



Social Science Community Newsletter

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Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services: The Benefits of Working Together. 3rd WMO Gender Conference, Geneva, 2014.

“Extreme weather and climate change are not blind to gender. We need responses to environmental change that are sensitive to existing inequalities, empowering women to be agents of change”. Laura Furgione, Deputy Assistant Administrator, NWS.

Extreme weather and climatic events are global threats, but not all populations and groups are affected equally.

In the past decades, studies have shown that natural disasters such as droughts, floods and storms kill globally more women than men¹. For example, 90% of the victims of the 1991 Cyclone that desolated southeastern Bangladesh were women². About 65% of deaths from the heat wave that stroke Paris and large areas of Europe in 2003 were female³, with significant higher impacts in elderly women groups in other Mediterranean regions⁴.

Why disasters seem to affect particular sectors of the population more than others can partially respond to the way societies define social roles^{5,6}. Women’s social status and rights as well as cultural and religious practices can prevent women from participating equally in social life. This might restrict their access to information on weather and climate risks, shelters and medical resources.

In other cases, however, gender differences can increase mortality of men. Many societies believe that men are the “stronger sex”, fostering expectations of “heroic actions”⁷. Some of these ideas lead men to not take adequate precautions and take unnecessary risks that result in death.

To reduce the differential impact of extreme events on populations, organizations like WMO and NOAA are developing actions that specifically target gender issues. For instance, NOAA is working to better integrate societal perspectives, and their impacts on safety behavior into our weather products and services.

A team of NOAA scientists led by NWS Deputy Assistant Administrator Laura Furgione will represent our Nation in the 3rd World Meteorological Organization Gender Conference at Geneva. In Furgione’s vision, gender inequalities offer opportunities for introducing change at the heart of communities. In their role as caretakers and decision-makers at the household level, women are often important vehicles for championing new ideas such as efficient energy use and intelligent consumption practices.

At NOAA, we are enhancing health and gender equity by identifying underlying sources of weather and climate vulnerability. It is in our mission to provide actionable information and scientific advice that can help decision-makers at all scales of the government to create sustainable long-term policies. For more information on these efforts please contact socsci.ppi@noaa.gov.



Photo Credit: V.C. Ramenzoni. Wolotopo Village, Flores, Indonesia.



Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan, First American woman to walk in space

Thirty years ago, on October 11th, Dr. Sullivan became the first American woman to walk in space, and, later, served as a member of the shuttle crew that deployed the Hubble Space Telescope. As NOAA’s Administrator, Dr. Sullivan leads an agency striving to enrich people’s lives through science. Named one of Time Magazine’s 100 most influential people for 2014, Dr. Sullivan is a magnificent example of a scientist who overcame gender barriers to serve both people and the planet.

News & Opportunities

ACES Conference. Linking Science, Practice and Decision Making. December 8-12, 2014. Washington, DC. More information [Here](#).

Restore America’s Estuaries Conference. Inspiring Action, Creating Resilience. November 1-6, 2014. Washington, DC. More information [Here](#).

International Association for the Study of the Commons. Deadline for abstracts and symposiums: November 1st. [Here](#).

Society for Applied Anthropology. Deadline for abstracts: October 31st. [Here](#).

American Anthropological Association Meeting. Washington, DC, December 2014. [Here](#). **Special Lecture by Bruno Latour.**

World Disasters Report 2014 – Focus on Culture and Risk ([HERE](#))



Photo Credit: Yuichi Nishimura.
<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/jetstream/tsunami/tsunamiready.htm>

The 2004 South East Asian Tsunami killed an estimated total of 178,000 people in Indonesia⁹. It was considered in Banda Aceh, a punishment from Allah due to modern tourism and oil industry practices¹⁰, ¹¹. Local beliefs played a significant role, transforming and adapting recovery programs¹¹.

Why do people chose to live in high-risk areas? How do people explain the causes of disasters? What prevents people from evacuation when exposed to danger?

The World Disaster Report is an annual publication by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFCR). The 2014 report explores the connections between disaster risk reduction and culture.

Culture, a corpus of practices and beliefs that encompasses religion, guides the way we live within a society and shapes how we see the world. Culture also helps us contextualize and understand environmental risks, like extreme weather conditions and disasters⁸.

Given that culture is an important component of how people respond to risk, we need to understand cultures to better communicate risk information. “[I]t cannot be assumed that information or even education is a guarantee that people will face up to the risks they are confronted with. Culture, psychology and emotion intervene as ‘filters’ that alter the way information is used. Any new knowledge has to interact with attitudes and emotions.¹⁰”

Efforts across international organizations such as IFCR or the United Nations Environmental Program emphasize the importance of tailoring the message to multiple audiences, recognizing differences in cultural values, gender and livelihoods, and adopting a participatory approach. Communications need to build from local systems of knowledge and common experiences. Connections between day to day realities and risks are effective ways to bring points close to home¹². In addition, research shows that risk education needs to be incorporated in scholar programs as kids tend to be very receptive to this type of information⁹.

References

- 1: WHO Report on Gender and Climate Change. 2011.
- 2: Ikeda 1995. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 2(2), 171:193.
- 3: Toulemon, L., & Barbieri, M. 2005. XXV International Population Conference.
- 4: D'Ippoliti et al. *Environmental Health* 2010, 9:37.
- 5: Neumayer and Plumper 2007. *Annals of the Association of Am. Geographers* 97(3), 551:566.
- 6: Skinner, Emmeline. *Gender and climate change: Overview report. Bridge*, 2011.
- 7: *World Disaster Report. 2014. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.*
- 8: Terry Cannon. 2008. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An Int. Journal* 17(3), 350:357.
- 9: Morin et al. 2008. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal* 17(3), 430:446.
- 10: *World Disaster Report. 2014. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies: 65.*
- 11: Régnier et al. 2008. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal* 17(3), 410:430.
- 12: Center for Research on Environmental Decisions. 2009. *The Psychology of Climate Change*

Did you know?

The Ocean Economy employs more than twice as many people as the agriculture sector and pays more than three times in wages.

Recent publications in Social Science

Healthy Oceans— Resiliency

- * [Whatever Happened to the Wreckfish Fishery? An Evaluation of the Oldest Finfish ITQ Program in the United States](#)
Marine Resource Economics. Yandle and Crosson.
- * [Lifting the goliath grouper harvest ban: Angler perspectives and willingness to pay.](#)
Fisheries Research. Schideler et al. 2015.
- * [The Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper IFQ Program: The First Five Years.](#)
Marine Resource Economics. Agar et al. 2014

Climate Adaptation and Mitigation –WRN

- * [Cyclone Center: Can Citizen Scientists Improve Tropical Cyclone Intensity Records?](#)
AMS. Hennon et al.
- * [Social justice in climate services: Engaging African American farmers in the American South](#)
Climate Risk Management. Furman et al.
- * [Integrating scientific and local knowledge to inform risk-based management approaches for climate adaptation](#)
Climate Risk Management. Kettle et al.

We would like your input. Please send us ideas for stories, articles, or social science work that we should highlight. You can contact us at: ppi.socsci@noaa.gov