation and measuring rainfall. The estate management also agreed to provide rainfall data maintained by the estate.
- iv. Appropriate evacuation spaces: Discussions were held between the committees, estate management and the local officials. Further improvements for a more suitable location are yet to be made.
- v. Use of local languages: Consultations during the planning phase and following the simulation exercise were conducted in local languages (Tamil and Sinhala), with a translator where necessary.
- vi. Engagement of the local governance institutions: GN, the DDMCU, and relevant technical officers were consulted and engaged in conducting risk assessments and planning of AA to eliminate ad hoc interventions and to establish continuity.
- vii. Committees representing diverse groups: Voluntary committees have been set up for maintaining the canal, for a community-based flood warning mechanism. The GN, welfare officer of the estate management, and the DDMCU officials are connected with the Committees in an overseeing capacity.
- viii. Obtaining community feedback: Diverse groups in the community were consulted, including the committees that were established in follow up to the AA simulation, GN and the DDMCU officials, obtaining feedback post-monsoon since conducting the simulation exercise in 2023.
- ix. Incorporation of community feedback: Community and the estate management discussed a forward plan and agreed for shared and assigned responsibilities, to conduct regular meetings focusing on flood management.

- x. Community ownership: Community participation in cleaning the canal, in planning and implementation has enabled utilizing their capacity and creating ownership of the actions, as well as their ability to plan for future flood incidents.
- xi. Financing: Consultations were held following the simulation exercise, leading to an agreement to set up a fund with regular contributions to manage infrastructure such as canal cleaning, and community spaces. Contributions to the fund as agreed consist of an allocation from the estate management, IWMI with seed funding, and affordable monthly contributions from the community members.
- xii. Renew anticipatory action practices: Collective agreement reached to conduct regular meetings/drills/simulations led by the local/community institutional mechanism engaging the local DM institutes.
- xiii. Advisory and technical support: DDMCU, technical officers, the local government authorities and the estate management agreed to support and oversee community efforts providing technical, advisory, financial, and other assistance when needed with sensitivity to gender and inclusion issues.

The following institutional and resource mobilization mechanisms have been agreed upon to safeguard the measures taken for flood risk reduction:

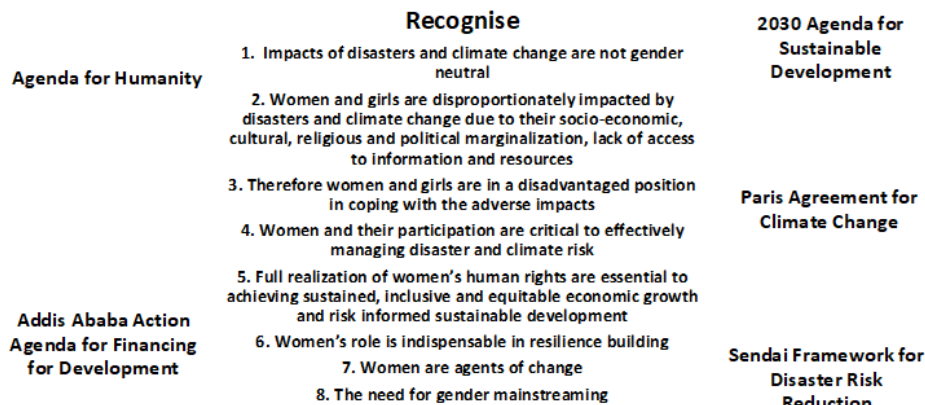
- A subcommittee consisting of seven community members formed for regular canal cleaning (dedicated subcommittee through the existing Disaster Management Center subcommittees).
- A proposal aiming for a win-win position by creating a fund for canal cleaning, where community members contribute on a regular basis (USD 0.3 per month), supported by the estate management (maintaining a 60/40 ratio), with the possibility of IWMI contributing with seed funding.
- In addition to matching with 40% of the cash contribution, the estate management will provide machinery for regular cleaning of the canal.
- A team of volunteers from the community has been formed to police and report (to the estate management/ to the Public Health Inspector) any garbage dumping into the canal, dividing sections of the canal to monitor between the committee members.
- The Disaster Management Center committees established at the GN level to be reactivated, linking with the flood management/ anticipatory action.
- Setting up of a community-based early warning mechanism with the support of the DDMCU:
 - IWMI will provide indicative values based on historical rainfall data.
 - Designated community members will be trained to use rain gauges to measure rainfall.
 - DDMCU will help to assess the threshold of flood, so that community can take appropriate preparedness measures.
 - Community representatives will be earmarked and trained to communicate flood warning messages to the community.
 - Appropriate modality of messaging: WhatsApp messaging or the usage of the *kovil* (temple) bell, etc., to be discussed in a meeting before the onset of monsoons in mid-October, with the participation of the DDMCU.

