

Integrating Gender into Humanitarian Action: *Good Practices from Asia-Pacific 2*





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Protecting the Most Vulnerable Groups in Society

Natural disasters do not discriminate. However, their impacts are far from gender-neutral. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction stresses the need to integrate gender perspectives in all disaster-related policies and practices, as well as to promote women's leadership at all levels of society.

Existing gender inequalities mean that women are disproportionately affected by disasters. A 2007 study by researchers at the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Essex found that between

1981 and 2002, natural disasters in 141 countries killed significantly more women than men. The worse the disaster, the bigger the gender disparity.

This is the second compilation of good practices on integrating gender into humanitarian action in Asia, developed on behalf of the the IASC Regional Network Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action in Asia-Pacific.

On the following pages, you will see how gender perspectives can be successfully included in interventions before, during and after disasters.

Sources:

Neumayer, E. & Plümper, T. (2007): *The gendered nature of natural disasters: the impact of catastrophic events on the gender gap in life expectancy, 1981–2002*. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*.

Key Advocacy Messages on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

The goal of these key messages is to provide guidance to Humanitarian Country Teams to ensure gender needs are reflected in emergency preparedness and response activities in support of the country's government. The messages were endorsed by the IASC Regional Network for Asia-Pacific at the Regional Directors' meeting in April 2015, and are progressively being rolled out across the region.

The Humanitarian Country Team commits to:



Strengthen mechanisms, through consultation with affected populations, to identify the different needs, capacities and voices of women, girls, boys and men in emergencies or in high-risk locations, and to develop comprehensive preparedness and response plans, including communication and advocacy products, that capture and make visible those differentiated needs.



Support the integration of gender issues, highlighting the differences in needs and capacities of women, men, boys and girls, into emergency preparedness and response processes including data collection, assessments, population profiles, design/delivery of age/gender appropriate assistance packages, capacity-building for government and national partners.



Ensure that surge staff are fully capacitated to support humanitarian country leadership, including sector/cluster leads, to effectively integrate gender within humanitarian programming response.



Require all staff to complete the IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action e-training, "Different Needs: Equal Opportunities" (available at www.iasc-elearning.org)



Ensure that the IASC Gender Marker is incorporated into all appeals and funding mechanisms.



Put in place the necessary actions to protect women, girls, boys and men from all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) including sexual exploitation and abuse by their staff.



Ensure that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms effectively seek feedback on the extent to which the different needs of women, girls, boys and men have been met in the humanitarian preparedness and response through consultation with the most remote and marginalized among the affected populations and utilizing appropriate communications technology.



Gender Snapshots Integrated into Disaster Situation Reports in Fiji

In times of disasters, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) produces regular Situation Reports with up-to-date information about disaster impacts and humanitarian activities. For the first time, the reports produced as part of the humanitarian response to Cyclone Winston in Fiji in 2016 include Gender Snapshots with gender-specific information about the disaster.

The snapshots, compiled by the Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) and UN Women, provide gender-disaggregated data about the impact of Cyclone Winston and the prevalent gender equality situation in the country. They outline the specific needs of women and girls during recovery as well as the actions that should be taken to reduce the risk of gender-based violence.

The Gender Snapshots provide immediate action points for each cluster, responding to the increased risk of sexual violence in shelters, the specific vulnerabilities of female market vendors, and women's hygiene needs.

Including gender-specific information in the Situation Reports represents a good practice that should become the standard for organisations reporting on disaster response and recovery efforts.

April Pham, Interagency Regional GenCap Advisor for Pacific

The Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) – an IASC initiative created in 2007 in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council – seeks to facilitate and strengthen the capacity and leadership of humanitarians to undertake and promote gender equality programming. The objective is to ensure the distinct needs of women, girls, boys and men of all ages are taken into account in humanitarian action at global, regional, and country levels.



Credit - Philippines Red Cross / Ian Val Azucena



Philippines Red Cross: The breadwinner

“My name is Sheral Magtulis and I am from a sitio (small village) in the Philippines. I am 29 years old and am married with two children. After Typhoon Haiyan my family and I often struggled financially. My husband selling fish was not enough. I was blessed to be chosen for a Red Cross Livelihood Cash Assistance program.

Before we received assistance, we were required to attend a seminar that taught us how to manage a business. From fish vending, we diverted to selling rice, gasoline, and charcoal. This is convenient for my neighbors because these items fill their needs and is a steady source of income for me.

This reliable business plan is important because I am the breadwinner of my family and everybody depends on me. The income from our business is good enough to provide for our daily needs and my children’s

education. It saved us from a lot of worries. I am thankful to the Red Cross Livelihood Assistance. It helped our family a lot.”

This is one of the stories from the Philippines Red Cross *Stories of Change on Microenterprise Assistance* publication. The publication is comprised of 35 stories of microenterprise beneficiaries from the Haiyan Recovery Programme, implemented by the Philippines Red Cross in partnership with the British Red Cross, and with support from the International Federation of Red Cross Red and Crescent Societies. By using the method of storytelling, the Philippines Red Cross utilizes a captivating medium that showcases its gender initiatives in a way that is both intimate and informative to the reader. Each story shows a lesson on resilience that anybody could learn from.

Ian Val Azucena, Philippines Red Cross

This text from [Stories of Change on Microenterprise Assistance](#) has been adapted for this publication.



Credit-Oxfam Nepal and Tulsi Unesco Club

“Now we do not have to feel humiliated”

When Samjhana Basel, 17, returned to school a month after the earthquake struck her home in Gorkha district of Nepal in April 2015, nothing was the same.

Her classroom was destroyed along with nearly the rest of the school. Access to drinking water was limited and there were no working latrines. As a result, school attendance, particularly of girls, started to decrease.

Oxfam together with the local partner organization Tulsi Meher Unesco Club, which

specializes in improving the quality of life of Nepali people, recognized the need to replace the damaged facilities and construct female-friendly latrines specifically to address girls' hygiene needs.

The latrines included proper lighting, lockable doors, water for cleaning, an area for disposing sanitary pads, and hand-washing facilities. Samjhana said that after the latrines were built, many girls started to attend school on a regular basis.

“Now even if we are menstruating we do not have to go back home or leave after a half day at school. In the new latrines we have a storage facility for sanitary napkins along with space to dispose of used ones. Now we don't have to feel humiliated in front of our friends and can ask for a sanitary pad from our female teacher,” she added.

Oxfam Nepal, Tulsi Meher Unesco Club

Oxfam improves the wellbeing of vulnerable people by strengthening their participation in development and governance processes, and pushing for economic, social, institutional, and policy change.



Closing the gap between disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action

UN Women, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center have initiated a series of training workshops on gender in humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the South and Southeast Asian region. The workshops link the two distinct, yet closely interlinked, components of sustainable development and resilience-building.

The three-day training workshops focus on the key concepts of gender, power, capacities and vulnerability in relation to humanitarian

action and disaster risk reduction. They encourage governments, civil society organisations, and UN agencies to bridge the gaps between DRR and humanitarian work – all the while ensuring the rights of the most vulnerable groups in society. The workshops are based on the GiHA training materials developed by the Norwegian Refugee Council's Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap).

The pilot training was implemented in Bangladesh, where participants developed individual and agency-specific action plans to incorporate gender into development plans and processes. As a result, a local group of NGOs committed to conducting a follow-up workshop on youth and disaster risk reduction.

For ADPC, the initiative is part of a program aimed at sustaining the transformational impact of gender mainstreaming by building capacity across sectors, funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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www.adpc.net
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