Practical ACTION

THE MISSING VOICES APPROACH

OCTOBER 2023

MANUAL

Contents

Acknowledgments

The Missing Voices Approach was conceptualized and developed by the Practical Action Consulting International Disaster Risk Reduction team (Sarah Brown, Mirianna Budimir, Alison Sneddon, and Sujana Upadhyay Crawford) using funding from the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance in 2018. The Approach was further refined and developed between 2018 and 2021 through projects funded by UN Women, UNICEF, Australian Aid, START Network, and the Asian Development Bank's ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund.

The first version of this manual was originally commissioned by the START Network in 2020 to inform their analysis of the different potential gendered dimensions of their disaster risk financing programming. The manual has since evolved in response to further use of the methodology, including to inform the development of recommendations for a flood early warning system in Baguio City, Philippines.

Thanks go to all the interviewees who took part in the studies, who took the time to meet with us and provide their insights and knowledge to develop this methodology. Thanks to all those who worked with us to use and implement the methodology, and their feedback that helped to refine the approach, in particular Rebecca Clements.

We welcome feedback on The Approach as we are seeking to continually improve it and learn from experiences of applying The Approach in different contexts.

Related publications

For examples where the methodology has been applied previously, please see:

- *Gender transformative early warning systems: experiences from Nepal and Peru* (Brown et al., 2019a).
- *Missing Voices: experience of marginalized gender groups in disaster in Nepal and Peru* (Brown et al., 2019b).
- *Gender and age inequality of disaster risk* (Brown et al., 2019c).
- *Gender inclusive disaster risk financing* (Clements et al., 2021).
- *Baguio City Gender and Inclusion Study: findings and solutions to inform the Baguio City smart flood early warning system* (Grant et al., 2021).

Summary

Existing gender norms and social inequalities related to status, power, and resources result in differentiated impacts of disasters. Some people, including women, girls, elderly, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities are more vulnerable to disasters than others, and they are often those missing from mainstream data gathering methods and decision-making processes.

There are significant challenges for researchers to reach marginalized groups, as well as barriers faced by vulnerable and marginalized people to participate in data gathering activities.

This means marginalized people’s needs are often not being heard or addressed, and their skills and experiences are not being used to inform disaster risk management.

The Missing Voices Approach developed by Practical Action seeks to address these challenges and proactively listen to the experiences of marginalized individuals to inform policies and practice that affect their lives. The approach is centred on building trust and actively listening to marginalized voices in a way that prioritizes anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality.

This *Missing Voices Approach manual* provides guidance on how to implement The Approach to capture first-person perspectives of marginalized people to inform disaster risk management.

Rationale

Existing social inequalities increase vulnerability to disasters

Gender relations and social inequalities are fundamental causes of poverty. Women, girls, and marginalized gender groups often face inequality and injustice in access to status, power, and resources. Gender inequality and injustice are issues that affect everyone, and inclusive approaches are vital to achieving meaningful and deeply rooted change. Without recognizing, understanding, and addressing the underlying causes of inequality, we can't achieve the sustainable change for people of all genders that we seek.

'Vulnerability to the impact of disasters is increased by gender inequality, particular gender norms and social marginalisation (Wisner et al. 2012). The less economic, political and cultural power held by women and gender minorities prior to a disaster, the greater their suffering during and in the aftermath (Pincha, 2008; Gaillard et al., 2016, 2017; Enarson and Meyreles, 2004 in UNISDR et al., 2009; Cannon, 2002).'
(Brown et al., 2019c)

To understand disaster risk better and tackle it effectively, it is important to recognize and understand the 'complexities and inequalities in a given location, the differences within and between broad categories of women, men, boys and girls, taking a context specific and intersectional approach' (Brown et al., 2019c).

Missing data, missing voices, missed opportunity

There are huge gaps in disaggregated quantitative data that actively contribute to, and reinforce, exclusion (Brown et al., 2019c). The lack of disaggregated quantitative data can impede action on gender and age inequality in disaster risk management. Data gaps that exclude marginalized people mean that the most vulnerable are often invisible in analysis, policy, and practice. Among mainstream data routinely collected and used to inform disaster risk management, minority, vulnerable, or marginalized groups often do not appear or are only mentioned in passing. The voices of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups are also often missing from traditional data collection methods, such as focus group discussions and surveys. This means their needs are not being addressed, and their skills and experiences are not being used for disaster risk management.

Women, girls, and marginalized gender groups often face inequality and injustice in access to status, power, and resources

The Missing Voices Approach seeks to hear from these individuals who are most marginalized from engaging in mainstream methods

Challenges in reaching the most marginalized

There are significant challenges to including vulnerable and marginalized groups in research to inform disaster risk management: they may not be easy to identify; they may not want to be identified; they may not be aware that their opinions matter. Vulnerable and marginalized groups deemed different from others in society may not want to be found or may face persecution when being more 'seen'.

Even if disaggregated quantitative data exists, any analysis based on this data alone is insufficient for a meaningful understanding of the underlying reasons for differences in impacts and for taking action to reduce these different impacts.

Data collected to inform disaster risk management tends to 'treat groups as homogenous, focusing on singular identities (children as a uniform group for example), not capturing the ways in which women or children with multiple vulnerabilities or areas of marginalisation are differentially impacted' (Brown et al., 2019c).

Using the Missing Voices Approach to listen to excluded perspectives

The Missing Voices Approach seeks to hear from these individuals who are most marginalized from engaging in mainstream methods. The Approach requires 'building trust, listening, and working in partnership with intermediary organizations, and provides a rich intersectional and context specific perspective on the impacts of disasters on marginalized groups' (Brown et al., 2019c).

The Approach outlined in this manual provides a way of listening to those who are most marginalized and thereby gaining insight into their experiences to design more inclusive approaches to disaster risk management.

The Missing Voices Approach has provided insight into how and the reasons why individuals are more vulnerable to disasters, excluded from decision-making processes, missing from data collection methods, faced with barriers in accessing information, and confronted with challenges in responding to disasters.

It is recommended that the results gained from this approach are combined with other data sources, including disaggregated quantitative disaster impact data, census data, qualitative studies of hazard events, and contextual information on underlying inequalities.

What is the Missing Voices Approach?

The Missing Voices Approach involves proactive efforts to listen to the experiences of marginalized individuals (Figure 1). The Approach identifies individuals who are most marginalized and accesses them through snowball sampling, initially via trusted intermediaries. Anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality are prioritized. The interviews are loosely structured, aiming to build understanding of pre-identified core themes, but with open questions and active listening to understand the issues, challenges, and opportunities that each individual wants to talk about.

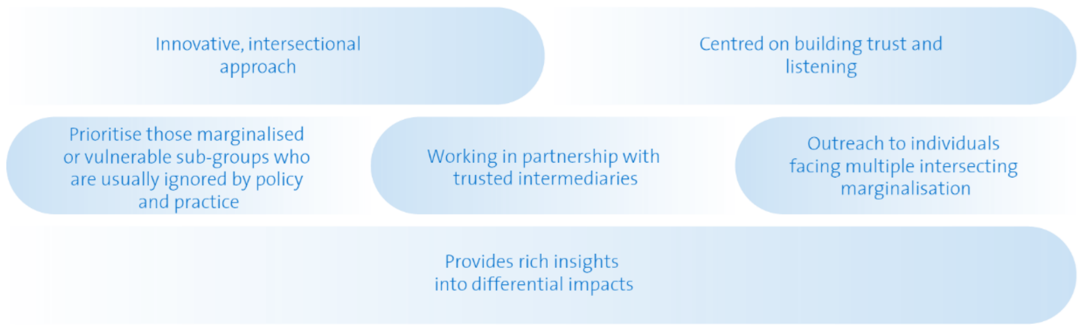

Figure 1. Features of the Missing Voices Approach
Source: Brown et al., 2019c

Benefits of the approach

Responding to the fundamental right to be heard

Everyone has the right to be heard and to shape the decisions that affect their lives and communities. Those who experience social inequalities are often not sought out, heard, or supported to participate in disaster risk management decisions that affect them. This is particularly the case for those most marginalized.

The Missing Voices Approach is specifically designed to listen to those who are less heard

The Missing Voices Approach is specifically designed to listen to those who are less heard and to use that insight to shape the decisions that affect their lives. The interviews let people share their experiences in their own words. If done right, this process can be incredibly empowering and therapeutic for those who are most often ignored but usually most affected by traumatic disaster experiences. The Missing Voices Approach provides them with the opportunity to be deeply listened to.

'I have never attended any trainings or meetings regarding disaster preparedness. I never thought I would benefit from them, or others could learn or benefit from my contribution to them. If that was the case, I think, I would have been asked to participate, no?'
Young woman with visual impairment, far-west Nepal

Using the power of stories and first-person narratives

Stories are powerful methods for communicating and understanding. They 'trigger emotional responses, put a face on an issue, connect us to deeper issues, humanise us, raise the stakes of the discourse, and go beyond telling to showing' (Rao, 2019). The experiences and incidents described in Missing Voices narratives can help transcend data and labels and get to the core of the issues.

The stories themselves can provide nuances to big-picture issues, and concrete and clear examples of what that experience means to real people. This can be useful for advocacy purposes as it can provide human connection and understanding beyond statistics and numbers.

Example
A study combining the Missing Voices insights with contextual research on the 2015 Nepali earthquake found that:

> *'People with acute specialist health needs encountered gaps in healthcare provision, for example temporary field hospitals lacked facilities for neonatal care. The cost of access to hospitals remained a barrier to some needing healthcare, and poverty is gendered in Nepal.'* (Brown et al., 2019c)

The Missing Voices Approach gathered the following testimonial, which complements the insights from the contextual research findings and provides a real person experience of the earthquake's impact:

> *'My son was undergoing chemo at the time of the earthquake. I was at the hospital at the time of the earthquake and with the help of others, and with great difficulty, moved my son and his bed out to the parking lot. We stayed there for a number of days until the aftershocks eased. I was worried about my son catching pneumonia and other infections. But the hospital was already oversubscribed with those wounded during the earthquake and we were not prioritised. I didn't want to risk going back home to fetch more money or food as I was worried I might not be able to make it back. I slept on the ground and ate what others shared. It was a difficult time.'* (62-year-old woman, whose son was at hospital undergoing chemotherapy at the time of the earthquake)

Seeking out those most marginalized

Limited perceptions, understanding, and application of concepts such as gender, inclusion, and diversity can result in research being conducted through lenses which are binary, heteronormative, and cis-normative. Individuals and communities who are marginalized because of societal discrimination due to their gender identity, sexuality, marital status, physical ability, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or income can be excluded and further marginalized (Brown et al., 2019c).

Interventions based on findings from data collection and research methodologies that fail to consider the heterogeneity within communities risk perpetuating these inequalities and divisions. Input from and understanding of a wide range of people are essential to informing policies and practice that are appropriate for everyone, bearing in mind the diversity of experiences and perspectives that will exist within a single community.

Data collection and research methods need to consciously find ways to hear from groups or individuals who have less power and less social capital. These people will be harder to reach and less able to participate in community platforms designed for the 'majority' population, including methods such as surveys, questionnaires, and focus group discussions.

Reasons for exclusion from participating in data collection methods or decision-making processes can include: not being invited, logistical barriers, fear of encountering discrimination

Reasons for exclusion from participating in data collection methods or decision-making processes can include not being invited, not being able to attend due to logistical barriers or due to a fear of encountering discrimination, or not being able, willing, or encouraged to actively participate in 'inclusive' decision-making.

There are also cases where people's vulnerabilities are not recognized or acknowledged, and therefore their needs become invisible or are ignored.

