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## Disaster Recovery Guidance Series

# Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Disaster Recovery



# Acknowledgments

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Benin—The people in Woukpokpoe now have access to safe, clean water. Photo: Arne Hoel /World Bank

# 1. Introduction

It is often assumed that all members of a population experience the impact of disasters in the same way. However, natural disasters are not neutral: They affect women, men, girls, and boys differently due to gender inequalities caused by socioeconomic conditions, cultural beliefs, and traditional practices which have repeatedly put females at a disadvantage. “Gender” refers to the socio-cultural roles, norms, and values associated with being a man or a woman. These roles, norms, and values determine how women and men prepare for, react to, and recover from disasters, and they often cause unequal distribution of power, economic opportunities, and sense of agency.

In countries where women’s socioeconomic status is low, the mortality rate of women and girls during disasters can be higher than that of men and boys.<sup>1</sup> For example, in 1991 in Bangladesh, the cyclone-related mortality rates of women compared to men were 14:1 (see Box on page 29). Women and girls are also subject to indirect impacts that arise in the aftermaths of disasters, such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV),<sup>1</sup> early and forced marriages, loss of livelihood and access to education, deterioration in sexual and reproductive health, and increases in their workload, all of which compound the gender-specific impacts of disasters. For example, a needs assessment conducted by Mercy Corps in Karamoja, Uganda, revealed that harmful practices, including domestic violence, child marriage, courtship rape, and female genital mutilation, spike during droughts and prolonged dry spells.

In the pre-disaster context, women’s and girls’ unequal access to social, political, and economic resources influences their access

to post-disaster assistance and compensation for damage and losses. For example, in the aftermath of 2010 flooding in Pakistan, many women lacked mobility due to financial and familial restrictions, which limited or prevented their access to conventionally delivered aid, whether in the form of food assistance, medical services (especially reproductive health services), and even access to toilets. Many women also lacked national identification cards (NICs), which limited their ability to receive assistance from relief schemes that were predicated on the possession of a NIC.

**Differences in female and male vulnerability to risk from natural hazards are often exacerbated by marginalization due to age, race, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation, as well as socioeconomic status, geographic context, cultural and religious beliefs, and migration status.**

While the post-disaster context presents a host of challenges for women, it is important to recognize that women are not just victims of disasters. Rather, significant evidence demonstrates that women are powerful agents of change during and after disasters. In the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch that devastated Honduras and Nicaragua in 1998, women organized disaster recovery efforts, including hauling cement and building temporary shelters and latrines, in addition to undertaking governance initiatives and working to restore livelihoods. After the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, women played a crucial role in rebuilding efforts, despite the disproportionate impact that the disaster had on them. Some women were trained as masons to help repair

<sup>1</sup> SGBV includes, *inter alia*, harassment, abuse, rape, coerced sex for food, pressure for early marriage, and trafficking.

and reconstruct houses, infrastructure, and cultural sites to be earthquake-proof. Women's groups also successfully advocated for the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts in the country. This resulted in the 15-point Kathmandu Declaration on disaster risk management (DRM), endorsed by government authorities and development partners, that set out key demands for gender-responsive recovery and reconstruction. In 2017, a series of earthquakes in Mexico prompted women's groups to step up and actively contribute to rescue efforts and the rebuilding of their communities. Yet, too often women's contributions in recovery and reconstruction are undervalued or invisible, despite evidence that demonstrates that deeper and more sustainable recovery can be achieved when promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Since the publication of PDNA Guidelines Volume B: Gender<sup>2</sup> in 2014, there has been an increase in post-disaster needs assessments (PDNAs) that state that the gender-differentiated impacts of disasters, particularly violence, exclusion, and inequality, are exacerbated by the disaster, but these impacts have yet to be translated into gender-specific differentiated needs, policies, interventions, and projects in recovery and reconstruction efforts. Many PDNAs have also often failed to understand and address gender dynamics due to a tendency to focus more on visible and more easily quantifiable physical impacts at the macro level. While this is also important, many of the assessments have been unable to assess several key issues and needs for recovery at the community and household level or gender differences in the sectoral impacts of disasters.

The strength of post-disaster recovery lies with how well it responds to the needs of both women and men. Recovery has the potential to transform unequal power relations that contribute to gender-differentiated vulnerabilities as it provides a “window of opportunity” to promote gender equality. However, it is important to be aware that attempts at promoting women's empowerment may face a backlash as resistance to change norms can entrench those norms even further. Another challenge is to ensure that this sudden empowerment is not reversed with a “return to normalcy” once recovery and reconstruction have taken place.

This Guidance Note<sup>3</sup> aims to provide action-oriented guidance to local and national government officials and key decision makers who face post-disaster challenges and to assist them in incorporating gender-responsive recovery and reconstruction efforts across all sectors through robust gender assessments that lead to concrete needs identification and gender-specific recovery strategies and frameworks. Implementation of such actions will facilitate both a more resilient, sustainable recovery and advances in reducing gender inequality. The note also addresses the different challenges that women face in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction caused by underlying issues of inequality and marginalization. Further, the note provides guidance on how to turn a post-disaster situation into an opportunity to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment, with a focus on building back better, as the aftermath of a disaster can present opportunities for new and more progressive gender roles and relationships to emerge.

<sup>2</sup> <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/270841493643065229/pdf/114671-WP-PUBLIC-pdna-guidelines-vol-b-gender.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> This Note builds on earlier publications that introduced many of these issues, such as the IRP Guidance Note on Recovery: Gender, and sharpens these concepts into practical, actionable guidance, <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/16775>



My Road, My Responsibility: Empowering Women in Vietnam to Maintain Rural Roads. Photo: Ngan Hong Nguyen / World Bank

The guidance note is structured around three key areas:

1. Identifying and Prioritizing Gender-Specific Recovery Needs
2. Protecting Women and Men from Physical and Psychosocial Harm
3. Planning for Gender-Responsive Recovery in the Disaster Recovery Framework and Empowering Women for Sustainable and Resilient Recovery

The final section of the paper provides a long-term outlook on strengthening gender-responsive recovery systems.

This note is accompanied by an extensive reading list that is available on the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery's (GFDRR) Recovery Hub website, under the "Gender" section.

## 2. Identifying and Prioritizing Gender-Specific Recovery Needs

Depending on the extent to which gender has been addressed in the PDNAs or other types of post-disaster assessments, a more extensive gender analysis could be carried out to get a better understanding of the gender-differentiated impacts of the disaster. The prioritization of the gender-specific needs to address in the recovery should be informed by the gender analysis and by the communications and consultations that take place with the affected populations, through participatory approaches. The following sections provide guidance on how to identify and prioritize gender-specific recovery needs.

### 2.1 Collect and Analyze Gender-Differentiated Data

When assessment data do not capture the distinct losses and damages, needs, roles, responsibilities, and capacities of women and men, boys and girls, policies and decisions might be formed based on assumptions and stereotypes that fail to consider gender-specific needs and contributions. The collection of gender-differentiated data not only sheds light on the complex realities of the differing and interdependent roles but also provides vital information for developing more-comprehensive, efficient, and relevant recovery strategies.

