



Woman empowerment through adoption and usage of technology

The specific role of gender in technology adoption and use during a disaster has been largely documented by researchers from many academic fields. Women have special needs during a disaster. Moreover, during a disaster women are at risk because of factors such as economic and political powerlessness, culture-related gender discrimination, and other cultural perceptions of inferiority and superiority (Bari 1998; Thornton & Voigt 2007). In this context, technology can then be a good way to empower women. Nevertheless, after a disaster, women may be "constrained by cultural norms that restrict their movement", and they may lack access to adequate technology that would allow them to get accurate and useful information (Drolet et al. 2015). Radio was found to be one of the most accessible media of communication for women in the context of disasters, thanks to low cost and low needs of electricity to function. They can access information and it proved efficient for prevention through programs that are culturally oriented for women, meaning that they target the needs of women in specific cultural settings. The 2005 World Disasters Reports states that skilfully produced programmes can go beyond simple exchanges of information by using role modelling and entertaining soap operas to promote greater awareness of risks such as landmines or infectious diseases. In Afghanistan, evaluations of the BBC's long-running radio soap opera "New Home, New Life" have shown that listeners change their attitudes and behaviour after hearing the drama (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent 2005). With the evolution of cultural practices and gender roles, prevention and awareness raising could come through other means. Women were found to be more likely than men to use television to gather information after a disaster (Spence et al. 2007). Contradictory results about internet use were found, since Spence et al. (2007) found women to be also more likely to use the internet whereas (Dutta-Bergman 2004) found men more likely to use the internet in the aftermath of 9/11. This could be linked to the evolution of Internet use between the two studies and should be further researched. During the earthquake that struck Emilia-Romagna (Northern Italy) in 2012, men showed to be almost four times more likely to use Twitter than women (Tagliacozzo & Magni 2016), which can't be explained by previous divide in social media uses. In an online international survey, men were also found to contribute more to geo-located information and crisis maps than women who are less aware of tools like OSM (Open Street Map) an open source based map. On the contrary, women are more likely to provide social information through online social networks and photo sharing sites (Stephens 2013). This can lead to some biases in the way the maps are created since they are created, edited and reviewed mostly by men, who then decide what information is relevant for the map.

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Gender roles](#)

Disaster Phases: [Response](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Non-active citizens](#)



Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [The use of new technologies \(e.g. Bluetooth\) can improve communication strategies in disaster management situations](#)
- [Use cultural factors to improve the effectiveness of disaster communication](#)

Source

[Deliverable D3.1 "Cultural factors and technologies" \(page 43\)](#)

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