‘There were instances of transgender people being refused relief aid. Providing support and awareness to transgender people is not easy; cis-normative binary gender assumptions can result in incorrect records during data collection. They are often homebound and do not engage with the community due to stigma and discrimination.’ (Brown et al., 2019c)

Research methods that inform policies and practice that affect people’s lives must consider the many barriers that may prevent marginalized people from participating in processes where their voices can be heard. Extra effort is needed to reach these marginalized people in an appropriate and sensitive way, balanced with logistical efficiency.

The Missing Voices Approach aims to actively seek out those who are most marginalized and hear directly from those who are unable (for various reasons) to participate in traditional methods of data gathering, which are focused on statistical validity and generalizable findings, and in which their voices may not be heard, or their opinions discounted.

‘When conducting research, it is also necessary to actively and iteratively review whose voices have been included and who is missing, being cognizant of biases which may preclude the consideration of key populations.’ (Brown et al., 2019a)

Understanding intersectionality

‘Lack of political rights and social recognition, inequalities constructed on the basis of ethnicity, age, health, disability, marital status, gender, gender identity, and sexuality play into individual and group experiences of vulnerability.’ (Brown et al., 2019b)

Insights from interviews can emphasize the importance of taking an intersectional approach – going beyond binary considerations of gender, as well as understanding nuances within vulnerable groups. For example, 'women' are not uniformly vulnerable. Other aspects affect a person's vulnerability. The Missing Voices Approach brings light to these multiple intersecting vulnerabilities – the narratives demonstrate how these layers of vulnerability affect an individual's experiences.

'When we evacuated it was difficult for me, not only to leave my belongings but because the road is unsafe. One of my feet was cut with a piece of glass. I cried but it was not because of the pain but to leave all my things.

I did not want to leave. I did not want to leave my things. But it was not possible anymore and I had to send my children to my mother because my only daughter was sick with dengue and I could not provide the care she needed.'
33-year-old woman, who is blind, with three children, Piura, Peru

Providing a safe space

The Missing Voices Approach can provide a safe, private space for people to openly share their experiences. This can mean they are willing to share experiences that might be considered taboo, shameful, or embarrassing in their culture, and would not be discussed in a shared space, such as a public interview or focus group discussion. Issues around subjects such as gender-based violence or menstruation, can therefore be shared and come to light.

Closing data gaps

'Data gaps excluding marginalized groups were apparent in all data sets, including at census level, meaning marginalized groups were often invisible in analysis, policy and practice.'
(Brown et al., 2019c)

By actively seeking out marginalized people, the Missing Voices Approach can provide new information not captured via traditional data collection methods. This shines a light on gaps in provision of services to those who need them most.

Traditional methods of gathering information regarding vulnerable groups, such as key informant interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions, should be considered complementary to the Missing Voices Approach rather than alternatives. Traditional methods can be more straightforward, less resource-intensive, and/or easier to carry out compared to the Missing Voices Approach; however, they have been demonstrated to miss out those most vulnerable and most marginalized. The Missing Voices Approach can be challenging to carry out, but the process and the insights gained are highly valuable, and incredibly informative and useful for understanding the most marginalized.

Example
Injuries sustained during the Nepal 2015 earthquake and loss of relatives, particularly husbands or main caregivers, had a significant long-term effect but were not reflected in mainstream data (Brown et al., 2019c). Missing Voices interviews provided insights into those losses and their impacts on marginalized people.

'My life has changed forever, and not for the best. I will always have to live with the stigma of being a widow. People who I thought were my friends in the village turn away when they see me now. They think I will bring them bad luck. The doctors are hopeful I will be able to walk unassisted someday, but four years since the earthquake, I still can't. This has made getting any kind of work difficult as most of the buildings here [in Kathmandu] aren't very user-friendly for people with special needs. Staying in the family home [in the village] is not an option anymore because it's a hilly place and I would be totally homebound. I worry about my son, worry about providing for him on my own.' Widow, Nepal

Going beyond 'what' and 'how many' and getting to 'how' and 'why'?

The Missing Voices Approach goes beyond datasets that focus on 'what' (e.g. labelling groups) and 'how many' (e.g. counting how many women are in displacement camps) to provide evidence and understanding of 'how' and 'why':

- How and why the existing structures and systems are presenting barriers and challenges to groups and individuals.
- How and why their experiences are different from other people's experiences.
- Why they need additional support or recognition.
- Why intersectionality is important and how it plays out in real-world experiences.
- Why inclusion matters and how it affects people when it is not happening.

- How and why the most marginalized are left behind.
- Why we need to recognize the most vulnerable.
- How to change our systems to be more aware of, and sensitive to, their needs.

Limitations of the approach

Missing Voices interview insights cannot provide information on how many people have the same experiences, and their stories should not be interpreted as representing the experiences of all people with similar vulnerability profiles.

The Missing Voices Approach should be integrated with other sources of information, including disaggregated quantitative data, qualitative data, and contextual data on inequality (Figure 2). More detail on blending these data sources can be found in Brown et al. (2019c).

It is important to note that, even by taking the Missing Voices Approach, there may be reasons why the perspectives of certain people may not be captured. Critically reflecting on whose voice has not been included is essential to recognize biases and gaps in interpretation of the insights.

An awareness and transparent recognition of which voices are included, and which voices are overlooked when conducting the Missing Voices Approach is critical. While the underlying methodology aims to take an inclusive approach to ensuring no one is left behind, there are likely to be instances where individuals do not feel comfortable sharing their experiences, possibly for a variety of reasons. In all cases, the Do No Harm principle should be maintained when carrying out the approach.

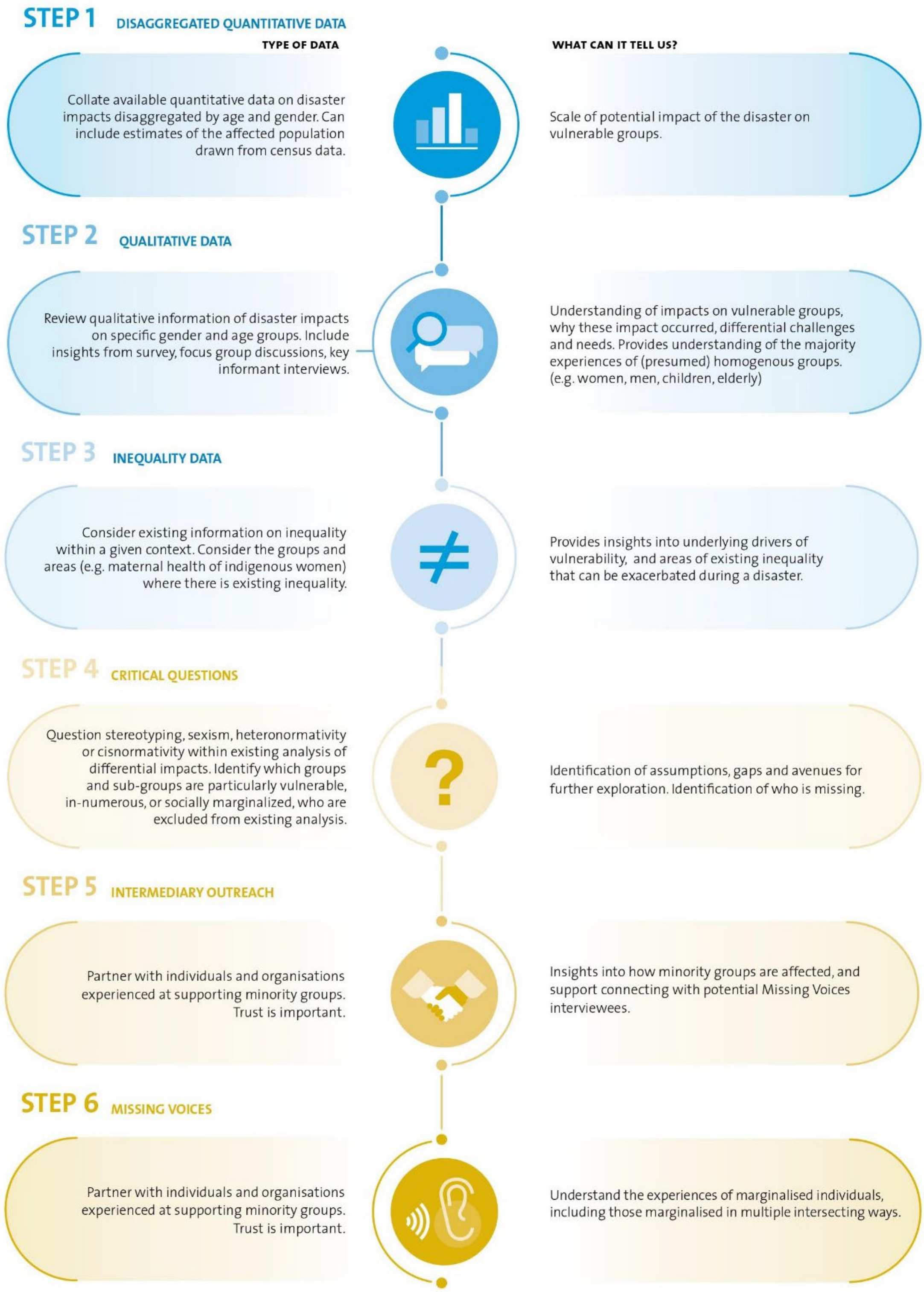

Figure 2. A six-step guide to gender and age inequality informed data. Note the Missing Voices Approach begins at Step 4
Source: Brown et al., 2019c

How to implement the Missing Voices Approach

To support others to take this approach, Practical Action has developed the 5-step process outlined below that can be used with this manual to put the methodology into practice.

Identifying themes and aims

Before starting the 5-step process outlined below (figure 3), identify the overall aim for how the insights from the Missing Voices Approach are going to inform your project, programme or system.

Identify general thematic areas or topic areas where you want to better understand marginalized people's experiences. This will vary from project to project. This manual has been designed with Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (specifically early warning systems) in mind, based on application of The Approach in projects focused on these themes. However, The Approach could be used to gain insights on marginalized people's experiences beyond disaster risk reduction and management topics.

Example
If you were designing a flood early warning system and wanted to understand how social inequality particularly affects a person's experiences, challenges, and barriers, you might come up with the following theme areas:

- their experiences of floods in general;
- participation and influence in decision making around flood risk and management that affects them;
- risk awareness or knowledge, including access to information sources;
- access to and understanding of risk information or warning messages;
- their capacity to respond to warning information and specialized needs;
- barriers and challenges in evacuating and experiences of safe shelter.

These thematic areas will help you to develop pre-prepared questions to guide the interview process in Step 3. The following sections outline each step in further detail.

Step 1: Identify which marginalized or vulnerable sub-groups (beyond headings of women, children, elderly people) are not centred in current disaster and DRR analyses and plans.

Step 2: Outreach to individuals facing multiple areas of marginalisation or vulnerability, working in partnership with trusted intermediaries where trust or access is an issue.

Step 3: Targeted exercises of listening to the experiences of individuals facing multiple intersecting marginalisation on differential impacts, needs or opportunities.

Step 4: Proactive action (in partnership) to identify and reduce differential impacts.

Step 5: Ongoing engagement and feedback loops to ensure marginalized or vulnerable people are centred in DRR policy and practice, so that no one is left behind.

Figure 3. Five-step Missing Voices guideline: an approach to understanding differential impacts
Source: Brown et al., 2019c

Step 1: Identification of vulnerable groups

1. **Recognize the importance of openness and avoiding bias**
2. **Review published sources**
3. **Consult experts and local advisors**
4. **Identify target interviewee groups**

Identify the axes of marginalization that affect vulnerability. Develop a preliminary list of vulnerable groups (beyond headings of women, children, elderly people) for targeting interviews.

