Integrating Gender into Humanitarian Action:
Good Practices from Asia 1

Integrating Gender into Humanitarian Action

Statistics show that women are disproportionately negatively affected by disasters. As an example, the devastating Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 took the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Asia, and over 70 percent of the victims were women. Women are often posed at risk when social and cultural norms limit their mobility – according to some studies, women are 14 times more likely to die during a disaster than men.

The humanitarian community has been taking steady steps to ensure an effective humanitarian system for all women, men, boys and girls affected by disasters. As stated in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the reduction of risks from disasters requires engagement and partnership from all in society.

On the following pages, you can read about successful initiatives that have been taken in Asia to ensure an equal treatment of all in society before, during and after disasters.
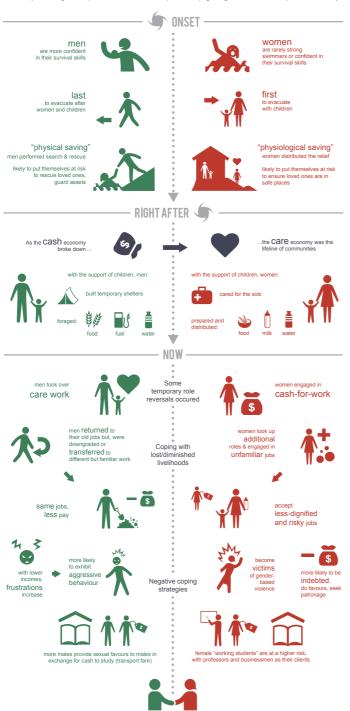
Cover photo: *Shutterstock.com / Asianet-Pakistan*

Credit-Shutterstock.com / Hang Dinh

SUPER TYPHOON HAIYAN GENDER SNAPSHOT

Persistent pre-disaster gender inequalities lead to differences in response and coping strategies and have different implications for recovery.

ONSET

men are more confident in their survival skills

women are rarely strong swimmers or confident in their survival skills

last to evacuate after women and children

first to evacuate with children

"physical saving" men performed search & rescue — likely to put themselves at risk to rescue loved ones, guard assets

"physiological saving" women distributed the relief — likely to put themselves at risk to ensure loved ones are in safe places

RIGHT AFTER

As the **cash** economy broke down ...

...the **care** economy was the lifeline of communities

with the support of children, men:
built temporary shelters
foraged: food fuel water

with the support of children, women:
cared for the sick
prepared and distributed: food milk water

NOW

Some temporary role reversals occured

men took over **care work**

women engaged in **cash-for-work**

men **returned** to their old jobs but, were downgraded or **transferred** to different but familiar work

women took up **additional** roles & engaged in **unfamiliar** jobs

Coping with lost/diminished livelihoods

same jobs, **less** pay

accept **less-dignified and risky** jobs

with lower incomes, **frustrations** increase

more likely to exhibit **aggressive** behaviour

become **victims** of gender-based violence

more likely to be **indebted**, do favours, seek patronage

Negative coping strategies

more males provide sexual favours to males in exchange for cash to study (transport fare)

female "working students" are at a higher risk, with professors and businessmen as their clients

Apply gender equality to programming

OCHA and Oxfam created a visual snapshot to illustrate how men and women cope and recover from Super Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

Credit-UNOCHA

DRR Gender Checklist as a Preparedness Tool in the Philippines

Credit-UNOCHA

The 'DRR Gender Checklist' ensures the implementation of gender-inclusive and responsive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programs in the Philippines. Utilised by national line ministries, local government units, academia, and government-owned corporations, the checklist is a simple tool to address gender-related issues during the planning stage of DRR programs.

The Checklist was created by a working group, led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), with participation from UN agencies, INGOs and the Government of the Philippines, as part of the development of the Philippine Harmonized Gender Guidelines. The guidelines include a number of gender checklists covering several sectors, aiming to ensure integration of gender inclusiveness in programs related to disaster prevention and mitigation, disaster preparedness, disaster response, rehabilitation and recovery.

