



A practical guide to

Gender-sensitive
Approaches for
Disaster Management



Strategy 2020 voices the collective determination of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade. Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified, and peaceful world.

Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

- 1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises**
- 2. Enable healthy and safe living**
- 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace**

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Cover photo:

Top left: *Conducting Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment in Hubei Province, China to identify and understand disaster risks and community capacities. IFRC*

Lower left: *Tataua of the Tonga Red Cross teaches the women of Funafala Islet to use the emergency satellite phone. September 2007. Giora Dan/IFRC*

Right: *The Philippine Red Cross volunteers share knowledge and laughter with children at a health and nutrition event in Laguna, Philippines. Rob Few*

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We are also indebted to Ms Cynthia Burton who kindly turned the material from the Forum into the narrative framework for these Guidelines.

This work is the result of the cooperation between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’s global “Principles and Values” Department, and its Asia Pacific Zone Disaster Management and Organisational Development Units respectively.

These guidelines are a tribute to the women and men who have worked hard in the most challenging humanitarian environments possible, whether as people affected by disasters or as contributors to improving the lives of others, to ensure that gender equality and diversity have remained at the heart of effective disaster response, recovery and risk reduction work.

Some 12,000 families throughout the Philippines, who were affected by the typhoons and landslides in 2006, received building materials and guidance on constructing transitional shelters capable of resisting typhoon-strength winds.





Key definitions

Sex: The biological characteristics that define humans as either male or female. These sets of biological characteristics are not always mutually exclusive, as there are some individuals who possess both male and female characteristics.

Gender: The socially constructed attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female vary widely from place to place. Gender defines social and cultural expectations about what behaviour and activities are allowed, what attributes are valued, and what rights and power one has in the family, community and nation. For example, in one society women may be expected to focus on the family's domestic needs while men engage in the formal paid workforce, whereas in another, both men and women may be expected to contribute to the family's cash income.

Gender audit/stocktake: An assessment tool and process for organisations to identify how gender issues are included in their work with communities and internal organisational processes (Interaction, 2004).

Gender equality: Refers to both men and women having the freedom to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. It does not mean that men and women have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities should not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender inequality predominantly impacts negatively on women and girls, as men tend to have more decision-making power and control over resources than women. Because of this, efforts to advance gender equality need to focus primarily on improving the situation and status of women and girls in their societies. For example, specific actions may be taken to ensure that women's views and priorities are adequately and directly heard in disaster management committees.

Gender equity: Refers to fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but considered equivalent. For example, specific outreach strategies may be developed to ensure that relief assistance reaches female-headed households in societies where the mobility of women is restricted. Likewise, general distribution centres may be created or certain livelihood recovery activities may be designed and implemented specifically by and for women.

Diversity: Respect for diversity means not only accepting that others may be different, but also respecting those differences. In its programmes, the International Federation has also specified criteria that may not be used to make an adverse distinction: ethnic origin, nationality, sex, political opinion, philosophy, religious belief, social origin, class, sexual preference, age, disability, physical characteristics and language (COUNCIL OF DELEGATES Seoul, 16–18 November 2005 paper on "Promoting respect for diversity, fighting discrimination and intolerance").

Source: Adapted from Enarson (2009) and L Bayaarma (2002) except where indicated otherwise.

To guide the reader the following symbols are used:



Practical action example



Must read



Tools located on CD Rom



Tips or checklist



Case study

Acronyms

ALNAP Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action

APFWLD Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development

DRR Disaster risk reduction

FAO Food and Agricultural Organisation

GBV Gender-Based Violence

HIV/AIDS Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome

IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

IFRC International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

ILO International Labour Organisation

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

RCRC Red Cross Red Crescent

UNFPA United Nations Fund for Population Activities

UNHCR United Nations High Commission on Refugees

VCA Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

WFP World Food Programme



Purpose and overview

- Introduction
- Gender Issues in Disaster Management
- The Approach of The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Photo: Korea Volunteer Kim Cheung Sook helps to ensure that emergency supplies remain on hand before disasters strike in Korea.

Introduction

These guidelines are intended to help Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) incorporate effective gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches into their disaster management strategies when assisting communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

While the gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive approaches referred to throughout these guidelines address the needs of both men and women, greater focus is placed on addressing the needs of women, as it is recognised that women more often carry additional disadvantages due to gender than men. These disadvantages can be amplified within some communities and cultures, especially when women are single, divorced, widowed or childless.

These guidelines provide background information on IFRC policy context for gender-sensitive disaster management programming. They identify key issues to consider, and actions to take when working in all phases of disaster management in order to develop disaster risk reduction (prevention, mitigation and preparedness), response, and recovery initiatives that equally involve and benefit men, women, boys and girls. This includes a specific focus on developing the organisational capacity of National Societies to achieve gender equality both in disaster management programming and in their general work. The guidelines are primarily drawn from the practical experiences of twelve National Societies who participated in the *Asia-Pacific Gender and Disaster Management Forum* held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 2-5 June 2009, but are also based on broader international experience.

The six accompanying National Society case studies also provide specific examples within the Asia Pacific region of key challenges and good practices for integrating gender into various stages of disaster management programming. The countries covered include:

- **Pakistan:** Humanitarian Assistance for Internally Displaced Persons
- **Myanmar:** Women's Participation in Recovery
- **Bangladesh:** Community-Based Flood Management Programme
- **China:** Community-Based Disaster Preparedness
- **Indonesia:** Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Project
- **Solomon Islands:** Working Together for Healthy Communities



The *Asia Pacific Gender and Disaster Management Forum Report* can be found on the accompanying CD Rom. Additional sources for interactive case studies and support can also be found in the IFRC's "Training Pack on Gender Issues" which is also included on the CD Rom.



Male and Female disaster preparedness volunteers from Mongolia Red Cross providing first aid service for victims affected by fire, earthquake and chemical poison.

Gender issues in Disaster Management

The relationships between men and women are powerful forces in every culture. The way these relationships are defined creates differences in the roles and responsibilities of men and women. It also leads to inequalities in their access to, and control over, resources (who inherits land or can get credit from the bank) and decision-making powers (who has a voice and sits on community councils and committees). The combined effect of these differences and inequalities means that women and girls, and men and boys face different types and levels of exposure and vulnerability to natural hazard risks and disaster impacts. Gender-based behaviours and stereotypes about what men and women can and cannot do, or should and should not do, can further contribute to gender differences, sometimes with devastating consequences. Yet, attention to gender is consistently one of the weakest areas of humanitarian response (Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, 2005).

Women and girls generally tend to be the main victims of natural disasters. A few commonly recorded reasons for higher death tolls among women and girls include:

- cultural constraints on female mobility which hinder self-rescue, for example, women may not leave the home without male permission, they may be reluctant to seek shelter because shared communal facilities do not have separate, private spaces for women or clothing may have been damaged
- lack of skills such as swimming or tree climbing, which are traditionally taught to males
- less physical strength than males, in part due to biological differences but, in some countries, also due to the effects of prolonged nutritional deficiencies caused by less access to food than men and boys.

At the same time, gender-based behaviours and stereotypes can also have negative effects on men and boys. For example, the majority of the victims of Hurricane Mitch in 1998 in El Salvador and Guatemala were men. Some researchers attributed this to societal concepts of masculinity that compelled men to feel they had to take very high risks in order to protect family, community lives and property (Smyth in A Dimitrijevic, 2007).



Japanese Red Cross volunteers test disaster preparedness system and procedures through simulation exercises.



Understanding gender differences can save lives

There is considerable evidence that a lack of physical skills, such as the ability to climb trees or to swim, has been a major contributing factor to disaster fatalities among women. In India, up to three times as many women as men died in the 2004 tsunami, while in Indonesia this figure rose to up to four times the number of male casualties. While not all of this disparity is due to differences in physical skills, in cases where women had the ability to swim, the overall mortality rate was reduced by more than 60 per cent. Teaching women and girls to swim when it is not traditional to do so has saved lives in flood-prone areas.

Source: Guha-Sapir et al, 2004 and I Smyth, 2005.

Poverty is known to be a key factor in the vulnerability of both men and women during hazard events, but there can be gender differences among poor people that further compound the risks. For instance, poor women may have heightened vulnerability to hazard events that occur during the daytime, as many live in unsafe areas and houses and tend to spend more time indoors and near the house than their male relations. As men usually form the majority of poor migrant labourers, their wives and children, as well as older people remaining in the family home, may be more exposed to the impacts of local disasters.

Furthermore, there are many instances of women and girls facing difficulties in gaining access to relief or recovery assistance following a disaster, as well as being exposed to demands for sexual favours, rape and other forms of sexual and physical abuse in camps and other temporary shelter arrangements.



Erik Olsson/IFRC

It was an ordinary afternoon at the Pacabis' family home in Quezon town when Kesser Ann Pacabis, nine years old, asked her mother if she could go for a swim.

Some time had passed when Francisca suddenly heard the upset voice of her older brother. "He shouted that I should come out of the house quickly. I ran," says Francisca. Kesser Ann had been stung by a "salabay," a toxic jellyfish, and lost consciousness while still in the water.

Luckily Francisca's brother was at the beach. He jumped into the water and pulled Kesser Ann onto dry land.

"There was my daughter, shivering the whole time," Francisca remembers with distress.

Francisca had participated in a cardiopulmonary resuscitation training arranged by the Philippine Red Cross. Now was the moment to use her skills.

"I did mouth to mouth and compressions, focused on getting her back to consciousness. I was afraid she might die," says Francisca. Kesser Ann finally regained consciousness. "My daughter cried, but I felt so happy."

Francisca applied ice and soothing gel on the leg that had been stung and Kesser Ann recovered after resting at home. Francisca has remained an active Red Cross volunteer in the community ever since.



The purpose of the IFRCs *Global Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response* is to provide specific strategic directions to National Societies and the IFRC to implement the three strategic aims of *Strategy 2020* as each of them relates to self-directed and interpersonal violence, including urban violence. These documents can be found on the CD Rom accompanying these guidelines.



Nowhere to go

Hasina, a transgendered qualified plumber, lived in her boyfriend's house in Tamil Nadu, India. She could not find a job and therefore begged for a living in order to save for her studies. However, after the 2004 tsunami, Hasina's boyfriend threw her out of their temporary shelter. She was forced to sleep out in the open and was gang-raped several times. Hasina felt that a common shelter for people from transgendered communities would have provided a sense of security and prevented some of the trauma she experienced.

Source: C Pincha, 2008, p 44.

At the same time, many women's workloads in terms of caring for children, the infirm, the elderly and those with functional limitations or disabilities, rise at exactly the same time that traditional support networks may have been damaged. An increase in underage marriages of girls has also occurred after several disasters in which more women than men died.

Men on the other hand, sometimes find themselves in the position of having to assume unfamiliar tasks if the women in the household have perished or become severely disabled in a disaster. Childcare and household labour are two areas in which men may feel they lack skills, having performed little such labour in the past.

In addition to gender-based stereotyping and discrimination, women and men may face further discrimination based on race, ethnicity, age, language, disability, sexuality, class or religion, further increasing their vulnerability.

The experiences of the Asia Pacific National Societies have particularly highlighted the importance of understanding and considering ways to respond to inequality and discrimination

against the 'third' gender: transgenders. Transgenders may be born with both male and female sexual characteristics and often see themselves as neither men nor women and do not easily fit into conventional social categories and roles. Often, their deaths and losses are not recorded in official disaster statistics, they are stigmatised in ways which mean they cannot access normal channels of information or warnings, and they may be neglected or ignored in disaster preparedness, relief and recovery.



Kyaw Swar Min listens carefully when an elderly man tells him how he lost his wife, his son and his two daughters in Myanmar. The 30-year-old Myanmar Red Cross volunteer also provided psychosocial support to survivors of Cyclone Nargis who suffered the greatest losses.

The approach of The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The IFRC and its member National Societies are committed to working with both men and women to address gender inequality and other forms of social inequality, and to reducing the associated disaster risks.

Two of the three strategic aims of IFRC **Strategy 2020** are:

Strategic aim 1: Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises, recognises that when crises arise from disasters and conflicts, the imperative is to save lives, limit suffering, damage and losses, and hasten recovery for all affected, irrespective of race, ethnicity, age, language, disability, sexuality, class or religion.

Strategic aim 2: Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace, aims to build upon the IFRCs 1999 Gender Policy and 2003 pledge on *Non-discrimination and respect for diversity*.

Strategy 2020 highlights the fact that many communities include groups of people who have been neglected, marginalized or excluded for reasons such as social or economic disadvantage, employment status, a lack of access to information, knowledge or modern communication tools, or perhaps due to public attitudes that stigmatize or cause discrimination against them. Such disadvantaged groups include women and girls who are at risk because of their gender, the elderly, those with certain diseases or disabilities, children and young people in difficulty such as orphans, people who have been displaced, refugees and other migrants, people of a particular sexual orientation, and members of minority groups, among others.

The strategy commits the IFRC and its member National Societies to undertaking actions that encourage greater equality, non-discrimination and the protection of vulnerable and marginalized groups from abuse and exploitation. This approach complements the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, which stresses the importance of focusing assistance on those most in need. It further complements *Resolution 14: Code for Good Partnership* adopted by the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement' council of delegates in 2009.

These gender and disaster management guidelines reflect this new strategic direction and highlight good practices from international experiences in gender sensitive programming.



Chit Oo organised ten male and female volunteers from Myanmar Red Cross immediately after the winds had died down to support those affected by Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, 2008



Section 2

Usman Ghanji/IFRC

Integrating gender into the Disaster Management cycle

- Disaster Response
- Disaster Recovery
- Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation

Photo: Pakistan Red Crescent Society Balakot mobile health team doctor checking a female patient in Khairabad village. The mobile health teams provided basic health care services to earthquake-affected villages in Besham, Balakot, Banna and Oghi, April 2009.

Integrating gender into the Disaster Management cycle

A stronger capability to effectively address gender issues in disaster management needs to be developed within Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and the IFRC. In order to do this, significant steps in capacity-building need to be taken, steps towards reinforced institutional characteristics and commitment that will ultimately lead to gender sensitive programming.

The Red Cross Red Crescent understands that disaster management inherently requires an integrated approach to be successful, one that must combine a variety of functions and sectors including emergency and public health, water and sanitation, shelter, livelihoods, and food security across overlapping phases of action.

To guide us in this understanding, the disaster management cycle as presented in **Figure One**, stresses the importance of the interrelated nature of aspects of disaster management work. It is important to understand that activities undertaken before, during and after a disaster are linked, and when undertaking actions in one area, we need to refer to and reflect upon our work in the other areas. The integrated and holistic approach represented in the disaster management cycle is the foundation on which all Red Cross Red Crescent programs, projects and interventions in disaster management are built. This foundation then contributes to the creation and development of safe, resilient and sustainable communities.

Men and women at all levels within Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and the IFRC need to develop a greater understanding of gender issues in disaster management and become more fully engaged in the capacity building process in order to become more committed to the implementation of gender-sensitive processes.

To promote this work, the steps, key messages, case studies and further resources that follow have been identified.



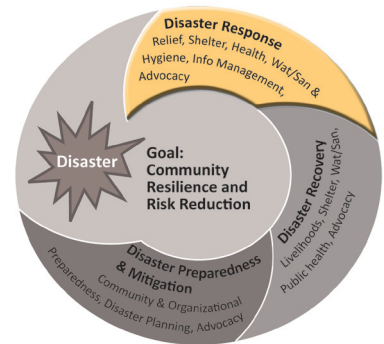
Figure One: Disaster Management Cycle

Disaster response



Pakistan Experience

To illustrate key gender sensitive aspects to consider during disaster response please see the case study from Pakistan on page 50. The case study illustrates excellent ways of assessing situations that involve women and men: respecting local culture and mobilising female volunteers to reach female beneficiaries, having equal male to female representation, the use of culturally appropriate facilities for discussions and privacy, provision of gender and counseling centers to help in resolving issues of Gender and Sex Based Violence, and mechanisms for collecting complaints and suggestions from people affected by the disaster in order to adjust services to fully meet their respective needs.



The need to act fast when providing disaster relief can sometimes obscure the equally important but less visible need for it to be administered with careful planning and a sound understanding of the local context in order to be appropriate and equitable. Women and minority groups frequently have less social, economic and political power and are not represented as well in formal leadership structures. However, these structures are often the first and main point of contact for relief personnel.

Consulting with a socially and economically representative cross-section of affected men and women is essential for effective targeting, as is their participation in decision-making. This is the case even if it is only possible in a limited form in the early days of the emergency. As disasters impact women and men differently (even within the same household) because of social, economic, physical and biological differences, having information about their situations is essential when developing responses that better meet their specific needs.

The following good practice checklist provides guidance on the key actions to take in order to ensure that gender issues are identified and gender-sensitive responses are developed in this area of the disaster management cycle. The text that follows the checklist box contains more detailed explanations of activities that should be included to ensure this checklist is fully met in reality.



Understanding Social Cultural Systems

In parts of India's Tamil Nadu state that were affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, it was found that that both elderly women and men were excluded from some assistance when relief was mediated through communities' traditional local authority organisations. This was due to mistaken assumptions that they required little food for their survival.

Source: C. Pincha, 2008



Good Practice Checklist for Gender and Diversity in Relief

- ✓ Collect data on the age, gender and diversity of the affected population during emergency needs- assessments. Conduct separate interviews with a cross-section of affected men and women and compare the two sets of results when planning relief assistance.
- ✓ Ensure that needs-assessment and response teams are gender and diversity balanced. Recognize that in some cultures women can only talk to women.
- ✓ Make certain that procedures for relief registration and distribution do not accidentally exclude women or vulnerable and marginalized groups or individuals, for example households headed by women, the disabled or transgenders. Do not register beneficiaries solely based on male heads of household.
- ✓ Consult with, and seek feedback from, both men and women to ensure the contents of relief packages actually meet their respective needs and are socially and culturally appropriate. Preferably this should be done as part of disaster preparedness planning and pre-stocking of relief items.
- ✓ Provide both male and female health personnel, especially when cultural norms may not allow the examination of women by male physicians and when women's mobility may be restricted.
- ✓ Ensure that relief assistance includes items (condoms and midwifery kits), and information that meets both men's and women's reproductive health needs, including protection against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- ✓ Include counseling on domestic violence and alcohol abuse prevention when providing psychosocial support. Ensure this support is sensitive to the needs of some men for help coping with changes in their gender roles, i.e. caring for young children after loss of a spouse.
- ✓ Design emergency and transitional shelters and support services (toilets, water supply, lighting) that are responsive to the socio-cultural and economic needs and preferences identified by both affected men and women, and keep in mind privacy and safety considerations.
- ✓ Identify the possible need to protect vulnerable men and women, including those from ethnic minorities or who are older or disabled. Rigorously monitor, report on and advocate for the safety of these groups.

Source: Adapted from World Bank, 2009.