Why is this important?

Every context is unique and a conscious effort is required to understand the existing inequalities and context in which disasters occur and people experience them. As a first step, we need to seek to better understand the local (and national/regional) context, to help understand who might be missing from traditional data collection, analyses, and policy or practice. Identifying groups of people who are likely to be missing from the data and policy or practice will guide us in being able to seek out their perspectives via intermediaries in the following steps.

How to do this

1. Recognize the importance of openness and avoiding bias

It is vitally important to take an open approach to this step and avoid bringing in preconceived expectations and conscious or unconscious biases.

2. Review published sources

Conduct a review of academic and grey literature specific to gender and marginalization in disaster risk management for the region and country. Look for whether there have been any recent studies into inequalities in experiences of disasters (either by event, or more longitudinal approaches). Research whether any NGOs have published any studies on gender and inequality in the location.

This review of published literature should also be supported by a wider study of the gender or socio-economic context of the area to enable an understanding of the wider context beyond hazard-specific information:

- Review relevant data sets and statistics, for example census data, gender disaggregated data on education/health, infant mortality rates, and gender-based violence. Use this to understand better the socio-economic context in which individuals are operating; for example, what is the main source of income, what type of environment are they living in, what hazards are they exposed to, what is the political or cultural context? Inequalities will often be present in the data – either by clear differences (e.g. percentage of girls in

school), or by omission (e.g. no data on LGBTQIA+ or people with disabilities).
- Review relevant reports conducted by human rights monitors and other expert agencies which provide insight into issues of formal and informal discrimination and marginalization practised by the state or socially.

3. Consult experts and local advisors

Local expertise and experience can provide vital insights, particularly in contexts where published sources of information may not reflect all of the experiences on the ground. Beyond academia, there is a wealth of knowledge that is often untapped or unpublished, for example NGOs' experiences are often not captured unless for a specific project deliverable. Tapping into this knowledge can support additional insight into who might be missing from the published sources. Local advisors or experts can be sourced within project team members, and/or sought from external sources.

4. Identify target interviewee groups

Through the review of literature and consultation with local experts, create a list of axes of marginalization which will be likely to exclude groups and individuals from traditional data collection techniques.

It is better to come up with a longer list of potential axes of marginalization at the beginning and fine-tune it later than to start off with a shorter list excluding those who you may not (yet) understand as being marginalized.

Examples of axes of marginalization

See below for some examples of an initial list of target interviewees from previous case studies. Note, these groups are not an exhaustive or prescriptive list of interviewees. These are to demonstrate the variety of individual interviewees sought for each case study and the differences between contexts as to who to seek for interview. Identifying the types of marginalization in any specific context is a key step to undertake, which will inform who will be sought for an interview.

This is not a 'final' list. This list will likely evolve and change as the interviews and discussions with intermediaries take place. Consider this a starting point for Step 2, being open to suggestions for other individuals to include as the next Step takes place.

Nepal: flood early warning

- women who experienced a hazard event while pregnant;
- women who are blind or have a significant visual impairment;
- members of a gender minority (self-identified as not identifying with the gender identity assigned at birth);
- women with a significant physical disability;
- adolescent individuals;
- persons from an ethnic minority group.

Malawi: floods and drought

- pregnant and lactating women;
- divorced women and single mothers;
- LGBTQIA+ individuals;
- persons living with HIV or AIDS;
- persons with disabilities;
- albinism-affected persons;
- homeless and slum-dwelling populations;
- elderly individuals;
- orphans and vulnerable children.

Dominica: hurricane

- single-parent families headed by women;
- women farmers;
- Kalinago community;
- pregnant and lactating women;
- orphans and vulnerable children;
- people experiencing homelessness;
- persons living with HIV or AIDS;
- LGBTQIA+ individuals;
- persons with disabilities;
- elderly individuals.

Step 2: Outreach to interviewees via intermediaries

1. Identify intermediary organizations
2. Reach out to intermediaries
3. Work with intermediaries to reach out to targeted interviewees
4. Conduct snowball sampling

Reach out to individuals facing multiple areas of marginalization or vulnerability, working in partnership with trusted intermediaries where trust or access is an issue.

Why is this important?

The Missing Voices Approach specifically seeks out those who are most marginalized from society. They are very likely to have experienced exclusion, oppression or violence from those in power throughout their life. We are seeking them out to hear from them regarding sensitive issues. It is vitally important to have established trust to be able to hear from them, and for them to feel safe and confident in speaking with us.

Intermediaries are a useful way of connecting with those most marginalized, as they have pre-existing relationships and longer-term trust built up already. They are also best-placed to know and identify who we should interview. This is a more sensitive approach than turning up in a community and asking to speak to those who are most marginalized.

How to do this

1. Identify intermediary organizations

Using your list of targeted interviewees, develop a list of potential intermediary organizations who advocate for, represent, support, or work with those groups. These intermediary organizations can be identified via local advisors or experts and online or published lists or resources on civil society organizations.

It is important to prioritize intermediaries that are trusted by the target interviewees and be aware of power dynamics that may affect that trust when selecting the most appropriate intermediary. The relationship between intermediaries and interviewees is likely to exhibit unequal power dynamics, which can at times directly affect an interviewee's willingness to participate, or how honest and open their answers are during an interview.

It is vitally important to work with and through those who already have established trust

For example, government, church, and humanitarian organizations may have connections with target interviewees, but at the same time target interviewees may not view these organizations as trusted contacts. While there may be a formal organization that works with target interviewees and could provide direct contact to them, you may have to find alternative intermediaries or go through multiple layers

Snowball sampling can connect you with the right people

or efforts to get to the most trusted, appropriate intermediary closest to those who are marginalized.

2. Reach out to intermediaries

Contact intermediary organizations or individuals working at those organizations via formal and/or informal channels and networks. Explain the purpose of the study and that you are seeking their support in reaching out to individuals who are marginalized.

3. Work with intermediaries to reach out to targeted interviewees

Support or work with intermediaries to identify interviewees that: a) align with your targeted groups; and b) are willing and able to participate in an interview.

4. Conduct snowball sampling

This sampling technique is where interviewees or intermediaries identify, connect you with, and recruit future interview subjects from among their acquaintances. During conversations with intermediaries, ask them to identify people who might be interested in being interviewed and ask them to introduce you to them.

When interviewing those interviewees, you also ask them if there is anyone they know who would be relevant for us to talk to and who might be willing to be interviewed. You ask them to reach out to those new individuals to see if they are interested or willing.

Note also that there will be challenges in reaching all target interviewees, and in some cases you may not be able to interview all groups that have been identified as most marginalized. Supplementing these Missing Voices insights with key informant interviews, surveys, and other supporting data sources is therefore critical to building a holistic picture in any given context, as is being transparent in the outputs about who you were unable to reach and who is missing from the interviews.

Examples of intermediary organizations

See below for some examples of intermediary organizations or institutions contacted for previous case studies. Note, these groups are not an exhaustive or prescriptive list of intermediaries, and these will vary between contexts. The lists below should give some insight into the types and variety of organizations or institutions that can act as intermediaries, for example activist groups, community groups, NGOs, INGOs, and government departments.

Nepal: flood early warning

- Independent Living Center for Persons with Disabilities
- Blue Diamond Society – transgender women
- Blind Youth Association Nepal
- Women for Human Rights – single women (widows) group
- ADWAN (Association for Dalit Women's Advancement of Nepal)
- Evidence to Action at Marie Stopes International

- Save the Children, Nepal
- United Nations Children's Fund Nepal

Malawi: floods and drought

- Girls Empowerment Network
- Ivy Foundation
- Chance for Change
- Nyasa Rainbow Alliance
- Standing Voice
- Open Arms in Blantyre
- Ndirande Handicapped Center
- CARE Malawi
- Centre for Alternatives for Victimised Women and Children
- Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi
- Association of Malawian Midwives

Dominica: hurricane

- Minority Rights Dominica
- Achievement Learning Centre
- National Youth Council
- Dominica Association of Persons with Disabilities
- West Dominica Children's Federation
- Lifeline Dominica
- Dominica Council on Ageing
- Love One Teach One Foundation
- Caribbean Female Empowerment Movement Vibrant Seniors Group
- National HIV/AIDS Response Programme

Step 3: Interviews and analysis

1. Prepare for interview
2. Make initial contact
3. Conduct the interview
4. Analysis

Conduct one-to-one interviews and listen to the experiences of individuals facing multiple intersecting marginalization on differential impacts, needs or opportunities. Transcribe the interviews and analyse the results, identifying themes, challenges, or lessons.

Why is this important?

The most important part of this activity is to support the process to listen to people's experiences in their own words. The method here is designed to support this process in a safe space.

This interview technique is different from traditional semi-structured interview methods and requires the interviewer to have a willingness to undertake this methodology, a nuanced understanding of how to conduct the interview, empathy with the interviewee, and a specific skill set to capture insight.

While quantitative data might provide you with information on the numbers of people counted as marginalized (e.g. the number of people with visual impairments) in a study location, the results from this Step should provide you with insights into why that is important (e.g. it affects their reliance on supportive mechanisms or people, which becomes more pronounced in times of disasters), what their experiences are (e.g. warning messages are sent out via text or on TV, which they cannot see), and ultimately begin to indicate ways in which disaster risk management strategies can be adapted or redesigned to be inclusive for all (e.g. send out warning messages via radio as well).

How to do this

This step in the overall Missing Voices Approach can be further broken down into: 1) interview preparation, 2) initial contact, 3) conducting the interview, and 4) analysis. The following sections go into more detail on each of these steps.

It is important to note that allowing time for reflection, feedback, and fine-tuning the method throughout the process is important.

Key steps: 1) interview preparation, 2) initial contact, 3) conducting the interview, and 4) analysis

After the first 2–3 interviews, it is important to reflect and review the process and what you are finding. Review the transcripts with your wider project team and identify content that is of interest to the project aims, and that which is not. This should help the interviewer with the subsequent interviews. It also helps with the write up as the interviewer can focus on writing up only the parts of the interviews that were insightful and on-topic.

This is a relatively new approach and is evolving and developing each time it is used in new contexts or with new project teams. It is important to reflect on the process and your experience of it, providing feedback to the Practical Action team so that we can improve our guidance or adapt the methodology to your experiences. Please see contact details for the Practical Action team at the beginning of this manual to provide feedback.

Step 3.1: Prepare for interview

1. Missing Voices questions preparation
2. The importance of the interviewer
3. Do some research beforehand

1. Missing Voices questions preparation

Using the thematic areas relevant to your project, programme or system identified before Step 1, develop questions to guide the interview process.

Some examples of pre-prepared interview questions based around thematic areas are shown in Annex A2.

Note, it is not the intention to ask all these questions. They are to be used to guide the conversation and for prompts within the interview.

2. The importance of the interviewer

Choosing an appropriate person to conduct the interviews is vitally important to be able to really see the benefits of the Missing Voices Approach. Without careful choice of interviewer, the interviews will not provide useful, honest, and open insights.

These are the critical characteristics and considerations for an interviewer:

- *Fluent native speaker*: Choose interviewers who can speak the language of the Missing Voices interviewee fluently. This might require multiple interviewers to conduct the interviews across groups with different language preferences.
- *Empathetic listeners*: Interviewers that are comfortable listening and have a genuine interest in and empathy with the person they are interviewing is essential for an open and insightful conversation. It is beneficial if the interviewer has a desire to understand the lives and experiences of the Missing Voices interviewees better and a wish to do justice to the authentic and brave voices of those interviewed.
- *Respect for interviewee*: The interviewer must have respect for the person they are interviewing and be proactively seeking to support their voices being heard.

