

# iSoy Capaz! Plus: Integrating Environmental Stewardship into Health Outreach in the Northeastern Peruvian Amazon



Jessica Jefferson  
Jmjefferson@ufl.edu



## Background Information

- Geographic focus area: Loreto, Peruvian Amazon
- Project sample: 6 ribeño communities (men n=11, women n=27, couples n=9)
- Subsistence farmers
- Staple crops: yucca, rice, beans, plantains
- Endemic malaria
- Lack of potable water
- No electricity
- High fertility rates
- Thatched homes
- Open defecation
- Seasonal flooding
- Geographically isolated

Geographic Focus Area



- Partner Organization:  
Amazon Promise  
Iquitos, Loreto, Peru

## Objectives

- Identify the points of entry through which we may reach the community to begin addressing environmental concerns and developing in collaboration with the communities strategies of environmental stewardship.
- Identify the most pressing points that the community cares about/worries about in terms of their health and explore linkages of these health concerns to environmental processes and degradation.
- Identify leadership roles for different activities within the community.
- Determine if there are existing groups or partnerships within the villages to collaborate with and how to do so, during the research/information gathering stage.
- Integrate women's empowerment and agency within the aforementioned objectives

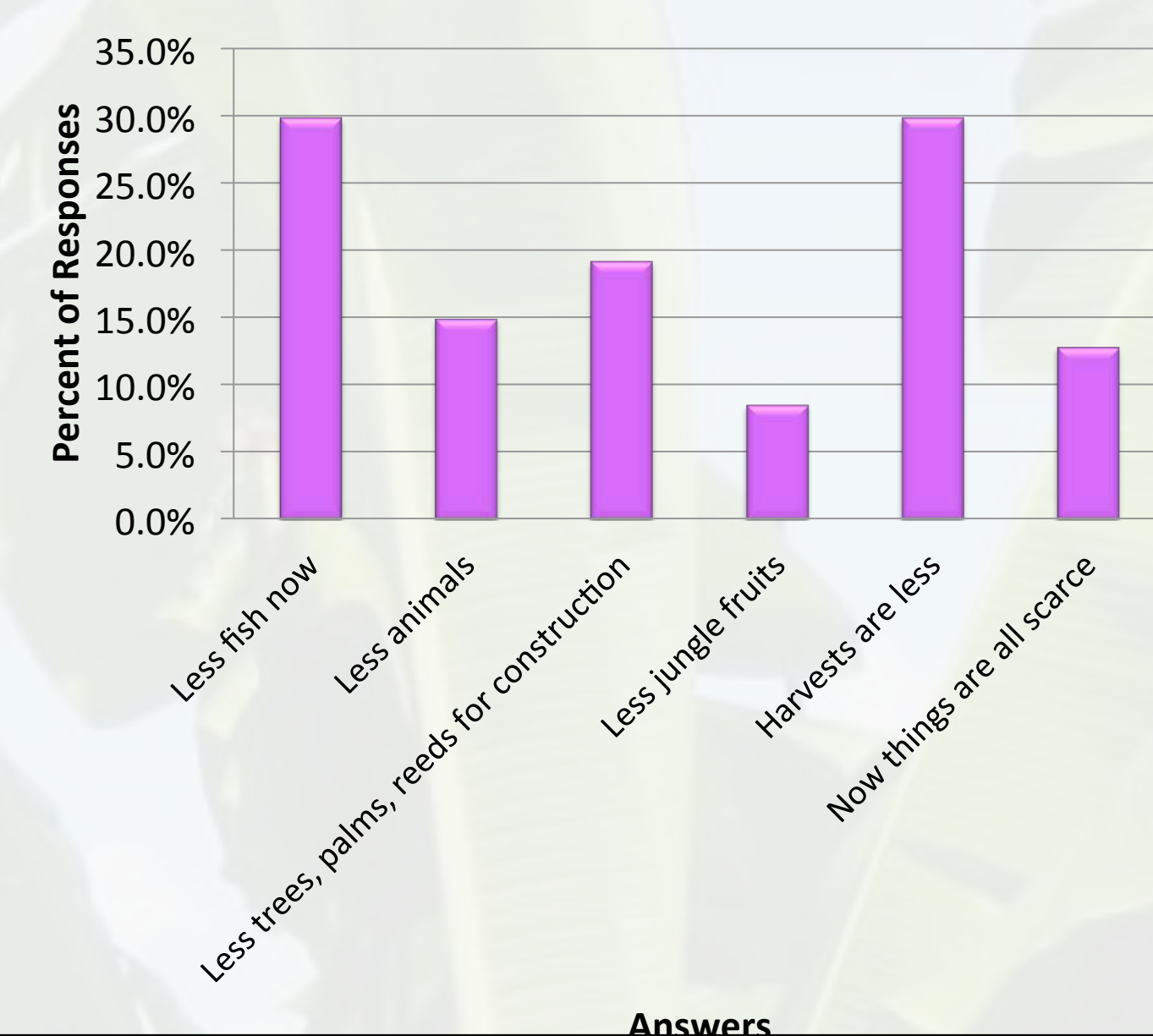
## Methods

- Semi-structure Interviews (n=46)
  - 20 open ended questions incorporating strength, weakness, opportunity, threat analysis and visioning
  - Gender differentiated
- Direct Participant Observation
  - 3-7 days spent in each community (n=6)
- Focus Groups
  - Gender differentiated

## Results & Analysis

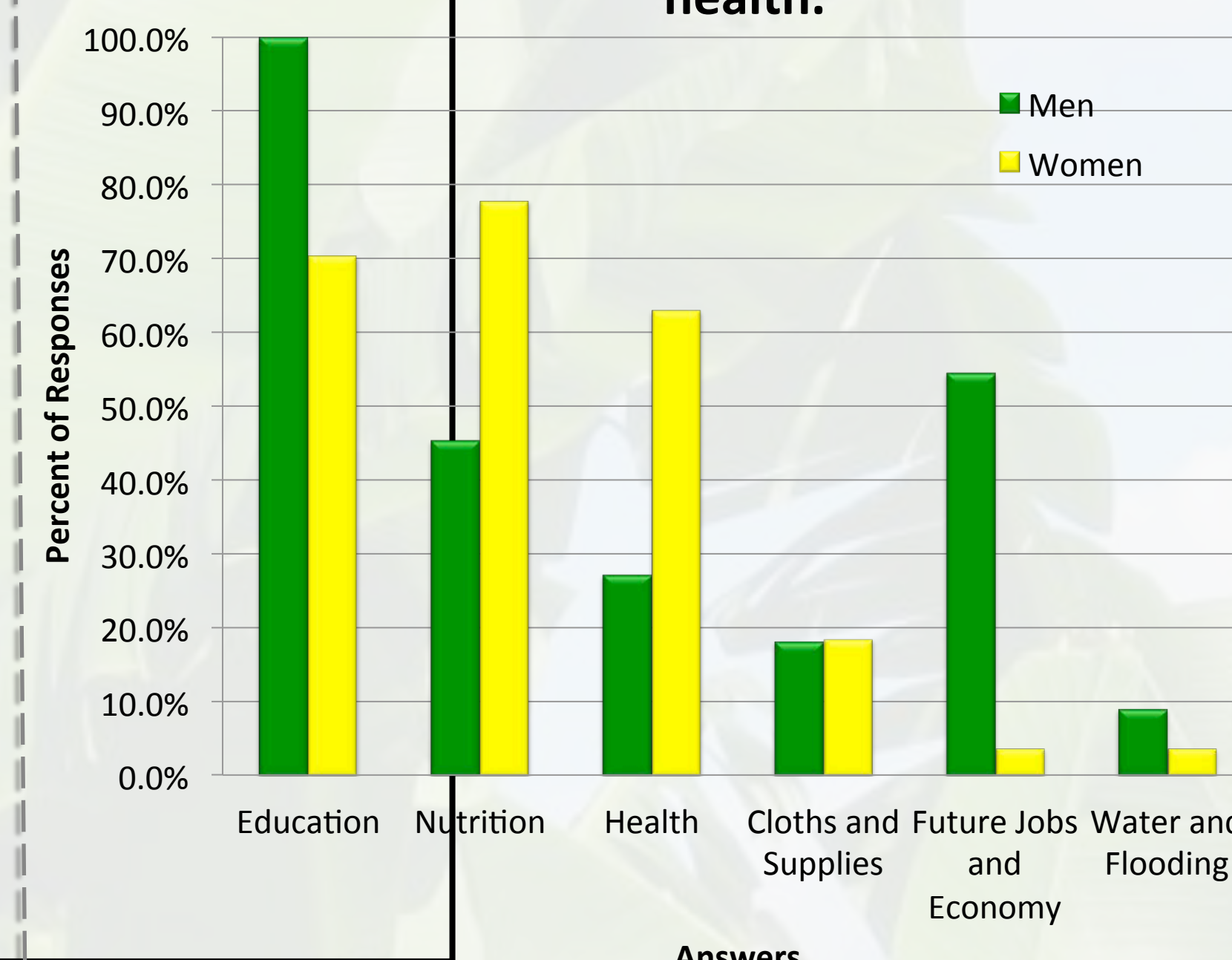
### Overall Community Analysis

Natural resources that have historically functioned as sources of livelihood are becoming more scarce.