The following are some key gender considerations that should be taken into account when planning and implementing emergency response assistance.

Emergency needs assessment: In the case of quick-onset disasters, rapid assessments normally take place within the first 24 to 72 hours of the emergency. At the minimum, data should be collected at this time on the age, gender, and diversity of the affected population. Whenever possible, this data should be supplemented with any available information on the pre-existing gender and socio-economic context and on the impact previous disasters may have had on different groups.



Gender-Sensitive Emergency Needs Assessment in Fiji

Following severe flooding in January 2009, assessments conducted by UNICEF and the Fijian Ministry of Social Welfare found problems relating to gender and protection with the Government of Fiji's emergency shelter system. The Fiji Red Cross Society assisted UNICEF and the Government of Fiji in improving the targeting of relief and protection support in evacuation centres by registering groups with specific needs, such as households with single parents and disabled and mentally challenged members.

Source: C Burton, 2009



Fiji Red Cross Society has a well-developed set of preliminary (24-72 hour) emergency needs-assessment forms and is one of only a few agencies in Fiji that separates data on disaster-affected populations by gender and age groups. The forms can be found on the CD Rom accompanying these guidelines.

The same needs-assessment tools should be used separately with men and women allowing the two sets of results to be compared. There are several important reasons for doing this. It cannot be assumed that affected men will be able to adequately represent the needs of their female relatives and neighbours. Women's views of their own needs often differ from the needs perceived by male relatives and Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers. In some cultural contexts, men are not allowed access to women and female heads of household who are not related to them. Women with badly injured or absent male relatives may also be missed. Both women and men may also be more comfortable discussing sensitive issues, such as personal hygiene or reproductive health needs, with somebody of the same gender. Finally, varying categories and age groups of men and women will have a wide range of views and opinions about needs and priorities. Thus, there will be greater opportunity to identify diversity if these various groups are consulted.



The IFRC Guidelines for Emergency Assessment (2008) provide a framework within which an assessment can be organized. By working through the guidelines, you should be able to cover all the main issues required for a successful assessment.

Those conducting the assessment may also need training in conducting a gender analysis. Some useful training materials are offered free of charge online by the Gender and Disaster Network (<http://www.gdnonline.org/>).

Both of these have also been included on the CD Rom that accompanies these guidelines.



UNHCR and IASC have produced specific guidelines and checklists covering a wide range of thematic areas and sectors for emergency response and early recovery (for example, relief items, shelter, water and sanitation, hygiene and health) in *Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities: Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action* (2006). A copy can be found on the CD Rom accompanying these guidelines.

Emergency response teams: Assessment and response teams should include equal numbers of male and female members in order to facilitate accessing women and men separately during needs assessments. If these teams are kept in the same balance throughout the operation they will also be better able to address the respective needs of women and men. The proportional representation of, and consultation with, male and female representatives of different groups in the affected communities (the elderly, youth and minorities), is also very important for the same reason.



Good Practice in Iran

In Iran, relief teams operated by the Iranian Red Crescent Society include women so female survivors can more freely discuss their needs. Woman-to-woman assistance has also proven effective in Bangladesh, where strong social dictates have previously kept women out of distribution lines for emergency help.

Source: E Enarson in A Dimitrijevic, 2007.

All staff and volunteer members of response teams, including partners such as governments, need to become familiar with potential gender-related issues and considerations in advance of undertaking any assessments or planning the delivery of relief assistance. They may also need training in participatory approaches and working with marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Beneficiary registration and relief distribution systems: Procedures for relief registration and distribution should recognize the need for, and ensure access to, assistance by all types of vulnerable and needy households, as well as individuals within households. There have been many instances of women and other vulnerable or marginalized groups missing out on relief assistance, particularly when governments and relief agencies have registered households based on their male heads or on the basis of physical damage and losses (such as loss of a home), which could exclude renters or squatters. For instance, in Thailand following the Indian Ocean Tsunami, female household members who needed to become the main breadwinners due to the illness or injury of the male head of household had difficulty getting their situation recognised by authorities (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 2006).



Preparedness Training Results in Action

In September 2005, Saeeda Bibi was one of 7 women and 18 men who attended a Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) training session in community-based disaster preparedness. This was three weeks before the Pakistan earthquake. For four days, Saeeda and her fellow participants learned about different types of disasters, how to prepare before such events, how to react afterwards, and where to go for help.

“After the earthquake in 2004, we didn’t know what to do”, she says. “But with the training I realised I had to rescue people, mobilize people – I left my home and organized other people to help.” She provided water for survivors, and cleaned mud from the bodies of victims. She told villagers to get blankets and assist the injured. She helped rescue some school children and pulled out dead bodies. Together, Saeeda and those with her saved 40 to 50 people from their collapsed homes. She adds, “We also learned the need for psychological support from our training.”





Emergency family pack distribution conducted by Bangladesh Red Crescent in flood affected Oshdomi chor (chor is a small island in the river), north Bangladesh, August 2007.

Likewise, there is well-documented international evidence that in many cases relief provided solely to male heads of household does not always reach other family members. For instance, food aid is far more likely to reach children if it is distributed directly through women (L Bayaarma, 2002). Specific targeting of, and quotas for, female and marginalized group beneficiaries can be useful when there are obvious barriers to their accessing relief assistance. Setting quotas for participation in camp or relief management committees can also be beneficial. However, the system for doing so must be carefully developed with the participation of community and other local leaders to avoid misunderstandings and backlashes against the targeted groups.



IFRCs *Better Programming Initiative* is a tool that provides guidance on processes to ensure interventions do not add to or further strengthen local discriminatory processes. It is available on the CD Rom accompanying these guidelines.

Female heads of household or female family members with limited physical mobility may need help accessing distribution locations or may need relief aid transported to them. This may also be the case for the elderly and for those with disabilities. This situation can be compounded when women face multiple mobility constraints.

It is also important that information on relief assistance and how to access it is provided to all members of the community or all residents of relief camps. This may require door-to-door visits to those with mobility constraints, as well as consulting men and women separately and scheduling community meetings at times that are convenient for both.

Appropriateness of relief items: Gender and culture-specific needs should be taken into consideration when designing relief packages. Women and men should be consulted on the contents of relief supplies to ensure they are suitable and to avoid costly waste, preferably as part of disaster preparedness planning for the pre-stocking of relief items. For instance, following the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, the IFRC included shaving equipment in hygiene kits that were provided to areas where it was not traditional for men to shave. Many Indian Ocean Tsunami aid packages supplied by various organisations in Tamil Nadu excluded culturally appropriate *chudhidar* sets that are worn by girls. Similarly, *burkas* were underprovided in areas with Muslim communities (C Pincha, 2008).

Women and older girls also have particular sanitary needs that should be taken into account. Relief packages need to contain supplies for menstrual blood absorption that are in line with what women would normally use (sanitary pads and clean strips of cloth), and should include underwear for women and girls. As women tend to be reluctant to approach men regarding their personal hygiene requirements, and can be easily embarrassed or humiliated during the distribution of sanitary and undergarment supplies, it is generally preferable that males are not involved in their distribution. Similarly, pregnant and lactating women have special needs for ensuring adequate milk production and for other crucial nutrients and vitamin supplements that can be incorporated into family or mother and baby assistance packages.

Addressing health issues: Disaster relief efforts need to pay attention to specific female health needs. Often, pregnant women have lacked access to obstetric care and have miscarried or delivered babies under unsanitary and unsafe conditions. The availability of female and male medical personnel is particularly important after a disaster. This is especially true when cultural norms may not allow women to be examined by male physicians, and when women's mobility may be restricted.



Successfully Reaching Out to Women in Pakistan

In Pakistan, the national Lady Health Worker programme hires local women to deliver treatment for minor ailments and immunization and reproductive health services in their communities. After the 2005 earthquake, over 8000 community and lady health workers were mobilized along with mobile health teams to serve more distant areas. It is thought to be in great part a result of this that mortality and morbidity rates after the disaster were considerably lower than expected.

The IFRC and German Red Cross, in partnership with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, implemented a number of emergency health and hygiene activities in Banian Union Council through this network. They targeted female members of households as the key recipients given their important role in educating young children and looking after the household. This approach was successful in:

- creating awareness within the communities on hygiene and sanitation issues
- highlighting the issues and role of women within the family and community
- raising the status of women by highlighting their key roles in family education and the prevention of disease outbreaks.

Sources: A Dimitrijevic, 2007 and IFRC, 2006.

Ensuring the safety and security of those displaced by disasters is also a key priority. Displaced women and girls face heightened risks of unwanted and high-risk pregnancies and rape. Those affected by disasters also frequently face a higher exposure to contagious diseases including HIV/AIDS. Condoms, reproductive health kits and midwifery kits, along with reproductive health information are key post-disaster needs.



The accompanying CD Rom provides details of the useful *Minimum Initial Services Package* (MISP) for post-disaster reproductive and sexual health services developed by a working group of UN agencies and other international organizations, led by UNFPA.

Domestic violence and alcohol abuse prevention counseling should be incorporated into the provision of post-disaster psychosocial services whenever possible. Increased rates of alcoholism and alcohol-related violence are frequent in disaster affected areas and assistance with related services from CARE, Oxfam and World Vision was requested by residents in nearly every Indian Ocean (2004) Tsunami-affected area surveyed in 2005. Men may also need counseling to help them cope with changes in gender roles, i.e. caring for young children after the loss of their spouse. Sports programmes for men and women may also be helpful in relieving tensions.

Ensuring appropriate safe shelter, human settlements and water and sanitation: Shelter and human settlement planning needs to take into account the socio-cultural and economic needs and preferences of both men and women, as well as safety considerations. Following natural disasters, the threat of physical and sexual violence often increases; this threat is magnified in relief camps. For example, after the 2001 earthquakes in El Salvador, single women insisted upon sheeting for temporary shelters that was opaque and strong. In the past, it had been translucent, making it easy to see when women were alone. Given that it had also been easily cut with a machete, many women were raped (ALNAP, 2003).



Cook Islands Red Cross staff and volunteers register evacuees from Cyclone Pat, 2009.

The location and set-up of shelters can affect both the perceived and actual safety of those displaced by a disaster. Locating shelters close to the original home whenever feasible provides extra safety due to intimacy with the shelter's physical surroundings, in addition to the broader benefits of facilitating earlier rebuilding and recovery. Encouraging communities to stay together in shelter areas has similar advantages: the community can be a source of strength and support and often maintains an internal policing system that can offer additional security. Furthermore, women are often in charge of collecting firewood and water, and are therefore particularly affected by the security of access routes to these resources.

The spacing and design of shelters is important in ensuring adequate privacy for female members of households from neighbours or passersby. Secure doors and adequate lighting can be important factors in safety. Cooking, bathing and toilet arrangements also need to be adequate, safe and culturally appropriate. This requires participation by both male and female beneficiaries in designing such facilities. If it is not possible to provide individual household sanitation facilities, then bathing areas and toilets are best segregated by sex. Female and male bathing areas should be placed at some distance from each other and near areas with adequate lighting. Oxfam International has received reports in the past of sexual assaults taking place in poorly lit toilets (APFWLD, 2006). Whenever culturally necessary, women's bathing and toilet areas should also include a separate area for washing and drying menstruation cloths. Furthermore, kitchens should be adapted to local food preparation customs.



The accompanying CD Rom contains various checklists for gender and water and sanitation including, a gender in water and sanitation checklist from the Asian Development Bank and a gender and water factsheet from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea staff deliver relief assistance to Kim Yong Nam.



Gendering the Sphere Minimum Standards for Disaster Response

Women and children account for the majority of affected persons in emergencies. Unaccompanied women and adolescent girls face disproportionate and specific security risks, often in the form of sexual and gender-based violence. Women and girls are also vulnerable as a result of their restricted access to food and other resources, and because traditional gender relationships may define their roles as passive. Gaining recognition of women's rights, particularly their sexual and reproductive rights, has been a long struggle. As humanitarian agencies apply Sphere to better address the political, protection, social and economic concerns of women refugees, the humanitarian charter and Sphere standards will be put to a true test.

Sphere and gender: Prior to the start of the process of developing a humanitarian charter and minimum standards for disaster response through the Sphere project, it was generally believed in the humanitarian community that women were best served if services were gender-neutral. However, the Sphere Project's Management Committee questioned the idea of gender neutrality, and argued that women were under-served, or actually harmed, if their specific concerns and basic needs were not addressed. The challenge was how best to do this.

Initially, the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response guidebook was going to contain a separate chapter on gender issues with specific recommendations, such as gender-balanced evaluation and monitoring teams. However, some NGOs were reluctant to relinquish their autonomy over what they considered to be internal matters. Others were worried that donors would hold them to standards for gender equity that were difficult to meet, and penalise them for falling short.

The gender chapter was removed altogether, and the Management Committee conceded that it had failed to integrate gender adequately or consistently into Sphere. In July 1999, the Committee retained the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children to conduct a gender review of Sphere materials, and to suggest a series of amendments or additions.

The gender review: Based on consultations with donors and experts, a review of written submissions by humanitarian agencies and its own field experience, the Women's Commission found that:

- sphere should acknowledge the need for gender equity in humanitarian services and programmes in emergency situations
- there is a need for women's full participation in decisions regarding access to humanitarian aid, and the appropriateness of humanitarian interventions
- attention should be paid to the physical safety of women and adolescent girls in emergencies.

Conclusion: The full participation of women and heightened awareness of their specific concerns are crucial to the implementation and achievement of the Sphere minimum standards. The 'gendering' of Sphere is a significant step in the Sphere process as a whole. Sphere has succeeded in making people think about quality control, and about what it means to have a right to minimum standards. Sphere has encouraged better analysis and can help humanitarian agencies focus on gender at the onset of an emergency. The significance of Sphere lies in the fact that agencies willingly entered into a dialogue about a great moral question: what do people in disaster situations have a right to expect? The Sphere process continues. For the gendering of Sphere, that is a good sign.

Taken from an article written from C Schlitt, the full article can be found on the accompanying CD Rom.



In undertaking the second review of the Sphere humanitarian charter and minimum standards the Management Committee has mainstreamed issues of gender, diversity and vulnerability throughout the sectoral chapters. The revised Handbook is expected to be published in early 2011. See <http://www.sphereproject.org/>

Disaster recovery



Myanmar Experience

To illustrate the Red Cross and Red Crescent learning with regard to gender-sensitive approaches during disaster recovery please see the case study from Myanmar on page 55. The study illustrates excellent ways of assessing situations that involve women and men while respecting local culture and mobilizing female volunteers to engage in cash for work projects and livelihood initiatives.



According to *Strategy 2020*, the impact of a disaster or crisis can be reduced if the situation is stabilized as quickly as possible, allowing people to start rebuilding their lives and communities. The recovery assistance provided by National Societies and the IFRC aims to prevent further damage and loss,

repair essential services, protect health, provide psychosocial support, restore livelihoods, and enhance food security as circumstances require. Recovery should also be carried out in such a way as to rebuild more inclusive societies and reduce vulnerability to future disasters, making recovering communities safer than before.

The aftermath of a major disaster can offer a window of opportunity for institutionalizing gender concerns in disaster management, as a shaken local economy and society becomes more sharply focused on better protecting itself against future disaster risks. If gender issues are addressed with sensitivity to local contexts, it can contribute to boosting the economy, reducing the disaster-related psychological and domestic burdens of men, and promoting the safety, prosperity and decision-making power of women.

At the same time, recovery is not a neutral process. There are always different interest groups and agendas that must be balanced when deciding where and how to allocate resources. Without careful analysis and planning, the recovery process can contribute to existing gender and social inequalities.

The following good practice checklist provides guidance for ensuring that gender sensitivity is addressed and catered to in this aspect of the disaster management cycle. The text after the checklist box contains more detailed explanations of activities that should be included to ensure this checklist is fully met in reality.



Good Practice Checklist for Gender and Diversity in Recovery

- ✓ Conduct a full gender analysis as an essential component of recovery needs assessment.
- ✓ Ensure that the team conducting the needs assessment is gender and diversity balanced.
- ✓ Consult with, and fully involve, women and men from all social and economic groupings in the affected communities when making decisions about the repair, design and location of new housing and community infrastructures, such as water and sanitation facilities and community halls.
- ✓ Encourage local participation in physical reconstruction, including the hiring of women and providing them with training in construction-related skills.
- ✓ Obtain accurate information on the different roles women and men play in contributing to the household's food security or income, whether as family members or heads of the household, and design livelihood recovery activities that meet the needs of both.
- ✓ Design housing, cash or food based assistance (home reconstruction, cash or food for work, cash grants), that provides opportunities for both vulnerable men and women and ensures that those without land title, such as squatters, unregistered migrants, and female heads of household, are not missed. Pay all persons fairly and equally for performing the work.
- ✓ Provide male and female health personnel to meet ongoing health and rehabilitation needs, especially when cultural norms may not allow women to be examined by male physicians, and when women's mobility may be restricted.
- ✓ Ensure that recovery assistance continues to include items (condoms and midwifery kits), and information that meets men's and women's reproductive health needs, including protection against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Source: Adapted from World Bank (2009).

The following are key considerations to ensure gender-sensitive recovery.

Recovery assessment: In order to ensure that recovery operations are aware of both men's and women's needs and priorities and can design appropriate interventions in response, a full gender analysis should be conducted as an essential component of recovery needs assessments. Following the initial emergency assessment of a quick-onset disaster, a more in-depth assessment of community needs, vulnerabilities, and coping strategies is usually undertaken by the response and recovery operation. This includes the detailed identification of vulnerable groups with special needs within the local context (single parents, orphans and landless tenants for example). National Societies should be able to carry out Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCAs), Participatory Rapid Appraisals, and other forms of social analysis to be used to determine those that are the poorest and most vulnerable within disaster-affected communities with whom they are currently working or plan to work. For slow-onset disasters, it should be possible to carry out an in-depth assessment in the early stages of the disaster.



A Vietnamese Red Cross assessment team in the Mekong Delta on its way to interview village beneficiaries of the avian and human influenza prevention programme. Nearest the camera is Hoang My Chau, a 23-year-old volunteer, behind her is Vu Thi Phuong, 27, a training specialist from the VNRC headquarters in Hanoi.



Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment is an IFRC risk assessment tool and process, that can be used by National Societies as a basis for their disaster preparedness and risk reduction planning. The VCA guide can be found on the accompanying CD Rom.

A gender analysis can easily be incorporated into these methodologies. Gender analysis is a systematic approach to identifying and understanding the relationships of women and men within the family, economy and society and how these relationships affect the distribution of resources, as well as the structures and rules that contribute to an unequal distribution of resources and power. It involves consulting with a range of men and women from the community, including those in positions of authority, to get their different perspectives. As with emergency assessments, ensuring gender balance on the team conducting the assessments is essential to achieving a reliable result.