Choosing an appropriate person to conduct the interviews is vitally important to be able to really see the benefits of the Missing Voices Approach

The interviewer role is to be a conduit for those who are not being heard elsewhere. The interviewer must not be a power-holder as this will disrupt the honesty and openness of the interviewee's narrative.

- *Cultural awareness*: Having a similar cultural background to that of the interviewees can be beneficial, but with the added advantage of having had the time, distance, and education to reflect and question many of the deeply ingrained practices. This can allow for an honest and empathetic conversation and an ability to guide the narrative back gently but rationally from natural trajectories.
- *Skilled at listening*: The survey style interview is so familiar to many; it takes effort to unlearn that and have a listening-focused conversation. The interviewer will need training or re-training in the Missing Voices interview technique before conducting any interviews. The Approach is more like having a friendly chat rather than a traditional interview – the emphasis is on listening rather than asking lots of questions.

In reference to the above, the interviewer must be chosen carefully to fulfil the requirements. This may mean additional training is needed for those carrying out the interviews, or a change of personnel so that the most appropriate person is conducting the interviews.

3. Do some research beforehand

If the interviewer is interviewing a member of a group about which they know very little, they should take some time to find something written by a member of that group (e.g. blog, Twitter post) to get some idea of how their community might talk about themselves. If you are unfamiliar with a minority, be upfront about your areas of ignorance, while showing eagerness to get it right.

Be aware the marginalized communities may have had poor experiences with data collection or research in the past and be reluctant to trust outside researchers. If there's a group you are unfamiliar with, try to speak with an intermediary beforehand to ask about and avoid common pitfalls or misassumptions that may be held about that minority.

Acknowledge the emotional burden of minorities in talking about their experiences and be clear that through these interviews we want to be an ally to them and to raise up their voice.

Step 3.2: Make initial contact

1. **Primary contact with follow-up interviews**
2. **Building trust**
3. **Consent**
4. **Privacy**
5. **Finding the right people**
6. **Don't inappropriately raise expectations**

Be aware marginalized people may have had poor experiences with research in the past and be reluctant to trust outside researchers

1. Primary contact with follow-up interviews

It is important to have at least two calls or meetings with interviewees. A first short call or meeting can be used to introduce yourself, to introduce the project's focus, to go through consent, to ask if they fit the criteria for your research (e.g. they have been affected by a flood), and to ask if they are willing to talk. Rather than directly continuing with the interview, the interviewer will ask if they could pick a (different) time to be called back or attend a meeting – asking them when a convenient time would be when they can speak in private. In this first short 5–10 min call or meeting, try to build trust and explain the process.

If they are willing to be interviewed, follow up with a text or WhatsApp message to agree a time of their choosing for the interview. The logistics of organizing this will depend on how flexible the interviewers can be, but it can lead to much better interviews if they can be flexible on interview time. Especially for those who have caring commitments or who find it hard to get privacy, flexibility on the time of the call or meeting can be really important.

Those who do not have access to their own phone will need to use someone else's phone for the call (e.g. the intermediary person), but it may be difficult for them to do so without the intermediary being present. This needs to be negotiated with the intermediary, as the interviewee may not be able to ask the intermediary (and owner of the phone they are using) to leave them alone with the phone. So for people who do not have a phone, the logistics of organizing access and finding space for privacy needs to be part of the conversation with the intermediary.

This has been really important as many interviewees spoke much more openly when they were not overheard.

2. Building trust

Building trust between interviewer and interviewee at the start is critical. Explain why we are doing this – explain that other data collection methods provide the average view of experiences, but we are conscious that minority views may be different. We really want to hear their story and learn from their experience.

Trust can be built by sharing a bit about yourself as an interviewer, so that it is a more truthful and empathetic conversation. We don't want to be the 'neutral' and 'detached' objective interviewer, we can and should empathize and connect with them. If they speak of something difficult, we should show emotion and conduct the conversation like it is an empathetic exchange with a new friend rather than a job interview or an assessment.

3. Consent

3.1 Informed consent

Informed consent is essential and can be obtained verbally or in writing. Explain beforehand how their information will be used. Explain that their story will be fully anonymized with any identifying details taken out. If a recording is taken before producing a transcript be clear that the recording will be deleted as soon as the transcript is produced. Be clear that we take their anonymity seriously.

Ask your institution or funding body if they have any consent requirements before conducting these interviews.

3.2 Clarity on how we can use their story

Some of the interviewees may be quite identifiable in a small community. As well as stressing that their name will be anonymized, at the end of the interview please ask how important it is to make sure they are not in any way identifiable, and how we can describe them to make them less identifiable, for example, we may give an age bracket rather than an exact age.

3.3 Clarity on right to withdraw

Let them know that they have a right to withdraw from the process – or a right to reflect and withdraw part of what they have said if they feel concerned about any part. Please give them a specific deadline (typically a month) and a way of contacting the interviewer if they later decide they do not want their interview to be used.

3.4 Involvement of under-18s

It would be good to include the perspectives of under-18s as the experiences, particularly of adolescent girls, can be especially valuable. In this process, it is important to get verbal parental consent for any interviews with an under-18.

Be aware there may be safeguarding risks related to interviewing some under-18s, for example LGBTQIA+ teenagers who may not have parental support, or homeless youth who may be estranged from their families. In these cases, it is ethical to avoid parental consent as asking for parental consent can be a safeguarding risk.

Ask your institution or funding body if they have any consent requirements before conducting interviews with under-18s. Also check whether there are any safeguarding policies or practices you need to follow.

4. Privacy

Be clear that the interviewee is in charge of selecting an interview time, location, and format that suits them (if the interviewers are able to be flexible over interview time, this can really help, especially for marginalized individuals). Be clear that no one needs to be aware that they are part of the research.

Find ways to communicate privately and directly with the Missing Voices interviewee

There may be some instances where the interviewee is uncomfortable or unable to be interviewed one-to-one. It may be that they want company for comfort or reassurance, or feel like they 'shouldn't' speak or go alone. There may be instances where a person's vulnerability or disability makes it logistically harder to conduct one-to-one interviews; for example, someone with auditory impairment may require support from an interpreter who can communicate between them and the interviewer.

Finding the right people to speak with is critical

All efforts should be made to support the Missing Voices interviewee to communicate privately and directly with the interviewer. However, where this is not possible, or where the interviewee is unhappy with being alone, trusted intermediaries who the interviewee is comfortable with and able to speak openly with should be sought as a 'translator' or support person.

There may be instances where people do not understand how valuable the privacy is to the purpose of the interview – at the beginning you can emphasize this and reassure them regarding anonymity and your desire to have a private conversation – in some cases this can help reassure them and build their confidence to be able to participate in the interview alone.

Note that having an additional person in the room or on the call can affect the interviewee's level of openness and honesty. If you can see this happening, or if the extra person is affecting how the interviewee responds to your questions, it is fine to stop the interview and not write up the transcription.

5. Finding the right people

Example
There were some cases where interviewees were hesitant about speaking to a stranger in a language they weren't fully adept in and baffled that somebody thought their views and experiences were not only worth listening to but also worth writing about. In some cases these women turned to men, asking them to speak on their behalf. Unfortunately, these interviews were not taken forward.

Finding the right people to speak with is critical. If you speak to one person and they haven't got relevant experience or are not sharing relevant insights, move on to asking who else they might know (who shares a similar status or identity) and whether they can introduce you to additional people who might also have been affected by the issue you are exploring, e.g. flooding.

There may be occasions when target interviewees are unwilling to be interviewed. In these cases it is worth carefully and sensitively reviewing. Consider whether the intermediary is trusted, or alternatives might be more appropriate for these interviewees, and make sure the interviewee understands clearly the purpose of the study and has been fully informed regarding consent and their anonymity.

If all of the above have been sufficiently addressed, do NOT pursue or try to force an interview if the interviewee is uncomfortable or unwilling to be interviewed. Use alternative channels to try to reach the particular target group, but if it is not at all possible, make sure that these efforts are noted in the final report, highlighting that the target group's perspectives are missing from the data.

6. Don't inappropriately raise expectations

If we don't yet know how the wider project will work, or what actions might be taken, be careful not to give an inaccurate impression that the project will directly benefit them in the short term, nor that it is the solution to all their problems.

Step 3.3: Conduct the interview

1. Telephone interviews
2. Language
3. Recording
4. Focus on first person experience
5. Intersectional experience
6. Check again if you are interviewing the right person
7. Biographer rather than interrogator
8. Interview questions are for guidance
9. Explain the focus and keep on track
10. Be sensitive to trauma
11. Anonymity and follow up
12. Transcribing

Interviews should be conducted through a series of one-to-one meetings (e.g. by telephone), with individuals identified and accessed through snowball sampling, initially via trusted intermediaries with anonymity and confidentiality prioritized.

The interview questions and format are loosely structured, keeping to the themes identified in the wider project aims (e.g. in the Nepal early warning system study, we focused on people's experiences of floods and early warning components of risk knowledge, monitoring and warning, dissemination and communication, response capability, governance, and inclusion in decision making), but with open questions and active listening, emphasizing listening to what challenges, issues or opportunities the individuals wanted to share. A less interventionist interview is better to capture larger chunks of narrative while the interviewee speaks fluently in the first person about their experience. This relies on trust and a quick establishment of a friendly and trusted relationship.

1. Telephone interviews

Missing Voices interviews are preferably conducted in a way that supports privacy and safety. Many of the Missing Voices interviews have been carried out remotely over a telephone. Conducting interviews over the telephone comes with many benefits:

- It allows those being interviewed to choose if, when, and where to speak.
- It allows those being interviewed to decline to speak without feeling pressure, to end the conversation if they are uncomfortable.
- It allows greater anonymity and privacy for those being interviewed. This can circumvent issues related to in-person interview techniques, where those being interviewed are made more visible to their community if they are sought-out for face-to-face interviews (which can place them at risk).
- It makes it possible, in a single day, to speak to people based in different geographical locations.

Anonymity and confidentiality is the priority for interviews

- It makes it possible, without costing too much time and money, to look more widely for another person to interview when one does not work out.

In some cases, the interviewee was hesitant to speak to a stranger – this hesitation would likely have been even stronger if they had to be interviewed face to face. Issues that would not have been discussed, confessions about being worried about an impending menstrual period during flooding or being sexually abused, for example, perhaps would not have been shared had it not been for being able to speak into a phone, when by oneself.

In cases where a telephone interview is not possible (e.g. lack of access to a mobile phone or auditory disability), finding alternative ways of holding the interview that consider the need for privacy, comfort, and safety to allow the interviewee to be able to speak freely is essential.

2. Language

Conduct the interview in the interviewee's own language – the one they are most comfortable with. Choose enumerators who can speak the language fluently. It is important the interviewee is able to speak comfortably in their own words and they do not have a barrier to expressing themselves. Translate the interview transcription back into the language preferred by the project analysis team afterwards, making an effort to translate the meaning rather than automated word-for-word.

3. Recording

Conducting the interview will take a lot of your attention, as you should be actively listening and trying to gently keep the Missing Voices interviewee on topic. You can take notes during the interview as a back-up record and to keep track of what is being said, but you should not be trying to write down every word they say.

You should record the interview so that you can later go back and transcribe the recording. Make sure you have the technology that can do this beforehand and that it works and provides you with a clear recording.

Make sure you inform the interviewee that you will be recording the interview, but reassure them that the recording will be stored safely and then deleted as soon as the transcript is produced.

4. Focus on first person experience

It is important to capture people speaking about their own personal experience and not their speculation about others. Interviewees sometimes stray into the latter and the information can be much less useful, relevant or insightful. We want to hear them talking about themselves and their experience, not guessing or making assumptions about the experience of others.

