



# Integrating Protection, Gender and Inclusion into Anticipatory Action: The Experience of the Cyclone Early Action Protocol in Madagascar

## CASE STUDY

Photo caption: Home visit conducted as part of a Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey with a dignity kit recipient following the activation of the Malagasy Red Cross Cyclone Early Action Protocol (EAP), April 2026.

Photo credit: Malagasy Red Cross.



Photo caption: Training on Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for Local Emergency Response Teams (ELTs) and representatives of public schools in flood-prone areas of Antananarivo, June 2025.  
Photo credit: Malagasy Red Cross.

## Context

Madagascar is among the countries most exposed to climate-related risks in the Indian Ocean region. Recurrent cyclones cause widespread damage to infrastructure, disrupt access to essential services, destroy livelihoods, displace populations, and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities. In this context, anticipatory action is an important approach for helping at-risk communities better anticipate hazards, reduce their exposure, and mitigate some of the humanitarian impacts before a cyclone strikes.

To anticipate the impacts of cyclones and take action before they strike, the Malagasy Red Cross (MRC) developed a Cyclone Early Action Protocol (EAP), enabling the activation of anticipatory actions based on predefined meteorological thresholds. On 9 February 2026, the protocol was partially activated in anticipation of Tropical Cyclone Gezani, following confirmation by the General Directorate of Meteorology (DGM) that the cyclone was likely to make landfall along Madagascar's eastern and northeastern coasts.

Anticipatory actions were primarily implemented in the districts of Fénérive Est and Toamasina, in coordination with local disaster risk management structures. These actions included the dissemination of early warning messages, support for the preventive evacuation of at-risk populations, and the distribution of dignity kits to women and girls accommodated in temporary evacuation sites.

This activation demonstrates how the integration of Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) considerations can strengthen the quality, accessibility and impact of anticipatory action mechanisms, particularly for populations most exposed to risk.

## Who Was Supported and How

### A Needs- and Risk-Based Approach

The activation of the Cyclone Early Action Protocol (EAP) was guided by a people-centred approach that took into account the specific needs and differentiated vulnerabilities of populations exposed to cyclone-related risks. In the context of anticipatory action and preventive evacuations, this approach helps ensure safe, equitable and dignified access to information and assistance before a cyclone makes landfall.

Activities specifically targeted groups considered to be at heightened risk, including women-headed households, pregnant women, mothers of young children, persons with disabilities, and individuals requiring additional support during preventive evacuations and displacement.

« All women and adolescent girls of menstruating age present at the site should be eligible to receive a dignity kit, regardless of their administrative status, possession of identity documents, or disability status.»

The actions implemented were designed not only to support evacuation efforts before the cyclone's impact, but also to contribute to safer, more inclusive and needs-based assistance for affected populations.

### Community Mobilization and Early Warning Dissemination

The activation of the Cyclone Early Action Protocol (EAP) relied on strong community mobilization to support the dissemination of early warnings and the preventive evacuation of at-risk populations.

This effort built on prior investments in capacity strengthening, including training in Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), as well as the establishment of Community Engagement and Accountability Committees in the Atsinanana region. Trained volunteers and Local Emergency Response Teams were then mobilized to disseminate early warning messages through door-to-door visits in at-risk communities.

According to available data, approximately 600 door-to-door visits were conducted, contributing to the dissemination of early warning information to an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 people.

This community-based approach helped improve access to understandable and actionable early warning information before the cyclone's arrival, including in highly exposed and hard-to-reach areas. Volunteers also supported households in preparing for evacuation and assisted individuals who were unable to evacuate independently.

The messages delivered by volunteers and Local Emergency Response Teams were aligned with the national cyclone warning system of the National Disaster Risk Management Office (BNGRC) and its colour-coded alert levels, helping to ensure consistency and coherence in the information shared with communities.

### Support for Preventive Evacuation and Inclusive Assistance

Alongside early warning dissemination activities, the Malagasy Red Cross supported the organization and management of several temporary evacuation sites in coordination with local authorities.

In Fénérive Est, two temporary sites were established to accommodate women who were preventively evacuated during the cyclone alert period.

Supporting preventive evacuation was a key component of the anticipatory action activation, helping to reduce people's exposure to risk before the cyclone made landfall.

Activities also included assistance for individuals who were unable to evacuate independently. This experience highlights the importance of integrating accessibility, inclusion and safety considerations into anticipatory evacuation mechanisms and the management of temporary evacuation sites.

### **People-Centred Assistance, Dignity and Support for Women and Girls**

Particular attention was given to the specific needs of women and girls in temporary evacuation sites through the anticipatory distribution of dignity kits.

Beyond the hygiene items themselves, this assistance aimed to promote safer and more dignified evacuation conditions by addressing needs related to menstrual hygiene, well-being and dignity among people who had been preventively displaced.

The kits included reusable sanitary pads, reusable menstrual underwear, underwear, a towel, a *lambahoany* (traditional Malagasy wrap), a storage pouch, and other essential hygiene and dignity items.