Effective Gender Inclusive Recovery Strategies in Indonesia

Following the 2006 Yogyakarta and Central Java earthquake, the Indonesian Red Cross and the IFRC undertook a large-scale temporary shelter program, a priority need that had been identified by local communities. Tools and materials, along with cash grants, were provided to neighbourhood groups to carry out the construction work.

The importance of ensuring that the early recovery programme reached men and women equally was recognized during the planning stage. Gender concerns were identified in the initial situation analysis and needs assessment processes. These largely focused on access to resources provided through the early recovery programme to women, especially female heads of household, and on ensuring direct participation by women in needs identification and decision making. These were programme priorities as women did not normally participate in formal decision-making bodies.

Gender equality strategies for programme implementation included: recruiting female volunteers, requiring that the finance team for each neighbourhood group have at least one female finance officer, and involving women in the process of constructing temporary shelters.

Source: IFRC, 2008.



The FAO and WFP 2002 *Passport to Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Emergency Programmes: Key Analytical Questions for Designing Gender Sensitive Humanitarian Interventions*, provides some useful guidance on the areas to cover in a gender analysis that can be used following slow-onset and rapid-onset disasters and civil crises.

A copy can be found on the accompanying CD Rom.

Housing, human settlements, and water and sanitation: It is vital that women and men from all social and economic groupings in disaster-affected communities actively participate in the design and location of new housing and communal infrastructure, such as water and sanitation facilities and community halls, as well as the repair of existing structures. Many reconstruction programmes have resulted in near-empty settlements or the re-creation of unsafe living conditions, because of a lack of understanding of the livelihoods and social needs of the inhabitants. This includes cases of homes that were designed to be safer when in reality the so-called improved features were unacceptable to the beneficiaries due to cultural or practical reasons. In post-tsunami Sri Lanka, women had no say in the design of most temporary housing. As a result, dwellings were constructed that lacked adequate kitchen facilities. The absence of safe cooking areas led to smoke and fire hazards, and some dwellings burned down (Chew and Ramdas, 2005).

Local participation in physical reconstruction should be encouraged, including the hiring of women and providing them with training in construction-related skills. While it is advisable to proceed with sensitivity to the local culture, many cases have been recorded where women have successfully launched new careers in non-traditional areas such as electrical fitting, masonry and carpentry. Although they faced initial resistance from male relatives, acceptance of their new careers by families and communities soon followed (Chopra 2005, Oxfam 2005 in A Dimitrijevic, 2007).

National Societies can also use humanitarian diplomacy to promote more equitable land titling and property rights. Many impoverished and marginalized people face various barriers to obtaining post-disaster land and property rights. Housing construction projects can offer such people opportunities to recognize formal ownership of this important asset. This may then in turn be used to gain access to credit for other productive activities. For example, in many countries women are not allowed to own

land or houses. Some National Society projects have contributed to elevating women's status in such societies by providing land titles in both men's and women's names. This was done by the Canadian Red Cross in Aceh, in partnership with the Government of Indonesia and a donor-supported land-titling programme.

Re-establishing livelihoods: The roles women play in contributing to a household's food security or income, whether as family members or heads of the household, need to be understood, and livelihood recovery activities should be designed that meet their needs, in addition to those of the men in the household. This is especially the case when households were already poor, were particularly affected by the disaster, or had their coping mechanisms badly eroded. For example, the informal community support systems on which impoverished people rely may not be available if most friends, families and neighbours have also been affected by the disaster.

One of the most important areas of post-disaster recovery programming for both men and women is the restoration of economic opportunities or the development of new livelihood opportunities to replace those that were lost. This can include diversifying household income sources to strengthen resilience to future hazards.

However, recovery agendas do not always adequately recognize or appreciate the dynamics of the survival strategies of impoverished and marginalized rural or urban households. Income may be generated, or food provided, by many different household members, with a certain proportion coming from the informal sector. Women often play bigger roles in generating the household's means of making a living than is recognized by those planning recovery. This is particularly true when the household is headed by a woman or when male



Abdul Raheem received 10,000BDT (144.60 US dollars) from a livelihood project supported by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and IFRC following Cyclone Sidr in 2007. With this cash he set up a duck farm with a coop, ponds and fencing and is able to sell ducklings and eggs. "My social status around here has risen with my business and the future looks bright. It makes me feel good and I didn't think it would end up like this", Abdul Raheem said proudly.

family members have migrated to find work elsewhere. Women's means-producing activities can include cultivating home vegetable gardens, playing key roles in crop and fish production and marketing, raising livestock, running small businesses such as selling snacks or making cakes and day labour.

Livelihoods strategies have sometimes neglected to replace the assets necessary for women to resume their economic activities or have provided inappropriate assets based on assumptions about women's roles and needs. This may be due to prevailing perceptions of men as the family breadwinners, or possibly because men tend to possess more visibly productive assets than women. For example, the need of lower caste women in Tamil Nadu for catamarans to collect edible shells went largely unrecognised after the Indian Ocean Tsunami (C Pincha, 2008).

When poor households have lost their means of making a living or become insecure about their means of providing food, food aid or labor-intensive public works schemes such as food for work, can provide them with much-needed income to restore or improve community assets and protect them from having to sell their productive assets. The clearing of rubble, marketplace rehabilitation, and drought mitigation works are examples of commonly used means of injecting income into a local economy in the aftermath of a disaster.

Women's participation in such schemes should be actively encouraged in addition to men's. However, attention must be paid to ensuring they are paid fairly (the same as men for performing the same work), as well as to relieving their other existing workloads and responsibilities inside and outside the home, (childcare and meal preparation for example), whenever possible. The Myanmar case study provide practical examples of how recovery programming can be designed to actively engage women's participation. When the mobility of women or other groups is restricted, home-based work alternatives should be considered. Pregnant women and older or disabled persons also can be given lighter roles in reconstruction schemes, such as providing snacks or water to the labourers.

The use of cash as an alternative or complement to commodity assistance is increasing in emergency responses. This includes cash grants, cash for work, providing cash through microfinance institutions, and vouchers for goods. Research has found that, under appropriate circumstances, cash-based programs can better meet people's needs than the distribution of commodities. Beneficiaries have used cash transfers for a variety of purposes: the purchase of food, kitchen utensils and clothes, the payment of debts and loans, school costs and health care, the purchase of livestock and agricultural inputs, and the purchase of tools and materials for rebuilding homes and businesses.

Female household members, like males, can benefit greatly from such cash-based support and the programmes must be designed to ensure that they are not summarily excluded. Cash transfer schemes based on home ownership often overlook vulnerable people without land title, such as squatters, unregistered migrants, and female heads of household. Schemes focused on male heads of household also often miss the needs of female household members or heads. Vouchers or in-kind materials may be more appropriate in situations where women or other groups have restricted mobility for physical or socio-cultural reasons, for example a female-headed household in a strict purdah situation. Monitoring the impact of cash distributions also requires social and gender sensitivity, as decisions about how cash is spent and who makes those decisions, may create conflict within households.



There is a growing body of evidence that cash-based programming can be a very appropriate and effective form of response, alone or in combination with other in-kind programmes. The IFRC Guidelines for Cash Transfer Programming help programme managers identify those situations where cash is appropriate, and provide practical, step-by-step support to the design and implementation of cash programmes. The Cash Transfer Guidelines can be found on the accompanying CD Rom.



Good Practice in Post-Tsunami Recovery



In Aceh, Indonesia, the British Red Cross adjusted its popular post-tsunami livelihoods cash grant programme to include an additional specific focus on women and the elderly when a review of the first phase found that funds provided through male household heads were not adequately reaching these groups. An impact evaluation later found that both the women and the elderly used their cash grants for activities that benefited all household members.

One woman in Pantan village described how, before the tsunami, she had run a kiosk whilst her husband was away fighting in the mountains in a civil conflict that was taking place in the province. When she heard that she was eligible for a cash grant, she decided not to return to trading because too many people bought on credit which meant she had previously always been in debt. Instead, she invested in betel nut, palm and rubber tree plantations, which she thought would be more sustainable for the future. Having seen good income results from all three crops, she continues to work hard, not only in tending the plants, but also in their processing.

Source: C Burton and J Brett, 2009.

The access to new skills and sources of income can be very important. In some cases, disasters may reflect fundamental longer-term changes that require adaptation. This is the case in parts of the Asia Pacific region that have been experiencing increasingly severe droughts, floods and cyclones linked to climate change. Access to training in new skills is equally important for women and for men. However, women have found it particularly difficult in the past to gain access to training and capacity building, such as extension advice on improved agricultural practices (Parker, 2006 in A Dimitrijevic, 2007). This has also been the case for poor, male farmers in some countries, where better-off farmers have traditionally been the targets of such support.



Good Practice in Mozambique

When responding to extensive flooding in the Chokwe district of Mozambique, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) targeted women when it became evident that the female-heavy sectors of agriculture and small trade had been extensively damaged. Female traders and farmers were given relief assistance, and were also directly engaged in the ILO's labor-intensive programming. Of those directly benefiting from ILO initiatives (relocating markets, vocational training and restoring livestock), 87 per cent were women.

Source: ILO, 2000 in A Dimitrijevic, 2007.

Lastly National Societies are not directly involved in livelihoods activities, they may work in partnership with local women's or micro-credit organisations to ensure the outreach of their services to both vulnerable and marginalized men and women. Alternately, National Societies can monitor the participation of men and women in broader schemes and advocate for access to services by those who may be inadvertently bypassed.

Reproductive health: Women frequently lack access to safe obstetric care and birthing arrangements after a disaster. Men, women, boys and girls also face higher risks of sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS. This can be due to an increase in unwanted sex, lack of access to contraceptives, or sexual violence (rape) committed against those living in communal or exposed living conditions, for example, those in shelters, with host families, under tarps, or waiting to rebuild or return to their homes. The "Health" sub-section under "Disaster reduction" provides information on addressing these needs.



UNHCR and IASC have produced specific guidance and checklists covering a wide range of sectors and thematic areas for emergency response and early recovery including relief items, shelter, water and sanitation, hygiene and health, in *Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities: Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action (2006)*. A copy can be found on the CD Rom accompanying these guidelines.

Disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities: Recovery processes can include disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities that assist in building community resilience towards future disasters. Undertaking these activities during a recovery process is highly favorable, as people currently affected by a disaster are usually highly motivated to learn new ways of protecting themselves.



Subesh Prasad, a Fiji Red Cross trainer from the village of Yavulo on Fiji's Main Island, conducts a disaster preparedness training session for villages covering: how to prepare for and respond to floods, cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis, where to flee to stay above the water, what supplies to prepare beforehand, what radio stations and mobile phone message to watch out for, the importance of a system to account for missing people and the establishment of a village committee to oversee disaster preparation and first aid.

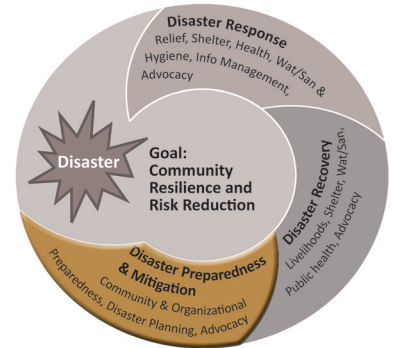
Disaster preparedness and mitigation



Bangladesh, China, Indonesia and Solomon Islands Experiences

To illustrate key gender aspects to consider during risk reduction programming please see the case studies from Bangladesh (pg 60), China (pg 65), Indonesia (pg 70) and Solomon Islands (pg 75). The case studies illustrate excellent ways of implementing many of the features of this section, such as:

- the inclusion of gender-disaggregated data collection in the reporting systems
- the setting of 50 % recruitment quotas for female volunteers in committees
- the impact women have in community Disaster Response Team
- the holding of Basic First Aid and on DRR trainings for both men and women based on their self-identified needs and priorities
- the taking gender differences in vulnerability into account when planning and implementing disaster mitigation measures
- the decision of which men and women can be engaged in project design, implementation and monitoring
- the inclusion of a strong gender policy framework to support integration of gender issues into programming
- the provision of gender training to staff and volunteers to support the reduction of disaster risk and to help build inclusive societies.



Disaster risk is defined as the chance of a disaster occurring that will have potentially harmful effects on lives, assets and livelihoods, arising from community exposure and vulnerability to natural and human-made hazards. *Strategy 2020* commits the IFRC to encouraging comprehensive community action to eliminate disaster risks wherever possible, and to reduce the occurrence and impact of disasters when primary prevention is not feasible.

Community-based disaster risk reduction and preparedness starts by working with communities to map the most significant

locally prevalent natural and human-made hazards and to understand their patterns of vulnerability. It is also important to have a strong understanding of community demographics and existing social capital. Much of this information can be collected by undertaking community Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments. From these, communities can devise local ways to manage hazards and reduce their exposure and vulnerability.

Practical strategies can include spreading awareness of a “culture of safety” and promoting attitudes that favour such a culture, as well as advocating for laws, government policies and incentives for risk reduction measures. Community health and food security systems can be strengthened. Environmental and physical improvements to infrastructure can also be made to protect assets and maintain services in the event of a disaster.

The issues faced and processes required to ensure that community-based disaster risk reduction activities are sensitive to, and inclusive of, gender and diversity, are similar to those required for disaster response and recovery programming. Consultation with a socially and economically representative cross-section of affected men and women is essential for effective targeting, as is their participation in decision-making. A gender analysis of the situation of both men and women can help in developing interventions that better meet their different roles and needs and are mutually reinforcing in increasing the overall safety and resilience of the household and community. The creation of an enabling environment may also be required to support this work.

The following good practice checklist is a set of guidelines for ensuring that gender sensitivity is addressed and catered to in this aspect of the disaster management cycle. The text after the checklist box contains more detailed explanations of activities that should be included to ensure this checklist is fully met in reality.



Good Practice Checklist for Gender and Diversity in Disaster Risk Reduction

- ✓ Educate and advocate with local government officials and community leaders to fully involve women and men, as well as marginalized groups, in disaster management activities and decision-making.
- ✓ Carry out a systematic gender analysis of the different roles, responsibilities and socio-economic status of men, women and other household members in needs assessments. Make sure that the analysis includes a focus on diversity issues, such as the situation of men and women who are poorer, ethnic minorities, elderly, disabled, etc.
- ✓ Strengthen both male and female capacity in activities such as risk mapping to enable gender perspectives of risks and vulnerabilities to be identified through processes such as VCA.
- ✓ Promote proportional representation of women and men from diverse groups in the decision-making process of community-based disaster risk reduction and preparedness activities to ensure the social, cultural and economic gender aspects of risk reduction are being addressed.
- ✓ Involve men and women from diverse groups actively in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of mitigation works.
- ✓ Work with and strengthen existing local organizations that represent women and diverse groups in order to encourage community participation, either in the promotion, planning or implementation of the programme.
- ✓ Ensure the full participation of local female and male Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers in identifying at-risk areas, groups and individuals and in developing community-based early warning systems that use the local tools and knowledge of both men and women.
- ✓ Promote the involvement and engagement of both genders in community-based early warning systems to ensure procedures are sensitive to both female and male needs, including privacy, security and adequate protection of valuable assets like livestock, in communal shelters.



Constructing safe water supplies, Damian Village, Guangxi, China 2004.

Some Key considerations for ensuring gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction follow.

Physical mitigation works: The gender-related issues involved in the development of physical mitigation works – be it the building of check dams or health clinics, the planting of mangroves, the improvement of the safety of housing and public buildings or other such activities – are similar to those outlined in the recovery sub-section on “Housing, human settlements and water and sanitation”. Women are often not adequately consulted or involved in the selection, design and implementation of these mitigation activities. For instance, in one Fijian community, an NGO built a community centre that was predominantly used by men for socializing, when women would have preferred the available funds to be spent on improved health care services (Burton, 2009). Opportunities can also be created for women to be trained in non-traditional areas, such as cyclone-resistant roof construction, which would contribute to both their personal income and community safety. This has been successfully accomplished in several locations across Asia and the Americas.



Gaps in Early Warning Systems in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Cyclone Preparedness Programme has successfully warned, evacuated and sheltered millions of people from cyclones since its inception in the early 1970s, by the IFRC, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and the Government of Bangladesh. The number of people who lost their lives in Cyclone Sidr in late 2007 was 3,347, as compared with over 193,000 in the May 1997 cyclone (IFRC, ‘Red Cross Red Crescent good practices in early warning,’ 2006).

However, even a good Early Warning System may have gaps. A survey carried out by Bangladesh’s UN-IASC shelter cluster found that only 12 per cent of respondents had actually used cyclone shelters on the evening of the 2007 cyclone. Focus group discussions held by Oxfam UK with women in some of the most heavily affected communities found that:

- a number of households headed by women, or women whose husbands were away fishing or working in other places, did not receive the warnings, as they were given in the marketplace which was distant from their homes
- fear of theft of goods discouraged some people from using the cyclone shelters
- some women’s perceptions of domestic responsibility for the household assets in the absence of the male head of household inhibited them from leaving their homes
- the form of purdah [seclusion of women from public observation] practiced precluded women from leaving the home unaccompanied by male relatives in a few cases.

Facilities within cyclone shelters for water and sanitation, women’s privacy, food storage and general maintenance were reported to be poor. One NGO also reported that some populations, such as sex workers, were denied access to the shelters in certain locations.

Source: CARE Bangladesh (2007), UN-IASC Bangladesh Shelter Cluster (2007), Burton (2007).

Early warning systems: Ensuring that vital information reaches all segments of the community is of paramount importance when designing community-based early warning systems. In the past, there have been examples of assumptions that communicating the danger to one part of the community would ensure the passage of the information to all concerned, when in reality this was not the case.

Additionally, in some situations where women and other groups had restricted mobility, they were overlooked. Community-based early warning systems should specifically address this concern.



The American Red Cross assists Sri Lanka Red Cross Galle Branch Bentota divisional office Branch Disaster Response Teams (BDRT) prepare for and establish community based early warning systems, July 2009.

Information, education and communication: Taking gender into account when planning the content of disaster preparedness training and designing the training in accordance with the risk profiles of gender groups can be beneficial. For example, the high-risk nature of some courses of action, and the existence of alternate, safer rescue methods may need to be emphasised with men. The methods chosen for information dissemination should also take into account gender differences in literacy, mobility and access to public venues (some women may need home visits by other women), labour schedules (day fishermen or factory workers may only be available in the evening), and general preferences for the means of participation.



Different Gender Preferences and Needs in Communication

In South Africa, it was found that while male farmers preferred climate information to be transmitted through the radio, female farmers preferred it to be made available through an extension officer or through the school. Women were less able to schedule a time to listen to the radio with having to balance multiple responsibilities, from farming to domestic roles. They also preferred an environment where questions could be handled immediately and a discussion could develop.

In some Philippines communities, disaster preparedness training programmes of the Philippines Red Cross were predominantly attended by women, the elderly and the unemployed, as the courses were held during the daytime when many men were away from the village at their jobs.