5. Intersectional experience

Consider that the people you are interviewing may experience multiple axes of marginalization and make space to ask about that if it comes up. For example, not just what their experiences during floods are like for them as widows, but also what they felt floods are like for disabled widows, or widows from this ethnic minority. Encourage them to talk about the aspect of their experience that they feel is most salient, even if it is not the focus that brought them to your attention (e.g. you may have been introduced to them as an example of a widow, but their disability affected their experiences much more).

6. Check again if you are interviewing the right person

It should be reiterated here that finding the right people to interview and providing the opportunity for their voices to be heard is not a tick-box exercise. If, during the interview, it emerges that they are not the most appropriate person (e.g. if they do not experience any marginalization or do not have any knowledge of the issue that you are interested in), stop the interview and ask if they know anyone who better suits our needs.

This is checked at the pre-interview first-contact stage, but sometimes it is not apparent in that initial call, but becomes obvious as the interview goes on. Do not feel you have to 'push on' with the interview – this wastes everyone's time and resources and will not result in data that is useful for your purposes. Instead use the opportunity to find a more suitable interviewee, or just close the interview.

Continually bear in mind that we are seeking missing voices. If during your interview it becomes apparent that although the interviewee experiences one axis of marginalization (e.g. indigenous group, religious minority, women) they actually hold a position of power and/or are in privileged roles (e.g. on formal decision-making committees, leaders in the community), you can potentially switch this to a key informant interview, but recognize this is not a 'missing' voice.

7. Biographer rather than interrogator

We want to hear their stories and experiences. There is no correct answer. For the interviewer, think of it more like a biographer wanting to learn about someone's life, or a friendly chat you might have with a new friend rather than an interview. Be clear that their life and experiences matter – being curious and interested in them as a person will help.

Always approach each participant with an open mind. Begin the interview with a simple conversation – think how a conversation might evolve when speaking to a friendly stranger at a bus stop. Be that friendly stranger, and then build from there.

Get yourself comfortable with the questions and stay focused on the key insights you hope to gather, but remain open to conversations jumping between different themes. Gently guide conversations back if and when necessary, but try not to be controlling.

It is important to capture people speaking about their own personal experience

Be prepared to add your own questions if you feel that might help go deeper into any issue. Think of the whole process as having a conversation. Stay focused. Listen. Listen to understand, not so you can move on to the next question. You will then instinctively know if or when to focus on the topics that are most relevant to a particular participant.

We want the interviewee to share their thoughts, memories, and opinions

8. Interview questions are for guidance

We want to hear interviewees' experiences – we want to know which areas are important to them and what parts of their story they want to share. The point is not to get through all the pre-prepared questions.

The Missing Voices questions used as an interview outline (see examples in Annex A2) are guiding questions only – not a script. Not all questions will be relevant or necessary for each case. The questions (in written form) are phrased by an English language speaker and are 'formal.' It's better if they are more informally framed when asking them during an interview, using phrasing or questions that resonate – they do not need to be translated word for word.

In terms of success, an interview can be a success without you asking even one of the pre-prepared questions. It will be a success if they have shared their experience and what matters to them, if we end up with a narrative in their words that helps us understand their experience and gives us insights into how we can design or adapt the project or programme to better support them, and how we can ensure better outcomes in the future.

At the end of the interview we would hope to be better able to put ourselves in their individual shoes, to see the world from their perspective. If at the end of an interview you feel you haven't gained understanding of their individual experience and perspective (which can happen, if they did not have enough trust or were distracted or didn't want to engage) then it is worth trying another interview with another person rather than writing up that interview.

9. Explain the focus and keep on track

Part of the art of this Missing Voices Approach is letting the interviewees tell their story in their own words, letting them speak freely, while keeping them more or less on topic relevant to the project. The best ways to keep people on track would include:

- being clear how their stories and the research will be used; and
- providing one opportunity to mention other areas where they have relevant experiences they would like to share, and promising to include these in our feedback to government officials.

At the start of the interview, tell them the topics we are interested in (e.g. 'We really want to understand your experience of flooding, what it was like for you'), and why we are asking (e.g. 'We want to understand a more diverse range of experiences, to help us make sure our work on flood early warning is going to help everyone in your community'). Imagine these topics are a path – we want the person to walk along the path sharing their thoughts, memories, and opinions relevant to the main topics.

If they stay on the path (i.e. if they are talking about things that are relevant to our Missing Voices questions) then the interviewer's role is gentle encouragement to

Listen to the interviewee with sensitivity, bearing in mind the principle of "Do No Harm"

keep them talking with gentle phrases like 'right', 'interesting', 'I see', 'and then what happened', 'and how did you feel', 'and was that hard', 'What did you do next', 'Why do you think that was'.

If they understand the path we want them to go on, they may well talk freely without the interviewer needing to ask any of the questions on the Missing Voices pre-prepared questions list.

If we imagine that at the side of the path are bushes, occasionally the Missing Voices interviewee may walk off the path and into the bushes (i.e. they start talking about things that we are not interested in, e.g. their thoughts on local politics, on agriculture practices, on other issues). This is when the pre-prepared questions can be useful – the interviewer can use one of the questions to prompt them back onto the path/topic.

So if an interviewee starts going off topic and talking about, for example, discrimination in education when you are focused on developing a flood early warning system, try to listen while steering back to flooding-related topics. You can re-emphasize that right now we are focusing on flooding, but we are also hoping that this work will demonstrate the value of wider outreach to minority groups, and saying that if there are other areas where they are affected differently and would like their voice to be heard, that we will flag those areas in our report. In the notes, you can flag these areas, but don't take notes when they go off topic (or don't type up that section of the recording).

The questions are there for you as interviewers to understand which topics are 'on the path'. If they are talking about any issues that refer to those questions, encourage them to keep talking. We want them to guide the interviews and to talk about the things that matter to them (as long as they are on the path, i.e. relevant to the topic area), so please let them shape the interview.

You can add some additional questions on topics that they have not naturally talked about, but if they show little interest in talking about, for instance, community flood risk mapping, then don't dwell on that topic, move to something that they do want to talk about. The emphasis is on listening and capturing what they have to say (while keeping to the path).

10. Be sensitive to trauma

This research is not aiming to cause trauma. It may not be obvious at the start of the interview, but you may find out part-way through that the interviewee has experienced serious trauma (for example, in one of our interviews it became clear part-way through that an interviewee had lost a child in the Nepal earthquake). We want to hear the stories of people who have been affected by disasters, but are not aiming to speak with those who have been very traumatized.

If you have an option of speaking to an interviewee who has serious trauma related to disasters, we would recommend not selecting that interviewee. If the interviewee touches on to topics that are trauma-related part-way through an interview, be sensitive to their emotional and mental health. We do not need to ask any questions

We want to hear their own words

at all about traumatic issues or topics; the interviewee should drive what we talk about.

Do not proactively ask follow up questions on any areas that are particularly traumatic – revisiting trauma is not the purpose of these interviews, and may cause harm to the interviewee. In case something like this does occur, you could also consider in advance if there are any support services available in their community that you could offer to connect them to.

11. Anonymity and follow up

Ask them how we should describe them in the summary (and to pick their own pseudonym), for example, 'I'm a widow who is a Dalit'. Do not prescribe an identity for them.

Find out which parts of their story they want us to treat with an additional level of sensitivity. Ask if there are particular quotes that they are concerned about (e.g. if they criticize their family or local government) and reassure them that we can make sure that section is referred to as a quote from one of our interviewees without identifying which of our interviewees said that. Record these sensitivities and check this in later publication development.

Provide them with information on how they can keep in contact to ask any questions that occur to them after the interview, and remind them of their rights to withdraw. Provide information and a timeline on when the outputs from the study will be published and details of how you will be getting back in touch with them with the results (see Step 5: ongoing engagement and feedback).

12. Transcribing

Use the recording to transcribe what the interviewee says. You do not need every single section of the interview – some topics would be less useful – so focus on the sections that provide insight to your overall topic/project aims.

- *Their own words*. Transcribe as closely to their own words as possible, providing a narrative from their words. During transcription and translation, we don't want the interviewer to reinterpret and rephrase what was originally said, for example, 'This happened then she did this, and she said she felt like this'. We'd much prefer a write up of what they actually said so, for example, 'This happened, and I felt sad and had a cry and then after that I went to the market and I …' If they talk in colloquialisms or swear that is fine; we want to hear their words.
- *Translation*. The translation is also important. We want a fluent translation capturing their voices and narrative rather than an automated word for word translation.

Interview transcripts should also be stored securely and for longevity beyond the project end, in accordance with current data protection guidance.

Step 3.4: Analysis

1. **Thematic analysis of qualitative data**
2. **Extracting findings**
3. **Developing recommendations**

At this stage, you will have a series of interview transcripts as Word documents from your interviewees. This section explains the next steps of analysing the results by selecting thematically relevant quotes from the transcripts, extracting findings, and developing recommendations.

There are three main parts in the analysis process:

1. Thematic analysis – grouping sections from the transcripts by thematic area and an initial reflection of the results.
2. Extracting findings relevant to original questions or theme areas.
3. Developing recommendations based on the findings relevant for stakeholders.

1. Thematic analysis of qualitative data

This is the process of selecting quotations from the interview transcripts and labelling and organizing them to identify different themes. Through this process, sections of the transcripts will be labelled with corresponding themes, making it easier to interpret the qualitative data. Assigning themes to phrases in each response helps to capture what the interviewees said related to certain themes, which can help better analyse and summarize the results from across the entire survey. This can help make data-driven recommendations.

1.1 Methods of thematic analysis

Thematic analysis can be supported by software (e.g. NVivo) that is designed to help organize and structure the manual process.

Thematic analysis can also be carried out without the need for specialist software support. For example:

- *Paper-based*. Printing out interview transcripts and highlighting with different colours (this can quickly get complicated) or cutting out sections of text relevant to specific themes and grouping them on a new, bigger piece of paper. Paper-based thematic analysis can work well when working alone, or on smaller datasets, for example 20 pages. It may become less manageable when working collaboratively or on larger datasets, such as 50 pages or more.
- *Digital*. This can be done by copying and pasting relevant sections of interview transcripts into a series of new documents that are labelled for each theme. This can be done offline, for example via Microsoft Word, or via collaborative workspaces such as Google, Teams or SharePoint systems, which allow multiple

Keep track of who said what

people to work on the same documents at the same time. Digital analysis can be helpful for collaborative working and when there are larger datasets.

1.2 Analysing transcripts by theme

Go through the pre-identified themes or questions you want answers to and make a list of potential themes.

Read through your interview transcripts briefly once, to get an idea of the sorts of content and themes existing in the data. Keep a note of interesting topics.

Combine these two lists to create a list of short themes or labels you want to group your outputs into. For example, if researching flood early warning systems, some of your themes might be flood experience, risk knowledge, participation in training, receiving warning messages, response, and so on.

Go through all the interview transcripts and copy and paste relevant sections of text to your list of themes, i.e. copy and paste passages from interview transcripts that are relevant to the themes to a separate document on each theme.

The amount of text you choose to select will vary depending on context – in some cases, words or sentences are selected, in others whole paragraphs or sections. You can always cut down sections later or go back to the original text – a guide would be to select sections that stand out as particularly insightful, with enough text to understand what the wider context is.

Make sure you keep track of who said which quote when copying across (NVivo will do this for you). Also keep note of whether an interviewee is speaking first-hand about their own experience or not. Interview transcripts are likely to contain sections where an interviewee is talking about their own personal experience, sections where they are talking about the experiences of those closest to them, and sections where they are speculating about other people's experiences who they understand less well. It is important to be aware of the difference. Prioritize the sections where they are talking about their own personal experience.