Several gender analyses have concluded that using households as indivisible units (which is often done), with assumed congruent interests, fails to take into account intra-household dynamics and the fact that families and homes are frequently sites of conflicts, competing interests, and conditional cooperation. Identifying male heads of households as prime beneficiaries in the majority of the cases and making relief assistance for family members

During recovery and reconstruction, women and girls might face a number of challenges including:

- SGBV
- Livelihoods
- Land tenure/ownership
- Loss of education
- Forced and early marriages
- Reproductive health
- Mental health
- Shelter/housing
- Medical needs
- Insurance

dependent on them may serve to simply strengthen the status quo and retrench the need for male approval instead of enhancing gender equality.

Start by addressing any lack of data and gender analysis in the damage and loss assessment, and pay particular attention to the informal sector (propose criteria and means to disaggregate data, e.g., through the use of samples or surveys). Sex-, age- and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) is particularly effective when assessment tools are developed and analyzed with a gender perspective, which helps ensure that the right questions are asked to capture gender-specific needs and capacities. This information can be used to restore, replace, and/or compensate lost assets and damages, including those of the informal sector.

## 2.2 Communicate, Consult, and Engage with Affected Women and Men, Boys and Girls, with Inclusive and Participatory Techniques

The communication, consultation, and participation of affected women and men in identifying and prioritizing recovery needs are key to an effective recovery. Governments should therefore develop gender-responsive information-sharing mechanisms. One common approach is the establishment and support of organizational bodies that facilitate the flow of information between communities and assistance providers and that advocate on behalf of excluded populations. Other strategies to employ are:

- Facilitate gender-specific communication forums that create a space for both men and women to contribute to recovery and to advocate for their priorities.
- Radio, television, and the internet are all media that can facilitate a better flow of

information between and among affected populations, as well as assistance providers, such as governments and NGOs.

Disaster communication needs to be grounded in *knowledge exchange* and participatory analysis not just information dissemination. Consider the following:

- How might women and men use communication media differently?
- How are women using media currently in this region? There needs to be an understanding of how women use conventional and nontraditional communication media in order to reach them with critical information about disaster relief and recovery.
- How can critical recovery and risk reduction information be integrated into these communication networks?
- Seek out ways to access the knowledge of local women about hazards, disasters, and disaster recovery, for example, by engaging directly with women elders.

### Case Study: Innovative and Gender-Responsive Information Systems in Central Java, Indonesia

After an earthquake struck Indonesia in 2006, in one central Java village, the Java Reconstruction Fund project teams found an extraordinary yet practical way to get information to women who were often hard to reach: mobile ice cream sellers. The community leadership helped turn these vendors, present in every village, into a vital community asset offering a “barefoot texting” service. Village leaders and project facilitators called the ice cream sellers together when there was community news or important project

information to disseminate. Once briefed, the vendors called out the messages as they walked through the village selling ice cream. This way, women and children who would not normally attend village meetings or check information boards were able to access important information about reconstruction projects for their communities and their families.

*More Than Mainstreaming: Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women Through Post-Disaster Reconstruction*, World Bank

- Time any radio or television messaging programs so that women are relatively free from their gendered roles and responsibilities to listen to these programs.

To identify and meet the different needs of women and men, governments should make a special point to consult with all affected communities. Potential partners that may be able to support effective consultation with the affected women and men include local Civil Society Organizations (CSO); women's trade unions; local-level governance structures, formal or traditional, in which women are active participants; women's collective organizations, such as self-help groups and livelihood cooperatives; and NGO networks. These organizations should have an established history in the district or community advocating for or providing services to numerous populations. These groups have a deep understanding of the local complexities that influence the recovery process and the need for more-nuanced and comprehensive approaches.

Aim at engaging both women and men more extensively than only through consultations. There are a number of community and stakeholder techniques that decision makers may employ to incorporate women in the decision-making bodies and processes:

- **Community participatory monitoring.** Community participatory monitoring involves community groups or members to monitor and oversee program activities. In addition to assessing progress and identifying ways to improve the program or project, these activities facilitate learning.
- **Information accessibility and transparency.** Project information must be available and accessible for community members to check and verify. Information regarding the project activities and budgets should be posted on information boards and project sites.

- **Open public meetings:** As a principle of community participation, transparency, and accountability, all project meetings should be open to the public and community members should be allowed to participate and monitor proceedings. During project implementation, projects should also hold accountability meetings to report on project progress and finances.

- **Complaints handling grievance procedures.** The complaints handling process allows community members and the general public to channel complaints or inquiries via mail, text messaging, or communication with local government officials and facilitators. There are activities to strengthen community awareness about their rights and these mechanisms.

- **Management information systems and project website information systems.** The public website should contain basic project information and updates, including the status of complaints.

- **NGO monitoring.** CSOs and NGOs can be invited to independently monitor the program. These groups play a critical role in monitoring whether communities, especially marginalized groups, the poor, and women have the opportunity to participate in recovery activities.

Strive for the equal representation of women and men in these participatory approaches. Identify and, if possible, address potential barriers to women's participation.

## 2.3 Provide Recommendations for the Prioritization of Gender-Specific Recovery Needs

As previously mentioned, the aftermath of a disaster and the early recovery phase can



Uzbekistan—Elder women convene in Khiva. Photo: Ozbalci

present opportunities for new and more-progressive gender roles and relationships. The principle of “building back better” should focus not only on rebuilding and improving infrastructure and restoring systems and livelihoods but also on rebuilding in a way that is inclusive of women, girls, boys, and men from the affected population. “Building back better” considerations should include how restoration, replacement, and compensation of lost assets and damages can decrease gender inequalities and make the sectors more inclusive by considering the gender-differentiated needs identified in the assessment. The recovery can be more efficient, comprehensive, and stronger by

maximizing the contributions that both women and men make.

Once the steps to identify the gender-specific needs have been taken, the prioritization of gender-responsive actions and interventions needs to take place. Try to limit the recommendations to a few strategic and realistic actions based on available resources, partner government capacity to implement, and the socio-cultural context in the country. These priorities should then be included in the overall Recovery Framework, every sector Recovery Plan, and the specific gender Recovery Plan.

### 3. Protecting Women, Men and Children from Physical and Psychosocial Harm

One of the priorities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster is to protect women, men and children from physical and psychosocial harm. Although the recovery process does not include the early relief phase, it is important to consider some of the gender dimensions, such as providing protection in this phase because they tie into the longer-term recovery phase. Issues that governments should consider in the immediate recovery phase are discussed in the following sections.

