



Gender in disasters

- 1) Gender is not only about vulnerability: it is also about capacity
- 2) Effective mainstreaming starts *before* the disaster
- 3) The post-disaster period can be a time of opportunity
- 4) Coordination and responsibility allocation are key
- 5) Disaster response should not only be managed for those affected, but also *by* the beneficiaries

Definitions

- “Gender” refers to “ ...culturally based expectations of the roles and behaviors of males and females. The term distinguishes the socially constructed from the biologically determined aspects of being male and female” (World Bank 2002)”
- Gender mainstreaming = the process of taking into account the needs, concerns and capacities of women, men and other gender groups (United Nations Economic and Security Council, E.1997.L.30.Para.4)

Gender issues (examples)

- Preparedness:
 - Legal infrastructure
 - Human development
 - Knowledge dissemination
- Relief:
 - Aid composition and distribution
 - Male-targeted counselling
- Recovery and reconstruction:
 - Livelihood recovery
 - Infrastructure priorities
 - Social reconstruction

1) Vulnerability and capacity

- Gender issues ≠ taking care of vulnerable women
- Issues affecting specifically women; issues affecting specifically men; issues affecting communities
- Mitigating effect of vulnerabilities
- Removing vulnerabilities
- Accounting for priorities
- Exploiting capacities

2) Starting before the disaster

- General policies can impact on gender in disasters (equal wage, sexual harrassment, databases, socioeconomic indicators...)
- Disaster-specific policies need to be in place ex ante (mitigating ad hoc responding)
- Lessons learned need to be translated into action plans

3) Disaster aftermath as opportunity

- Good timing is not sufficient, but it is necessary
- Institutions are sticky (path dependence theory): external shocks create opportunities for change
- Disaster aftermath: policy innovation, benchmarks and enforcement

4) Coordination and responsibilities

- Recurring problem: knowledge and resources are not distributed well
- Information flow: use lessons learnt/good practices from elsewhere; use feedback from ground up
- Clear division of labour / allocation of responsibilities in advance
- Policy map (WBI mainstreaming gender into disasters team)

Policy map element

State government	Enacted	Not in place
Disaster policy	Gender-sensitive disaster preparedness plan in place	Data on the informal economy at disposal of disaster managers
	Police and judiciary receiving gender-sensitive training for the disaster context	Gender data from health and social services at disposal of disaster managers

5) Beneficiary participation

- Consultations
- Active involvement of population cross-section (women and men) in needs assessment and recovery plans:
 - Aid composition
 - Livelihood recovery
 - Infrastructure needs
 - Development priorities
- Complementing expert input

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