

THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF FLOOD RISK: TOWARDS BUILDING RESILIENCE IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

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Significant advancements have been made in hydrodynamic modeling for natural disasters such as floods; however, it is vital to better understand how to effectively communicate risk to promote hazard preparedness. Risk perception is associated with self-protective behaviors, therefore, a central concept in understanding flood vulnerability. Prior to development or implementation of any hazard mitigation strategies - planning, policy, programs, projects - it is crucial to first understand the perspectives of those who are most vulnerable. Thus, the Flood Resilient Infrastructure and Sustainable Environments (FloodRISE) project, in a university-community partnership between the University of California – Irvine and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, conducted household level surveys - in Newport Beach, California and in Tijuana, Baja California – to investigate perceptions and preparedness in two urban communities. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted in the Tijuana River Valley, a smaller, more rural, population. Preliminary results, as well as a comparison between distinctive sites will be discussed, specifically addressing data that speaks to risk perception and next steps for (1) engaging community in the co-generation of local knowledge about flood hazards; and (2) co-development communication strategies that can contribute to more flood resilient communities.