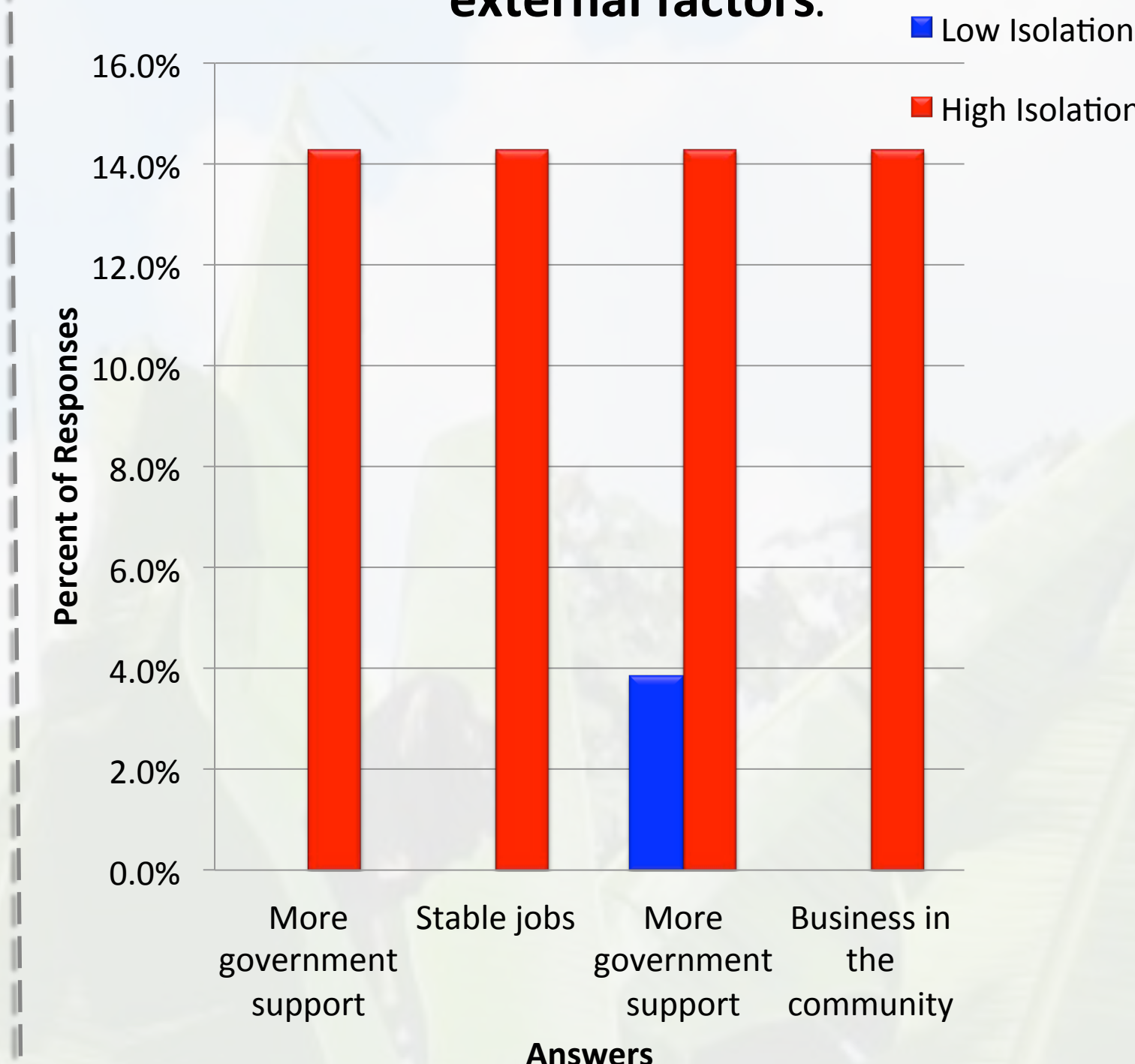
### Gender Analysis

Men are concerned with livelihoods and earning potential while women focus on immediate concerns such as nutrition and health.