Remaining challenges:

- There is no suitable evacuation space to move people to during a flood; the current option is the preschool, which also gets flooded, cutting off access.
- Managing sudden flooding of houses was cited by the community as a challenge. However, this is expected to be resolved with the structural measures taken.

Annex 2. GESI in the Global Frameworks Supporting the 2030 Agenda.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Global Guidance Frameworks supporting 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



Commit and call action for



Source: Ariyabandu 2023.

Annex 3. Selected Best Practices, GESI Integration in Anticipatory Action Mechanisms.

Integrating protective, gender-transformative and inclusive approaches into anticipatory action: snapshots from Nepal

The forecast-based action and shock responsive social protection project led by the Nepal Red Cross Society In taking anticipatory action (AA), protection, gender and inclusion are identified as crucial for addressing intersecting vulnerabilities and to ensure they are not exacerbated (Karki et al. 2022).

Nepal has a deeply divided and hierarchical society. Social marginalization aggravates the vulnerabilities brought by disasters. Caste, gender or disability can create barriers that obstruct access to the support or services needed to recover from a disaster. In addition, intersecting vulnerabilities—where people are vulnerable in one or more ways—could mean there are specific needs to be considered. Vulnerable groups and the nature and extent of their vulnerabilities differ widely; they cannot be supported by homogeneous approaches to humanitarian support.

Anticipatory action has the potential to mitigate these intersecting vulnerabilities by acting in advance and targeting the populations most at risk of forecast shocks. It provides a way to drastically improve the ability of humanitarian actors to mitigate and respond to the specific impacts caused by intersecting vulnerabilities.

In defining AA ahead of floods, UNICEF Nepal has adapted a three-way approach to achieve this: (i) set protection-sensitive triggers, (ii) prioritize vulnerabilities using a protective, gender-sensitive and inclusive lens and (iii) adopt protective, gender-sensitive and inclusive early actions.

Set protection-sensitive triggers

The Nepalese Protection Cluster's emergency preparedness tool for protection monitoring and incident reporting is anchored in a network of local volunteers and informants. This tool increases the monitoring of protection risks and strengthens the analysis and usability of pre-crisis and disaster-protection data. The key informant networks for protection monitoring and incident reporting include women's and youth organizations, and aim to include associations for people with disabilities in the near future. Engaging such organizations builds upon their networks and ensures the voices of underrepresented groups are considered in preparedness work. The tool enables collecting protection-sensitive information from historical patterns of population movement before and after a shock, including causes of displacement, the prioritization of groups to be evacuated, areas of displacement, and perceptions of urgent needs and protection risks among the affected populations.

As a result of this deeper analysis of protection, vulnerable households were identified ahead of the activation for possible cash transfers—not only in the municipalities directly affected by floods, but also in those which were hosting displaced people as well as where households' incomes, support mechanisms or access to services were closely tied to the places affected by flooding.

Prioritize vulnerabilities using a protective, gender-sensitive and inclusive lens

For a forecast-based action model to function, it is essential to know which groups are more likely to be affected. This allows for planning which early actions need to be prioritized and where they should be implemented. Vulnerability and capacity analysis are the basis for prioritizing the communities, households and individuals more likely to be affected by a hazard, i.e., pregnant and lactating mothers or people with disabilities.