Source: Archer, 2001 in Dimitrijevic, 2007 and Burton, 2009.

Advocacy: Convincing local government officials and community leaders to fully involve both women and men from communities in disaster management activities and decision-making can be challenging. This may be based on capacity or a variety of other cultural factors. While there is no simple solution to managing these complex dynamics, actions can be taken to gradually build government and community support for, and capacity in, gender inclusive disaster risk reduction programming.

As auxiliaries to their governments, National Societies are respected and trusted to undertake an advocacy role regarding the needs of these disadvantaged women and men. This diplomatic role can be adopted during DRR, relief and recovery phases. There is a window of opportunity following disasters when there is great humanitarian caring and a willingness to eliminate potential barriers so that beneficiaries can have equity in relief and recovery processes. This period of time can be well utilized to bring about positive change within legislation, community attitudes and values. For example, relief services can be equally distributed to female and male beneficiaries, and barriers to women's land ownership and limits to their access to financial institutions and means of borrowing can be potentially overcome during the relief and early recovery processes.

Experience has shown that effective advocacy requires clear objectives based on advanced preparation and research. This research should be conducted to provide evidence to decision-makers regarding the costs and benefits of understanding the different roles of women and men and responding to their subsequent needs. The more the information can draw from or be related to the local context, the greater the chances it will make an impact. The information should be adjusted to reflect the interests of, and intended impacts on, the different stakeholder groups—for instance, explaining to health and disaster management authorities how training women in evacuation procedures and first aid can save children's lives. The messages should emphasize good practices and ways to move forward.

Furthermore, some National Societies have found that conducting gender analysis training has been a useful entry point for starting a both an internal dialogue and one with communities, government, and other stakeholders. Perseverance and patience may be needed, as stakeholders need time to reflect on, question, and validate the information they receive.



Gender Sensitization Training in Guangxi, China

The inclusion of Gender Sensitization Training in the 2006-09 Community Based Disaster Preparedness Project (CBDP) in Guangxi, China led to greater recognition and understanding of the importance of addressing gender issues in disaster management by the Guangxi Red Cross (GXRC) staff and their local partners.

Gender integration was included as a chapter of the CBDP staff and volunteer training manual and was incorporated as a module in all CBDP training for the Guangxi Red Cross and its government and community partners. This included: the training of trainers in project management and VCA, a training workshop for community facilitators or TOF, and village level training for the community leaders, Village Disaster Committee (VDC) members, volunteers and villagers. The training emphasised the importance of collecting gender-disaggregated data and identifying the different needs of women and men and included practical exercises on how to identify and meet women's needs in the disaster management context. During the courses, the female participants were also given the chance to speak and report to a large group, which helped strengthen their self-confidence.

The training was considered to be very beneficial by those involved. At the same time, the GXRC and project staff felt that this needed to be complemented with future practical follow up training and technical support to learn how to apply this new knowledge to real, on-the-job situations.



Source: Gender Inclusiveness China Case Study, 2010.

Finally, identifying a group of advocates for gender inclusiveness among respected local leaders, as well as through groups representing these interests, women's groups and NGOs for example, can be highly effective. These advocates should be encouraged to educate and motivate their peers on gender issues. The establishment of an advisory committee or working group comprised of these individuals can also help. However, it should be noted that sometimes support is initially required to strengthen the capacity of the interest groups.



Strengthening accountability for gender impact

- Creating enabling environments for gender and diversity in programming
- Organizational development
- Monitoring and evaluation for achieving gender sensitive programming

Photo: Tuvalu's oldest volunteer, Cinderella Tuvlamati, who has been volunteering since the 1980s, has enjoyed helping the handicapped with home visits and raising money to enable poor children to go to school. Although she can no longer walk upright, she plans to keep on volunteering until she dies. She says "Now I can't walk, but I can still do my duty by giving advice to president of the Funafuti branch of the Red Cross."

Creating enabling environments for gender and diversity in programming

Achieving gender equality and inclusiveness in the disaster management programming implemented by Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies and the IFRC requires work that ensures:

- changes in the level of access to resources by women
- greater participation and leadership by women in decision making processes
- respect for and implementation of women's rights
- improved understanding of the impact of disasters on men's social roles and personal well-being
- an increased capacity to tackle these issues.

It also means not automatically viewing women merely as victims, but as survivors with capacities, who can be vital first responders and rebuilders within their communities. Women (and men) should not be stereotyped, and need to be valued as active contributors to disaster management, contributors who provide valuable experiences, resources and perspectives.

The following good practice checklist is a set of guidelines for ensuring that gender sensitivity is addressed and catered to in this aspect of the disaster management programming.



Good Practice Checklist for Gender and Diversity in Disaster Management Programmes

- ✓ Include representatives of women, youth, children, the disabled, ethnic minorities and migrant groups in damage and needs assessments.
- ✓ Recognize that decision-making roles are traditionally male functions within society and that women may require substantial orientation on their responsibilities, training in confidence building and mentoring to be able to fully participate in these types of decision-making committees.
- ✓ Develop partnerships with organizations that represent the interests of these groups.
- ✓ Develop an understanding of the longer-term history of discrimination against these groups in the programming area so that the activities planned can help to overcome such discrimination.
- ✓ Build knowledge about the disaster management skills, capacities and coping mechanisms of these groups.
- ✓ Consult with community members and specialists to identify the possible need for designing the activities in specific ways that ensure that these groups have access to the available resources and can participate equally in decision-making.
- ✓ Develop strategies that ensure marginalized groups are actively involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of disaster management activities.
- ✓ Support the development of information, education, and communication activities and systems that are designed with and for marginalized groups. Activities should be culturally appropriate, available in their languages, and through communication networks they normally use.
- ✓ Work with Organizational partners and representatives of these groups to develop progress and success indicators and other ways of assessing the impact of disaster management programming on them as a result of their participation in decision-making and access to resources available.
- ✓ Ensure sufficient funds have been allocated in programme budgets to support these activities.

Source: Adapted from World Bank, 2009.

There are a number of good practice measures highlighted in the following text that all National Societies should implement in all aspects of disaster management programming—be it relief, recovery or risk reduction – to ensure that they are gender-sensitive and diverse inclusive.

Creating a safe environment: The IFRC and its member National Societies have important roles to play in protecting vulnerable disaster-affected people, as well as monitoring, reporting on and advocating for their safety. Affected people who were already poor and socially vulnerable may be at greater risk of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) following a disaster. GBV refers to any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females (UN/IASC, 2006).

For example, increased violence against women was noted in reports from the Philippines after the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, in Central and North America after Hurricane Mitch and in several countries after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami (UN/IASC, 2006).

While gender inequality and discrimination are root causes of GBV, various other factors affect the type and extent of violence. In emergency settings, norms regulating social behaviour are weakened and traditional social systems often break down. Women and children may be separated from family and community support systems, making them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to their gender or age and more dependent on others for help and safe passage. This can be especially true for women who have lost their male relatives or who have been severely or permanently injured.

Disaster after disaster produces irrefutable evidence that with displacement – be it as a result of natural hazards or conflict – the risks of physical abuse to women and girls rises substantially.

IFRC

Suitable entry points for consultation with representatives of vulnerable and marginalized groups need to be identified in order to understand potential protection risks. Abuse of power represents a serious threat to the protection, health and dignity of vulnerable people, especially children. It can result in sexual, physical or psychological harm as well. Allegations of abuse of power have been made against humanitarian workers in all parts of the world. In order to help protect child beneficiaries, it is essential that all parts of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement develop an internal capacity for systems pertaining to child protection and violence prevention. During the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, a pledge on abuse of power was submitted that applies across the International Federation.



RED CROSS RED CRESCENT PLEDGE ON ABUSE OF POWER

IFRC pledge, 30th International Conference, 2007

“The International Federation recognizes the particular trust and power that lies in the hands of those assisting the most vulnerable and that we have a special responsibility, as embodied in the Fundamental Principles, to create and maintain safe environments in our workplaces and for all those that we seek to assist. The IFRC pledge to (by 2011):

- support National Societies to adopt and implement a zero tolerance approach towards sexual exploitation and abuse
- assist National Societies in promoting safe environments for all vulnerable populations, especially children within their own institutions and throughout their operations and programs

- promote awareness on the abuse of power and support capacity building efforts and training in preventative approaches
- collaborate with other international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations in reviewing the implementation and impact of collective efforts to eliminate abuse of power.”



Safe Environments for Children and Youth

The Canadian Red Cross, through its RespectED: Violence & Abuse Prevention programme, has been working to prevent violence against children in Canada for 25 years. Over the past several years, it has been invited to consult and collaborate with the IFRC and numerous National Societies on these issues. One of the tools offered by the RespectED program to organizations is “*Ten Steps to Creating Safe Environments for Children and Youth*”.

The ten steps to creating safe environments for children & youth

1. Understand the issue
2. Recognize the vulnerability and resilience of children and youth
3. Define protection instruments
4. Create a prevention team
5. Complete a risk assessment
6. Develop policies and procedures
7. Educate adults, youth and children
8. Respond to disclosures of violence
9. Meet the challenges
10. Maintain safe environments



Outcome report: Ten steps to creating safe environments for children and youth pilot workshops, October 2009, included in the accompanying CD ROM.



Engaging Nepalese youth in raising awareness of disaster risk and identifying preparedness and mitigation measures to reduce the impact of future disasters.

It is also important to sensitize security staff and police to concerns relating to gender-based and domestic violence in regions where such violence is not socially recognized as a crime. Ensuring that female and male security staff and law enforcement officers are accessible to disaster survivors may further increase the likelihood that victims of GBV come forward and report assaults. The IFRC and National Societies can work closely with the UNHCR-led United Nation's Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) protection cluster to identify an appropriate role and course of action.



The IASC has also developed specific guidance and checklists on: *Protecting Persons Affected by Natural Disasters: UN/IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters* (2006). A copy can be found on the CD Rom accompanying these gender guidelines.

Beneficiary feedback, consultation and community participation: The beneficiaries of all Red Cross Red Crescent disaster management programming should be involved in ongoing monitoring and reporting systems. Doing this effectively requires gender-sensitive approaches that recognize the differences between men and women in their access to information and the channels by which it is given and received (see DRR sub-section on “Information, education and communication” for details). This is also the case for those who may have vision or hearing impairments, or those who cannot speak the dominant or official language of the country.



Engaging women's perspectives on disaster risk reduction through focal group consultations.

Ensuring that information about disaster management assistance reaches men and women in a clear and timely manner can also be a key factor in the success or failure of programmes. It is especially important to ensure that communities are empowered to contribute to and understand the selection criteria, documentation requirements, and feedback or complaint mechanisms available for relief and recovery assistance. The establishment of community committees can provide a pivotal point for enabling communication between a National Society and a disaster affected community, engaging community members in decision-making.

It is equally important to get feedback from both male and female beneficiaries to ensure that what is being done is appropriate and is meeting their priority needs, including the creation of formal grievance mechanisms. This can be done by establishing community committees whose members represent different sections of the community and are selected and nominated by clear and obvious means, by holding separate focus group discussions and household interviews with men and women (and other groups such as youth, the elderly, minorities, etc), by the creation of grievance officer positions when resources permit, and through the use of tools such as community scorecards.



Tearfund has produced a helpful publication, *Disaster Management Team Good Practice Guidelines – Beneficiary Accountability* (2008), that outlines a seven-step process for incorporating beneficiary accountability into disaster management operations and programmes. A copy can be found on the CD Rom accompanying these guidelines.



The UK Disaster and Emergency Response Group produced a helpful tool in 2006 for assessing gender and diversity inclusiveness in National Society and IFRC delegations' procedures, systems and disaster management assistance and developing an action plan and performance indicators to address any needs for improvement: Gender and Diversity Checklist for Disaster and Emergency Response. The checklist can be found on the accompanying CD Rom.

Organizational development

Given the emphasis on humanity and impartiality in the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, it is a key responsibility of National Societies and the IFRC to ensure that our programmes, services and workplaces are gender-sensitive and to promote gender and social equality. The IFRC aims to ensure that all Red Cross Red Crescent activities benefit women and men equally, encourage greater equality between men, and promote respect for women's human rights. To achieve this requires the systematic integration of men's and women's respective needs, interests and priorities in the policies and activities of National Societies, as well as into our offices and delegations.

The following good practice checklist is a set of guidelines for ensuring that gender sensitivity is addressed and catered to in this aspect of the disaster management cycle. The text after the checklist box contains more detailed explanations of activities that should be included to ensure this checklist is fully met in reality.



Good Practice Checklist for Gender and Diversity in Organisations

- ✓ Adopt a Gender and Diversity Policy to guide people, activities, and programming at all levels of the National Society.
- ✓ Demonstrate a clear commitment to gender and diversity inclusiveness at the senior management level.
- ✓ Identify how gender and diversity issues are being addressed in the current disaster management programming portfolio and the National Society's internal procedures, along with any needs for further development or improvement.
- ✓ Develop a systematic strategy or work plan to address identified needs and make certain that there are adequate funds and people available to implement it.
- ✓ Ensure that staff and volunteers are sensitized to gender and diversity issues and are skilled in gender and diversity analysis.
- ✓ Recruit a gender and diversity focal point (male or female) to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of gender and diversity strategies when feasible.
- ✓ Ensure equal opportunities in the recruitment and working conditions of male and female staff and volunteers and provide a workplace environment that promotes diversity.



Examples of the best practices of National Societies in Nepal, Cambodia, Mongolia and Australia are captured in the DVD on Gender and Diversity in the accompanying CD Rom.

Commitment of leadership: If gender and diversity sensitivity and inclusiveness are to be achieved, National Society and IFRC leadership at governance and management levels need to ask themselves: "What does gender and diversity inclusiveness mean in real terms for National Society and IFRC Offices?" and "What are the prerequisites for making this happen?" and "How should progress be systematically measured?"



Examples of National Society Gender and Diversity Policies, as well as the IFRC's Gender Policy first adopted in 1999 are included on the accompanying CD Rom.

Commitment and support from management is essential. All staff and volunteers need to understand what gender awareness is and how it relates to their work.

Needs identification: One way to assess what the National Society needs to do is to conduct an internal gender and diversity audit or stocktake. A gender and diversity stocktake helps to identify how gender and diversity issues are being addressed in the current disaster management programming portfolio and the National Society's internal procedures, along with any need for further development or improvement. The process can also support Organizational learning regarding what gender and diversity sensitivity means to the National Society and specific challenges it needs to address.



The Australian Red Cross has developed a useful Gender Capacity Assessment Matrix to guide a gender audit or Organizational self-assessment process in a National Society context which can be found on the accompanying CD Rom.

Strategic planning: Clear and measurable steps should then be taken towards the development of a strategy or work plan to increase or improve gender and diversity inclusiveness. This strategy should identify the following: key objectives and tasks, timeframes, performance indicators, persons responsible for action and the budget required to achieve the identified gendered outcomes.



Samoa Red Cross staff and volunteers organize relief distributions for families of Satitoo, one of the area worst affected by the Samoan tsunami, 2009.

Rob Few



Gender Strategy of Indonesia Red Cross

Indonesia Red Cross developed a gender policy, strategy and action plan as an integral part of the National Society's overall Strategic Plan, 2004-2009. This entailed mainstreaming gender in disaster management "to ensure that the different roles, responsibilities, needs, interests, vulnerabilities and capacities of men and women are addressed."

The key elements of the strategic approach of the Indonesia Red Cross were: incorporating gender considerations into all development programmes and services, promoting and facilitating the equal access of women to leadership and management positions, ensuring that women and men had equal access to, and fully participated in, the committees, working groups and decision-making processes for disaster management activities, and developing strategies for advocacy, socialization and promotion of equal rights and obligations between men and women in disaster management. Working groups were established at all levels of Indonesia Red Cross to implement the strategy and integrated with the CBDP and Integrated Community Based Risk Reduction programme.

Indonesia Red Cross found that this approach led to better integration of gender issues across its Disaster Management services, rather than it becoming an isolated topic. Women's participation increased in Indonesia Red Cross activities, leadership and management and awareness of gender issues increased among beneficiaries, staff and volunteers. VCA was a useful tool for identifying gender roles in communities and informing programme design. Community and religious leaders played important roles in reducing community resistance to gender sensitive approaches, and the capacity of some grassroots women's organisations was increased.

Indonesia Red Cross plans to continue to deepen and strengthen this work in the future, including developing budgets and other performance indicators to monitor strategy implementation and reviewing its relief items to ensure they are gender-sensitive and meet SPHERE minimum standards.



Source: Indonesia Red Cross PowerPoint presentation, June 2009 IFRC Asia Pacific Gender and Disaster Management Workshop.

Developing gender and diversity skills and resources: A National Society's systems and procedures need to facilitate the incorporation of gender and diversity perspectives into its work. For example, programme planners need to be skilled in gender analysis, and gender analysis needs to be made a requirement of all needs assessment processes. Evaluators need to know how to assess progress on gender equality during implementation.

The establishment of working groups or the recruitment of a gender and diversity focal point (male or female) can also help to raise awareness, ensure commitment and develop competence regarding the integration of gender and diversity perspectives in a National Society or IFRC office. For example, a gender focal point's role would be to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of gender strategies. She or he would promote gender issues and would be involved in monitoring the gender mainstreaming process. However, gender focal points must be supported by the management and other gender-aware colleagues in order to effectively function as catalysts for change. Sometimes, gender focal points have been seen as solely responsible for anything having to do with gender issues, when these issues are in fact the responsibility of the entire organization.



A sample gender focal point job description can be found on the accompanying CD Rom.

Fair workplace practices: Another important aspect of achieving gender and diversity inclusiveness is ensuring equal opportunities in the recruitment and working conditions of staff and volunteers. This can include: using selection methods that attract male, female and socially diverse applicants, adopting gender and diversity sensitive approaches to staff training, and including gender and diversity in staff performance appraisal systems. This is especially important for managers. The good practices for volunteer recruitment highlighted in the box below can also be applied to staff recruitment.



Women-Friendly Volunteer Programme Design

Programme Planning	<p>Target recruitment of female volunteers.</p> <p>Plan activities that help in skill development.</p>
Recruitment of Volunteers	<p>Target information at influential groups like parents, spouses, families, institutions and community leaders.</p> <p>Focus promotional and recruitment activities on: organization and activities, the value of volunteering and the significance of women's participation.</p> <p>Use the visibility of women in the National Societies as role models.</p>
Training	<p>Design approaches specific to women's aptitudes.</p> <p>Encourage women's participation.</p> <p>Include sessions on leadership and decision-making.</p>
Programme Implementation	<p>Design flexible schedules that include women-friendly slots.</p> <p>Arrange transportation for fieldwork.</p> <p>Provide support for childcare.</p> <p>Establish a safe, supportive and enabling work environment.</p> <p>Reward and recognize efforts.</p>
Service Delivery to the Vulnerable	<p>Provide better access to all sections of the population.</p> <p>Cater programmes to the specific needs of the community.</p> <p>Design an organization representative of the people, which generates confidence.</p>

Source: Adapted from IFRC (1999). Bangladesh Red Crescent Society: The recruitment of female volunteers to respond to disasters. The full case study can be found on the accompanying CD Rom.

