Integrating Gender into Humanitarian Action:
Good Practices from Asia-Pacific 3

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On behalf of the IASC Regional Network Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action in Asia-Pacific

Credit-ADPC

Mainstreaming Gender Equality into Humanitarian Action

In May 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit convened a High-Level Leaders' Roundtable "Women and Girls: Catalyzing Action to Achieve Gender Equality," recognizing a need to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in crisis. Meanwhile, discussions during the Regional Asia-Pacific Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Hanoi, Vietnam, centered on integrating gender into disaster risk reduction processes. These dialogues highlighted examples and critical commitments to ensure an effective humanitarian system for all women, girls, men, and boys.

This is the third compilation of good practices on integrating gender into humanitarian action in Asia, developed on behalf of the Regional Network Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action in Asia-Pacific. On the following pages, we highlight examples from the region that support equal treatment of all before, during and after disasters.

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Credit-UN Women/Marie Sophie Pettersson

Gender Equality Resource Guide

The Gender Equality Resource Guide for Emergency Response Preparedness is a new resource in Nepal that sets out the responsibilities for collective coordination and ensures the rights of women, girls, men and boys are equally represented and their distinct needs, interests and capacities are incorporated into preparedness, immediate response, early recovery, reconstruction and transition.

The document is based on the lessons learned and good practices from the integration of gender equality into the humanitarian response to the recent earthquakes in Nepal. It is also included in Nepal's Emergency Response and Preparedness plan marking the first initiative of its kind globally.

The Gender Equality Resource Guide consists of two parts. The first section outlines key action for mainstreaming gender equality in preparedness and response. It guides key stakeholders to promoting participation and dignity of affected populations, suggests key actions for the roles of humanitarian organizations, and engaging local women's organizations. The second part offers a set of templates/tools to support

Credit-UN Women/Samir Jung Thapa

implementation of key actions. These include Checklists, Advocacy tools, Terms of References, Information Management and Communications Tools, Cluster-Specific Tools, Flash Appeal Documents, and Capacity Development Tools.

The Inter-Cluster Gender Working Group, co-chaired by UN Women and UN-OCHA prepared the guide, and the UN's Nepal Humanitarian Country Team endorsed it, which led to the document being incorporated into Nepal's Disaster Contingency Plan. This endorsement and incorporation is critically important for ensuring gender-responsive disaster preparedness in Nepal.

Marie Sophie Pettersson, UN Women Nepal

WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT
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Credit-OCHA

"A right, not a gift"

During the high-level leaders' roundtable session on "Women and Girls: Catalyzing Action to Achieve Gender Equality" at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, participants recognized that advancing the agenda of gender equality, women's empowerment and girls' power is a right, not a gift.

There was unanimous agreement that humanitarian action must be grounded in the principles of gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights. Recognition that humanitarian efforts must be localized with women's full participation and leadership was seen as critical to building resilience and creating more effective and sustainable humanitarian action.

Clear linkages were made with the Security Council's Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, as well as with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Every Woman Every Child Every Where movement of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, and Women Deliver underlining the view that only through robust, joint efforts that are backed by sufficient financial resources will humanitarian action finally work for and with women and girls.

There were approximately 500 commitments made during the roundtable. While some stakeholders chose to use the individual commitments proposed by the Secretariat in the gender prospectus, most commitments were original ones tailored to stakeholders' specific priorities, mandates, and contexts.

A significant number of civil society, academia, UN agencies, and Member States announced their plans to assist in establishing gender responsive programming as the norm in crisis as a matter of priority. Notably, a number of donor governments committed to mandating a gender marker and/or a gender analysis and sex and age disaggregated data was included in all project proposals.

World leaders committed to creating more opportunities and funding for women's representative organizations, to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and improve access to services that support survivors. Other commitments included access to quality sexual and reproductive health care.

All of the commitments are being finalized, and the way forward on these commitments will be included in the UN Secretary General's speech to be delivered at the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly in late September.

Samantha Orr, OCHA

GENDER AND GIS FOR RESILIENCE

SERVIR-Mekong uses publicly available data collected from space technology to create innovative solutions to development challenges in the Lower Mekong Region. The program produced guidance notes that outline how to integrate gender considerations with geographic information systems (GIS) for better decision-making related to environmental risk management.