Four indicators were identified for vulnerability analysis: (i) social, (ii) physical, (iii) economic and (iv) coping capacity. Using these in the analysis ensured that intersecting vulnerabilities could be considered when planning early actions, and that the most vulnerable individuals and households could be reached as a priority, especially with limited time and resources.

The Nepal Red Cross Society also integrated a geo-referenced household-level database into the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority's BIPAD portal. This encouraged the Government of Nepal and humanitarian actors to consider the intersecting vulnerabilities during their decision-making processes.

Adopt protective, gender-sensitive and inclusive early actions

A simulation exercise on AA was conducted, in which community-based feedback mechanisms helped to gather recommendations for revising the matrix of early actions. This helped unpick coordination challenges and opportunities for the local disaster management committee and the GESI focal point at the municipal office.

The early action matrix clearly defines the role of different departments in the municipal office. The data collected on pregnant and lactating women can be used to take early actions, such as early evacuations or the provision of food and non-food items to meet their specific needs.

One month later, Nepal was hit by an unseasonal monsoon. While this event had a very short lead time, the previous anticipatory action preparations proved to be invaluable in responding to this emergency. In just a few hours, the Nepal Red Cross Society—acting as an auxiliary to local authorities—disseminated early warning messages through multiple channels. Family members and neighbors were encouraged to pass the information on to senior citizens and people with disabilities. Families living along the rivers expected to face flooding were evacuated to safe sites and shelters and provided with assistance for three days.

By using the government's social protection system alongside prior identification of the most vulnerable households, rapid cash assistance was facilitated to the individuals and families most at risk, including people with disabilities, single and widowed women, children, and elderly people.

The case study concludes that integrating protection, gender, and inclusion considerations into AA initiatives is a crucial step in tackling the intersecting vulnerabilities that affect the delivery of humanitarian assistance. It also helps to ensure that any assistance provided does not further exacerbate these vulnerabilities. These three factors should be considered at all stages of the AA process, as they not only affect the type of assistance provided and where it is carried out but also the target beneficiaries and modalities of early warning and delivery mechanisms.

Anticipatory Action and Child Protection: Acting Early to Better Protect Children in Emergencies

Early action to prevent short-term and long-lasting life-threatening risks to children is a humanitarian imperative. Yet, resources and services to protect children in emergencies are lacking. Unlocking the potential of anticipatory humanitarian action to reduce the protection risks faced by children is essential and must be accelerated. Preventative actions can have a crucial impact in ensuring children's rights and best interests (Oettli 2021).

In order to improve child protection in emergencies, the IFRC, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre, and the Anticipation Hub, supported by the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, have developed a new Issue Brief exploring the links between anticipatory action and child protection (IFRC 2021).

For instance, the inclusion of child protection and education-related concerns as part of the anticipatory actions, triggers and indicators is essential to meet the needs of children in emergencies.

In addition, fostering coordination between local government authorities, youth-led and community-based organizations, United Nations, and Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to jointly develop in-depth analyses of local child protection risks and drivers is vital to establish relevant, and ideally joint interagency early actions. Such actions can help protect children and safeguard their rights and access to essential public services at all times.

How to comprehensively integrate social protection, gender and inclusion in anticipatory action: a case study from Nepal

Protection, gender and inclusion are prioritized from risk assessment to response for ensuring that the unique needs and vulnerabilities of various groups are addressed.

During the risk assessment phase, the diverse social dynamics and power structures within communities are considered. This includes identifying individuals at risk—women, children, persons with disabilities, and marginalized community members—and understanding their specific risks and challenges. Accounting for these factors, targeted and inclusive anticipatory action plans are developed and executed (Owd and Oettli 2023).

A proactive approach consists of prepositioning emergency supplies and resources in disaster-prone areas. This ensures that vulnerable groups in times of crisis have access to essential items including food, water, first aid and hygiene kits. Training sessions and mock drills are also conducted to enhance the disaster response capacities of communities, with a particular focus on empowering women, children and marginalized groups.