Monitoring and evaluation for achieving gender-sensitive programming

Once detailed assessments have been carried out and the National Society's strategies to increase gender inclusiveness are in place, information should be collected and analyzed regularly to assess progress and outcomes. To be useful, the information has to be relatively easy to collect, reliable, and accurate. It needs to be made available in a timely manner so that changes can be made or corrective actions taken when they can actually make a difference in achieving the objectives of disaster management assistance. For example, following the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, shaving equipment was provided by the IFRC in places where men did not normally shave off their facial hair. If beneficiary feedback is collected immediately following the initial relief distributions, rather than after the relief operation has been completed, through simple male and female focus group discussions for example, there is a better chance of being able to adjust the contents and methods of delivery of the food and non-food items being provided to ensure they are culturally appropriate and suitable.



Key Elements for Lasting Gender and Diversity success

While each National Society or IFRC office will develop a different strategic approach that is suitable to its own context, some of the key elements that have been found to lead to positive and lasting improvement in gender and diversity inclusiveness include:

- each National Society and IFRC office has a gender and diversity policy, strategy and action plan
- capacity building and professional development programmes include adequate gender and diversity content
- gender and diversity-disaggregated data is routinely included in reports and the programming implications are addressed
- gender and diversity-disaggregated information about local and international staff and volunteers working on programs, and about people in decision-making positions, is routinely collected and analysed and appropriate follow-up actions are taken to ensure balanced and proportional representation
- adequate financial resources are allocated to the implementation of gender and diversity-sensitive activities, and funds are explicitly earmarked for these activities
- adequate human resources are allocated to the implementation of gender and diversity-sensitive activities
- gender and diversity issues are discussed during staff performance appraisals and good performance on gender issues is rewarded, recognized and shared with others.

The performance indicators used for the overall operation or programme should measure the outcomes or results of the assistance, rather than just the outputs. For instance, an indicator that assesses the number of staff and volunteers who complete a gender analysis training course would be useful for monitoring the progress of delivery of training, but it would not answer the important question of whether or not the participants used the training to produce more gender-sensitive programming. Both quantitative and qualitative information should be captured in order to work out both how many men and women were reached and if the assistance provided actually helped to meet their needs and priorities in a timely manner.

For these reasons, both the programme objectives and performance indicators that are developed should follow 'SMART' principles: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. A few examples of SMART indicators for measuring progress and outcomes on gender inclusiveness that can be adapted to the specific circumstances and needs of individual National Societies and IFRC offices follow. These can also be used to assess diversity sensitivity with only minor adjustments.

For more specific and detailed guidance on ways to measure progress on gender sensitivity, please refer to the checklists and guidelines recommended under "Useful Tools."



Indonesia Red Cross Water and Sanitation Volunteer inspecting water purifying equipment used in the response to the Yogyakarta earthquake in May 2006.



Expected Results in Disaster Management Programming

- the disaster management programmes and initiatives of National Societies and the IFRC benefit at-risk and disaster-affected men, women, boys and girls equally according to their different needs
- the structure and composition of National Societies reflects the gender make-up of the population and ensures non-discrimination on the basis of gender.

Possible Indicators include:

- an increase in the number or percentage of disaster management programmes and operations which have: identified the different priority needs and capacities of male and female beneficiaries, designed and delivered initiatives to respond to these different needs, and assessed the results over a given period of time
- an increase in the number or percentage of male and female beneficiaries of programmes and operations over a given period of time
- high levels of satisfaction with the assistance provided among male and female beneficiaries
- an increase in the number or percentage of women (and men when relevant) joining the National Society or IFRC office as staff and/or volunteers over a given period of time
- an increase in number or percentage of women (and men when relevant) in decision-making positions where there is a gender imbalance over a given period of time
- achieving equal treatment of women (or men when relevant) in terms of pay, conditions-of-service and so forth

- seeing high levels of satisfaction among female volunteers and staff (as well as males where relevant) with their treatment and influence on decision-making within the National Society and IFRC over a given period of time.

Progress: All stages of disaster management cycle should make note of:

- representation on needs assessment teams of gender and diversity that is proportional to their representation in the affected or beneficiary population
- the number or percentage of male and female beneficiaries who have participated in programme decision-making structures and processes
- the number or percentage of monitoring reports that include gender-disaggregated data, analysis of its implications for programming and identification of follow-up action
- the number of complaints by women and men reported and resolved through established feedback and complaints mechanisms
- an increase in access to, and control over, programme and operational resources by socially marginalized men and women over a given period of time
- an increase in levels of awareness, skills and confidence among socially marginalized men and women to articulate and enforce their rights over a given period of time.

Disaster response (these indicators can also be used for disaster preparedness):

- the number or percentage of women and men who feel evacuation centres are safe and accessible
- measures are identified and put into place for ensuring that beneficiary registration and relief distributions do not exclude female heads of household, female members of households or any other groups, such as those with limited mobility
- the selection of relief stocks that include gender-specific needs such as menstrual items with input from local men and women
- the incorporation of women's privacy and protection needs into design of emergency and transitional shelters and settlements.

Disaster recovery should include:

- the number or percentage of male and female beneficiaries receiving livelihoods assistance, e.g. participating in cash for work, receiving seeds, tools or grants
- women's needs and preferences incorporated into the design of housing and human settlements
- men's and women's workloads and time schedules taken into account in the timing of activities.

Disaster risk reduction and preparedness should take note of:

- an increase in the number or percentage of VCAs and needs assessments that include systematic information gathering and analysis of gender issues over a given period of time
- an increase in the number or percentage of women (or men when relevant) on disaster preparedness committees over a given period of time
- an increase in the number or percentage of women (or men when relevant) participating in disaster preparedness training and planning over a given period of time
- the needs or priorities of women (or men when relevant) that have been incorporated into disaster preparedness and DRR plans
- the number or percentage of women and men who have received and understood early warning and disaster preparedness messages over a given period of time
- a decrease in the number or percentage of deaths, injuries and property losses among both men and women from disaster impacts over a given period of time.



Case studies

- **Overview of case studies**
- **Pakistan: Humanitarian Assistance for Internally Displaced Persons**
- **Myanmar: Women’s Participation in Recovery**
- **Bangladesh: Community-Based Flood Management Programme**
- **China: Community-Based Disaster Preparedness**
- **Indonesia: Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Project**
- **Solomon Islands: Working Together for Healthy Communities**

Photo: Pakistan Red Crescent assists community members in analysing the risk to market gardening initiatives.

Overview of case studies

As presented throughout the guidelines National Societies across Asia Pacific and the IFRC are committed to gender inclusive approaches that address social inequality and reduce the disaster risks of vulnerable communities. We understand that this is a long-term process that requires ongoing commitment at all levels to ensure gender sensitive disaster management programming.

The following six case studies aim to show the significant difference made peoples lives by highlighting the actions of National Societies in addressing gender-sensitivity and diversity within their disaster management actions across Asia Pacific.

Extended version of the case studies can be found on the accompanying CD Rom.



Pakistan: Humanitarian Assistance for Internally Displaced Persons

Project overview

In 2008, Pakistan faced a growing humanitarian crisis in Malakand division (North-West Frontier Province) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas triggered by fierce fighting between government security forces and militants. According to UN OCHA reports, more than 2.5 million people had been displaced and moved to safer ground. This was the largest and the fastest growing displacement the world had seen in the past 15 years. Fighting began in August 2008, but as a result of an upsurge in fighting, an estimated 90 per cent or more of displaced people stayed with their relatives and friends. The remaining families lived in 27 camps for internally displaced people (IDP).

As of May 2009, more than 6,500 tents had been pitched in Six camps run by the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In addition to the response phase, PRCS, supported by Movement partners to undertake early recovery and rehabilitation actions in support of the displaced population.

Gender considerations

Overall design

A number of gender-sensitive design considerations were taken into account by PRCS and RCRC Movement partners in managing the IDP camp. Vulnerabilities were exacerbated for people who belonged to one or more of the following groups:

- women and children (these are the priorities, as they form the majority of the displaced population)
- female-headed households
- socially isolated groups (minorities)
- people who are isolated from services and lack transport options
- the ill, frail, elderly or those who have disabilities and no financial reserves or means of generating income.

Specifically through the provision of relief assistance PRCS took into consideration the following social, cultural and practical considerations. Women and children comprise 80 per cent of refugees and internally displaced persons. Uprooted populations generally encounter problems of protection and safety, but women in particular also suffer additional forms of physical abuse. It has been found that women are subject to more violence while displaced than in normal circumstances and suffer from a wide range of violent acts, many hidden and unreported like rape, torture, intimidation, discrimination, and psychological abuse. In addition to violence from the “outside,” domestic violence also tends to increase as men are under greater stress than usual and women are easy targets. Gender-based violence is much more than just sexual or domestic violence, it is any action or omission that takes away from women’s dignity and abilities.

Acronyms

UN OCHA	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
PRCS	Pakistan Red Crescent Society
GSBV	Gender and Sex-Based Violence

Traditional gender roles in Pakistan define a woman's place as in the home and not in the workplace. As a result society invests far less in women and they suffer from lack of opportunities throughout their lives. This carries over into emergency situations, as women usually have more difficulty than men obtaining humanitarian assistance.

As in society, the Pakistan culture predominant in the IDP camps does not permit women to interact with strangers, particularly men. Widows, single women, and those not accompanied by an adult male relative had no one to facilitate their registration and risked being overlooked in the distribution of goods. They were also not privy to information about benefits or how to gain access to resources. Therefore female heads of household were less likely to receive assistance, especially in situations where resources were limited. As men usually have control over how resources are distributed in emergency situations, distribution systems can be inequitable, which may lead to high malnutrition and mortality rates among women and children.

Due to high temperatures experienced during the day, life was extremely unpleasant for those in the camps, the majority of whom were women and children. Typically women were not allowed to leave the camp without the permission of a male relative and had to wait until dark to meet their hygiene needs.

Women had various coping strategies to help their families face the crisis. These included collecting water and firewood, activities that further contributed to the increased negative impact on women. Hauling water made women more susceptible to heat exhaustion, and as the water in refugee and displaced persons' camps is usually polluted, they were more prone to water-borne illnesses. Firewood needed to be gathered outside of the camps, which posed dangers due to the presence of anti-personnel landmines and the possibility of increased violence against women.

In the chaos and panic of displacement, which all too often takes place on foot, families became separated. As women are not permitted to travel unless accompanied by husbands or other male relatives, many didn't have the personal documentation needed for crossing check-points or international borders. They were stopped, harassed, or subjected to humiliating body searches. Children who were separated from their parents no longer had the comfort of their social networks of friends and neighbours. This left them vulnerable and unable to adapt to the new environment and exposed them to violence. This can manifest in insomnia and depression, which can lead to withdrawal and self-harm.

Men were also not immune to the effects of crisis or on-going military operations. Some evacuated their homes and took refuge in IDP camps with their families, but many remained in their homes to look after livestock and valuables. This posed an increased risk to their safety.

Needs assessment and vulnerabilities targeting

During assessments, male and female representatives of the PRCS and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) held consultations and focus group discussions with men and women separately. In respect to local culture and strict purdah (veil) considerations, these assessment teams followed proper dress codes and community women were approached and interviewed inside the camps by women only. Health and water and sanitation teams had equal male-to-female representation.

Implementation

Male and female staff members of the health, psychosocial support and water and sanitation programmes were transported to the camp areas in separate vehicles and followed proper dress codes in order to respect local norms and customs.

Construction of the camps addressed the issues of culture, privacy in the new environment and access to the resources of water, non-food items and latrines. Communal latrines and bathing cubicles for women, girls, men and boys were in safe locations and were culturally appropriate. They provided privacy, were adequately illuminated and easily accessed by those with disabilities.

Mobile health teams visiting the IDP camps had equal representation of male and female health staff, and separate areas were provided for male and female examinations.

A Gender and Counseling Centre at PRCS Swabi IDP camp had an equal representation of male and female staff members. The gender team provided counseling and helped in resolving issues of Gender and Sex-Based Violence (GSBV). In areas that posed increased security risks for programme staff, only relief, health and water and sanitation were operational.

The consolidated detail of beneficiaries of different psychosocial support activities (Emergency Phase) in Haripur given in the following table.

No	Activity	Number of activities	Male	Female	Children	Total Beneficiaries
01	Group sessions and Psychosocial Education	63	399	450		849
02	Children activities	49			955	955
03	Activities for mobilization of community volunteers	147	103	44		147
04	Informal deductions	10			138	138
05	Referral activities	108	52	56		108
06	Sport activities	29	332		92	424
07	Individual sessions	79	29	50		79
08	Infant kits distribution	12		26		26
09	Short term skills	12		152		152
10	Religious activity	5		119		119
Total		514	915	897	1,185	2,997

Monitoring and evaluation

Separate meetings were held with male and female members of the community during monitoring and evaluation visits to the camps to discuss issues important to the IDPs. The female team visited multiple tents, water and sanitation and health facilities, community centres and vocational training centres, and organized discussions with community women and female volunteers. Mobile health teams also monitored pregnant or lactating women and children to detect possible malnutrition.

Male and female PRCS volunteers were assigned particular blocks or areas of the camp. These volunteers would visit each household in their duty area daily in groups of two. They would then arrange a number of small gatherings or meetings with the nearby households to discuss the camp situation and collect feedback on relief and other activities.

Frequent supervisory visits by the PRCS secretary general and provincial branch secretary ensured early identification of, and quick resolution to, potential gender issues, as they met with male and female field operation staff separately and addressed any issues that arose.

Outcomes

1. Community women who participated in PRCS-led trainings showed confidence in facilitating and organizing activities by themselves. This created a sense of self-worth, as they are culturally homebound and not otherwise allowed to participate in such trainings.
2. Through different skill-enhancement activities and group sessions, many community-based volunteers became aware of their capacity to help themselves and their neighbours. Hence, they became active survivors rather than passive victims. The self-help approach through strong community participation made many volunteers willing and able to work on behalf of their communities.
3. Gender-balanced teams of volunteers played a key role in emergency assessments and relief distributions. The programme was able to reach women and children beneficiaries who comprised the majority of the IDP population.
4. There was an absence of women in leadership positions in camp management and higher managerial positions.
5. Women played a role in generating income for the household after attending courses for vocational skills development.
6. Through the Gender Counseling Centres and Psychosocial Support Programme's different activities for women and children, the community as a whole gained the confidence to talk about difficult changes in their environment and share their feelings and experiences openly. Along with providing psychological support for parents suffering from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, such discussions helped to create a social environment similar to one they had before the outbreak of hostilities.

Lessons learned

1. Enrolling volunteers from among the IDP community contributes to better performance and acceptance of the programme because they are more knowledgeable about local norms and beliefs.
2. It is very important for the programme staff to have knowledge of the prevailing cultural values, traditions and the interests of the target community before designing activities to realize maximum benefits.
3. Advocacy and strong leadership in gender-sensitive programme activities are key elements for ensuring sustainability and lasting results, since it is very common for organizations to focus on saving lives during times of emergencies and to not give gender needs and issues adequate consideration.
4. Volunteers play a very important role in community development. Youth and volunteer projects endeavor to expand the female volunteer base. The youth policy addresses the inclusion of gender equity in the volunteer base. Also, gender sensitization sessions for volunteers will be incorporated in the training modules. All programmes aim to ensure gender balance and diversity in recruitment of their staff and volunteers.
5. Recognizing and reducing security risks incurred by women will make them more willing to participate in programme activities. It was difficult to implement gender counseling activities in areas that posed increased security risks for programme staff.
6. A challenge faced by one monitoring team was the lack of female personnel able to speak native languages. The PRCS North West Frontier Province provided female volunteers for the team to solve this issue and reach female beneficiaries. Knowledge of local languages and context needs to be taken into account during programme needs assessment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The way forward

1. PRCS needs to provide support for those who are tasked with advocating for gender equality. This support might include training in negotiation and other “change agent” skills.
2. Follow-up on programme interventions is needed to understand the long-term impact of the gender inclusiveness and improve future planning and designs.
3. There is a need for developing gender equality action plans at the departmental and Organizational levels. Women as managers in health, water and sanitation, relief and disaster management should be encouraged.
4. Boys between the ages of 12 and 18 should be targeted for rehabilitation efforts to have lasting results, as they are the primary age group being drawn into the conflict. Behavior change communication calls for engaging boys or girls of this age group in healthy activities and gradually cultivating gender sensitivity in them. A one-year long educational project called Children Affected by Armed Conflict included a set of modules for 20 trainings for 5th to 6th grade boys and girls. This school-based training has already been in use by the PRCS and has been approved for launch in Swat District.

Myanmar: Women's Participation in Recovery

Project overview

In May of 2008, Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar causing widespread devastation in the Ayeyarwady and Yangon divisions. Not only was it the eighth strongest cyclone in the world to date, it was also the worst natural disaster the people of Myanmar could remember. The official death toll stands at 84,537 with another 53,836 people unaccounted for. Fifty townships were affected in the two divisions, including Yangon, the country's largest city.

This devastating cyclone caused major damage to houses and other public infrastructure like roads, jetties, water and sanitation facilities, communication and electricity systems. One long lasting impact of the cyclone was the devastation of livelihoods resources in the communities. The Delta region, a big producer of rice, sustained major damage to agricultural fields due to the influx of seawater. Fishing, livestock and other small enterprises also incurred substantial amounts of damage. As one of the most vulnerable segments of the population, women felt the impact of the disaster most acutely.

According to assessment data, the majority of the cyclone's victims were female: 61 per cent of those who died were women, with a much higher number in some villages. The disproportionate number of female victims is especially evident in the key productive and reproductive age group of 18-60.

This demographic change is bound to have a significant impact on the roles of, and relationships between, men and women, and may cause social reverberations, including a spate of remarriages or early marriages. Men may resort to visiting other villages or towns in order to find wives, which could increase out-migration from severely affected areas or lead to more inter-village marriages.

The economic effects of the cyclone may cause younger, unmarried women to leave the village to find work, especially as women's work in the Delta is traditionally labour-based, instead of land-based as is the case for men. Inexperienced in urban life, these young women are vulnerable to exploitation, forced labour, forced prostitution and human trafficking.

Source: Tripartite Core Group (July 2008) Post-Nargis Joint Assessment Report.