SERVIR-Mekong is a unique partnership with USAID and NASA

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'GENDER'?

a social construct that assigns roles, responsibilities and defines behaviors according to differences between female and male, and which may lead to inequality

Some important terms

Gender Equality — does not mean that women and men become the same, but rather that their opportunities and rights are not hindered by being a woman or a man

Gender Equity — concerned with justice in the distribution of resources, benefits, responsibilities and opportunities between women and men, girls and boys. Gender equity is an important precondition for achieving gender equality.

GENDER AND DISASTERS

Women are **14** times more likely than men to die during a natural disaster

One study found that in 141 countries, when it came to deaths, gender differences were directly linked to women's unequal economic and social rights; in societies where women and men enjoyed equal rights, disasters caused the same number of deaths in both sexes.

GENDER AND GIS

GIS is a user-driven visual technology that enables the creation, organization and presentation of data in a spatially referenced form, which might include the production of maps and charts. It relies on data exploration, layering and visualization

Gender issues and gender-related information have a relevant role to play in the creation and use of GIS to improve decisions on resilience. Together with various gender mainstreaming approaches, GIS can shape these decisions so that they address gender inequality for more sustainable development.

HOW TO INTEGRATE GENDER AND GIS?

1. Conduct a gender analysis of a particular environmental, climate change or disaster context, focusing on people's gender-differentiated resources, livelihoods, rights and opportunities for recovery and resilience

2. Disaggregate data by sex, age, ethnicity, class wherever possible, to allow for more targeted analysis

3. Geo-reference the disaggregated data to visualize or assign data to specific locations. This will allow targeted decision making, response and solutions for gender-specific inequalities in disaster contexts and locations

Credit-Plan International Bangladesh

Safe Schools: Safe Girls

Girls commuting to West Bisandai School from remote areas of Bangladesh often face sexual harassment, particularly during flood season. Recognizing the needs of girls in emergencies, Plan International Bangladesh developed strategies to address the safety of girls inside and outside of schools through two Safe School projects in 25 primary and high schools in Lalmonirhat district.

The project identified that lack of knowledge, absence of technical human resources, and conventional gender norms are among the most important factors impeding gender mainstreaming into school safety programs. This realization led to the formation of disaster management committees and the establishment of opinion boxes at schools.

Additionally, the project created taskforces on four key areas: first aid, search and rescue, early warning, awareness raising and psychosocial support. Girls and boys were equally represented in each taskforce with one teacher as their supervisor. The project also equipped boats with the necessary items to support adolescent girls traveling from rural areas during flooding. Additionally, a mechanism and action plan is being developed to crack down on incidents of sexual harassment girls often face while walking through corn fields on their way to school.

The project created an enabling environment for both teachers and students to address gender issues such as how to retain girls in school, say no to child marriages, and combat sexual harassment inside and outside of school. It is expected that the safe school project would directly sensitize 169 women and 210 men, members of the Disaster Management Committee (DMC) as well as 3,848 girls and 3,372 boys of 25 schools.

Tahmina Huq, Plan International Bangladesh

Credit-Finnish Red Cross/Emil Helotie

Unseen, Unheard: A Myanmar Case Study

A 2015 global study on gender-based violence (GBV) in disasters, commissioned by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), featured Myanmar during the time of Cyclone Nargis as a case study.

There were divergent views among respondents. Half of the interviewees expressed that GBV did not increase, due to Myanmar's strong cultural, legal and community based support mechanisms. Other respondents, who were the primary responders during the disaster, strongly asserted that GBV did occur and increased during Nargis. One Myanmar Red Cross Society worker stated, "violence was not severe, but because we didn't ask about it we really don't know."

The study emphasized the importance of collecting sex, age and disability disaggregated data. Of the estimated 140,000 deaths approximately a third of those who died were children. An estimated 61 percent of deaths were women, with significantly higher figures in some individual villages. The high levels of

casualties among women and children were linked to gender roles. Many men were working away from home, which left female caregivers to look after children and elderly relatives.

The study showed that government, local and international agency responses did not consider GBV. This led to a lack of agreed upon processes, roles and responsibilities for responding to and supporting women, girls, men and boys affected by GBV.

There was little or no information available on how the disaster affected boys, men, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals differently.

There is an urgent need for government agencies and non-governmental actors to invest more in collecting and organizing gender-disaggregated data and information for more gender-sensitive disaster preparedness, response and recovery planning.

The Minimum Standard Commitments to Gender and Diversity in Emergency Programming developed by IFRC is one operational tool.

Piya Bhalla, IFRC Regional Pacific Office

For more information see Unseen, Unheard: Gender-based violence in Disasters Global study, IFRC

www.adpc.net
www.unocha.org
www.unwomen.org