As you review more and more of the transcripts, new themes might emerge. As new themes emerge, develop new documents to collect relevant quotes.

Example
From this section of an interview transcript, there are a few themes that are mentioned that we are interested in:

'*In 2015, the rains had been heavy and we knew a flood was very likely. It was mainly my brothers-in-law who followed the news and received messages regarding potential flooding, so when they decided women, children and elderly in the family should wait at home while they went out to consult community members and assess the situation, there was little we could do but wait'* – Maya Tharu,* middle-aged widow, mid-west Nepal.

For this section of the interview text, we would copy and paste the specific sections to each of the following separate documents for pre-identified themes:

Receiving warning messages: '*It was mainly my brothers-in-law who followed the news and received messages regarding potential flooding*' – Maya Tharu,* middle-aged widow, mid-west Nepal.

Response: '*They went out to consult community members and assess the situation, there was little we could do but wait*' – Maya Tharu,* middle-aged widow, mid-west Nepal.

There was also a new theme that is of interest, so a new document was created to collect all relevant quotes into:

Power and decision-making: '*It was mainly my brothers-in-law who followed the news and received messages regarding potential flooding, so when they decided women, children and elderly in the family should wait at home while they went out to consult community members and assess the situation, there was little we could do but wait*' – Maya Tharu,* middle-aged widow, mid-west Nepal.

*Name changed

It can be hard to remember all the themes off the top of your head, so it is useful to track themes – this can be as simple as an Excel spreadsheet or Word document. As you develop new themes going through the transcripts, add new themes to this list (software such as NVivo will do this for you). Make sure if you are doing this collaboratively that everyone has access to the theme list.

Once you have gone through all your interview transcripts and selected relevant sections, review your themes and decide whether you need to re-group or re-organize the themes; for example, some themes might need to be split into separate topics, some themes might be better grouped together under an overarching theme.

Re-organize the quotations based on this updated theme list (i.e. cut and paste them into the new lists). Then go back and check that you have captured all the relevant quotations that correspond to the updated theme list in the interview transcripts – there will likely be some earlier interview transcripts that have missed some of the newer, emerging themes.

It is useful to keep track of what you have already selected within each transcript for each theme (software such as NVivo can do this for you). If you are doing this manually, then using the comment function can help to show what you have already selected to what theme for each interview, so that you don't re-select the same text again and again when you go back through the transcripts a second time to check you have captured all relevant quotes.

1.3 Strategies for analysis

Thematic analysis can be done in a variety of ways including (but not limited to):

1. Individually:
   Person A analyses interview transcripts alone.
2. Individually and separately:
   Step 1: Person A and Person B separately analyse all interview transcripts.
   Step 2: Person A and Person B come together to compare and consolidate how they have grouped the quotations.
3. Individually and iteratively:
   Step 1: Person A does interviews 1–3, Person B does interviews 4–6.
   Step 2: Person A reviews and adds to interviews 4–6, Person B reviews and adds to interviews 1–3.
4. Collectively:
   Person A and Person B (and possibly Person C and Person D, etc.) go through transcripts together at the same time.

Individual analysis can allow for free-thinking and is less time-pressured as it can be done at a person's own pace. It allows people time to reflect and come up with insights without being affected by another person's opinion, and removes barriers to speaking up in group settings.

Having more than one person analyse the transcripts reduces the potential bias in the analysis process. Each person will approach reading a transcript with their own biases and areas of knowledge or ignorance, so having a more diverse team review the transcripts can help capture the content and shine a light on Missing Voices experiences and perspectives.

Collective, group analysis can lead to interesting conversations on what content is insightful or important. Ideas, issues, and insights can be shared and discussed in a group setting. If the group dynamics support and encourage sharing and exploring of ideas, this can be extremely effective, resulting in a variety of perspectives, shared knowledge, and education within the group, and potentially a domino-effect of ideas. However, if the group dynamics do not support or encourage open discussion, then the benefits of this approach will be negatively affected.

It is recommended a blended approach is taken, to allow time and space for individual reflection, complemented by the variety of perspectives that multiple people bring.

1.4 Keeping track of who said what

Diverse teams can reduce bias in analysis

It is vital to keep track (semi-anonymously) of who said what throughout the analysis and interpretation phase. When copying and pasting quotations across documents, make sure you keep a record of who said that quote. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example copying the interviewee details across with each quote, or numbering your interview transcripts (keeping the original details of the interviewee in a safe and secure location) and copying over the interviewee number linked to each quote you copy into a new file.

Keeping interviewee names and details with each quotation can be helpful as it provides context to the quote. It is recommended the details of each person is included with the quotation when writing up final reports or outputs. However, it might be easier for processing large numbers of interview transcripts to keep track of this using a central list of numbered interviewees.

Example
Keeping interviewee details with each quote:

'*During the flood season I always leave Chosica. When the rainy season is the most intense, I cannot leave my house to a higher area behind my house because my body is not so strong*' – Alicia, elderly woman, Chosica, Peru.

'*The warning does provide some time to evacuate but as the huayco [debris flow] happens too fast, time will always be short. Not everybody can evacuate in time. Because now I have my baby I will definitely evacuate to some other district the whole rainy season. This is what other mothers with small children do and they have advised me to do the same*' – Maria, young woman with small baby, Chosica, Peru.

Referencing quotations anonymously using a central list of numbered interviewees:

'*I live alone and do not have land to grow my own food. During the droughts in 2016, I went hungry for many days. I did not always feel comfortable to go collect food that was being distributed and even when I did go, I was not always given food because of my situation.*' M12

'*I used to sell shoes, but I haven't been able to continue because everything was damaged, I'm at a low point. I just go to where people are on buses to collect money and buy food.*' M19

'*I stayed in the shelter for three weeks. It was hard. Along with being pregnant, I also have asthma which gets worse if I do not keep warm. I was only given one blanket and that I had to spread on the floor to lie on, so got very cold.*' M26

A table of the interviewee's details would be provided within the document for reference:

M12: Meke, transgender woman, 29, Malawi
M19: Emma, transgender woman, HIV positive, Malawi
M26: Nana, single, pregnant, young, homeless woman, 24, Malawi

1.5 Analysis bias

Manually analysing qualitative data means that the researcher's cognitive biases can influence the analysis process. The team involved in the analysis of each study should agree on analysis methods beforehand to keep the results reliable, consistent, and accurate. A shared theme list can help here, as well as using more than one person to analyse, and doing the analysis reflexively and iteratively (going back over the data more than once). If you have multiple researchers working on one team, have them check one another's results to help reduce cognitive biases (e.g. individual iterative analysis). Try to have a varied team who carry out the analysis to bring a range of perspectives to the results and reduce undue influence of a single perspective on the findings.

2. Extracting findings

At this point, you should have a collection of quotes grouped around your themes. This next step is extracting findings from those results.

It is best to approach this theme-by-theme. For each theme, print out all the quotes collected for that theme. Read through the quotations and think about the following questions:

- What are people saying?
- What are their experiences?
- Are there commonalities or differences in experiences? Note, we are not looking for the average responses – but it can be useful to extract commonalities and differences between and within groups of people with shared experiences.
- Who is saying it?
- What do their experiences mean for this theme?

It is useful to do this individually, and then as part of a group. Group discussions will be incredibly helpful in providing a diversity of perspectives and interpretation of the findings. Having a range of people with different experiences and expertise in the room will help this: for example topic specialist, project officers, people with local expertise or experience, and gender and social inclusion specialists.

It is useful to do this visually and write down the points of discussion as you go; for example use flipcharts or collaborative blackboard spaces to take note of reflections as they emerge through discussion.

After discussion, agree the main findings from this theme area, then move on to the next theme.

Once you have done this for all themes, go back over your findings to see if there are overarching findings or commonalities across multiple themes.

Example
Once all the interview transcripts have been analysed by theme, you will have a collection of quotes around each theme. For example, for the theme of Response:

'*The biggest challenge at the shelter was keeping my toddler safe and out of people's way. Being so little, she knew nothing about personal boundaries, and because she would relieve herself whenever she felt the need to, and because of course I could not always see, people shunned us. Also, we were on the second floor and along with having no railings, there were also no toilets there. Overall it was a very difficult and uncomfortable experience. It was not far from being traumatic as I felt shunned by people around [me], even though there was little else I could do to help myself*' – Hira, woman with visual impairment, far-west Nepal.

'*When it started becoming clear we would be flooded and we had to leave, along with being anxious for our safety, I was also worried because I was due my monthly period. My concern was, in case my brothers decided to seek shelter in the temple grounds like in the previous years, I would not be able to stay with the rest of the family. In the previous years, many women stayed outside temple premises, separate from their families and they later talked about being scared of snakes and also other people*' – Sandhya, teenage girl, eastern Nepal.

'*As I started heading to a higher ground with the rest of my family, the name-calling started almost immediately … I am used to being jeered at and called derogatory names. But to be treated like this even during such a precarious time made me feel terrible. Nobody thought to offer any help, even though my mother is very old and my nieces and nephews are young. Instead they tried to avoid us. When the jeering and taunts continued for days even where we were taking shelter and people did their best to seclude us, I sometimes thought about jumping into the water and ending it all once and for all*' – Champa, transgender woman, western Nepal.

'*At night, most women remained alert for fear of rape and unwanted attention. Many men drank at night. Especially as a disabled person, already reliant on others for everything, if anybody was to behave badly with me, I know I would hesitate to complain for two reasons: first, I did not want to cause any more trouble for my family. And second, when disabled women have been abused in the past, people have been dismissive when complaints were made. It was as if having a disability meant her life and feelings didn't matter as much. All these things made me feel very vulnerable*' – Subina, woman with a disability, far-west Nepal.

'*At the shelter and afterwards when in a temporary tent, my family wanted me to keep to myself and not even step out of the small space designated to us unless strictly necessary. I knew this was because they wanted to keep me safe; we have personally known of incidents where young women who got separated from their families got taken away by human traffickers*' – Sandhya, teenage girl, eastern Nepal.

'*When I was in the shelter alone with my children, that is when things got difficult. Increasingly I began to face more and more unwanted sexual advances*' – Maya, middle-aged widow with two children, mid-west Nepal.

The findings for this theme therefore might be:

- Groups with higher vulnerability may have different preferences in preparedness and response, including a preference for earlier evacuation.
- The provision of sanitary facilities needs to be based on consideration of the needs for access, and privacy.
- Disaster exacerbates discrimination faced by marginalized groups.
- Vulnerable groups are at increased risk of sexual harassment and assault in emergency situations.

2.1 We are not looking for 'average' responses

The purpose of grouping the quotations is not (just) to look for commonalities or the majority perspective, but individual experiences. Sometimes these experiences will be similar across individuals, but we do not want to exclude reflections if 'only' one person mentioned them. The purpose here is not to gather the mean or majority perspective, or to count the number of times certain people mentioned certain experiences or opinions, but to understand the variety and nuance of individual perspectives.

The aim of the analysis is to directly inform recommendations for adaptations, changes, and re-design of the system so that the system works for everyone, and no one is left behind. It is therefore important to listen to all perspectives.

2.2 Interpretation bias

Our identity, be it based on gender, ethnicity, class or ability, affects the way we interpret the world – it informs what we know, how we think, and how we make sense of information.

Bias in the interpretation of the data can be extremely detrimental as it can lead to the distortion of reality and thereby affect the validity and reliability of the findings.

However, separation of the researcher from the data is neither possible, nor desirable as they are an integral part of the process and final product.