According to Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) data collected approximately 71 days after the distribution, 85 per cent of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance received. Findings also showed high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the items distributed (85%), the quantity of items provided (80%), the organization of the distribution process (92%), and the welcoming and respectful attitude of volunteers (88%).

The PDM also identified several areas for improvement for future activations, particularly regarding communication about complaint and feedback mechanisms, the accessibility of community information, and the strengthening of inclusion considerations for persons with disabilities.

## **Successes**

### **Community-Based Approaches Facilitated Access to Early Warnings and Preventive Evacuation**

Door-to-door visits, community-based dissemination of early warning messages, and the mobilization of trained volunteers helped communities prepare for and undertake preventive evacuations before the cyclone made landfall.

This strong community engagement also contributed to improving access to understandable and actionable early warning information, enabling at-risk populations to make informed decisions and take protective measures before the cyclone's arrival.

### **Positive Feedback on the Assistance Provided**

Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) findings showed a high overall level of satisfaction among recipients regarding the dignity kits, the organization of the distributions, and the support provided by volunteers.

These findings suggest that the kits addressed important needs related to hygiene, well-being and dignity among women and girls who had been preventively displaced. The approach also aligns with the

Movement's commitment to integrating dignity, menstrual hygiene management and equitable access to essential services within emergency and temporary displacement settings.

### **PGI as a Driver of Quality and Accessibility in Anticipatory Action**

The experience of the Malagasy Red Cross demonstrates how integrating Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) considerations can strengthen the relevance, accessibility and operational quality of anticipatory action mechanisms.

During the activation of the Cyclone Gezani Early Action Protocol, PGI considerations helped shape different aspects of the anticipatory response, ensuring that the specific needs and differentiated vulnerabilities of at-risk populations were better understood and addressed.

Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) also served as an important tool for gathering feedback from people assisted, identifying barriers and challenges, and strengthening people-centred approaches for future anticipatory action activations.

## **Challenges and Lessons Learned**

### **Strengthening Feedback and Accountability Mechanisms**

Post-Distribution Monitoring findings revealed that a significant proportion of respondents were not aware of the existing complaint and feedback mechanisms available to them.

This experience highlights the importance of continuing to strengthen accessible, safe and understandable community accountability mechanisms, including complaint, feedback and reporting channels for concerns related to protection and safeguarding, in future anticipatory action activations, particularly in evacuation contexts.

### **Continuing to Strengthen Accessibility and Inclusion**

The activation also highlighted the importance of further strengthening accessibility and inclusion considerations in future anticipatory action activations, particularly for persons with disabilities and individuals requiring additional support during preventive evacuations and displacement.

Post-Distribution Monitoring findings underscored the need to continue adapting information, assistance and feedback mechanisms to ensure they are accessible and responsive to the needs of all affected individuals.

### **Further Integrating Protection Considerations into Operational Readiness**

The short lead times associated with anticipatory action can sometimes limit opportunities for briefings immediately before activation. This experience highlights the importance of integrating Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) considerations into operational readiness measures, including through training, briefings and tools developed prior to activation.

Embedding these considerations during the readiness phase helps ensure that protection principles are consistently applied when anticipatory actions are triggered and implemented

## Lessons Learned

The activation of the Cyclone Early Action Protocol (EAP) in anticipation of Tropical Cyclone Gezani provides valuable lessons for strengthening the integration of Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) across anticipatory action mechanisms.

### 1. **Community proximity facilitates anticipatory action :**

Community-based approaches and local engagement mechanisms play a critical role in disseminating early warnings, improving access to information, and supporting preventive evacuations before a hazard occurs. By building on trusted local networks and volunteers, anticipatory action can reach at-risk populations more effectively and support timely decision-making.

### 2. **Dignity begins before impact:**

Considerations related to dignity, hygiene, accessibility and well-being can be integrated from the anticipatory phase onwards, including during preventive evacuations.

### 3. **Post-distribution monitoring strengthens accountability and continuous improvement::**

Post-distribution monitoring provides an important opportunity to gather feedback from affected populations, identify barriers to access or challenges encountered, and strengthen people-centred approaches in future anticipatory action activations.

### 4. **Protection and safeguarding must be integrated into operational readiness from the outset:**

The short lead times associated with anticipatory action can limit opportunities for briefing and capacity strengthening immediately before activation. Integrating Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) as well as safeguarding considerations into readiness measures, including training, tools and standard operating procedures, helps ensure that protection principles are effectively applied when anticipatory actions are triggered.

### 5. **Feedback, reporting and referral mechanisms remain essential:**

Accessible and safe community feedback mechanisms, as well as clear pathways for complaints, safeguarding concerns and protection referrals, should be integrated throughout the anticipatory action cycle. Ensuring that affected people know where and how to seek support contributes to safer, more accountable and more inclusive anticipatory action.

### 6. **PGI enhances the quality and effectiveness of anticipatory action:**

The integration of Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) helps ensure that anticipatory action is accessible, relevant and responsive to the needs of populations most exposed to risk.