#### 3.1 Ensure the Physical Security and Integrity of Women and Men

Natural disasters often force many people to leave their homes, with a high number of people becoming temporarily or permanently internally displaced, which makes them particularly vulnerable. Consideration should be given both to the internally displaced people and to the population of the host communities where these people move, given that the effects of the displacement affects both, with differentiated impact on men (e.g., competition for work) and women (e.g., increased pressure for basic services and increased demand on non-remunerated work). When the affected population must move to temporary or communal shelters or shelter settlements, decision makers should consider the design of such settlements and related services to minimize security risks and maximize privacy.

Women and girls should be consulted on the setup and location of sanitation facilities to ensure that the route is safe and that latrines are well lit and lockable from the inside and offer privacy. Separate facilities should be put

in place for males and females, not next to each other. Pregnant women in temporary settlements are highly susceptible to the psychological and physical strains put on their maternal health. Establish medical facilities specifically for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and infants, in addition to adequate reproductive health services for both women and men.

Alcoholism and SGBV of women and children typically increase after a disaster, when civil and administrative structures are weakened. This threatens women's short- and long-term security. Men and boys are also victims of SGBV. Addressing this requires attention and sensitivity given the stigma and difficulties men and boys face in admitting and reporting that they have been victims of SGBV.

Take actions to optimize safety, especially to protect against SGBV and to safeguard human rights by:

- Strengthening or rebuilding the social support structures and justice systems that typically provide certain levels of security for women and girls
- Developing policies and enforcement mechanisms to see that perpetrators of SGBV are legally held to account and penalized
- Raising awareness of the problem
- Incorporating women's and children's safety concerns into the design and construction of housing, as well as schools, clinics, and other physical infrastructure
- Making psychosocial support available to men and women
- Addressing men's dangerous coping

## Case Study: The Sexual Violence Epidemic in the Aftermath of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake

As the result of a breakdown in collective security and unsafe shelters, an epidemic of sexual violence broke out in the internally displaced camps after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. Reasons for this outbreak included lack of adequate lighting, lack of private bathing facilities, lack of tents, lack of police presence, and exclusion of women's grassroots organizations' participation in the coordination efforts to address and prevent SGBV.

Gender-responsive security measures, such as providing solar lanterns to women in IDP camps and street lighting in recovering neighborhoods, adequate patrolling in camps, more females in the police patrols, mechanisms to report violence, and meaningful participation of women's organizations in planning and decision-making bodies, could have been implemented to prevent the violent outbreak.

*Successes and Challenges of the Haiti Earthquake Response: The Experience of USAID, Emory Law*

## Case Study: Addressing SGBV after the 2012 Floods in Fiji

After the Fiji floods in 2012, a gender review conducted by UN Women revealed that the response had not adequately addressed gender issues, including SGBV. With the support of UN Women, the Ministry of Women developed "Standard Operating Procedures for Gender-Based Violence," with specific considerations

for humanitarian settings. The Fiji National Disaster Management Office established a National Protection Cluster and, with technical assistance from UN Women, developed guidelines for evacuation centers to enhance the protection of women and girls.

*Crisis Response and Recovery, UN Women*

mechanisms, such as increased alcohol consumption, that often lead to SGBV.

### 3.2 Protect the Psychological Integrity of Women and Men

Women and men need counseling to develop positive coping strategies and preparedness skills. It is equally important to provide women and men with outlets, in the form of post-disaster stress debriefing groups, to process their disaster memories. To plan for the future, it is recommended that pre-disaster

preparedness programs and post-disaster mental outreach programs based on gender differences in the psychological impact of disasters be created.

A lack of support services and the existence of social stigma can leave women to deal silently and alone with long-term psychosocial impacts or to face social exclusion and family disruption. By the same token, lack of such support for men can lead to violence, frustration, and depression in men that can, in turn, exacerbate abusive treatment and further exclusion and marginalization of women. Furthermore, the fear of SGBV limits women's mobility, decreasing

### Case Study: Protecting and Empowering Nepalese Women through Multipurpose Centers

In Nepal, in the immediate aftermath of the 2015 earthquake, UN Women established five multipurpose women's centers run by women's groups, in collaboration with local government, and three information centers. Through these multipurpose centers, 42,700 affected women were reached and received a wide range of services, including psychosocial counseling and

trauma assistance, legal referrals for survivors of violence, and information and access to livelihood opportunities. The psychosocial counseling and trauma assistance supported women to rebuild their lives and dignity after of the disaster's devastation.

*Nepal: A Year after the Earthquakes, UN Women*

### Case Study: Establishing Safe Spaces for Fijian Women in the Aftermath of Cyclone Winston in 2016

In the aftermath of Cyclone Winston in Fiji, seven Women-Friendly Spaces were established by the United Nations Population Fund to provide a safe space for women and girls to access psychosocial support, multi-sectoral referrals, and related services for survivors of SGBV. The Fiji Women's Crisis Center facilitated three-day workshops for women facilitators who manage the Women-Friendly Spaces on topics related to SGBV, gender equity, and referral mechanisms. Activities being conducted through the spaces also include community profiling.

The Gender-Based Violence sub-cluster is working on the development of a national gender-based violence service protocol with support from UN Women. Information, education, and communication material have been developed and distributed to raise awareness about gender-based violence and support services for survivors.

*Post-Cyclone Winston Health Response Ends in Koro, United Nations Population Fund*

their access to critical resources, recovery assistance, and employment opportunities.

To psychologically support women and men, the following actions should be considered:

- Make psychosocial support available to both men and women and also provide psychosocial counseling that promotes resilience and healing for boys and girls.
- Provide training for mental health providers on gender-specific factors in post-traumatic stress. Target highly vulnerable groups, such as women-headed households, grandmothers caring for orphans, battered women, women with disabling injuries, and newly widowed women and men, but also women and men who lost their livelihoods, work tools, or employment, such as farmers, fisher folk, cattle herders, migrant laborers, and others at risk of depression, violence, and suicide.
- Provide data collectors with information on local first aid psychological service providers and medical facilities for referral of trauma or violence survivors.

## 4. Planning for Gender-Responsive Recovery in the Disaster Recovery Framework

A planned, organized, and strategic recovery that includes the diverse needs and capacities of women, men, boys, and girls, contributes to a faster, more-inclusive, and more-effective recovery process. Developing a recovery framework can assist governments and partners in planning for resilient and inclusive post-disaster recovery. A framework can help articulate a recovery vision, define the recovery strategy, prioritize actions, and fine-tune planning, as well as provide guidance on financing, implementing, and monitoring the recovery. Ensure that the affected women, men, boys and girls are consulted and engaged throughout the process of developing the recovery framework.

A recovery framework includes five key areas for policy makers to consider in the recovery process:

1. Policy and strategy setting
2. Institutional frameworks
3. Recovery financing
4. Implementation arrangements
5. Strengthening recovery systems in advance of disasters (see Section 5)

This section outlines how to successfully integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into the recovery framework and implementation of recovery initiatives.