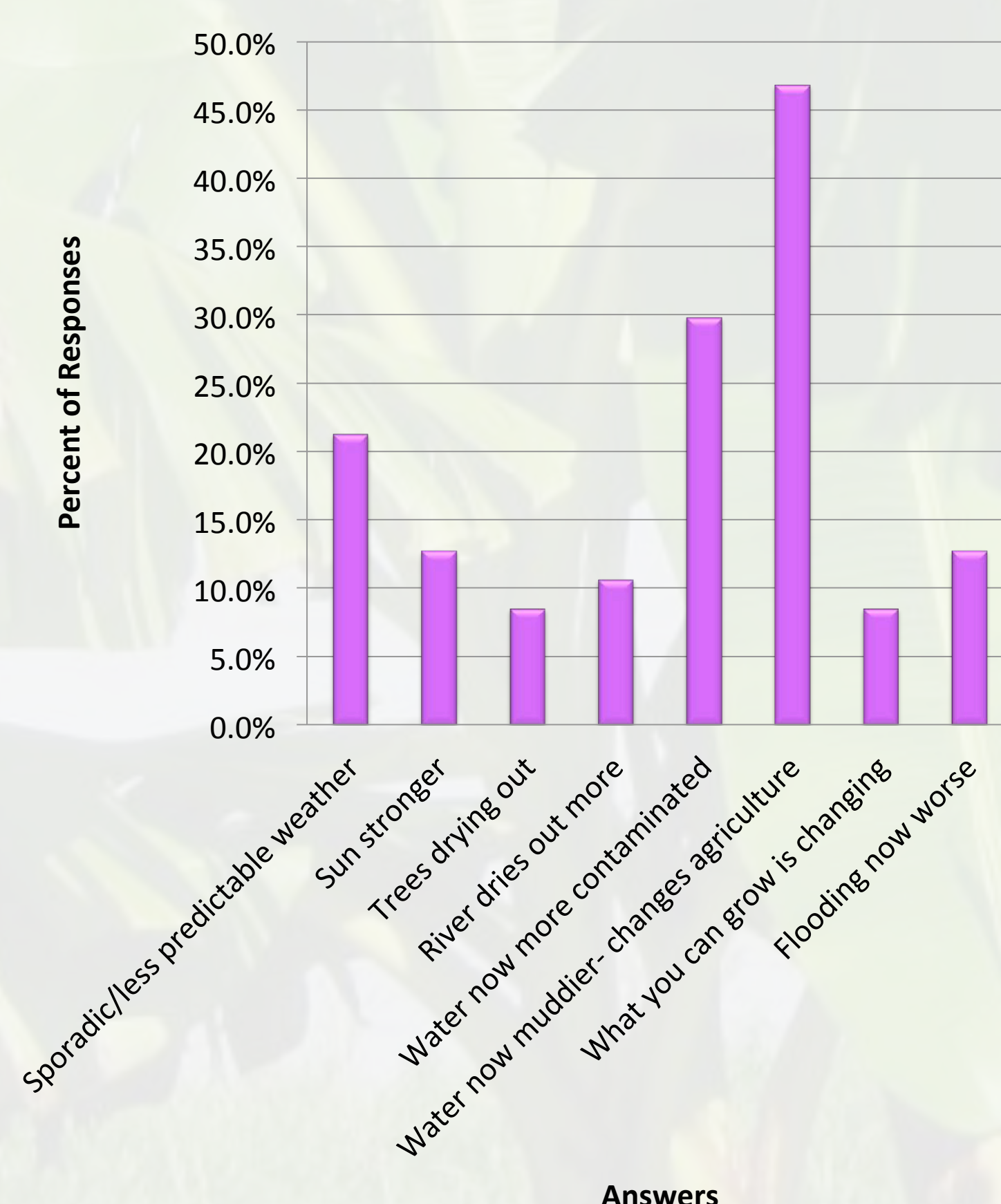


### Isolation Analysis