Groups of adolescents were particularly involved in the capacity-building sessions and are considered as key actors in the inclusive early-warning communication channels established for emergencies. For example, adolescent girls voiced their concerns around intimacy and the risks of violence. Consequently, temporary evacuation sites were adapted to accommodate separate toilets and women- and child-friendly accessible bathrooms, and breastfeeding and changing rooms were created.

During the early warning phase, the National Societies strive to make information accessible to all, regardless of the literacy level or language diversity (including disability). Text messages, radio broadcasts, community networks and volunteers are used to disseminate timely alerts and early warnings about potential hazards. This enables communities to take immediate action to protect themselves and their assets.

In the response phase, the National Societies establish safe spaces where the most vulnerable groups—including women, children, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and other marginalized groups, including survivors of sexual and gender-based violence—can receive support and protection to address their specific needs and ensure their safety and well-being. Inclusive relief support comprises specifically needed items, establishing a helpdesk for feedback, reporting and response mechanisms, and also referral pathways for additional support (e.g., psychosocial counseling, health, and legal support).

In all stages of the disaster response process, community engagement is prioritized. Local knowledge and expertise are valued, and community members—particularly women, children and marginalized groups—are involved in decision-making processes. Their active participation ensures that their voices are heard, their concerns are addressed, and that they become agents of change in their communities.

Overall, Nepal's comprehensive integration of protection, gender and inclusion throughout the disaster response process showcases a commitment to leaving no one behind. Prioritizing the protection, gender equality and social inclusion of vulnerable groups helps to build a more resilient and equitable society.

Annex 4. Questions to Guide Program Evaluation.

- Have the interventions been designed, and measures taken to target the vulnerable and excluded groups identified in the risk assessment?
- Has the program been designed to meet the needs and expectations of vulnerable and excluded groups?
- Has it addressed the issues of protection adequately and systematically?
- What are the effects of the program activities on women, men, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups?
- What program outcomes contribute to risk reduction in the short- and medium-term?
- What program outcomes contribute to enhancing the capacities of vulnerable communities, local networks and community organizations?
- What are the partnerships/institutions that have supported advancing the GESI outcomes of the program?
- What are the internal and external limitations and gaps observed in achieving the GESI objectives that the program has set out to achieve?
- What are the resources expended to pursue GESI objectives in the program?
- What are the lessons for gender and social inclusion specific to the socio-economic context of the project as recommendations for a way forward?

Following is a set of criteria for monitoring and evaluating GESI in projects and programs, developed by the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Working Group, International Development Partners Group, Nepal that can be adapted for AA interventions (International Development Partners Group Nepal 2017).

Monitoring

- Identify the disaggregation framework and the outcome indicators and how they will be measured at the outset.
- Collect data and document the baseline status referring to the indicators before making AA interventions.
- Include GESI/social science and statistical expertise and GESI responsibilities in the monitoring ToRs.
- Where possible, monitoring and evaluation should include the participation of local stakeholders and target groups.
- Collect and use disaggregated data and evidence on issues and changes affecting the vulnerable and excluded to better inform decisions.

Evaluation

- Ensure that evaluations include GESI-related questions that are linked to the AA project/program ToR and situational analysis.
- Include a GESI expert in the evaluation team and seek to ensure that teamwide understanding of GESI within the context of the project/program being evaluated.
- Collect feedback from vulnerable/excluded groups identified in the gender and social assessment using appropriate tools.
- Use the tools and instruments that clearly capture disaggregation and issues impacting the vulnerable and excluded people identified in the gender and social assessment.
- Use both quantitative and qualitative methods whenever possible.

- Analyze disaggregated data using the pre-identified indicators to assess how the vulnerable and excluded people were reached, engaged and supported through AA interventions, and identify any gaps and remaining issues.
- Include explicit documentation of the implications and impact of the AA interventions on the vulnerable and excluded people identified at the baseline.
- Develop a management response plan that includes actions to address GESI-related findings and recommendations.