### 4.1 Gender Considerations in Setting Policy and Strategy

Ideally, gender-responsive recovery policies, should be in place before a disaster strikes. Unfortunately, this is not often the case. In addition, even if recovery policies are in place,

each disaster is unique and existing policies may need to be tailored to appropriately respond to different needs. The process of delineating the parameters of the recovery effort and defining the principles to guide a gender-responsive recovery provides an opportunity for governments and stakeholders to set gender-responsive policies and strategies, which can begin while damage and loss assessments are taking place. Governments have the opportunity to reach out to affected communities to ensure that women's and men's needs and capacities are included in the Recovery Framework. Because gender issues intersect with all sectors, they should be integrated across the entirety of the recovery process. If gender considerations are not included in each component of the Recovery Framework, the risk of not adequately addressing women's and men's distinct needs and capacities is high. To ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are well integrated in the Recovery Framework, governments should consider the following, each of which is discussed in more detail below:

- Articulate a recovery vision and guiding principles that promote gender equality and women's empowerment
- Ensure that policy and legal frameworks address gender equality and women's empowerment
- Integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in the Recovery Framework, sector-based recovery plans, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for equitable resource allocation and needs prioritization

#### 4.1.1 Articulate a Recovery Vision and Guiding Principles That Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

To ensure an inclusive recovery process, meaningful and active participation by women in planning and other decision-making processes must be promoted actively, and both women's and men's needs, interests, and priorities concerning service delivery and institutional arrangements, policies, and procedures should be included in the Recovery Framework. By prioritizing the recovery of people and their livelihoods in the vision and guiding principles, governments can promote a people-focused recovery that is sensitive to the needs of the affected populations. The recovery vision and guiding principles should include reference to relevant national gender policies and inequalities so that the recovery and reconstruction efforts can bridge preexisting gender gaps and potential new gaps triggered by the disaster.

Setting the vision and guiding principles early on within the Recovery Framework is important to expedite an effective transition from the immediate humanitarian response to the medium- to long-term recovery. These elements are foundational to the entire recovery process. They enable the government to convey its recovery priorities to the public, stakeholders, and partners, and to build national and/or subnational consensus around them. Governments can make the process of developing the recovery vision inclusive by consulting stakeholders, such as women and men in affected communities, the ministry or other existing national institution responsible for gender and social issues, and women's CSOs.

In 2005, the Gender and Disaster Network developed six gender-related principles to guide relief and reconstruction efforts in the post-disaster environment. Below is an adapted version of these principles that could be included as guiding principles in the Recovery Framework.

- **Take the opportunity to fully integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in the recovery process.** Remember that gender encompasses both women and men, boys and girls. Failure to consider gender issues in recovery efforts is likely to reinforce, perpetuate, and increase gender inequalities. It is therefore important to ensure that gender equality guides and cuts across all aspects of recovery and reconstruction efforts. Take practical steps to empower women by engaging them in recovery activities and promote their rights. Gender trainings can equip planners, policy makers, implementers, and beneficiaries with the knowledge and tools to analyze and develop more-inclusive recovery policies and programs. Such trainings are an excellent way to facilitate reflection, expose inaccurate stereotypes, and understand the different impacts that disasters and disaster responses have on men and women.
- **Get the facts by undertaking gender analysis and collect SADDD.** Identify the specific impacts of damages and losses from the disaster on women and men and how they inform recovery activities for women and men. This is imperative to direct aid and to plan for a full and equitable recovery. Remember that nothing in disaster recovery and reconstruction is gender neutral.
- **Work with grassroots women's organizations.** Women's community organizations have insights, information, experiences, networks, and resources vital to increasing disaster resilience. The time challenges of rapid assessments conspire against fully engaging grassroots and community organizations in the aftermath of a disaster, while in fact most such organizations are already engaged in the immediate response. Working with established women's community organizations will therefore increase the efficiency of the recovery and reconstruction efforts.

- **Resist stereotypes.** Avoid that gender roles, sex, and sexual orientation become differentiating factors in terms of capacity to recover. Base all initiatives on knowledge of different and specific cultural, economic, political, and sexual contexts, not on false generalities.
- **Take a human rights approach.** Promote and protect international human rights conventions in post-disaster contexts. Participatory approaches are important to redress gender inequality. Get women and men involved in decisions that affect their lives and inform women and men about the conditions needed to enjoy their fundamental human rights, to survive, and to thrive. Recognize that women and girls are at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence SGBV in post-disaster contexts.
- **Respect and develop the capacities of women.** Increased demands to carry out traditional reproductive responsibilities and women's unpaid community contributions to reestablish collective services, such as health and education, often overburden women

with already heavy workloads and family responsibilities. Be mindful of women's roles and capacities in economic and social support and compensate them appropriately for their increased workload.

#### 4.1.2 Ensure That Policy and Legal Frameworks Address Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Governance systems reflect the power dynamics in a society and, therefore, determine citizens' ability to access services and resources, to mobilize, and to speak out. Gender relations and inequalities often limit women's ability to negotiate with the state, including through CSOs. Factors obstructing women's ability to benefit from the recovery process and outcomes, to build capabilities, and to exercise their rights include discriminatory practices, SGBV, and women's lower literacy levels. These structural barriers are often deepened by nonresponsive legal systems, ineffective public policy design, and inadequate service provision and investments.

When developing the Recovery Framework and subsequent sector-based recovery plans,

### Case Study: Inclusion of Gender in Disaster Risk Management Laws in the Philippines

In the aftermath of the 2009 Typhoon Ondoy and Tropical Storm Pepeng, the Government of the Philippines passed two laws that established a legal basis for gender mainstreaming in climate change and disaster risk management policy. The 2009 Climate Change Act implicitly recognized women as a vulnerable group and mandated a gender-responsive, pro-poor perspective for climate change plans and programs, calling for the establishment of a gender-responsive Framework Strategy and Program

on Climate Change. The 2010 Philippines Disaster Reduction and Management Act states that the government must "ensure that disaster risk reduction and climate change measures are gender responsive." The law also institutionalizes gender analysis in early recovery and PDNA and requires the inclusion of the Gender Development Office on newly formed Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Committees.

*Integrating Gender Issues in Disaster Risk Management Policy Development and in Projects, World Bank*

### Case Study: Strengthening Women's Representation following the 2004 Tsunami in Indonesia

In 2005, following the 2004 tsunami, the government of Aceh, Indonesia, worked to strengthen women's representation in the recovery process. The government prioritized gender equality as a cornerstone of effective development and as a key cross-cutting issue in the Aceh Recovery Framework, the province's road map to sustainable development. Gender equality was affirmed as a guiding principle of reconstruction and development. The government advocated for specific and concrete steps on behalf of women and their families, including one-stop crisis centers for survivors of violence, land rights and joint titling,

rebuilding of traditional women's houses, and development and strengthening of the capacity of local women leaders. Eventually, the Aceh government transformed the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency from a bureau to an independent agency reporting directly to the governor. The agency now has a solid strategic plan, trains government officers on gender equality and women's empowerment, and is leading the revitalization of gender-based focal points in provincial and district departments.

