A 6-STEP GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE GENDER AND AGE DIMENSIONS OF DISASTERS

UN WOMEN

A 6-step guide to understanding the gender and age dimensions of disasters
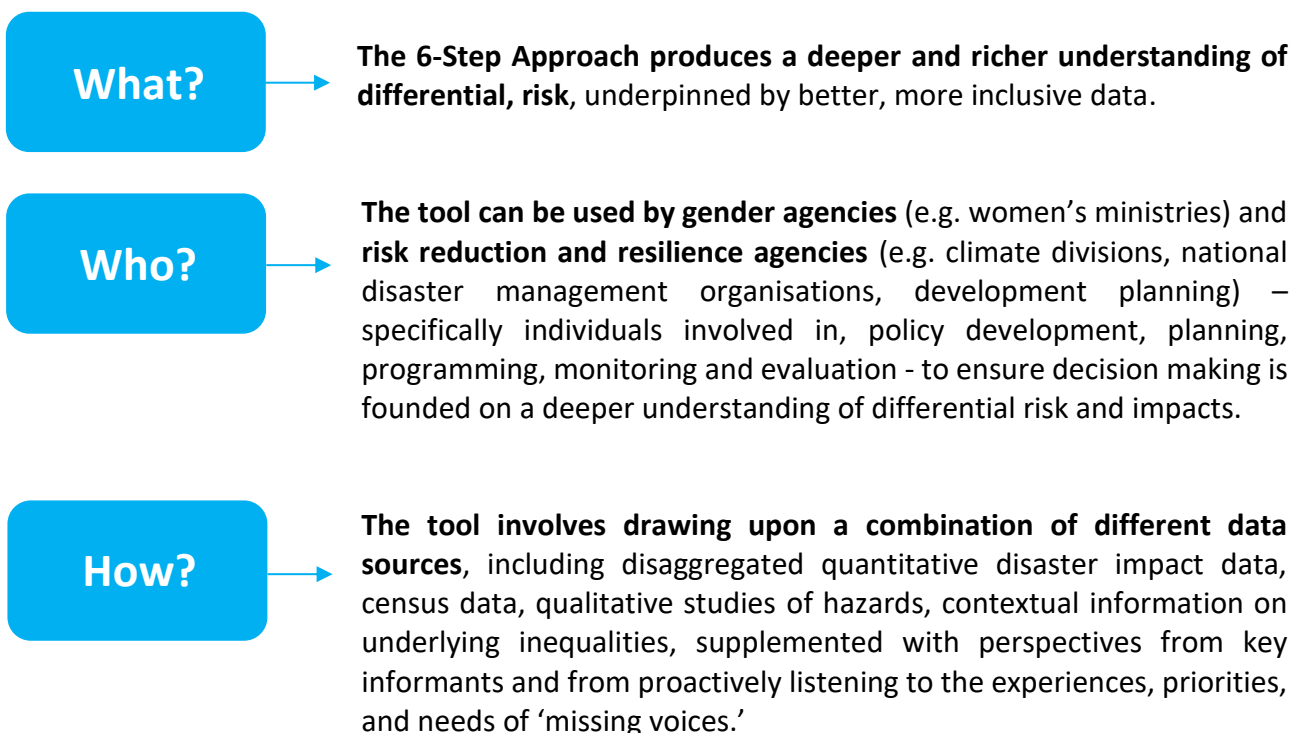
Context

This tool is based on research from the joint study *'Gender and age inequality of disaster risk'* by UNICEF and UN Women. The study explored the connection between gender and age inequality and disaster risk, examining evidence at a global level and in three post-disaster case study countries: i) Nepal (earthquake and flooding); ii) Malawi (cyclone and drought); and iii) Dominica (hurricane).

What is this tool for?

The 6-Step Approach helps policy makers and planners understand differential impacts of disasters and threats. Better data can help ensure that disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience efforts do not exacerbate existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. It can provide an intersectional understanding of disaster and climate risk, enabling a shift from gender and age inequality unaware action on risks, to a transformative approach. It can provide a foundation for commitment and action to reduce differential impact, ensuring no one is left behind.

How can this tool be used?