Acronyms

MRCS	Myanmar Red Cross Society
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
CFW	Cash for work project
VTRCs	Village Tract Recovery Committees
MMK	Myanmar Kyats

Gender considerations

Overall design

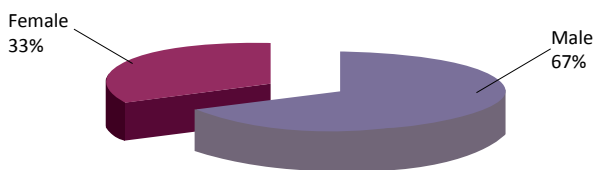
The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), responded immediately following the cyclone, with distributions of non-food relief items such as tool kits for shelters, tarpaulins, jerry cans, hygiene kits, mosquito nets, blankets and kitchen sets. Assistance in health and water and sanitation sectors was also offered early on. Focus was also given to activities aimed at Restoring Family Links. During the relief phase, MRCS provided relief distributions to over 260,000 households, or approximately 1 million people.

To transition from relief to recovery and address the long-term needs of those affected by the cyclone, MRCS and IFRC designed a recovery programme using an integrated multi-sector approach. The main focus of the programme was to ensure the most vulnerable households re-gained a sustainable, independent, post-disaster lifestyle. In order to achieve this, projects were implemented in different sectors including health, psychosocial, water and sanitation, shelter and livelihoods. The recovery programme also emphasized building the capacity of the communities to be prepared for future disasters. Therefore, a disaster risk reduction component was also included as a main component of the recovery phase.

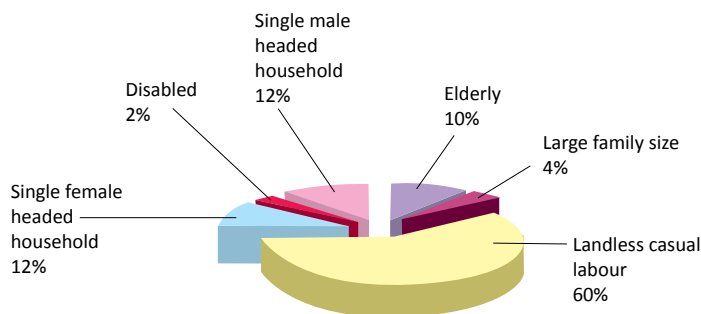
MRCS identified livelihoods recovery of the most vulnerable households as one of the main goals of the programme. Livelihoods projects including asset recovery, community capacity-building, restoration of natural resources and wage employment by means of a cash for work project (CFW) were conducted. The CFW was implemented in October of 2008, and was successfully completed by May 2009. The project was designed to mainstream gender awareness at all levels of implementation. The main objectives of the CFW were:

- to generate wage employment opportunities for the most vulnerable households affected by the cyclone
- to ensure food availability and economic security among the most vulnerable households with specific reference to women
- to restore community assets and infrastructure linked to community livelihoods systems
- to restore natural and environmental resources affected by the cyclone at the community level.

Overall beneficiary coverage



Overall vulnerability coverage of CFW project



During all phases of CFW, 13 cyclone-affected townships were involved. The project reached out to 67 village tracts and covered 178 villages. A total of 6,644 beneficiaries were helped. Of these, 33 per cent were women.

Other vulnerable groups represented included landless casual labourers (60 per cent), single male and female heads of household (12 per cent each), the elderly (10 per cent), large families (4 per cent), and the disabled (2 per cent).

The project was successful in providing assistance to the most vulnerable landless casual labourers, who were in urgent need of wage employment following the disaster.

Women were represented across all the vulnerable groups as can be seen in the following table.

Beneficiary Details	Male	Female	Total
Elderly	415	243	658
Large family	170	69	239
Landless casual labourer	2979	1038	4017
Single female headed household	0	808	808
Disabled	122	41	163
Single male headed household	759	0	759
Total	4445	2199	6644

Needs assessment and vulnerability targeting

Multi-sector Village Tract Assessments were carried out by MRCS teams comprised of volunteers, 30-40 per cent of whom were women. The teams used different participatory approaches during assessments, including focus group discussions and interviews with households and stakeholders.

Women were encouraged to participate in the focus groups, as this helped the assessment teams incorporate gender perspectives into their understanding of urgent community needs. For example, it became clear that landless female labourers had difficulty finding employment post-disaster and needed work to be able to meet the needs of their families.

Different activities to be carried out at the village level by CFW were also identified. Utmost care was taken to identify activities that facilitated women's participation. These included: the repair of village roads, the restoration of river embankments, the cleaning of debris from agricultural fields and the repair of canals.

MRCS developed specific project implementation guidelines for branch level teams. The guidelines covered different aspects of the project including: the formulation of activity proposals, beneficiary selection criteria, the kinds of activities to be selected, daily wage rates, implementation and monitoring procedures and financial management.

Some of the key gender-specific elements that were emphasised in these guidelines were:

- selection criteria that includes a target of 50 per cent female beneficiaries
- the inclusion of activities that were not overly technical and therefore encouraged women's participation
- equal wage payment of 2000 Myanmar kyats per day per beneficiary for both men and women
- wages paid to actual beneficiaries at the work site and not family members.

Implementation

After the necessary training and capacity building of implementation teams, community-level project planning began. MRCS established Village Tract Recovery Committees (VTRC), which had a minimum of two female representatives, to coordinate the recovery programme. Community mobilization was undertaken through VTRCs to help communities become familiar with CFW. Details of the project were explained in community meetings. This was followed by, the making of decisions concerning the kinds of work to be carried out and the selection of beneficiaries. The number of beneficiaries selected was based on the nature of the activity, the size work force required, and was decided by the community. Women's participation was encouraged at this stage of the planning process. Based on community-level action plans, MRCS teams then developed proposals. Beneficiary selection criteria that included:

- the elderly (55 or older and in need of employment)
- large families (households with eight or more dependents)
- the disabled
- single female headed households (including widows)
- landless casual labourers and labour-dependent families
- single male headed households (families with a single male parent looking after dependants).

Before any activities began, additional preparatory meetings were conducted to finalize the project monitoring and implementation systems. It became clear that the selected female beneficiaries, especially those with large families and those who were the heads of household, found it difficult to participate in a full day of work due to their responsibilities at the household level in looking after other family members. In response, MRCS included a psychosocial

component in the CFW. Necessary facilities were provided for women to bring their children to work sites so that they could productively participate in the project. Necessary arrangements were also made at work sites on a case-to-case basis to promote women's participation.

Wage payments were made to the actual beneficiaries and not to other family members. This helped to ensure that women taking part in CFW received their wages directly, which enabled them to then use the money to meet the needs of their households.

Monitoring and evaluation

Project monitoring was a regular and ongoing process. Systems were in place to monitor progress made on a daily basis using a master roll or attendance sheets. Another important aspect was the transparency of the programme – participating villages displayed the names of beneficiaries and other details such as the kind of work provided and the amount paid to each beneficiary.

VTRCs played a significant role in the overall management and implementation of the project at the community level. MRCS introduced a systematic beneficiary database, using a computerized data entry system for each beneficiary registered. Beneficiary information including name, sex, age, identity number, village, activity under CFW, total number of days of work provided and total payments made were recorded. This database was a useful monitoring tool for tracking the progress and achievements of the project.

EIN CHAN, a woman from the village tract of Bine Daunt Chaung in Labutta Township lost her husband and house in the killer cyclone waves. She managed to survive by holding on to a tree.

During the months of November and December 2008, Ein Chan participated in a road repair project under the cash for work programme conducted by the MRCS and IFRC.

The project involved the repair of a road in Ein Chan's village tract that had been damaged by the cyclone. She was one of 40 beneficiaries from the village tract who participated in the project. Each participant was paid 2,000 MMK for each day of work.

Ein used the income she earned for food and other daily needs, as well as for purchasing materials for her temporary shelter.

"The project has been very useful for women like me. It has given us hope that we can recover from the disaster", she said.

Upon the project completion, a participatory review and reflection process was initiated. Communities displayed all information relating to the project and discussed key achievements and impacts. Possible follow-up and additional support for the communities were also discussed at this time. This exercise helped provide communities with an opportunity to review their own work and identify future concerns. The whole process promoted community participation, particularly that of women.

MRCs conducted an internal review of the overall CFW project and documented the process for future reference. The detailed report is available at: <http://www.myanmarredcross.org.mm/PDF%20Download/CFW%20Project%20Report.pdf>.

Outcomes

The CFW was a successful early recovery project implemented in response to needs of the most vulnerable households affected by Cyclone Nargis. Some key outcomes of the project were:

1. Wage employment opportunities were provided to 6,644 vulnerable households following the disaster.
2. An average of 18 days of work were provided to each beneficiary to meet urgent economic and security needs.
3. A total of 119,621 days of work were created in areas affected by Cyclone Nargis. Of these, 40,095 (34 per cent) were for women.
4. A total of 239,242,000 kyats (36,311,635.57 US dollars) in wages was paid to beneficiaries.
5. The programme was successful in strengthening and developing village infrastructure that was damaged in the disaster.

Lessons learned

This was the first time MRCs had implemented a cash for work programme.

The whole process helped MRCs develop the institutional capacity to respond to emergency situations while integrating project such as CFW to support the affected populations recovery. The resulting insights will no doubt be of future benefit. Some of the key lessons learned were:

1. Women are among the most vulnerable groups affected by disaster and there is a need for structured and gender-sensitive approaches to address their special needs.
2. CFW projects are extremely relevant in the early recovery phase post-disaster and can contribute to the household economic security of the most vulnerable, specifically women, and to the recovery of village infrastructure.
3. Ensuring the active participation of women in CFW is a challenge - MRCs set a target of 50 per cent female participation, but in reality achieved only 33 per cent. Conscious efforts to promote women's participation through effective community facilitation skills are essential.

The way forward

After completing the initial project, MRCs decided to implement more CFW projects in selected areas to address the needs of the most vulnerable, including women. In addition, other projects intended to support livelihoods asset recovery of disaster-affected populations will be implemented. Projects including in-kind and cash support for livelihoods asset recovery in agriculture, fishing, livestock and small business have already begun.

Bangladesh: Community-Based Flood Management Programme

Project overview

Women are highly vulnerable to natural disasters in Bangladesh. Of those who died during the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh, 90 per cent were women. This high percentage was due to adherence to codes of honour that prevented women from staying in public shelters (where they would be in the company of unknown men) without a male relative. Therefore, many women died in their homes with their children while they were waiting for a male relative to come and make a decision regarding evacuation (Oxfam, 2002). In addition, the way women traditionally dressed made it difficult for them to flee from the floods, and few could swim, since this was not considered to be an appropriate activity for women. The comparatively low human value ascribed to girls may also be responsible for tragic consequences in this and other disasters. One report from Bangladesh described a father who, when unable to hold on to both his son and his daughter to prevent them from being swept away by a tidal surge, helplessly released his daughter, because "... (this) son has to carry on the family line" (WHO, 2002).

In the mid-1990s, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) encouraged the recruitment of at least two female members to each of the community action teams being formed for its Cyclone Preparedness Programme. BDRCS expected that having female volunteers would better enable the programme to:

- reach female beneficiaries
- ensure gender-sensitive programme planning
- increase opportunities for women.

Based on positive results, when preparations began for another major disaster preparedness programme in 1996, the BDRCS adopted a policy stating that 8 out of 25 members of both branch-level volunteer squads and community disaster preparedness groups should be female. This approach proved to be highly successful in increasing women's participation in community level disaster preparedness, despite many socio-cultural and other constraints. The lessons learned from this experience led to the adoption of a Gender Policy in 2005 to guide the future work of the BDRCS, including in community-based disaster management. The main purpose of the policy is:

"To define the main approach of BDRCS for addressing gender issues within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, both in its programme and human resource practices. The BDRCS focus is on gender rather than exclusively on women. With regard to gender issues, the goal of the BDRCS is to ensure that all BDRCS programmes benefit men and women equally, according to their different needs, and with the input and equal participation of men and women at all levels within the National Society."

Beginning in 2005, the BDRCS implemented a Community-Based Disaster Management Flood and Earthquake Preparedness and Response Programme (CBDM), in Bangladesh. The programme's goal

Acronyms

BDRCS	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
CBDM	Community-Based disaster management Flood and Earthquake Preparedness and Response Programme
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
WHO	World Health Organisation
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

was to reduce the vulnerability of people, especially women, to disasters, and to enhance and sustain the capacity of high-risk communities to mitigate the impact of emergencies. Its main focus was the flood and earthquake prone areas of the country – it aimed to reach 31,000 families from 80 communities in 10 flood prone districts (Lalmonirhat, Kuirgram, Tangail, Sirajgonj, Jamalpur, Munshigonj, Chandpur, Faridpur, Madaripur and Shariatpur). The programme provided support by forming community-based disaster preparedness organizations, raising disaster risk awareness, constructing small scale physical mitigation works such as tube wells, and improving livelihoods.

Gender considerations

Overall design

The key gender-sensitive features of the CBDM programme are:

- inclusion of gender-disaggregated data in the reporting systems
- setting recruitment quotas for female volunteers of 50 per cent in Community Disaster Management Committees, and 30 per cent in Community Disaster Response Teams
- holding basic first aid and disaster risk reduction trainings for both men and women, and other courses like Traditional Birth Attendant training for women based on self-identified needs and priorities
- taking gender differences in vulnerability into account when planning and implementing disaster mitigation measures
- providing livelihood-support measures according to the different needs of men and women
- involving local political and religious leaders as active volunteers when addressing issues of cultural and religious constraints to women's participation.

Needs assessment and vulnerability targeting

When a community is selected to participate in the CBDM programme, gender and age-disaggregated data is collected in the initial assessment of the area through field visits and questionnaires. Women are included on the assessment team, though not usually in a 50/50 ratio to men.

Following the initial assessment, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA) are carried out. The VCA process provides opportunities for both the men and women of the local community to evaluate their own situations, based on their own experiences. They then prioritize their needs and prepare community action plans. More than 20 communities have participated in VCAs up to December 2009. This process has also highlighted the importance of livelihoods projects as key disaster risk reduction activities, and there are ten livelihood (support and skill development) and mitigation projects currently underway in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Sirajganj and Tangail districts.

During the VCAs, local leaders and volunteers recognized that some women and children were especially vulnerable to disaster impacts. These included divorced or widowed women and their children, and other female-headed households. The needs of these groups were given special consideration in the design process, including the specific involvement of women as volunteers and members of community-based disaster preparedness committees and action groups in order to ensure that women's views were represented.

Implementation

In order to ensure quick and effective disaster response, participating communities and local volunteers were provided with basic training, which was followed by periodic refresher training, in disaster management and response, first aid, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and its structure, public health in emergencies (health volunteers only) and leadership skills. Gender issues were covered in this training. Selected female health volunteers were also given training in Primary Health Care and as Basic Traditional

Birth Attendants, due to the primary role women play in family health. There was 60 per cent female participation in all the trainings, except for primary healthcare and basic traditional birth attendants which were 100 per cent women.

Through the CBDM programme, communities were assisted through various income-generating activities. Women were provided with sewing machines and men with three-wheeler rickshaws. A three-wheeler rickshaw is a kind of taxi that is a major source of income for much of the population in Bangladesh. This income-generating programme received positive feedback, particularly from women.

Improving the Lives of Men and Women

“We received training for three months, and after that we got sewing machines from the Red Crescent. Now we do not depend on the income of our spouses. We can take care of our children if something bad happens to our husbands. We have a lion’s share of the investment in cultivation and small businesses of our spouses and sons”, says Rosina Begum, 35, mother of 2 daughters and one son.

Women in flood-prone areas are also contributing to family savings for better well-being and preparedness. As a result they can bounce back to pre-disaster status. “We feel more empowered and our opinion has value in the decision-making of the family.” Rosina adds.

I have a three-wheeler rickshaw of my own that the Red Crescent provided. I used to work as a farmer in the paddy field on someone else’s land. After the floods, the entire land was washed away and I had no means of income. Now I can earn on an average of BDT 150-200 every day which is twice as much as I earned before.” states Rahim, who resides in Kurigram. “I am happy to see the smiling faces of my children, when I buy text books and stationery for them, make uniforms for their school, and also buy clothing for my wife. I am also saving a portion of my money every day so I can arrange for food and other essentials during periods of unemployment when floods occur.” Like Rahim, there are many others who are able to make a living with the rickshaws provided to them.

Monitoring and evaluation

While the CBDM programme has a strong focus on gender equality, well-defined gender-related performance indicators have not been developed to assess progress and outcomes. In order to get feedback and assess progress, the programme currently relies on community meetings. The National Society, IFRC Country Delegation and other stakeholders also engage in active knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities including: community exchange visits, monitoring by officials, and coordinating with governmental and non-governmental organizations, such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, one of the leading NGOs in Bangladesh. The programme officer holds monthly and bi-monthly meetings with community programme volunteers to ensure that feedback is collected from both men and women. Women participate actively in these meetings and have expressed their interest in further skills-development opportunities.

Outcomes

1. The impact of CBDM disaster risk reduction interventions could be seen in the timely and effective response of the BDRCS to the floods and in the fact that the impact of the floods was lower in the CBDM areas than in others not participating in the programme (IFRC, April 2008).
2. Initially, women in the participating communities were shy and reluctant to become part of the programme, but now, because of the awareness and motivation created by both programme and unit level officers, and the presence of female members among the field staff, they are enthusiastic about becoming volunteers.

3. The recruitment of 50/50 male-to-female volunteers and promotion of more women into leadership and decision-making roles has made a significant contribution to increasing women's access to the opportunities and benefits available through the CBDM programme, as well as ensuring their views and needs are incorporated into planning. This, in turn, supports the primary health care, livelihoods and survival strategies of women and their families, leading to an improved quality of life, increased disaster preparedness and better hygiene standards.
4. Through the formation of different committees, the Organizational potential within communities has been improved. With a view to reducing disaster risk, under the livelihood support component, CDMC volunteers selected 47 vulnerable women from 10 VCA identified communities who were then provided with 3 month-long sewing trainings along with sewing machine support. Now these women are able to actively contribute to the generation of household income. The practical results are that women are more financially solvent and more confident.
5. Having community advocates, including religious leaders, who act as BDRCS ambassadors, has helped to increase women's participation in the programme. Religious barriers are no longer a challenge in one community.

Lessons learned

1. Setting targets and quotas and using related promotional strategies has been important to the recruitment of greater numbers of female volunteers in the CBDM programme. This is especially significant in the context of the targeted areas because there are fewer men than women in these communities, as many have migrated elsewhere to find employment and women ultimately must play a leading role in community-level disaster preparedness and response. In most of the communities, the approach of holding combined monthly and bi-monthly meetings with male and female BDRCS volunteers and the programme officer has made it easier to concentrate on finding solutions to the problems they face in the community.
2. The involvement of local political, community, and religious leaders has a profound impact on effective programme implementation in the community, including the acceptance of women's participation. Local festivals (melas), or large gatherings and Friday prayer sermons can be utilized by the local leaders (Imams), as opportunities to connect to the community on issues of gender.
3. Having a significant number of women participate in disaster risk reduction efforts strengthens the overall positive outcomes for communities.
4. Special attention needs to be paid to young female volunteers, as the average age of marriage for girls in Bangladesh is 14-18 years old. Typically after marriage these valuable, trained volunteers become less active due to the demands of family and later to pregnancy. According to female volunteers, women find it harder to convince their husbands that volunteering will not be detrimental to the running of the household.