While completely avoiding bias is impossible, we still need to be aware of and reduce the potential impact of researcher bias during interpretation of the data. For example, bias may get introduced if researchers unknowingly interpret data to meet their hypothesis or only include data that they think are relevant or interesting to them.

There are several ways we can reduce researcher bias during interpretation:

- Recognize that everyone has biases.
- Develop a diverse team of researchers/analysers.
- Actively encourage participation and diversity of opinions during the interpretation phase.

Our identity, be it based on gender, ethnicity, class or ability, affects the way we interpret the world

- Keep an open mind during discussions and record all suggested interpretations of the data.
- Ensure transparency in thematic analysis and interpretation – i.e. agree methods of analysis before beginning the process, keep a record of the method followed, and the results of the analysis and discussion throughout the whole process. You (and others) will then be able to go back and check the process.
- Be critically self-reflective about your own preconceptions, relationship dynamics, and analytic focus. Continually re-evaluate the analysis and interpretations and ensure that pre-existing assumptions are kept at bay.

3. Developing recommendations

For each of the findings, discuss as a group what those findings mean, and what actions, strategies, or approaches you would recommend to address the issues identified.

Consider:

- What do the findings mean for your project purpose?
- How would you edit or adjust your project or approach to address these issues?
- If you were to begin the system or project again from scratch, how would you design it?
- What would key stakeholders within the system need to change or do differently to address these issues?
- Are there any specific actions certain stakeholders can take?
- What are some overarching guiding principles or approaches that could address the wider issues/more systemic causes?
- Consider the actions that are inside and outside the scope of your project. For those outside, who needs to take what action? For those within the scope of your project, how will you work to ensure you are responding to them? (This will be useful input to Step 4 and Step 5 of the Missing Voices Approach).

Again, group discussions aided by visual note taking will be incredibly helpful here to provide a diversity of perspectives, collaborate on discussion points, and develop recommendations.

It is also often beneficial to leave a gap of time between interpretation of findings and the development of recommendation processes to allow time for reflection.

3.1 Moving towards a transformative approach

Using the gender transformative spectrum (Figure 4) as a guide and extrapolating beyond gender into other areas of social marginalization can help shape your recommendations in response to the Missing Voices findings.

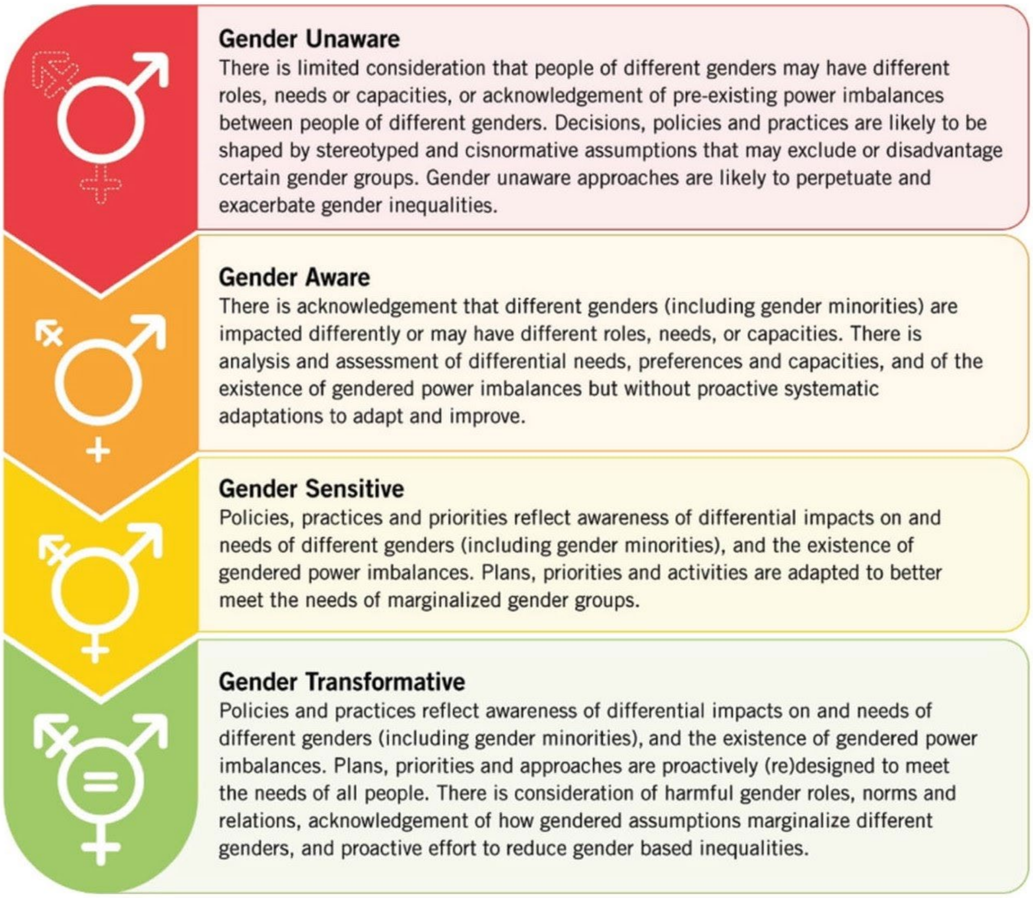

Figure 4. From gender unaware to gender transformative practice, the gender transformative spectrum
Source: Brown et al., 2019a

By implementing the Missing Voices Approach, you should develop evidence and knowledge that will move you beyond the ‘unaware’ state. The purpose of developing recommendations is to move towards an ‘aware’, ‘sensitive’ or ‘transformative’ state in disaster risk management projects, approaches, and strategies to address issues emerging from the Missing Voices findings.

An **unaware** approach takes limited considerations of the way in which marginalized people may have different roles, needs or capacities. There is a lack of acknowledgement that pre-existing power imbalances, and stereotyped assumptions directly shape decision, policies, and practice. Unaware approaches may exclude or disadvantage certain marginalized groups and are likely to exacerbate or perpetuate social inequalities. There are a variety of layers of being gender unaware; there are also aspects of unawareness for other areas of marginalization, including but not limited to colonialism, white supremacy, and ableism.

Unaware example:

- Evacuation kits supplied to all, with no variety in contents.

An **aware** approach acknowledges that there are different needs without taking the necessary action or acknowledges there is a problem without putting in place a solution.

Aware example:

- Mapping people's vulnerabilities within a community, including those with physical disabilities that will affect how they evacuate.

A **sensitive** approach is when the efforts to 'include' are an add-on or an alteration to an existing system.

Sensitive approach examples:

- Increase the lead time of warning messages to allow greater time to prepare and respond in advance of flood water reaching the most vulnerable.
- Work with local communities to develop evacuation procedures that incorporate the needs of the most marginalized, e.g. early evacuation for women, children, elderly, and people with disabilities.
- Ensure evacuation routes are safe, well-lit, and navigable for those who may have physical mobility limitations.
- Ensure safe locations for evacuation contain adequate WASH facilities.
- Provide menstrual hygiene kits within shelter supplies.
- Provide glasses to those with visual impairments so they can see when evacuating.

However, the fact that these considerations were ever left out during the design of the system suggests a problem with who was designing the system in the first place, and a problem with who was at the table and who was being considered and prioritized. For example, providing glasses to those who cannot navigate the evacuation route is an adaptation to the existing system, instead of giving those with visual impairments a seat at the table so that the evacuation route could be designed from the start around their needs.

In a **transformative** approach, the systems and processes are designed throughout in a way that centres and empowers those who might otherwise be an afterthought. The outcomes of gender transformative and gender sensitive approaches might end up the same, or they might end up different.

Transformative approach example:

- Those people with visual impairments, when designing the system to meet their needs, might say that the handout of glasses is exactly what they need, or they might say, actually, if we design it in this way, we should do X or Y.

It is difficult to prescribe in advance what a transformative action might be as it is the process that leads to the action, whereby the whole way the system (and society and power) is structured leads to outcomes that incorporate everyone from the start, so add-ons are no longer required.

A transformative approach also suggests some systemic change. So in the glasses example, handing out glasses is a one-off change that does not sustainably solve the root problem. Whereas, if glasses are indeed the best solution, a transformative approach would look at how to ensure those who need glasses have sustainable access to them, for example looking at healthcare budgets. The solution should include sustainable approaches so that the system is going to continue to have equal outcomes over the long term.

A transformative approach also examines and addresses the root causes of the problems. So in the glasses example, if there is a systemic reason why some people are disproportionately losing vision (e.g. smoky stoves affecting eyesight) then a transformative approach would need to focus on the underlying cause of that vulnerability as well.

Transformative approaches are altogether more ambitious and are not afraid to look at the connections between different parts of life. This often requires greater understanding (and acknowledgement) of social norms and power structures, and willingness to explore alternative ways of reaching the desired outcome.

Step 4: Proactive action

> **1. Engage with champions and power-holders early and continually**
> **2. Build Missing Voices into project plans**
> **3. Make sure voices are heard**
> **4. Do not exploit people's stories**

In partnership with intermediaries, key stakeholders, and marginalized people, proactively act on the identified issues to reduce differential impacts.

Why is this important?

It is important to use the insights and information provided to take action to adapt or redesign disaster risk management so that it is inclusive. The specific actions taken will depend on the project or programme aim and scope (e.g. a flood early warning system study could use insights gained from the Missing Voices Approach to adapt the dissemination and communication methods so that there are channels to issue warnings that reach the most vulnerable).

Often in projects, particularly research projects, implementation is missing as a follow up after the results are analysed. This is a common gap and needs to be addressed in all areas where research can be used to achieve change.

In the case of the most marginalized, we have a higher duty of care to take action and make changes based on a better understanding and analysis of their experiences. The Missing Voices Approach uses their valuable time and relies on interviewees sharing their very personal experiences and knowledge, and is designed fundamentally not to be an extractive and exploitative process. The Approach assumes and is built on a commitment of those undertaking these interviews and analysis that action will be taken as a result of what is found.

We need to acknowledge and recognize that people are sharing their stories with an understanding and trust that we will use their stories to help inform those who have power and influence so that they will understand better those who are marginalized and their experiences, in order to adapt and change the system to be inclusive and appropriate for them.

This is vitally important for the Missing Voices Approach as we are working with and interviewing those who are most marginalized and we need to build, develop, and maintain the trust gained through the process, recognizing that they are likely to have very low levels of trust in those who hold power, and we should not be breaking that trust.

In order to effect change, those in power-holding positions need to be on-board

How to do this

1. Engage with champions and power-holders early and continually

You cannot do this alone if you are in a position outside the system that needs to change. In order to effect change, those in power-holding positions need to be on-board and engaged with this method and approach and have a shared vision from the very beginning. We need to bring in those who have power and influence in the system right from the start, with a shared aim to use the results and the process to change the system so that it is appropriate and inclusive to all.

2. Build Missing Voices into project plans

The Missing Voices methodology and the outputs and insights obtained need to be integrated into project plans and designed a priori in a way that influences and adapts those plans.

Example

If setting up a flood early warning system, the Missing Voices research should be conducted towards the beginning of the project and the insights and outputs should feed directly into the design of the system and the development of protocols. It should not be done at the end of the project to 'look into' issues of gender and marginalization as an afterthought.

For example, if the results show that people with visual impairment will not be able to access the SMS warning messages that are the main channel of communication, then the dissemination and communication strategy needs to be adapted to ensure they can receive warnings appropriate via another method, such as push voice messages, sirens, radio and TV alerts.

3. Make sure voices are heard

Use anonymized quotes from the interviews in any outputs produced, as evidence and insight into your reports on findings. Make sure the words of those who were interviewed are shared and seen by those who are taking actions or making decisions. This can be in the form of selected quotes to demonstrate the findings and support the recommendations. The stories and words of those interviewed should not only be seen by those who are coding the data.