*Study on Gender Impacts of Land Titling in Post-Tsunami Aceh, Indonesia, World Bank*

a sound policy framework for program implementation and monitoring can help create the enabling environment for integrating gender considerations in recovery and reconstruction efforts. However, this enabling environment is often either insufficient or not provided, as political will and resources are required. To help build an enabling environment, governments can create an incentive structure that recognizes the work done by institutions and individuals to integrate gender considerations into recovery and reconstruction efforts.

Recovery and reconstruction policies and laws should be informed by gender analysis and gender-differentiated data. If possible, make sure that gender equality and women's empowerment becomes one of the key policy imperatives for recovery. Aim to recognize the following elements in policy and legal frameworks: women as economic actors (having assets to guarantee access to credit, recognition of informal work as a means to leverage resources), women as decision

makers or co-participants in decision-making processes, and women's community role as organizers and negotiators in the household or family. The integration of gender considerations in recovery and reconstruction policies and laws is important to avoid reversing the gender equality gains obtained in the recovery period once there is a return to "normalcy."

#### 4.1.3 Integrate Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Recovery Framework, Sector-Based Recovery Plans, and Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks for Equitable Resource Allocation and Needs Prioritization

A gender sector recovery plan should be developed, identifying key outcomes, outputs, and interventions that relate specifically to addressing gender that are not included in other sectors. There should be constant consultations and communications with the other sectors to avoid contradictory recommendations, gaps, or overlaps.

The priority sectors for recovery should also reflect gender-specific needs based on the findings from post-disaster assessments. The recovery priorities identified in the Recovery Framework and Recovery Plans should be based on extensive consultations with affected women and men, grassroots organizations, NGOs, and the ministry responsible for gender and social affairs, as this leads to better inclusion and increased decision-making power for the affected communities.

The Recovery Framework and Recovery Plans are central planning tools and act as an oversight mechanism for integrated cross-sectoral recovery and reconstruction efforts and should include objectives, targets, and measures to address gender issues. Inclusive participatory approaches should be promoted to increase consultation and involvement with both women and men in assessing recovery damages and losses, developing both the Recovery Framework and Recovery Plans (including identification and prioritization of recovery activities), and implementing recovery activities.

When prioritizing across the social, production, infrastructure, and cross-cutting sectors, actions that promote gender equality and women's empowerment should be a criterion for prioritization. When developing sector-specific Recovery Plans, focus on a limited number of strategic and realistic actions (informed by a gender analysis) with the greatest impact on affected women, men, boys, and girls. Make the choice based on available resources, capacity to implement, and socio-cultural context.

Outcomes, outputs, and indicators outlined in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Recovery (attached to the Recovery Framework) and sector-based Recovery Plans should specify the beneficiaries or participants by sex and age, and activities should focus on strengthening national and local capacity and

systems of sectoral ministries and institutions to collect SADDD and should integrate gender considerations in policies, plans, and strategies.

#### 4.1.4 Ensure that Recovery Actions are Long Term and Development Oriented from the Initial Recovery Phase

Male-biased perspectives often dominate policies and intervention processes. This can often exclude women from equitable compensation and assistance and subsequently place them at even greater risk of future harm from hazards and disasters. The immense contributions women make to recovery need to be amplified up to the national and local policy levels so that their skills and knowledge are not marginalized, thereby limiting their opportunities to play a greater role in building back better and beyond. To use the immediate phase of recovery to promote long-term equitable development, recovery interventions can:

- Apply an understanding of socially determined differences between men and women to projects, programs, and policies, and involve government and nongovernmental entities responsible for gender equity to help address men and women's unique needs and capacities
- Provide balanced access to resources, allowing both men and women to contribute to personal and collective recovery, thereby accelerating recovery, broadening impacts, and building resilience
- Build political will to advocate for increasing women's representation and more gender-responsive programming, which will help initiate the process of long-term social change

## 4.2 Gender Considerations in the Institutional Framework of Recovery

How institutions are set up to effectively manage the contributions of various stakeholders is critical for disaster recovery. It is equally important to clarify their roles at both the national and the community levels. This section describes good practices associated with the development of institutional frameworks for overseeing, managing, and coordinating recovery efforts that promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

### 4.2.1 Understand that the Roles of the Lead Agency and Recovery Leader Are Critical to Ensuring Recovery and Reconstruction Efforts that Address Gender Gaps and Support Gender Equality

When developing the Recovery Framework and subsequent Recovery Plans, the lead recovery agency should help ensure that gender analysis and actions to increase gender equality and women's empowerment are given adequate attention across these documents. This should also be included in the policies and in the coordination, implementation, and monitoring of recovery activities. The institutional mandates specifying the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders should delineate the responsibilities of the various stakeholders to ensure that the recovery activities address gender issues. The lead agency could also initiate gender trainings to raise awareness of policy makers about gender issues across sectors. This should be done in collaboration with government institutions and CSOs that specialize in gender equality and women's empowerment.

The head of the lead recovery agency needs to have the skills to lead a gender-inclusive recovery process, bringing together all stakeholders, particularly affected communities and vulnerable groups.

### 4.2.2 Engage and Consult Affected Women and Men in Defining the Recovery Needs, Identifying Solutions, and Implementing Recovery Activities

The lead agency is responsible for addressing the equal participation of women and men and needs to establish the necessary support mechanisms to proactively consult and engage with both women and men during the recovery process to adequately identify needs, priorities, and capacities. To achieve this, it is even more important to engage the communities, including local actors and leaders and traditional or elder authorities. Women's grassroots organizations, local CSOs, and/or NGO networks should also be partners because they are already working with vulnerable and marginalized groups and are using well-tested participatory techniques and methods, including surveys, individual interviews, and same-sex meetings, to gain access to less visible groups. These actors should be motivated, supported, and given means and recognition for their work. If possible, appoint respected civil society leaders (both women and men) to policy and coordination mechanisms as this has proven to be essential for the success of recovery. For more information on ensuring the participation of affected communities see [Section 3](#).

### 4.2.3 Define the Roles, Responsibilities, and Mandates of Relevant Stakeholders to Address Gender Issues in the Recovery Process

Draw on the resources and competencies of communities, civil society, the private sector, international agencies, and other development partners as these stakeholders can support disaster recovery in many ways and complement government efforts. Ensure that all stakeholders and implementing agencies have stated commitments on reaching the most vulnerable women and men through their disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts. The commitments should be reflected

## Case Study: Women's Disaster Insurance through Microfinance

In the aftermath of the Gujarat Earthquake in 2001, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) took an innovative approach to providing insurance to women. Through its large network of members throughout the region, SEWA set up village development committees to provide small loans to the poorest village women. This enabled them to diversify their livelihood base, gain regular income and enhance their ability to manage

risk. To reduce the vulnerability of women to future shocks, SEWA began providing an integrated microfinance package that includes micro-insurance. The experience demonstrated that gender-responsive microfinance and micro-insurance can significantly reduce the vulnerability of the poor in hazard-prone areas particularly when coupled with institution building and training.