For further information and access to the checklist please contact Ms. Rowena Dacsig (dacsig@un.org).

Rowena Dacsig, UNOCHA

Credit-UNOCHA

Women Friendly Spaces in Pakistan

Shirkat Gah was initiated as a small voluntary collective in Pakistan in 1975, and has since evolved into a leading women's rights organisation. Working in 44 districts across Pakistan's four provinces, the organisation operates six Women Friendly Spaces set up in the aftermath of the devastating floods that hit Pakistan in 2010. These centres provide safe spaces for women affected by gender-based violence, providing psychosocial support as well as opportunities to participate in local support groups and receive information about gender-based violence.

The centres are springboards for empowerment, in which women feel safe to plan for a better future for themselves and their children. The skills learned at the centres help women and girls better negotiate their rights at home as well as demand better quality services and accountability.

Khadija Parveen, Shirkat Gah Pakistan

Gender Emergency Checklist: Pakistan and Afghanistan

- [ ] 1. All reports of deaths and injuries should be disaggregated according to age and sex. *(Sex and age disaggregated data allows us to understand who is more vulnerable and also what type of service provision must immediately be ensured like pediatric, female doctors, services for persons with disabilities etc.)*

- [ ] 2. Note any gaps in the availability of female staff in paramedic and rescue response.

- [ ] 3. Facilitate access to adequate protective services such as trauma counseling or psychological first aid.

- [ ] 4. Women's specific needs of sanitary articles, and purdah should be ensured as part of each outreach and rescue package.

- [ ] 5. Solar lights and solar FM radios should be included in first response packages to protect women and give them access to information.

- [ ] 6. Set up Women Friendly Spaces to cater to range of information and services needs of women and their children.

- [ ] 7. Ensure water and latrine facilities are located close to camp sites with higher number of latrines for women as they cater to needs of children, elderly and disabled; latrines for women and for men to be separately located, well lit, and clearly marked.

- [ ] 8. Deploy female enumerators along with male enumerators to conduct assessments under government and UN collaboration to ensure women's views and needs are fully identified.

- [ ] 9. Map camp occupants and prepare sex and age disaggregated lists with reference to persons with disabilities to facilitate appropriate support including disability aids and access to latrines and bathing facilities.

- [ ] 10. Map especially vulnerable families including disabled headed, child headed, elderly headed and female headed.

- [ ] 11. Support public service messaging that clearly highlights how and where to address protection issues – reporting lost persons, and children, registration with or without documentation, GBV recognition, reporting and referral.

UN Women and OCHA in Pakistan and Afghanistan developed a gender emergency checklist for distribution among humanitarian partners in the immediate aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in northeast Afghanistan. This simple tool reminds all actors of the key gender issues to consider right in the immediate response.

Credit-UNDP

Nepal Earthquake: Promoting Gender Equality in Disaster Response

Credit-UNDP

Only five days after the devastating earthquake hit Nepal in April 2015, the Inter-Cluster Gender Working Group was in full operation, providing advice to the clusters to ensure gender equality was prioritised in the response. The Working Group, co-chaired by UNOCHA and UN Women, developed gender equality indicators to track women's participation in decision-making committees and to understand women's and men's different perceptions of the adequacy, fairness and transparency of relief efforts. For the first time globally, gender indicators were included in the Flash Appeal Monitoring Framework, used to measure the overall effectiveness of the response.

Nepali women's groups were actively involved in advocacy work, and together with UN Women, developed a common charter of demands for gender equality and the empowerment of women, which was later presented at the World Humanitarian Summit consultations.

The Humanitarian Country Team in Nepal will continue to advocate for gender equality recommending the establishment of a common information management framework for the collection of sex and age disaggregated data and the development of gender indicators to inform policy making.

Marie Pettersson, UN Women