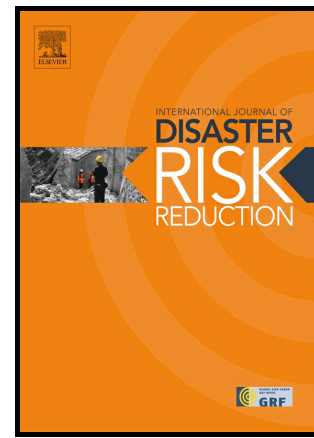


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Local understanding of disaster risk and livelihood resilience: the case of rice smallholders and floods in Ecuador

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Abstract

On the premise that a system's resilience is partially a function of its capability to manage risk, this paper systematically presents a step-by-step process to develop and apply a participatory risk assessment as an approximate way to better understand livelihood resilience from a local perspective, specifically within the context of rice smallholders located in flood-prone areas in Ecuador. This process is characterized mainly by (i) approaching smallholders to ascertain the livelihood assets that are relevant to them, how they could be understood as being at risk, and how their at-risk situation should be measured and interpreted; and (ii) using drawings and stories as a combined research tool for refreshing memory in the process of data collection. The differentiated research process showed that (i) including local knowledge and interpretation of risk from the beginning of the assessment tool construction results in an easier application in the field; (ii) drawing and storytelling as a combined tool on the one hand helped participants to provide detailed information about facts, feelings, and social dynamics, and on the other hand allowed us to indirectly assess their willingness to collaborate and the strategies to do so; and (iii) popular or innovative strategies, involving tangible and intangible resources, identified through every step, proved to be a link between local resilience and risk management capabilities.

Keywords: livelihood resilience; risk disaster; participatory assessment; flood; rice; smallholders

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