*Guidance Note on Recovery: Gender, UNISDR*

in their various policies, codes of conduct, and humanitarian standards and programs.

It is crucial to include recovery stakeholders in the lead agency's national recovery coordination mechanisms to maximize policy coherence across programs.

### 4.3 Financing Gender-Responsive Actions during Recovery

Gender-responsive recovery implementation needs to be supported by the mobilization of funds specifically aimed at addressing gender-specific needs and priorities, including a gender-responsive financial M&E system. Beyond funding gender-specific activities, the recovery process presents an opportunity to mainstream gender-responsiveness in all investments. For example, using the recovery and reconstruction of the road network to promote gender-responsive and socially inclusive transport projects.

#### 4.3.1 Estimate Financial Needs and Identify and Mobilize Additional Domestic and External Funding for Gender-Specific Programs and Actions

A gender-responsive post-disaster assessment such as the PDNA can help assess the

overall recovery financial needs. A more comprehensive gender assessment that includes an assessment of affected communities and women's and men's pre-disaster access to funding might be needed to confirm more-accurate funding needs.

Gender-specific financing from all possible funding sources—e.g., government, the private sector, and international development community—should be identified.

International appeals and donor conferences are frequently used to access external funds. As gender equality and women's empowerment is a key priority for most bilateral and multilateral donors, it is recommended to give visibility to these goals in international appeals and donor conferences.

#### 4.3.2 Ensure That Dedicated Funds are Allocated to the Implementation of Targeted Actions that Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Governments can allocate domestic and external funding to projects with specific components to address gender equality and women's empowerment and can provide decentralized and flexible resources for women-led community recovery activities. This will help better connect

local needs and priorities with national policies in addition to speeding up recovery.

In many countries, women do not have equal access to financial or banking systems, so think innovatively about how to remove impediments to get resources to them. The first impediment is often the lack of recognition of women as “economic actors” who have capital and access to property or assets.

The following financial assistance measures and tools can support women in recovery and reconstruction efforts:

- Channeling funding through microfinance institutions (MFIs) and savings societies to provide low-interest credit to bolster women’s ability to recover
- Channeling social protection benefits to vulnerable female-headed households
- Mobile phone money transfer options, which are quite advanced in most developing countries and can be a sure way to directly reach women with assistance
- Assistance to women to claim or receive entitlements (e.g., through securing or replacing lost identity or land ownership documents) and to access remedies, such as legal redress, compensation, or restitution of property, in their name, whether they are the head of the household or not.

#### **4.3.3 Establish a Financial System that Monitors and Evaluates Advances in Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment**

Governments can set up financial M&E systems that include accurate estimates of funds allocated and spent on gender-responsive recovery and reconstruction efforts, recovery progress on gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the economic and social impacts of affected women and men. If possible,

contract an independent third-party auditor, such as a CSO, to increase accountability and to assess whether resources have been spent in line with objectives and targets.

## **4.4 Gender Considerations in Implementation Arrangements**

Recovery programs need to be implemented quickly and visibly to improve the lives of disaster-affected women and men. This section discusses the areas in which Recovery Frameworks and Recovery Plans could provide recommendations on how to consider gender-issues in recovery.

### **4.4.1 Establish Coordination Mechanisms to Address Gender Issues in Recovery**

As a cross-cutting sector, extensive horizontal and vertical coordination on gender is needed to bring together the large number of partners and stakeholders that support the recovery process. Several types of coordination mechanisms can be set up, such as inter-ministerial or community forums, depending on the stakeholders and the type of coordination needed. There should be consultations and coordination with stakeholders at all times to avoid contradictory efforts.

A national gender and development coordination mechanism, such as a gender coordination group composed of the national gender machinery, women’s CSOs, and multilateral agencies and donors, can enable coordination and alignment with existing national gender equality efforts, policies, and strategies. If no such coordination mechanism exists, the Recovery Framework and the recovery process could be used as an opportunity to promote establishing one.



Pakistan—Somo Samo village well. Photo: Caroline Suzman / World Bank

#### 4.4.2 Establish Gender-Responsive Recovery and Reconstruction Standards

As the recovery moves into the implementation phase, the guiding principles (see Section 2.1.1) need to be translated into practical recovery and reconstruction standards. Recovery and reconstruction standards are specific to the sector and the type of natural disaster. Ensuring compliance with these standards is key to resilient recovery.

Depending on the sector and the type of disaster, standards for the following examples of gender-responsive recovery and reconstruction activities should be considered:

- **Health:** Mobile health services, including a full range of reproductive and family planning health services
- **SGBV:** Specific safety standards in shelters (adequate lighting, provisions for privacy) and development/implementation of a standard for reporting SGBV
- **Housing, land titling, and property rights:** Equal ownership of permanent housing by establishing a standard to ensure that names of spouses are both included
- **Infrastructure restoration:** A proportion of reconstruction funding to community infrastructure channeled to community centers and similar facilities utilized mainly by women
- **Livelihood restoration and economic development:** Requirements that MFIs develop tailored financial services to help women restart livelihood activities

#### 4.4.3 Include Representatives of Women's Organizations in Recovery Plans to Monitor the Implementation and Effectiveness of Recovery Activities

Governments should develop strong two-way beneficiary communication and accountability mechanisms across sectors (and identified within each Recovery Plan) to reduce conflicts within relief and recovery programs over distributing aid benefits, combating corruption or abuse of aid, and identifying who may have been missed. The establishment of specific monitoring mechanisms, such as social impact monitoring, which consists of ongoing monitoring of the social impacts of the disaster and aid efforts, can help facilitate women, children, and marginalized groups gaining access to recovery resources, participating publicly in planning and decision making, and organizing to sustain their involvement throughout the recovery process. Social impact monitoring in collaboration with women's organizations and/or local CSOs is particularly helpful in identifying whether particular social groups or areas are excluded or at risk of being excluded from recovery and reconstruction efforts and is therefore key to ensure resilient recovery.

#### 4.4.4 When Monitoring Progress, Assess Whether the Needs of Women and Girls Have Been Addressed throughout the Recovery and Reconstruction Process

The lead recovery agency, with support from ministries responsible for implementing recovery plans, needs to develop and report on gender targets and indicators measured against dedicated gender baselines and monitor whether these efforts are sufficiently financed. These reports on monitoring, progress, and evaluation should identify gaps where gender issues and gender needs are not being addressed in the recovery process, including challenges and practical solutions to improve

the response. This should be part of a larger gap analysis to assess how all vulnerable groups (including the disabled, elderly, religious and ethnic minorities, etc.) are faring.

To be successful, all formal mechanisms developed to monitor the application and effectiveness of the Recovery Framework must include representatives of women's organizations or stakeholder groups and must monitor progress with a view to assessing whether gender-specific needs are addressed consistently and financed adequately.