The way forward

The CBDM programme has achieved improved community resilience in disaster risk reduction. The mid-term review clearly shows that communities are now better prepared to respond to floods. The programme has a long-term development approach and is focused on capacity building and the strengthening of community structures. This will ultimately lead to sustained initiatives even when programme activities have ended, resulting in community empowerment.

Within this broader context, gender-sensitive CBDM programme can be promoted through the following actions:

1. Identify the barriers to women's participation in BDRCS management and community leadership positions, and form a systematic strategy for overcoming these barriers (for example, recruiting women

union council members as CBDM advisors).

2. Strengthen BDRCS ties to governmental and non-governmental organizations that are adept at handling gender issues in the local community.
3. Create a gender-friendly environment for volunteers. This could include providing more opportunities for female National Society staff and volunteers to participate in disaster management work in the field. Workshops and creative simulation exercises for evacuation of vulnerable and disabled community members during floods and cyclones, and greater promotional opportunities for both male and female branch-level staff and volunteers if they are performing well could all be effective.
4. In view of the critical fact that there are more women than men living in some communities, the quota for recruitment of female volunteers should be increased to a proportional level of men and women in those communities in order to maintain gender equality and to ensure an effective disaster preparedness and response system. The present practice of BDRCS is to recruit 30 per cent female volunteers from the community. Quotas may be increased to 50 per cent in the future based on the requirements of the community.
5. The BDRCS should pass on the gender analysis skills it has learned to other National Societies in workshops, seminars and by disseminating case studies.

China: Community-Based Disaster Preparedness

Project overview

The Red Cross Society of China plays an active role in providing disaster relief and community development programs throughout China. The Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) project implemented by the Guangxi branch (GXRC) of the Red Cross Society of China was developed within this framework and was carried out in partnership with the Australian Red Cross (ARC). The project aimed to provide disaster preparedness training and physical hazard mitigation activities in hopes of improving the resilience of the participating village communities to disasters. It also assisted the GXRC at the provincial and county levels in strengthening its project management capacity and institutional linkages in disaster management.

The project was implemented in 3 1-year phases and reached a total of 11,200 men, women, and children. The participating villages had low average incomes and limited infrastructure and were vulnerable to illness, floods, droughts and landslides.

Community members and local stakeholders were actively engaged in the planning and implementation of the project. Individuals and households alike contributed their time and money and actively participated in meetings, discussions and disaster drills.

Gender considerations

Overall design

The focus on gender in the project developed and evolved over time. At first, basic gender concepts and practices were introduced in workshops. Eventually the following approaches were used:

- collection of sex-disaggregated data and narrative reporting on gender issues
- gender-awareness training for GXRC staff and community leaders
- setting of targets for, and promotion of, women's participation in training workshops and village disaster committees
- integration of the perspectives of women and men into disaster-preparedness and mitigation planning
- incorporation of gender-related performance indicators into the project logframe.

Acronyms

ARC	Australian Red Cross
CBDP	Community based Disaster Preparedness
Guangxi	Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
GXRC	Red Cross Society of China Guangxi Branch
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
VDC	Village Disaster Committee

Needs assessment and vulnerability targeting

In order to guide the project, a survey was conducted asking questions about gender-related issues and needs within communities. Attitudes towards gender roles and the different roles men and women play in family decision-making were addressed. Almost half of those surveyed were women.

Through disaster preparedness and emergency response training courses and simulations, community members became more sensitive to the needs of women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities – people the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) had identified as the most vulnerable. Disaster identified preparedness measures included ways to address their needs, and volunteers were assigned as liaisons to them in case of emergencies.

Implementation

The introduction of gender Sensitization training into the project led to a greater recognition and understanding of the importance of addressing gender issues in disaster management by the GXRC staff and their local partners. The GXRC project engaged a professor from the Guangxi University for Nationalities to assist with this training, which emphasised the importance of collecting gender-disaggregated data and identifying the different needs of men and women. This was done at three levels:

- a three-day participatory training-of-trainers for GXRC staff from project cities and counties on project management, VCA and gender issues
- a one-week intensive participatory training workshop for community facilitators that included GXRC staff, health department officials and community representatives
- village-level training for the community leaders, Village Disaster Committee (VDC) members, volunteers and villagers.

A 2009 gender evaluation found that there was confusion among several GXRC staff members, community leaders and other community members about the difference between being gender-sensitive and recognising vulnerabilities. Most understood gender-sensitivity as the need to protect women due to their biological limitations. They did not recognise the importance of understanding the different roles and needs of male and female family members or of balancing different priorities in project designs. For example, some emphasised women's key roles as mothers and caregivers, but expressed the view that specific gender-related relief needs - such as sanitary napkins – were less important priorities because they only assisted part of the community.

The project's emphasis on women's participation in project decision-making processes had a positive impact on perceptions of women's roles within the communities. In the creation of Village Disaster Committees (VDC) the participation of women was encouraged by making at least 40 per cent female representation a requirement. These committees oversaw the planning and implementation of the project and its members were elected at a Villagers Representative Meeting.

As a result of women's involvement in the VDCs, both women and men in the village became more aware of women's contributions to the public sphere. During one focus group discussion, a male villager said: "It has been several decades in our village that there is no women village leader. The last one was in the 1970's during the Cultural Revolution. Women are capable to be the leaders."

At the same time, changing gender norms and traditional gender roles is not easy to do. The ability of women to play active roles in the VDC depended on their levels of education, work experience, relationships with other villagers, and the attitudes and cooperation of other members of the VDC.

"Yes, I participated in the discussion. But I am not the one who holds the pen. Everybody can give his or her own opinion during the discussion, but there are only four people who are holding the pens. They are men. If women can organize our own group, I would like to be the one who draws and writes." *Female VDC member*

In some communities, women ended up relinquishing their own identified priorities in formal decision-making discussions due to the traditional dominance of male views and cultural practices. In many villages, women were organized into separate groups – often through the VCA process – in an attempt to give them more of a voice and to address their concerns.

The project's proactive approach to more gender-balanced representation contributed to the identification of specific roles for men and women in disaster response, an increase in opportunities for women to acquire valuable new skills that could benefit their families and communities, and greater recognition of the important roles that women can play in disaster management.

“Women are the ones who bring the messages and knowledge to their family, to their neighbours after the trainings, because women are more active than men in terms of networking in their communities. Women are also the main caregivers in the family and community. When women learn new knowledge, they like to share it with others. That is why women volunteers are very important for this programme.” *GXRC staff member*

In order to ensure gender-balanced participation, a target of equal male-to-female representation was set for the recruitment of project volunteers and for those who were to receive disaster-preparedness and first aid training. This was very nearly achieved with a rate of 40 per cent participation by women.

Volunteers played an important role: they facilitated training, disseminated educational and communications materials, organized disaster-preparedness rehearsals and provided outreach to families. The female volunteers also played active roles in mobilizing other women in the community.

The VDC assigned the volunteers various specific disaster-preparedness and disaster response tasks according to their physical strength and areas of expertise. For example, male volunteers were put in charge of coordinating the emergency response and protecting the elderly and people with disabilities, while female volunteers were made responsible for communications and psychological counseling. This task division was considered to be a reflection of the complementary roles men and women play in the community.

Women in particular found the training very practical and applied the new knowledge in caring for their families and serving the community. In one village, women even organized a quiz contest on disaster preparedness in celebration of International Women's Day. The event attracted women and men from the community as well as the local media. These kinds of events increase the visibility of women as community stakeholders.

Both the GXRC county office staff and community members, including village leaders and male villagers came to recognize the importance of female volunteers. However, some women mentioned the need for creating more incentives and opportunities for older women to volunteer. Women tended not to remain as active as men as they got older due to heavy responsibilities for housework and as care-givers.

Female community members benefited from a number of community mitigation projects, such as road construction.

“I moved to this village more than 30 years ago when I married and have been living here since. This road was damaged many years ago. The road gets muddy every time it is raining. So when we discussed what we should do with the money from ARC project, we decided to reconstruct this road. I am so happy to see, with ARC project's help, we finally are able to repair it. Now it is much more convenient to go to the farmlands that are located at the other end of the road.” *60 year-old woman from Beihai*

The project reached out to other governmental agencies, academia and civil society organizations to explore a holistic and collaborative module for gender integration into disaster reduction. This included:

- engaging local gender experts to provide training and technical advice
- exchanging experiences on gender with other developmental organisations such as World Vision International
- seeking advice from women’s organizations such as the Guangxi Women’s Federation.

Monitoring and evaluation

There were five gender-related performance indicators identified in the project proposal. They followed good evaluation principles such as SMART (they were specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) and included:

- support and participation of women, men, the elderly, youth and children in the project activities in selected villages
- training in project management and CBDP of 30 managers (50 per cent women) from city and county Red Cross branches by the provincial branch
- training in project management, CBDP, facilitation skills, and knowledge of disaster-preparedness, the Red Cross, and first aid of 38 facilitators (50 per cent women) from local Red Cross branches by the provincial branch
- training in knowledge of disaster preparedness, the Red Cross, and first aid of 140 VDC members and volunteers (50 per cent women) from village communities by trained facilitators
- distribution through community meetings and home visits of information, education and communication materials (IEC) to 1,680 villagers in 14 villages (30 per cent of the village community, 50 per cent women) by VDC members and volunteers about disaster preparedness, the Red Cross, and first aid.

Project staff members were also trained in conducting gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation. This enabled them to accurately assess their progress in effectively reaching women and men through project activities and to take corrective actions as required.

Outcomes

While the systematic approach taken to gender integration in the project had some shortcomings, it led to significant improvements in the effectiveness of disaster preparedness and mitigation in the participating communities.

The importance of gender issues in disaster management, and the need to integrate these issues into the project was recognised by the GXRC programme management and staff. The leadership and training opportunities provided to women contributed to building their skills and confidence. Furthermore, the project had a positive impact on the recognition of women’s roles and an increase in their status. A woman volunteer said: “The CBDP project organized the trainings and drills and implemented the mitigation construction, in which women are brought together. Given the chance, women can do the works as well as men do. There should be women leaders in our village.” Many community members now believe it is important to have men and women involved side-by-side in disaster response, a truly gender-sensitive approach to disaster management.

“Women are more careful than men. During the drill for the disaster risk reduction, men acted quickly and ran very fast to the emergency shelter. There is a woman volunteer who inspected the houses one by one and found an old woman with disability had been left behind, and she helped her to escape the house before the [mock] flood arrived.” *Community member*

Lessons learned

1. A systematic and pro-active approach to gender integration applied throughout all stages of the project cycle – needs assessment, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation – can have many positive results and create a better balance in meeting the needs and priorities of both male and female beneficiaries.
2. Gender sensitivity training is a useful entry point for building an understanding and appreciation of gender integration. However, this training needs to be of sufficient duration to adequately cover the topic, and follow-up support and practical advice based on field experience needs to be provided to the trainees to help them deal with implementation challenges.
3. The careful use of targets or quotas for participation by women and other socially excluded groups in decision-making bodies and training opportunities can be an effective way of ensuring that they do not get left out. At the same time, it needs to be recognised that this action alone will not necessarily lead to an increase in women's participation in decision-making.
4. Supporters - including respected community leaders and members - may need to be identified to encourage a change in the way things are done. Gender sensitivity education may need to be provided to peers, and support may need to be given to women for them to develop the skills to successfully play what may be new and challenging roles for them.

In the implementation of training it was found, that since gender was a relatively new concept in the history of the project and in China in general, the trainers and facilitators could have benefited from further in-depth skills-building to effectively apply their new knowledge to their work. Additional hands-on training, more examples of good practice and concrete case studies, and guidance on how to put this knowledge into practice could have been incorporated into all training modules to avoid treating gender as a separate and isolated topic. Moreover, even though project staff members were very proactive in researching gender and related topics, there was little information available in Chinese or that dealt with the Chinese context.

During monitoring and evaluation it was discovered that more qualitative indicators for monitoring the implementation of the project more efficiently would also have been useful. A gender-specific review and quality assessment of materials to ensure they are gender and culturally sensitive and free of stereotypes and discriminating language would be beneficial as well.

The way forward

A fourth three-year phase of the project that offers new opportunities for enhancing gender sensitivity and promoting gender integration in practice is now being implemented. Gender considerations continue to be addressed explicitly in the project proposal and narrative progress reports. Avenues to support the development of qualitative gender-related indicators using a participatory social inquiry methodology are also being explored.

The gender training content has also been shared with CBDP partners in China for their further use, including the Red Cross Society of China Headquarters Office, the Norwegian Red Cross and the IFRC delegation. Training content is also being revised to better clarify the difference between gender and sex, as well as between gender and vulnerability. The Guangxi branch has enlisted the help of an academic from a Guangxi university to conduct the training and to help strengthen the linkages with women's organisations.

Indonesia: Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Project

Project overview

Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction (ICBRR) is a five-year project implemented by the Indonesia Red Cross (PMI) in partnership with the American Red Cross (ARC). The ICBRR project aims to enhance the capacity of communities and PMI (at National Headquarters, chapters, and branches) to prepare for and respond to disasters. Implemented in 100 villages and 75 schools within 4 target districts of Aceh (Sabang, Aceh Besar, Banda Aceh, and Aceh Jaya), the project has 4 main objectives:

- build the disaster preparedness and response capacity of targeted villages
- develop the disaster management capacity of targeted schools by conducting disaster preparedness and risk reduction sessions for the students
- enhance the disaster management capacity of PMI at the national, provincial, and district and sub-district levels
- strengthen the local government disaster management capacity and research capability in disaster risk reduction.

Under Objective 1, the project established, trained and equipped Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMC) consisting of key village leaders, and village disaster response teams called Community-Based Action Teams (CBAT). The CDMC is responsible for overseeing and coordinating project implementation at the village level, as well as for responding when a disaster strikes. The CBAT helps in project implementation and supports the CDMC in providing disaster response. In line with the results of the hazard Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA), the project consulted with community members to develop a Community Action Plan and a Community Contingency Plan. Furthermore, the project also conducted regular risk reduction awareness activities, and formulated a disaster mitigation plan in accordance with the Community Contingency Plan. The project also provided communities with a small amount of funding (around 1, 000 US Dollars) that can be used by community members to respond to small-scale disasters at the village level. This Community Contingency Fund is managed by the village committee and is meant to be replenished by the community regularly.

Objective 2 of the project established and trained school disaster management committees consisting of school principals and school committee members (parents) to oversee the implementation of the project at the school level, and created school disaster response teams composed of teachers and male and female students. In addition, the project also developed school contingency plans based on the results of the hazard VCA results, and conducted risk reduction awareness sessions and disaster drills.

Under Objective 3, the project provided training on basic disaster management, emergency disaster response and preparedness, ICBRR, early warning systems and community participatory techniques to

Acronyms

ARC	American Red Cross
BRR	Badan Rehabilitasi & Rekonstruksi Aceh Nias (Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Agency for Aceh-Nias)
CBAT	Community Based Action Teams
CDMC	Community Disaster Management Committee
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measures
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ICBRR	Integrated Community Based Risk Reduction
PMI	Indonesia Red Cross

the staff and volunteers of PMI chapters and branches. The branch disaster response teams, called Satgana, were also given training, materials and equipment to strengthen their disaster preparedness and response capacity.

Finally, under Objective 4, the project worked with the Tsunami Disaster Management & Research Center, of Syiah Kuala University to strengthen local governments' disaster management capacity and research efforts in risk reduction.

Gender considerations

Overall design

PMI is aware that the differences in men's and women's roles and status in Indonesia, as well as between different social and economic groups, result in natural disasters affecting some men and women more, and in different ways, than others. This is why PMI has committed itself to mainstreaming gender throughout its operations. In accordance with the IFRC Gender Policy, PMI developed a five-year gender mainstreaming strategy paper called *Strategi dan Pendekatan Sensitivitas Gender*, in 2008 to guide the implementation of gender mainstreaming into all disaster management activities. The National Society has provided gender awareness training for some of its key personnel and integrated gender into all of its programme policies, materials, modules, and tools.

In 2009 and 2010, PMI reviewed the accomplishments and gaps of its gender strategy. The review noted that while there had been positive achievements in terms of mainstreaming gender into policies, guidelines and tools, the extent and quality of implementation varied across the 33 chapters. PMI also recognized the absence of a monitoring system as a weakness, resulting in under-reported progress. Based on the review, the strategy was updated and a one-year action plan (2009 – 2010) was developed. Since then, PMI has further disseminated and integrated its gender policies into different disaster management-related meetings, planning processes and training programmes. Additionally, the National Society has developed gender checklists for all stages of the disaster management cycle to guide its teams working in the field.

Within this broader context, in 2009 the project conducted an internal gender review of the programme with the technical support of the ARC gender advisor. The review identified many good practices in regard to gender integration in the project, though several gaps and challenges were also found. This led to the inclusion or strengthening of the following key gender recommendations:

- consult with both men and women during needs assessments and consider their different cultural roles and needs in the design process
- encourage more female community members to participate in CBAT as well as CDMC
- develop a gender checklist to guide the team in mainstreaming gender in all project activities
- continue collecting sex-disaggregated data and analyze and report on it on a quarterly basis
- integrate gender perspectives into the project logframe
- work with Monitoring and Evaluation to review the monitoring system so that it captures the qualitative progress of gender equality promotion and reflect this progress in reports
- review all project activity guidelines to ensure gender perspectives are considered in the documents; this should be done by the project team with technical support from the Senior Gender Officer
- conduct regular site visits and provide technical assistance to the project team on how to integrate gender into ICRR activities; this should be done by the ARC Senior Gender Officer.

Needs assessment and vulnerability targeting

The project collected detailed gender-related information from the participating communities in order to be able to address the different needs, concerns and capacities of both the male and female beneficiaries. ICBRR conducted hazard VCAs using a wide range of participatory assessment tools and techniques including Focus Group Discussion, Participatory Rural Appraisal, transect walks, to map out existing and potential hazards, vulnerabilities, and capacities in the target communities. These were facilitated by PMI staff and volunteers who were trained beforehand. PMI normally assigned one female and one male facilitator to do the assessments, and in some locations separate meetings were held with men's and women's groups, either due to a request by the community because of Sharia Law, or because women did not feel comfortable speaking in a meeting where men were present.