Documentation of M&E outcomes

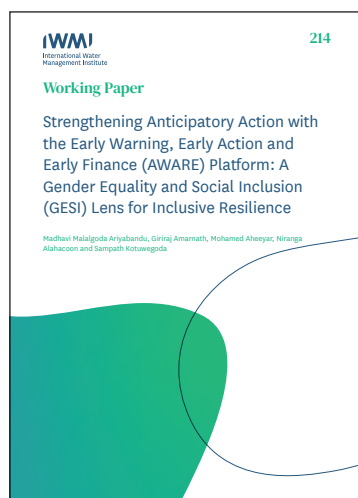
In documenting the analysis, the following aspects are suggested for attention (World Vision 2020):

- Were there barriers for participation and access for vulnerable groups during the consultations and implementation, and if so, what were the barriers?
- What were the barriers for participation and access by women in the community?
- How has the AA interventions attempted to remove these barriers?
- How has the participation and expression of views by the vulnerable, excluded and women improved as a result of the interventions?
- How has the AA interventions improved the access of women and other excluded groups to resources, opportunities and services?
- Were there any exclusion dimensions not identified in the risk assessment?
- What were the tools and approaches used in the intervention that were socially appropriate and instrumental to advance GESI objectives?

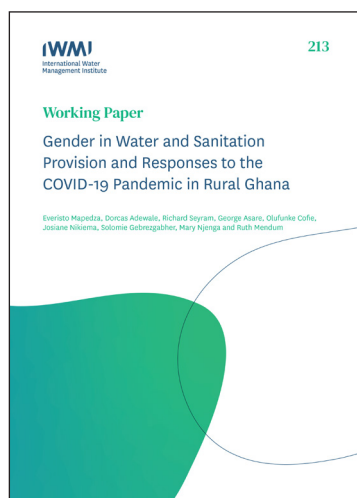
It is recommended that in addition to a section detailing GESI considerations, GESI matters should be referred to and linked throughout the project M&E report, i.e., using GESI as a lens in conducting the M&E of the program:

- Gender-related and social inclusion lessons should be captured and documented in the 'Recommendations' section to ensure learning is taken on in moving forward.
- Successful tools and mechanisms for advancing GESI-related changes should be linked with programmatic interventions that support an integrated approach.
- The evaluation results should aim to show programmatic effectiveness for vulnerable and excluded groups, not only accountability to project management and performance on targets.

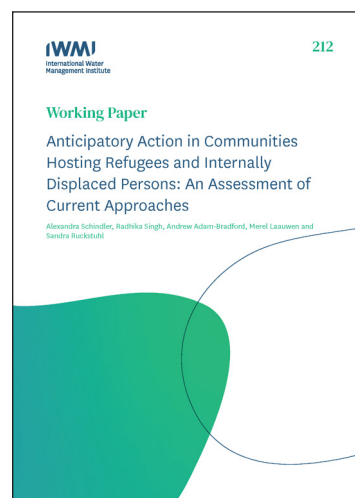
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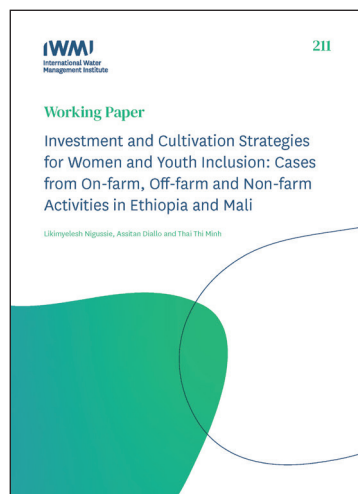
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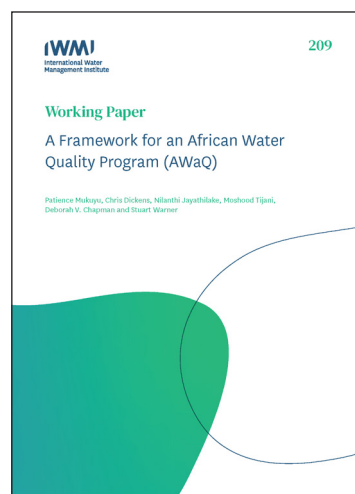
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<https://doi.org/10.5337/2024.201>



209 A Framework for an African Water Quality Program (AWaQ)
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