### 4.5 Empowering Women for Sustainable and Resilient Recovery

Promoting women's political, social, and economic empowerment in disaster recovery not only contributes to more effective and efficient recovery, it also establishes opportunities for women and communities to build resilient societies and contribute to sustainable development. Recovery efforts should therefore shift the focus from women's vulnerabilities to women's capacities and agency. Good recovery initiatives require the skills, knowledge, and contributions of both women and men and provide an opportunity to promote gender relations that improve the resilience of individuals, families, and communities. Governments should therefore support the formalization of women's role in recovery and formally allocate roles and resources to affected women for more resilient recovery. This can be done by:

- Equally engaging women and men in recovery and reconstruction implementation
- Developing the capacity of women to become recovery leaders
- Supporting processes of self-recovery to rebuild livelihoods and homes

- Facilitating the long-term economic recovery of women and men, including the informal sector

The following sections provide guidance on how this can be done.

#### 4.5.1 Engage Women and Men in Recovery Implementation and Develop Women's Capacity to Become Recovery Leaders

Women play a critical role in disaster recovery, but their roles have often been overlooked and unacknowledged. In societies with constraints on women's participation in public decision making, post-disaster relief and recovery processes can be a rare opportunity for women to step into new public roles and get involved in community decision making, build more resilient communities, and initiate long-term social change and development. For these efforts to be sustainable, it is important to involve men and boys, as interventions that exclude them may contribute to exacerbating imbalanced gender relationships. To equally engage women and men in recovery and reconstruction efforts, try to avoid the demand on women's household, community, and economic responsibilities that typically increase following a disaster. Reconstruction programs should aim to preserve social networks and find ways to lower women's workload, as women shoulder much of the burden of care for children, the elderly, and the disabled, as well as such household tasks as provision of water and fuel wood. Disasters increase the intensity of this work, and informal networks among neighbors and family, an important coping mechanism for women, often dissolve in times of crisis.

Effective and resilient recovery can be facilitated by providing formal spaces for marginalized groups to engage in consultations and participate in recovery and by formally allocating resources and roles to these groups. This not only contributes to more-effective

and -efficient recovery, it also establishes opportunities for women and communities to shape a more sustainable development by fostering effective relationships between governments and communities through policies, legislation, and organizational culture and practices. Governments can support women's groups and organizations and provide them with the necessary trainings, resources, and authority to engage in recovery efforts.

Women are often first responders when disaster strikes and, as demonstrated by extensive research, they present a range of capacities that make them excellent leaders. Mobilizing women's leadership is critical in recovery and reconstruction efforts. This can be done by getting women to participate in the decision-making processes for recovery and reconstruction and identifying women groups and community leaders to include in these processes. Work with them to help them recognize their potential, identify the roles that they can play in recovery, and provide support and training. Capacity building exercises (workshops, trainings, etc.) should target current and potential women leaders.

#### 4.5.2 Protect and Promote the Economic Livelihoods of Women

For the poor and vulnerable, recovery from the impacts of disasters depends greatly on how well livelihoods are protected and restored. Women's economic empowerment is key to resilience, and there are a number of key gender dimensions about the role of women that need to be considered in livelihood and economic recovery planning. Several actions can be taken to enable the protection of the income and assets of affected and vulnerable women and men and to avoid negative coping strategies. To better support women in self-recovery, keep in mind and possibly address the following:

- Traditional norms about the role of men as the primary income earners often prevent women from accessing income-generating opportunities through paid reconstruction work. It is therefore important that women and men have equal access to economic opportunities in recovery and reconstruction efforts. Women's participation in the management of community assets and infrastructure should be encouraged, reinforced, and maintained. This may require institutional and legal changes.
- Women are frequently found alongside men rebuilding houses, repairing and building physical infrastructure such as roads, and reclaiming or replanting agricultural land. Further, women tend to play a dominant role in maintaining and rehabilitating community services, such as education and childcare, health care, and emotional support. However, impact evaluations show that women's increased household responsibilities consistently prevent them from taking a larger role in disaster recovery initiatives.
- Women and their communities are often in a better position to respond to community needs and to decide on what kind of support a disaster-affected community requires. Women and their communities are well positioned to organize assistance. Governments and recovery programs should use women's networks to distribute resources efficiently and optimally. Putting information and resources in the hands of grassroots women's organizations can help achieve equitable aid distribution and prevent waste.
- Livelihood recovery and diversification are vital post-crisis coping mechanisms. It is therefore essential that financial recovery programs are targeted equally to women and men. Encourage women to get involved with rubble clearance, marketplace rehabilitation, or drought mitigation works. These are just

some examples of means to inject income into the local economy and empower women in the aftermath of a disaster. Social protection strategies like food for work, labor-intensive public works, and food aid can help support women who have lost their means of making a living and restore community assets that can provide much-needed income. Keep in mind that traditional safety nets may fail to reach some vulnerable groups (e.g., children, women, the elderly, and informal settlements outside the legal sphere) where they target beneficiaries by income or other indicators, such as ownership of land or assets.

Women's informal role in terms of small income earning, subsistence production and unpaid household responsibilities are often not recognized or poorly understood. When women's informal economic activities are disrupted by a disaster, there is often no financial aid to restore them, as they are not categorized as formal economic activities. In addition, for women and others in the informal sector, the loss of housing often means the loss of workplace, tools, supplies, and markets. For example, Haiti's economy is approximately 85 percent in the informal sector, with more than 75 percent of those participating in that sector being women. Agricultural produce is often grown in the garden by women and traded in the marketplace for other essentials not produced by the household or manufactured; such produce typically provides the income with which women feed and care for their children. In post-disaster settings like Haiti's, it is important to formally recognize women's agricultural activities and provide compensation for their loss of tools and agricultural inputs.

A crucial step in facilitating the economic recovery of women is therefore to operate under the assumption that women are economic providers in the household and to increase their participation in income-earning

## Case Study: Strengthening the Financial Resilience of the Poorest in Uganda through Gender Responsive Social Protection

In Uganda, the World Bank and GFDRR are supporting the government to strengthen the financial resilience of the poorest through a large social protection project that provides employment to the population through labor-intensive public works projects and direct cash transfers to households without able-bodied members. A crisis response mechanism to protect the poor and vulnerable from natural disasters has been designed to scale up assistance through public works following drought events. This mechanism takes into account the special needs of women and requires that at least 40 percent of the public works projects' participants are women. The project is implementing several gender-responsive measures to ensure that some of the selected activities are located close to villages and appropriately meet the needs of women. Through their representation on community

committees, women will also be fully involved in the decision making, including in selecting the types of public works activities to be adopted and their locations.

Direct cash transfer is intended for poor and vulnerable households without labor to participate in public works and that do not have sufficient and reliable support from children or remittances from other relatives living outside the village. Such households include lactating mothers during the first 10 months after giving birth and pregnant woman, among others. The project also improves household income with improved livelihoods through comprehensive skills development training, provision of livelihood grants, and follow-up mentoring support.