The VCA guidelines and tools incorporated gender perspectives. For example, the guidelines consistently mentioned the need to collect sex-disaggregated data and reminded facilitators to be aware of social, cultural and religious barriers which could prohibit certain groups from expressing their ideas freely. Additionally, in the VCA manual, one of the modules outlined three different tools for carrying out gender analysis: gender-based analysis of social and environmental issues management, gender-based economic analysis, and gender-based analysis of disease and disaster management. While these tools were useful in guiding PMI staff and volunteers in conducting the hazard VCAs, less experienced PMI community facilitators had difficulty gathering detailed information on gender differences and dynamics.

In Lamdingin village of Banda Aceh district, where most of the men work as government officials, the hazard VCA result shows that women prefer to have the meetings and other project activities in the morning (9.00 – 11.00 am) or afternoon (2.30 – 4.00 pm) when their children are either at, or have returned from, school and their husbands are either at, or have returned from work. Meanwhile, men prefer to meet in the afternoon (3.00 – 5.00 pm) or in the evening (8.00 pm – 10.00 pm).

Implementation

As was outlined in the project overview, the ICBRR established CDMCs and CBATs to ensure ownership and sustainability. In doing so, rather than create a new structure which would be unlikely to last beyond the programme, the existing village leadership structure (Tuha Peut or Tuha Lapan), was utilized. However, this was typically dominated by men. Recognizing the importance of having female representation, the project team went to the village heads to advocate for increased participation by women. At first, leaders agreed to have women participate in the CDMCs, although no quotas were set. Subsequently, a quota of a minimum of 30 per cent female CBAT members was also agreed upon and was eventually included in the programming guidelines.

Despite this agreement, in some areas it proved challenging to engage and convince women to take on such roles, as well as to gain the acceptance from those in power. As such, the team continuously advocated with village stakeholders and educated community members on the importance of men and women working together in order to create a safer and more resilient community. Besides advocacy and the improved guidelines, National Society volunteers also approached potential female candidates to encourage them to register and become more involved. As a result, 46 per cent of CBAT members (1,312 out of 2,826) are now women, and 10 per cent of village CBAT teams are chaired by women (10 out of 100).

Nurul, the leader of CBAT in Paya Seunarah expressed her happiness for being the chair of CBAT in her village. She said that it helps improve her confidence, network, and relationship with the community while at the same time provides her with opportunity to do something for her community.

The head of Jaboi village who also serve as CDMC head acknowledge that the involvement of women in CBAT and CDMC have improved the effectiveness of the project and made their job a lot faster.

Gender proved to be a critical factor in developing effective community-level evacuation systems. As previously mentioned, the results of the hazard VCA were used as the basis for action planning, including evacuation and contingency plans. Initially, however, the gender analysis in some of the hazard VCAs was not strong. In several places, when evacuation plans were tested with drills, it was found that many people - especially women and children - could not reach the designated safe place on time (within 10 minutes). The 2009 gender review revealed that the safe place location and the time required to reach it were decisions that had been made by, and tested on, men alone. As a result of this important discovery, the plans were revised and re-tested in consultation with both men and women, achieving a far better result.

Additionally, during disaster mitigation planning, several communities in the Aceh Besar and Aceh Jaya districts proposed constructing a stairway as part of an evacuation route to a hill they had identified as a safe location in case of a flood or tsunami. After consulting with women during the gender review, the stairway was re-designed to include a handrail and to reduce the height of the steps in order to facilitate its use by women holding babies, the elderly, children and the disabled.

Monitoring and evaluation

For monitoring and evaluation purposes, the project collected sex-disaggregated information for all the indicators in the monthly and quarterly reports. While the ICBRR logframe did not contain gender-specific indicators, the project adjusted indicators in the tracking sheet to include gender perspectives. While indicators did not explicitly state the 50/50 female-to-male target, such targets and quotas have been included in the ICBRR project guidelines.

Furthermore, as part of the ARC's Accountability to Beneficiaries Strategy, mechanisms were provided for men and women to share their feedback and make suggestions for improvement. These included:

- suggestion boxes
- community meetings
- project representatives from the community and PMI who were assigned to receive feedback from community members and pass it along to PMI and ARC key personnel.

Outcomes

The results have been encouraging. Project team members who initially did not take gender issues seriously have changed their attitudes and are now aware of the benefits of improving gender equality in the ICBRR, as well as the risks of not doing so. They are also more confident about implementing gender-sensitive programming as a result of the checklists provided to them and the technical support they received from the ARC gender unit.

The inclusion of gender mainstreaming into senior staff members' and managers' job descriptions and objectives has encouraged them to consider gender seriously, and the fact that they are assessed against objective accomplishments has provided further motivation.

In regards to beneficiaries, there has been a positive response to, and acceptance of, the involvement of women in the CDMCs and CBATs from the village stakeholders, as well as increased levels of self-confidence among women who have become either members or leaders. Consulting with both male and

female beneficiaries has also made significant improvements in the ability of the project to address the needs and concerns of male and female community members. Most importantly, these gender-sensitive approaches have increased the overall level of community safety, as evacuation routes, contingency plans and physical mitigation activities are more accessible and user-friendly for women and children than they would otherwise have been.

Lessons learned

1. The gender mainstreaming process should be started in the initial design stage and the project plan should be flexible enough to make necessary changes during implementation based on new information and feedback received.
2. Having a strong gender policy framework is important for achieving gender integration objectives. However, if it is not supported by relevant tools such as checklists, Information, Education, and Communication materials and capacity building for all levels of National Society personnel - board members, staff, and volunteers in the headquarters, chapters, and branches - it is unlikely to be successfully implemented.
3. Those staff and volunteers involved in community facilitation roles must have a good level of gender awareness and gender analysis skills, as well as an understanding of the local context and dynamics, in order to effectively facilitate a participatory assessment process such as the hazard VCA. The ability to gather information from both men and women from different groups in the community makes a big difference in the quality and accomplishments of projects.
4. Promoting the participation of women in project committees (CDMC) and decision-making bodies, and providing quotas for community volunteers (CBAT) are effective ways of challenging the existing power dynamics while at the same time promoting the participation of women in decision making, thereby giving them shared access to, and control over, project resources.

The way forward

In the future, in order to further improve its ability to effectively develop and implement gender sensitive programming, PMI plans to:

1. Continue disseminating PMI policies on gender to chapter and branch personnel.
2. Strengthen PMI capacity to implement gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue throughout its operation and services.
3. Continue integrating gender topics into all key PMI training programmes.
4. Conduct training on gender sensitivity planning for selected staff and volunteers.
5. Develop and improve PMI mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on gender, building on the experience in Aceh.
6. Share success stories and lessons learned with other chapters and branches, partner National Societies and stakeholders.
7. Adopt and adapt best practices and successful lessons learned from other agencies with experience and expertise in gender.

Solomon Islands: Working Together for Healthy Communities

Project overview

The Solomon Islands Red Cross (SIRC), supported by the Australian Red Cross (ARC), developed a project to improve the health and well-being of conflict-affected communities in northern Malaita and the eastern Weather Coast. This was done in two phases: the Health Awareness Project (HAP) from 2005-2008, and Together we work for healthy communities (THK), which commenced in 2008. While HAP (first phase) was designed to contribute to the reduction of tensions between these communities, THK (second phase) focused on providing them with the knowledge and skills needed to improve their health and hygiene practices, as well as with the provision of the tools and equipment necessary to improve their water and sanitation services. Risk-reduction activities addressing the health impacts of climate change were also introduced as part of a harmonized approach to the disaster management work of the SIRC.

The main components of the project included: capacity-building of the SIRC staff to conduct community-based health promotion training, and delivery of the training using a training-of-trainers approach for locally selected Village Health Volunteers (later renamed Community Health Volunteers or CHVs).

Acronyms

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
ARC	Australian Red Cross
CBFA	Community Based First Aid
CHV	Community Health Volunteer – originally Volunteer Health Workers (VHWs in the HAP first phase of the project)
HAP	Health Awareness Project – first phase
HPO	Health Promotion Officer
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
PHAST	Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Training
SIRC	Solomon Islands Red Cross
THK	Together we work for healthy communities project – second-project phase

Gender considerations

Overall design

The approach taken by the project towards gender inclusiveness has evolved over time, with progress regularly reviewed and improvements made along the way. Key gender-sensitive features have included:

- consulting with men and women during needs-assessment and using information regarding their different cultural roles and needs to help guide the design process
- targeting 50/50 male-to-female representation in the recruitment of health volunteers and participation in training courses
- designing opportunities in culturally sensitive ways that allow more women to take advantage of them
- holding training activities at times that take into account the different workloads and responsibilities of men and women
- introducing a separate funding mechanism to support the priority needs identified by women within communities, in addition to those previously identified by men
- including gender performance indicators and gender-disaggregated data collection in the project logframe and reporting systems.

Needs assessment and vulnerability targeting

The original beneficiary selection criteria reflected the context of a country going through a transition due to conflict and included those communities that were:

- heavily involved in, or affected by, the tensions
- in areas not well-covered by existing government health services but could be reached through existing SIRC networks of staff or volunteers
- vulnerable to natural disasters that could cause significant adverse health outcomes.

In order to understand local taboos and customs about appropriate interactions between men and women, both a 2004 participatory health assessment mission and a 2008 needs assessment and baseline survey in northern Malaita and the Weather Coast featured separate consultations by both male and female interviewers. An added feature of the 2008 survey was the inclusion of volunteers from one community on the assessment team for the other community.

In the second phase of the project attention was paid to vulnerabilities within communities with a specific focus on age and disability in the needs assessment process.

Implementation

The project provided Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Training (PHAST), and Community-Based First Aid (CBFA), training to communities and included information on the values and principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. Complementary training or support in the areas of climate change and disaster preparedness was also provided in some places.

By April 2008, at least 816 people in participating communities had received training. Data from monitored courses showed that 42 per cent of participants were female. In addressing this slight imbalance, the THK second phase has been able to increase the overall proportion of women attending its training programmes to 51 per cent.

A “respectful influence” approach was used in trainings and included efforts to:

- ensure the presence of female CHVs on the training team
- reduce the length of training from two days to six-hour blocks
- ensure that almost all programme delivery occurs at the community level, removing the need for women to travel away from their families and communities in order to participate.

Consultation now occurs with communities before the delivery of training to identify the most convenient times for visits. Trainings are also being done in the local languages and within the context of local customs. The programme also began to encourage the attendance of children and to record their participation; it is believed that this has contributed to women’s increased attendance. These efforts, combined with more diligent monthly reporting on gender-participation rates have increased the overall proportion of women attending the training programmes.

Small contributions of tools and materials (spades, wheel barrows, nails, etc.) were made to support community initiatives to dig pits for toilets, construct drainage ditches or carry out other environmental improvements. When it became apparent that further improvements would require skills and resources beyond what was available, greater provisions of materials and technical support were incorporated.

Consultations with both men and women, and gender-sensitive designs have proven to be critical factors to the success of the project’s sanitation programme, which has been implemented in four Weather Coast communities to date. The participating communities constructed 69 pit latrines during the first year of the THK phase. Initially, the building of communal or shared toilets was considered. When community feedback indicated that these would most likely not be used by women, a decision was made to built latrines in individual homes.

Initially the project did not have a strong focus on the role of women in project decision-making and attention to this issue has increased. Despite efforts however, the project has not been successful in reaching equal representation by men and women on the health committees, as the participating communities continue to largely nominate men for membership. The planning process for the second year of the THK phase identified four possible avenues for obtaining women’s views:

- a husband, chief, brother, or other male relative
- a women’s committee
- participation in workshops
- CHVs and health committees.

A request has also been made to make one member of each local women’s committee automatically a member of community health committees to encourage more female participation. An evaluation showed that most women believed local church groups and other women’s organizations were easy points of contact for the project.

“Women have in them as better educators, managers and in getting over fears. A woman’s presence in a village health committee or training course contributes to women getting over their fears and discovering their abilities as both educators and managers. These women are then able to greatly assist in providing guidance to others”. *Secretary General, Solomon Islands Red Cross*

Monitoring and evaluation

Gender analysis was included in the terms of reference for the project’s mid-term review and evaluation, which led to the collection and analysis of some important feedback from female and male beneficiaries, and adjustments to the project’s design and implementation – such as changing the timing of training courses and developing gender-sensitive performance indicators. The introduction of regular reflection workshops into the design has also provided valuable opportunities for increasing gender awareness among staff and volunteers, as well as for exploring culturally appropriate ways to tackle the challenges in this area of programming.

Health knowledge, attitude and practice surveys were introduced in order to assess the changes to the health practices of men, women and youth in the participating communities and the resulting outcomes, building a “before and after” picture of the project’s impact.

Some innovative community feedback mechanisms are another feature of the programme. The main approaches used include:

- obtaining a monthly progress report from men and women in participating communities about the successes and challenges of the programme and incorporating this information into the overall staff monthly reports

- providing feedback opportunities after every training session - though more work is needed to come up with a culturally appropriate mechanism to encourage both positive and negative feedback, as it is not usually considered culturally appropriate to provide negative comments in this context
- holding one-on-one discussions with randomly selected male and female community members and CHVs - this is done by the ARC Programme Coordinator during twice-yearly visits to the Solomon Islands
- introducing exit festivals (an informal celebration) in 2009, a setting in which both positive and negative feedback is easier for community members to communicate - both the communities and the program staff and volunteers strongly believe this to be a highly culturally-appropriate way to officially hand over the facilities built to the community and obtain their views on the effectiveness of the assistance.

Outcomes

Initially the project made a modest contribution to changing health-related behaviours and improving the health and well-being of the men, women, boys and girls in the participating communities.

At the same time, the project was a learning process both for the program staff and the communities themselves. In particular, the SIRC and ARC came to realize over time that they had underestimated the amount of time women spend on water and sanitation related duties. The 2008 evaluation concluded that this was likely a contributing factor to some of the behaviour changes promoted through the PHAST not being widely adopted, for example:

1. Women found boiling water to improve its safety too difficult, apart from their normal practice of making tea; their workloads at home and in producing food for their families from their gardens were high and they felt too tired to collect more firewood to carry out this practice.
2. Some villagers had fenced in their pigs to keep them from roaming freely in the village, but women in one village thought this would increase their workload too much as they would have to organize feeding the pigs. These women felt that a possible alternative was to tie up the pigs, allowing them to forage for food in certain places only.
3. Most women were not covering their water containers and were washing dishes in areas that were also used for bathing. The latter was partly due to lack of, or distance to, alternative sources.
4. It was also not very clear how modern health messages were being interpreted in a context of widespread and strong traditional *kastom* health beliefs and practices of what were suitable disease prevention activities for both men and women.

The introduction of gender analysis into project needs assessments and PHAST training has helped the programme team and communities alike to see that men and women perform different, but equally important, health-related roles, and to identify appropriate ways to build upon and reinforce these roles. This led directly to the introduction of gender-sensitive water tank and latrine construction, and instilled a greater appreciation in men of the workloads and health-related responsibilities of women. In some communities, men have even agreed to take on some health roles traditionally performed by women. Women's workloads have been reduced as a result, and overall community health outcomes have improved.

Eleven rainwater harvesting tanks were installed in eight communities in Malaita and the Weather Coast. Women from several of the participating communities have reported that they no longer have to use water from the river for drinking and cooking, reducing the need for boiling it. They also don't have to walk as far to get it. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests that water-collection duties are shared more equally by men and women.

The project has also helped increase the self-confidence and status of women within most communities by providing opportunities for them to apply their new skills.

Lessons learned

1. The way in which a programme is designed and implemented influences the degree to which women can actively participate and contribute. Women and men need to be fully consulted at every stage of design and implementation to ensure that the activities are responding to their needs and circumstances, for example, the scheduling of training courses and the accounting for different roles and workloads.
2. Achieving equal staff numbers of men and women requires systematic and pro-active approaches to identify the socio-cultural barriers to women's participation in the formal labour force and to develop specific strategies to overcome these barriers.
3. Gender objectives, targets and performance indicators need to be incorporated into the project's logframe or other key progress and performance measurement tools and systems. The collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data in monitoring and reporting needs to be reinforced by senior managers, and necessary follow-up on any issues identified.
4. Staff and volunteers often need more than a formal introductory gender training course to fully understand and feel confident carrying out gender analysis. Additional follow-up coaching and technical support, preferably from local organizations with greater experience in this area is needed.
5. Programmes need to provide adequate funding for staff and volunteers to meet as an entire team to discuss gender approaches in an environment that supports and encourages open discussion on sensitive cultural practices and ways of working within them or around them.
6. Programmes should not focus solely on collecting gender-disaggregated data. Although this is important for understanding the different needs of and programme impacts on men and women and can help with targeting support, it needs to be supplemented with specific measures aimed at increasing women's participation, such as culturally-sensitive approaches to dialogue with communities on gender issues.
7. The design of programmes needs to be flexible enough to adapt to lessons learned during implementation, such as the THKs phase experience of needing to change the way in which latrine construction and maintenance training was delivered to ensure that it better responded to the different roles of women and men. A gender analysis showed that local taboos and customs meant that men were predominately participating in trainings involving latrine construction and maintenance even though women were the ones primarily responsible for their cleaning and upkeep. Therefore, in its second year (2010), the THK phase plans to conduct separate training courses in latrine construction and maintenance for men and women. It is anticipated that once people have an increased understanding of the importance of addressing sanitation issues, combined male and female training will be more acceptable.

The way forward

The Solomon Islands Red Cross, in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, will continue its systematic work to identify the most socially and culturally appropriate ways to effectively respond to the different needs, capacities and vulnerabilities of women and men. This includes the activities outlined in this case study that aim to achieve greater balance in the number of male and female volunteers, to increase women's access to project resources and benefits, and to increase their participation in programme decision-making. In addition, the following initiatives will be undertaken in the months ahead:

- The Solomon Islands Red Cross will develop a gender policy to guide all of its future work.
- Gender will continue to be a major topic of every six-month progress reflection and training event. This includes the analysis and discussion of the implications of the findings from the gender-disaggregated data that is being collected, along with any future adjustments to the project that may be required as a result. The project will work to get female input into these events, as all staff members are currently male. One or more female external gender specialists may also be invited to join future events.
- In 2010, the project will provide one small grant solely for women to each target community. The grant is to be managed by the community's women's group, usually a church-based group long established within the community. This new initiative is intended to be a way of targeting the specific needs of women in the community, needs that may be overlooked by the mainly male dominated health committees.

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The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.





Photo: Nasma Khanman received assistance from Bangladesh Red Crescent Society after her home was under water for 20 days due to flooding in 2007.

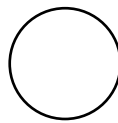




Photo: In Bimire, Nepal, village volunteers of all ages serve on a community disaster committee to help plan for and prepare for emergencies such as earthquakes, floods, landslide and epidemics. Together, work to prepare the required supplies and resource before they are needed.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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Our world is in a mess.
It's time to make your move.