Figure 1: Summary of the 6-Step Approach

What? → **The 6-Step Approach produces a deeper and richer understanding of differential, risk**, underpinned by better, more inclusive data.

Who? → **The tool can be used by gender agencies** (e.g. women's ministries) and **risk reduction and resilience agencies** (e.g. climate divisions, national disaster management organisations, development planning) – specifically individuals involved in, policy development, planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation - to ensure decision making is founded on a deeper understanding of differential risk and impacts.

How? → **The tool involves drawing upon a combination of different data sources**, including disaggregated quantitative disaster impact data, census data, qualitative studies of hazards, contextual information on underlying inequalities, supplemented with perspectives from key informants and from proactively listening to the experiences, priorities, and needs of 'missing voices.'

What are the 6 Steps?

1. **Collect quantitative disaggregated data** <u>before a disaster</u> (through disaggregated risk assessments) to help identify the potential scale of disaster and climate risk for different marginalised groups living in high risk settings. <u>Following a disaster</u>, collect disaggregated impact data including for mortality, number of affected people, economic losses, and damages. Estimates can be made of the number of women, children, or elderly affected by drawing upon census data.

2. **Collect qualitative data** in the form of large or small-scale <u>qualitative surveys, key informant interviews, and focus groups</u> to provide insights into risk perceptions, what impacts have been felt by different groups, why these impacts occurred, and what their differential challenges and needs are. This should be disaggregated by gender and age, unpacking differences across all marginalised groups.

3. **Collect inequality data** to capture evidence of existing areas of inequality in a given context (e.g. gender inequality indices, differential rates of maternal health of indigenous populations). This can provide a better sense of the <u>underlying inequalities</u> that make certain groups more vulnerable to disasters. This information can be quantitative (e.g. number of women with access to early warning systems or land rights) or qualitative (e.g. culture of men making decisions). This information is important as areas of existing inequality are likely to be exacerbated during a disaster.

4. **Critically review existing data** unpacking assumptions, stereotyping, and social norms to identify which groups are legally or socially marginalised in a given context (e.g. widows can be particularly marginalised in some context) and to identify which marginalised groups are missing from the existing data or analysis.

5. **Identify intermediary organisations,** representative organisations, or individuals with expertise, connections and importantly relationships and trust with marginalised individuals (e.g. a widows' community group, a HIV+ support group) through discussions with <u>key informants at national and sub-national level</u>. These organisations can <u>help connect</u> with hard to reach groups or groups who may be hidden.

6. **Listen to the missing voices** by proactively reaching out and connecting (in partnership with intermediary organisations (e.g. women's organisations, disabled people's organisations) with marginalised individuals (including those marginalised in intersecting ways) to listen to their experiences. Hold informal, loosely structured interviews to build understanding of differential risks and impacts, but with open questions and active listening to understand the issues, challenges and opportunities that each individuals wants to talk about.

Analysis of these multiple data sources will help build understanding of which groups are the most marginalised in a specific context, their differential risks and impacts.

Better data and analysis provide the foundation for action to reduce differential disaster and climate change impacts.

A 6-Step Approach to Gender and Age Inequality Informed Data

Collate available quantitative data on disaster impacts disaggregated by age and sex. Can include estimates of the affected population drawn from census data.

STEP 1
DISAGGREGATED QUANTITATIVE DATA

STEP 2
QUALITATIVE DATA

Review qualitative information of disaster impacts on specific gender and age groups. Include insights from surveys, focus group discussions, Key Informant interviews.

Consider existing information on inequality within a given context. Consider the groups and areas (e.g. maternal health of indigenous women) where there is existing inequality.

STEP 3
INEQUALITY DATA

STEP 4
CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Question stereotyping, sexism, heteronormativity or cisnormativity within existing analysis of differential impacts. Identify which groups and sub-groups are particularly vulnerable, in-numerous, or socially marginalized, who are excluded from existing analysis.

Partner with individuals and organisations experienced at supporting minority groups. Trust is important.

STEP 5
INTERMEDIARY OUTREACH

STEP 6
MISSING VOICES

Listen to the experiences of individuals missing from mainstream analysis, with explicit attention to intersectional experiences.