*Uganda Country Snapshot: Build the Resilience of Rural Households against Natural Disasters in Northern Uganda, The World Bank Group*

opportunities, including access to productive assets. For example, governments can support the development of federations/cooperatives for men and women to strengthen knowledge, information, and practices. These structures also allow for the sharing of productive assets and can increase access to financial services and new markets. Governments can also support gender-responsive financial services by partnering with microfinance, microloan, and insurance institutions that can develop tailored financial services to help women restart livelihood activities.

An important aspect of facilitating the economic recovery of women is to support their access to land and property rights. Countries prone to disasters can benefit from the implementation of inheritance rights to help women in recovering from losses and increase their resilience to future disasters. Joint registration of houses and land ownership between partners can support the relocation of assets and asset compensation processes. Promoting changes in discriminatory laws and supporting gender-responsive legal reforms on land titling are also important actions to support women's economic recovery.

## 5. Strengthening Gender-Responsive Recovery Systems

Strengthening recovery systems refers to enhancing governments' capacity to recover from disasters. Governments should incorporate gender-responsive DRM into their development planning and improve the links between readiness, recovery, and development processes. Disasters present an opportunity to more effectively integrate actions to promote gender equality into these processes and strengthen the empowerment of women going forward. Some of the ways governments can strengthen gender-responsive recovery systems are discussed in the following sections.

### 5.1 Invest in Actions That Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Disaster Risk Management

- Allocate funding for DRM activities that directly benefit women and that provide the national gender machinery with the capacity and resources to engage in DRM activities in advance of disasters.
  - Make dedicated commitments to empowering women as “resilience champions.” This will provide governments with the opportunity to manage risk more effectively and at the same time promote positive social transformation on gender equality.
  - Include gender equality commitments in relevant legal frameworks, institutional commitments, organizational arrangements, and capacity development in advance of disasters.
  - Promote changes in discriminatory laws and practices, and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in advance of disasters.
- Gather SADDD from the baseline statistics and include sex, age, and disability differentiation in disaster effects data-gathering questionnaires in advance of disasters.
  - Strengthen the national capacity and systems for collection of SADDD in post-disaster assessments.
  - Develop a gender assessment of the country to identify factors that contribute to gender-differentiated vulnerabilities.
  - Increase participation and leadership of women in DRM decision making at all levels, including in the national platform for disaster risk reduction (DRR).
  - Increase the capacity and resources of the national gender machinery to engage in the implementation of the recovery phase and coordinate with other line ministries, such as national disaster management offices.
  - Revise the National Disaster Plan, including national DRR strategies, to include specific provisions on gender equality.
  - Address SGBV as a cross-cutting concern and provide capacity-building on prevention of SGBV to relevant governments institutions and partners (such as the private sector and NGOs) in advance of disasters.
  - Secure support from men and traditional power holders for program activities that support gender equality and women's empowerment.



Guatemala—Young woman cooking outside of her house in Santa Catarina. Photo: VisualCommunications

## 5.2 Invest in Targeted Actions to Promote Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the Disaster Risk Management Cycle

The DRM cycle is organized around five risk management action pillars. Risk identification provides the base for all other actions: to reduce risk by putting policies and plans in place that will help avoid the creation of new risks or by addressing existing risks and to prepare for the residual risk either physically through preparedness or financially through financial protection and, finally, to recovery and reconstruction. Below is an overview of possible gender-responsive actions in the DRM cycle that governments can invest in.

### ■ Risk Identification

- Promote equal involvement of both women and men in the development of risk and hazard maps and data, as women and men identify, perceive, and experience risk differently.
- Risk assessment trainings should include

mechanisms to promote the equal participation of women and men.

- Women’s and men’s perception of risks should be considered separately when identifying risks at the community level.
- Identify gender-specific aspects of risk and vulnerability (physical, social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental).
- Include sex-disaggregated data and analysis in risk profiles and hazard maps.

### ■ Risk Reduction

- Promote women in leadership roles in DRR institutions, including the national platform for DRR.
- Identify the skills, experiences, and capabilities of both women and men for managing and reducing vulnerability.
- Promote equal substantive participation of both women and men in DRR activities.
- Provide alternative and climate-resilient livelihood opportunities to both men and women.

### Case Study: Investments in Gender-Responsive Disaster Risk Management Pay Off

In the aftermath of the 1991 Cyclone Gorky in Bangladesh, 140,000 people died. There were 14 times more deaths among women than men. This striking disparity was due in large part to social norms that prevented women from leaving their homes or staying in cyclone shelters without a male relative and called for traditional dress codes, in this case the wearing of sarees, that can easily become entangled in floods. Women were also hesitant to use cyclone shelters due to concerns around privacy. Many years later, the number of people that died in

Bangladesh from the effects of Cyclone Sidr in 2007 was much lower—3,000—with the gender mortality rate shrinking to five women to every one man. In the years after Gorky, Bangladesh shifted its focus and invested in training women as community mobilizers, having women communicate early warning messages so that other women felt comfortable heeding the warning and developing cyclone shelters with safe, women-only spaces.

*Gender & Climate Change: 3 Things You Should Know.* The World Bank Group

- Identify and act on barriers that hinder women's equal participation in DRM activities.

#### ■ Preparedness and Early Warnings

- Enable early warning systems to explicitly target both women and men in diverse cultural groups and hazard contexts and provide both gender groups with equal access to early warning systems.
- Formulate and disseminate warnings so that they are adequately understood by women, men, girls and boys.
- Promote active participation in and lead by women's groups in disaster preparedness drills and their planning.
- Train women to install, operate, and maintain early warning systems.
- Enhance all disaster preparedness and response plans so that they are gender-responsive by taking into account gender-differentiated vulnerabilities and capacities.

#### ■ Financial Protection

- Build or strengthen adaptive social protection systems that reach the most vulnerable before a hazard strikes.

- Identify the legal, policy, cultural, and social barriers that hinder women's access and use of financial protection schemes.
- Invest in increased access to financial resources for vulnerable women and men, such as microcredit, microfinance, and saving schemes, to protect and diversify vulnerable women's and men's income.
- Make women creditworthy by assigning economic value to their assets and social capital.
- Make public works gender-responsive so that women can contribute to restoring community assets and accessing needed income. Make investments in climate-resilient livelihoods infrastructure, e.g., reforestation, seawall or dyke construction, and water harvesting and storage, that benefits both women and men.
- Include such parameters as women-headed households, single households, widows, and the unemployed in financial protection plans and programs.





The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) is a global partnership that helps developing countries better understand and reduce their vulnerabilities to natural hazards and adapt to climate change. Working with over 400 local, national, regional, and international partners, GFDRR provides grant financing, technical assistance, training and knowledge sharing activities to mainstream disaster and climate risk management in policies and strategies. Managed by the World Bank, GFDRR is supported by 34 countries and 9 international organizations.

<https://www.gfdr.org/recovery-hub>