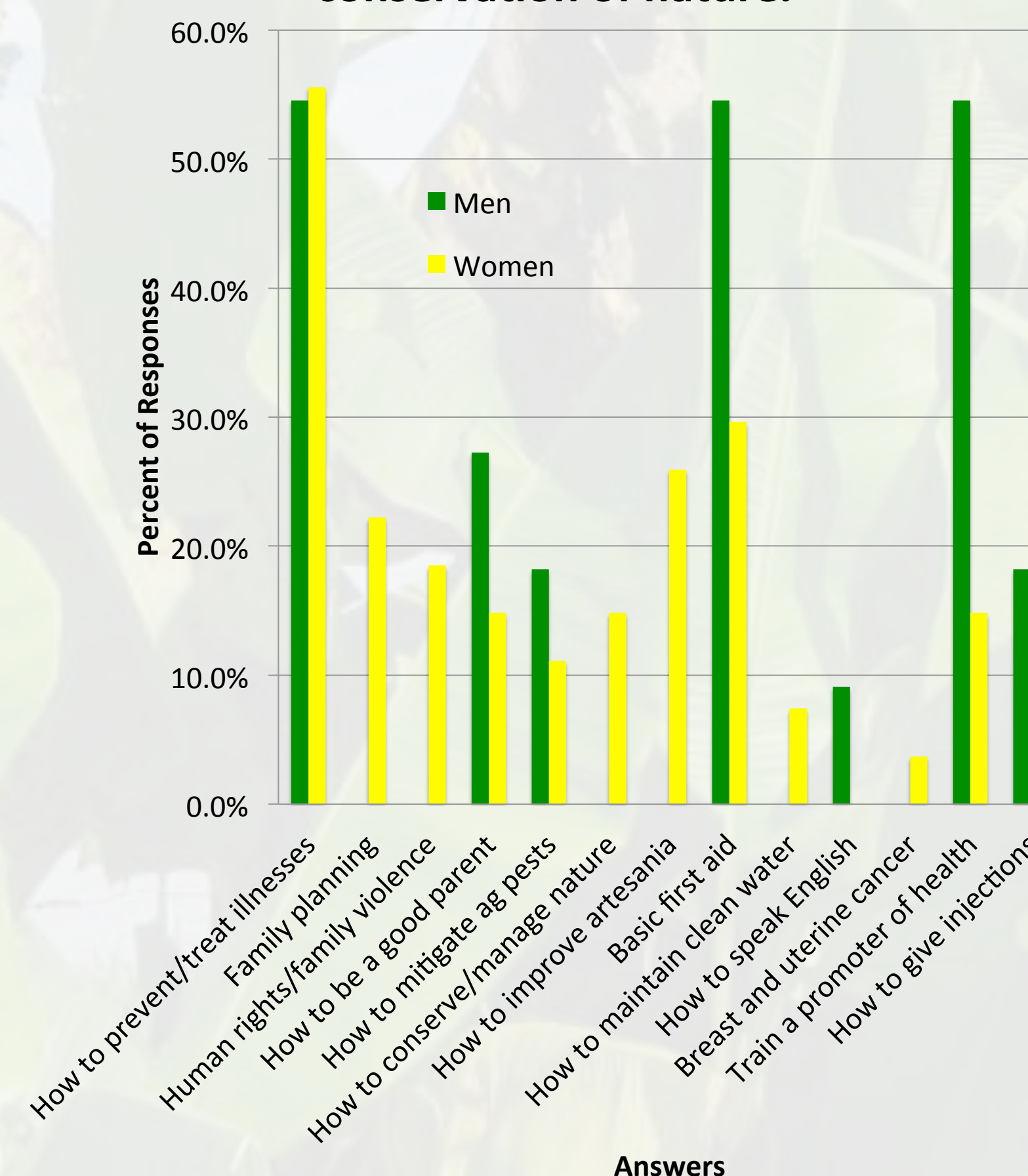
High isolation increases the importance of external factors.