Note that interview transcripts should also be stored securely and for longevity beyond the project end, in accordance with current data protection guidance.

4. Do not exploit people's stories

The narratives gained from the Missing Voices Approach are incredibly powerful and insightful. There can therefore be a risk that some people may seek to use the power of those stories for other purposes, whether positive or negative (e.g. fundraising for an NGO).

It is important that these stories are not used for any purposes other than those about which you informed the interviewee. The stories should not be used or shared elsewhere. You have only obtained informed consent from interviewees for a single purpose, and legally are not allowed to use them for any other purpose. It is also ethically wrong to use these highly personal stories people are sharing, as they have placed their trust in you to use them for an agreed purpose.

Step 5: Ongoing engagement and feedback

1. Through champions and power-holders of system change
2. Via intermediaries
3. Provide them with evidence their voices have been heard
4. Continual engagement

Continue engagement and implement feedback loops to ensure marginalized or vulnerable people are centred in disaster risk management policy and practice, so that no one is left behind.

Why is this important?

The Missing Voices Approach is not an extractive process and relies on the building of trust and the earning of trust. The Missing Voices interviews are a first step in building trust, particularly with those who are likely to have very limited trust of those in power-holding positions. In conducting the Missing Voices interviews, we are asking for their trust in us. We need to demonstrate back to them that we are worthy of that trust. We can do this by continuing the relationship and including them in future decision-making processes, adapting systems to their needs, and making future and ongoing processes inclusive of their needs and perspectives.

How to do this

1. Through champions and power-holders of system change

By nature, those conducting the Missing Voices Approach or methodology are not those who have the power to make changes to the system. They can only advocate and inform those who have the power to make changes based on the findings from the process. Those in power to make changes to the system need to take this on by adapting processes to continue engagement with those most vulnerable (possibly through intermediaries) and develop mechanisms for them to provide feedback on the system in order for the system to continue to adapt and improve over time. This needs to be built from those in power engaging from the beginning and being willing and enthusiastic to act based on insights and recommendations from the Missing Voices Approach.

2. Via intermediaries

We have a higher duty of care to the most marginalized to take action based on our understanding

For some individuals who are most marginalized, there may be cases where their direct engagement with those in power or their active, visible participation in processes may place them at greater risk or in uncomfortable positions. It is important that the ongoing engagement and feedback processes are designed in a way that is sensitive to their positions and vulnerabilities and in no way increases their risks or vulnerabilities. Any intervention or method should Do No Harm.

The Missing Voices Approach is not an extractive process - we must build on the trust we have gained to ensure action is taken

In some cases, it might be necessary to reach individuals via intermediaries who can act as advocates on their behalf, or as a bridge between those marginalized and those in power. It is therefore critical to choose intermediaries who are appropriate, sensitive, and capable of representing those who are most marginalized.

3. Provide them with evidence their voices have been heard

One very simple and vital way of ensuring the Missing Voices interviewees are engaged is to make sure they receive a copy of any outputs produced. This may be more appropriate to convey via intermediaries. But it is vital they get access to the information produced from their stories.

4. Continual engagement

The longer-term aim of the Missing Voices Approach is to raise awareness that these people's voices are not being heard in traditional methods of data collection, participation, and disaster risk management processes. The interviews and analysis demonstrate the insight, value, and needs of those who are being left behind.

It is therefore part of the Missing Voices Approach that the process shines a light on this gap and develops longer-term procedures and mechanisms to close this gap. This may be a slow and long process, but is necessary to enabling, supporting, and championing change in a system that leaves people behind. The Missing Voices interviews and insights should inspire changes to this system to enable and support those who are 'missing' to be included, their voices listened to, and their needs accounted for going forward.

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Annexes

A1 Introductory interview script example

The text below is provided as guidance for the interviewer in the first conversation with the interviewee and can and should be adapted and personalized as appropriate, as long as the interviewee is provided with all the information, and can give us their fully informed consent.

Thank you very much for agreeing to speak with me, I really appreciate your time.

My name is [Interviewer] and I would like to speak with you about your experience of flooding.

I'm part of a team that's carrying out a study to understand how to improve disaster preparedness activities so that they are effective for everyone.

We want to make sure that we understand the experiences and priorities of people who might face different challenges in being heard or participating in activities like focus group discussions, and who might have specific experiences and requirements that we need to understand.

[Intermediary] has connected me with you as someone that would be able to share some important insights from your experience of flooding.

We're interested to learn about your perspective and what is important to you about preparing for and responding to [flood event], and what your experience has been in terms of the impacts of the storm and flooding, accessing information, and responding to the storm.

Our conversation will be completely anonymous. I'm going to record it so that I can write it up fully and accurately capture what you tell me, but then the recording will be destroyed. If there is anything you don't want me to include, please just let me know.

Your account will be anonymously included in a compilation of individual stories and experiences and will also contribute to a report so that organizations can have this guidance about what is important to you in preparing for storms in the future.

Is there anything you would like to ask about the study?

Before we arrange a convenient time to speak, I want to make sure that you're happy to go ahead.

Are you happy to speak to me about your experience, and for your story to be anonymously included in this study?

Are you happy for me to record our conversation so that I can write it up, after which I will delete the recording?

Do you understand that you can withdraw from the conversation at any time, and that I will delete any audio recordings and notes I have taken, and not include your story in the study?

Thank you for confirming these points. When would be a convenient time for me to call you again for us to speak about your experience?

How would you prefer me to call you – using the phone, WhatsApp, or any other platform?

Also, when I publish your story, I'll use a pseudonym and a brief description of you to introduce your perspective. In our call [tomorrow], you can tell me which name you would like me to use, and how you would like me to describe you.

Thank you again, I'm really looking forward to speaking with you and hearing about your experiences.

A2 Interview question examples

Key themes and questions

The opening questions are the general questions that we want to understand. The key is to let the interviewee talk about what is most important to them. The follow up guiding questions are there to support the interviewer to guide the conversation and keep it focused on what we want to understand about the opening question.

They will not be relevant to each interviewee, and they may not be needed at all. Interviewers should not look at these questions as a list to be worked through – the interview is an open conversation, and this is intended as a tool to support and guide that conversation as needed.

1.1 Understanding the impacts of the flood

Opening question: Can you tell me about your experience of the storm?

Follow up guiding questions:

1. What happened?
    a. Did you lose your home?
        i. Where are you living now?
    b. Did you lose your livelihood?
        i. How are you earning income now?
    c. Did you receive any support?
        i. Who from?
        ii. Did it meet your needs?
        iii. Was there any support you needed that you didn't receive?
2. How did it affect you?
    a. Has your physical health been affected?
    b. Has your mental health been affected?
    c. Has your access to any key services and infrastructure been affected?
    d. How do you feel now about the experience?
3. How did your life change following the disaster?
    a. Do you have any new responsibilities or roles because of the disaster?
4. Do you think you had a different experience to other people?
    a. Do you see any difference in how you were impacted by the flood compared to others who are not [e.g. widows] in your area?
        i. Why and how?
    b. Do you think being [e.g. a widow] was particularly relevant to how you experienced flooding, or not relevant?
    c. Is there anything about being [e.g. a widow] that you think had an impact on your experience of flooding?
        i. In terms of how you were affected?
        ii. In terms of how you were treated by other people?

iii. In terms of how you were able to respond?

1.2 Risk knowledge

Opening question: Can you tell me what you know about the flood risk in your area?

Follow up guiding questions:

1. Have you any idea which areas where you live and work are at higher risk of flooding?
2. Would knowing more about areas at risk be useful to you and how?
3. If you wanted to know more about areas at risk of flooding, how would you try to find out?
4. Are there any barriers that might make it harder for you to find out about what areas are at risk at flooding?
5. Are you aware of any groups or individuals in your community involved in identifying areas of higher flood risk?
6. Have you ever been given an opportunity to engage with flood risk mapping?
7. Would you like to engage with this kind of process?
8. Are there any obstacles to you engaging with flood risk mapping exercises in your community?
9. Do you have any knowledge about flood risk that you would want to share with the community?

1.3 Monitoring and warning

Opening question: Can you tell me about how you knew that the flood was happening?

Follow up guiding questions:

1. What caused you to become concerned about the flood?
2. Do you think others knew about the flood before or after you?
   a. Who do you think knew before you and why?
   b. Who do you think knew after you and why?
3. If you could have known before the flood started, would that have been useful?
4. What would you have done to prepare?
5. How much time would be useful for you to prepare?
6. Do you think that you might need more time than other people to prepare or to respond to a warning?

1.4 Communication and dissemination

Opening question: Can you tell me about where you got information about the flood?

Follow up guiding questions:

1. When you found out that the flood was going to happen, who did this information come from?
2. How was this information communicated to you?
   a. Was this useful for you?
   b. How long before the flood did you receive this information?
3. Did you feel that you had enough information?
   a. What else would be useful for you to know?
   b. Do you think that there is some information you might need that other people don't need?
4. When you received information about risk, what did you understand it to mean?
   a. Did it help you to make a decision?
   b. Did it help you to take action?
5. Did you have a role in sharing risk information with other people?
6. How do you normally access important information, or get to know important information, about things that affect you?
7. Who do you trust to tell you the truth about things that affect you? [Open question – enter any detail of ticked options in blank column to right]
8. If another flood were to happen, which method of communication would you prefer to find out?
9. If another flood were to happen, what information would you need in a warning message?
10. Do you think you face any barriers in accessing information that other people might not face?

1.5 Response capability

Opening question: What did you do when you knew about the flood?

Follow up guiding questions:

1. When did you take action in response to information about risk?
2. Why was this action important to you?
3. Was there any action/any other action that you wanted to take but couldn't?
   a. Why were you unable to take this action?
4. Did you receive any support during the period of the flood?
   a. Who did you receive this support from?
5. Did you need any support that you didn't receive?

    a. Why do you think you didn't receive this?
6. Do you think that you face any barriers in responding to warning information that other people might not face?
7. Did you evacuate due to the flood?
    a. Can you tell me about your experience of evacuation?
    b. Where did you go?
    c. How did you get there?
    d. Did you experience any problems while evacuating?
    e. Did you have everything you needed?
    f. Was there anything you needed that you didn't have?
8. If you didn't evacuate, why did you not evacuate?
9. Have you ever received any advice on how to prepare in advance of a flood?
    a. Who did you receive this advice from?
    b. Was the advice useful?
10. Who made the decision in your household about what action to take?
11. If another flood happened, is there anything you would want to do differently?
12. Is there anything that would make it difficult for you to take that action/those actions?

1.6 Governance

Opening question: How well do you think that the authorities who are responsible for flood risk management in Baguio understand your needs when it comes to floods?

Follow up guiding questions:

1. What do you want the people designing this early warning system to know about your experience?
2. How easy is it for you to contact them if you have any questions or concerns about flooding?
3. How confident are you that you will be listened to and supported?
4. What do you think is the most important thing for these authorities to do so that you are protected from floods in the future?
5. If the early warning system starts working next year, what would you like to see to consider it a success?
6. How would we know whether the system is working well for everyone, especially for those with less power or influence?
7. Do you think the system should be reaching out to people like you in the future to check how well the system is working?
    a. How could they best do that?

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THE MISSING VOICES APPROACH MANUAL

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We are an international development organization putting ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world. Our vision is for a world that works better for everyone.
We help people find solutions to some of the world's toughest problems, including challenges made worse by catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality.
We believe in the power of small to change the big picture. And that together we can take practical action to build futures free from poverty.

Big change starts small

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