



# WARNINGS IN VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT

## Coproducing warnings with and for those most at risk

### Key Points

- Best practices for coproducing warnings must extend to places with conflict, armed aggression, and widespread violence
- The core local systems that serve conflict-affected populations must be at the centre of warning systems

### State of the Art

People living in places affected by violence disproportionately experience and are impacted by natural hazard-related disasters, yet they are often left without adequate early warning and response systems. Warnings are known to be best developed and implemented through people-centred approaches like coproduction. The process of coproduction seeks to develop partnerships with the people positioned to use and support early warning systems from the “first mile” of agenda setting and design through to implementation, dissemination, and management [1]. However, coproducing warnings in conflict contexts necessitates engaging people and institutions that may be in direct conflict with each other, perpetrate and be affected by violence, and/or benefit from the status quo. The lack of policies and best practices tailored for these contexts has led to ignoring or avoiding these complexities and treating warnings as a technical exercise to be solved by external experts. This has produced warnings detached from the early and sustained actions and responses necessary for mitigating disaster impacts, and such warnings can also be counterproductive to the needs of these populations.

### Core Needs

In order to advance global ambitions to protect all people on the planet with early warning systems [2], it is urgent to tailor practices in coproduction to reach and benefit the one quarter of the global population living in conflict-affected contexts. Coproducing warnings with affected populations as target end users is necessary for inclusive outcomes, along with the need for bringing other regional and national actors into the coproduction process. Developing warnings around core local systems can further enhance protections for affected populations. Core local systems are those that people contribute to and depend on to meet their basic needs – such as those involved in the provision of supplies, shelter, and social support – before, during, and after disasters. These core local systems can also play essential roles in the development and management of disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response capacities tied to warnings. Engagement strategies would benefit from assessing how violence and conflict limit and shape the equitable and sustained delivery of services, facilitating the cooperative relationships needed to stabilize and strengthen core local systems, and leveraging them as means for two-way communication with hard-to-reach segments of the population.

### Recommendations / Guidance

- Engage with and strengthen core local systems that provide critical support for affected populations.
- Support the institutional relationships needed to enact and sustain early actions, forecasting, and response.
- Build mechanisms to prevent disruptions related to insecurity, develop capacities for nonviolent conflict resolution, and avoid unintended consequences on violence, conflict, and insecurity.

### Warnings for Floods and Landslides in Violent Informal Settlements in Honduras [3]

Honduras experiences frequent as well as severe floods and landslides, including those related to extreme events like Hurricane Mitch (1998) and Tropical Storm Agatha (2010). In the capital Tegucigalpa, 52% of the population lives in informal settlements and is particularly vulnerable to disasters in part due to extremely high rates of territorial gang violence, social-political exclusion, in- and out-migration, and extreme poverty. These conditions create and compound disaster risks [4], and they also constrain coproducing all stages of early warning and response systems, including 1) conducting risk awareness, 2) establishing and monitoring alert thresholds, 3) disseminating alerts to everyone, and 4) strengthening response capacity and contingency planning.

The humanitarian NGO GOAL has coproduced early warning and response systems for floods and landslides in Tegucigalpa since 2010, noting the need for ongoing practices of coproduction. In addition to city-wide initiatives, they have focused programming on informal settlements mainly located in the city’s peripheries and along the river floodplain with the highest disaster risk. GOAL worked through a local systems approach by coproducing warnings with people living and working in the informal settlements alongside the actors involved in governance and the provision of services, and together they pursued long-term vulnerability reduction and capacity building. Key outcomes on effectiveness and sustainability include that people (including children) know their risks, local zones of safety, and what to do in an emergency, and they are willing to work together on community improvement efforts [5].

#### Key Strategies to Codevelop Early Warning and Response Systems Amidst Violence and Conflict

- Protecting, stabilizing, and strengthening core local systems;
- Engaging the capacities of key local actors, such as women and youth, who are often victims of violence, alongside municipal, regional, and national actors;
- Securing trust and goodwill with all key stakeholders through long-term partnerships and transparency;
- Cultivating positive public spaces for community dialogue, social cohesion programming, and related activities;
- Promoting partnerships in governance through establishing well-defined roles, distribution of authority, and processes for decision making and dispute resolution;
- Building local capacities in effective communication, conflict resolution, and collaborative planning.



Local “prevention preachers” make door-to-door visits to increase awareness of risks and the early warning and response system, encouraging community members to participate (photo GOAL)

#### References

- [1] Kelman, I., & Glantz, M. H. (2014) [Early warning systems defined. In Reducing disaster: Early warning systems for climate change](#) (pp. 89-108). Springer, Dordrecht.
- [2] UN. (2022). [COP27: \\$3.1 billion plan to achieve early warning systems for all by 2027.](#)
- [3] Peters, L. E. R. et al. (2022). [Informality, violence, and disaster risks: Coproducing inclusive early warning and response systems in urban informal settlements in Honduras.](#) *Frontiers in Climate*, 4, 937244.
- [4] Peters, L. E. R. (2021). [Beyond disaster vulnerabilities: An empirical investigation of the causal pathways linking conflict to disaster risks.](#) *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 55, 102092
- [5] Florida International University. (2018). [Performance evaluation in LAC urban DRR programming: The neighborhood approach.](#) USAID, Washington, D.C.