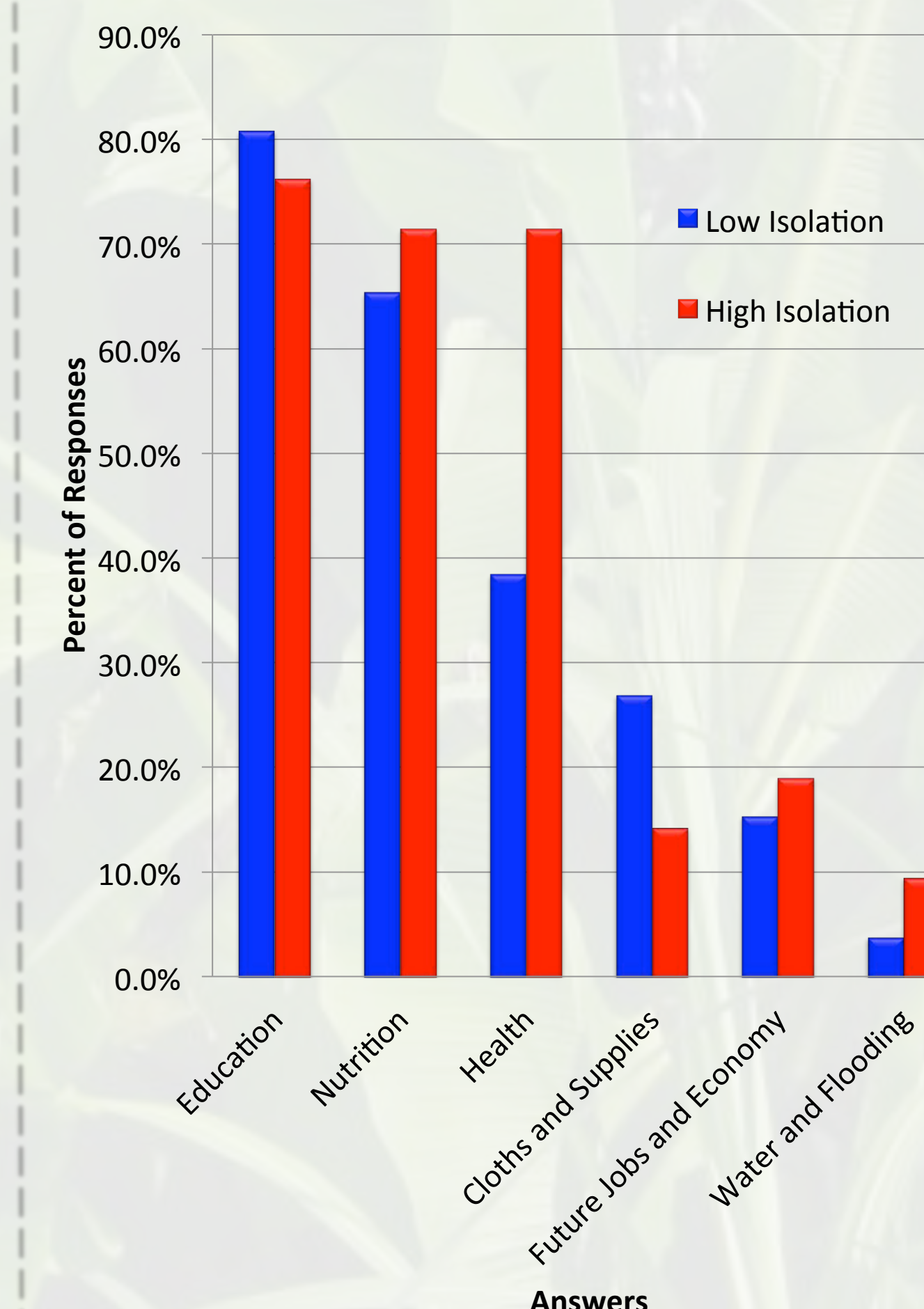
Changes in climate, water, seasonality and environmental degradation are negatively impacting households.



Men and women both concerned with health, men mainly in health knowledge. Women also focused on domestic issues and conservation of nature.



High isolation communities are more likely to identify health, nutrition, and flooding as top worries for their children.



## Conclusions

- Existing parent and artisan groups viable entry points for outreach
- Community leadership and contacts interested in engaging with NGOs on environmental stewardship due to positive impacts of regional tourism and the potential for tourists if communities manage their natural areas effectively
- Use of medicinal plants prevalent (51%)
- Importance of health knowledge and identifying serious illnesses is reflected in the worries, needs and topics the community would like to learn about
- Universal desire for children to be educated and have a "better life" than their parents
- Identified skills and changing realities similar in all communities visited
- Clearly defined (traditional) gender roles in households
- No consensus on the meaning of an ideal life
- Communities lack a trash management plan
- Amazon Promise's health clinics in the communities are justified based on expressed needs
- Environmental changes negatively affecting the food security and the health of these communities

## Recommendations

- Increase the focus of Amazon Promise clinics on health outreach and removing barriers to positive behavior change
- Focus outreach and clinics on more isolated communities
- Link communities to other NGOs working on agriculture, climate resilience and potable water through a multi stakeholder platform
- Train a Community Promoter of Health in each (or every other) community to promote local healthcare knowledge and truly sustainable health knowledge

## Acknowledgments

My Support Team – AP Team – My Boat Driver – Francisca – Respondent – Focus Group – Achuar Apu

