



Integrating Gender Issues in Community-based Disaster Risk Management

This note on **Integrating Gender Issues in Community-based Disaster Risk Management** is the fourth in a series of guidance notes on gender issues in disaster risk management (DRM) in East Asia and the Pacific. Following a brief introduction, the first part of this note looks at reasons to adopt a gender sensitive approach for community based disaster risk management. The second part focuses on tools to support a gender conscious approach to community based DRM efforts.

Grounded in extensive field work in Lao PDR and Vietnam, and drawing on the significant amount of material already available, these guidance notes are intended to be first stop, practical documents that can be used to design and implement gender dimensions into disaster risk management work across the EAP region. The target audience is World Bank staff, clients and development partners active in the fields of gender and DRM.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS COMMUNITY-BASED DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT?

Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) is an approach that seeks to actively engage at risk communities in the identification, analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of disaster risks in order to reduce their vulnerabilities and enhance their capacities (ADPC 2004). The underlying rationale is that communities bearing the brunt of disasters have intimate knowledge of the issues and vulnerabilities they face and therefore, given appropriate support, are well-placed to identify solutions; plan and implement disaster risk reduction activities; and in the event of a disaster, manage relief and recovery efforts.

CBDRM has traditionally been a grass-roots approach, driven mainly by international development organizations working with local government and community partners. However since the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005 – 2015, which strongly promotes the link between national and community resilience, CBDRM has increasingly been recognized as a valuable and effective approach in overall disaster risk management. These types of development projects typically aim to empower beneficiaries, and by integrating gender sensitivities into design of these programs, outcomes can be more sustainable and equitable. The main characteristics of CBDRM are outlined in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Main Characteristics of Community-based Disaster Risk Management

| Equal community participation / involvement | Reduced vulnerability focused DRM activities | Disasters are linked to development |
|---|--|---|
| <p>The community is the key actor as well as the main beneficiary of short and long term DRM.</p> <p>The community directly participates in the entire process of DRM from situational analysis to planning to implementation local level risk reduction measures.</p> <p>Responsibility for change rests with those living in the local community.</p> | <p>Recognises different risk perceptions of different people.</p> <p>Revolves around reducing vulnerable conditions and the root causes of vulnerability through increasing a community's capacities, resources, and coping strategies.</p> <p>Within the community, priority attention is given to the conditions of the most vulnerable and to their mobilization.</p> | <p>CBDRM is multi disciplinary and multi sectoral linking DRM with poverty reduction and socio-economic goals.</p> <p>Disasters are viewed as unmanaged development risks and can become unresolved problems of the development process. CBDRM should lead to improvements in the quality of life of the poor and of the natural environment.</p> |

Source: Adapted from World Bank 2008 (Yodmani 2001; 9-10); ADPC 2004

REASONS TO ADOPT A GENDER SENSITIVE CBDRM APPROACH

The aim of disaster risk management is to reduce vulnerabilities and build the resilience of communities to external shocks of major hazard events. The CBDRM approach advocates equal community participation and involvement. It focuses on community vulnerabilities and is couched within the broader sustainable development and poverty reduction goals. Using a gender sensitive approach ensures that DRM is conducted in a comprehensive way, addressing the needs and harnessing the capacity of all people (women, girls, boys and men) living in the community.

A gender sensitive CBDRM approach can have a positive impact on many aspects of women and men's lives. Working with existing women's networks (such as NGOs or grassroots organizations) helps strengthening women's participation in the community's decision-making processes. For example, women's participation can highlight issues related to gender-based violence and strengthen women's roles in community-based early warning systems. It can also be used to elevate the role of women as leaders who can drive a risk reduction agenda in support of community development goals. Below are two case studies focusing on these aspects. By actively soliciting and listening to women and men's voices and concerns, this approach can also enhance men's understanding of key gender issues.

Case Study: Safe Community Initiative, Aceh, Indonesia:

In post-tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, UN Women partnered with the NGO Relawan Perempuan untuk Kemanusiaan (RpuK) to launch the Safe Community Initiative in 2010. The initiative developed protection mechanisms to prevent violence against women at the community level. The project established a Watch Mechanism in the community that responded to incidences of violence against women in the community and built the capacity of service providers, including counsellors, hospital attendants, police and legal practitioners.

Source: *Safer Communities Initiative (2010)*. <http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/Aceh/index.html>

Case Study: Women's participation in early warning process in Ban SopBor village, Lao PDR

Floods events in 2005 in Nongbok district of Lao PDR, affected 71 out of 72 villages, and impacted close to 30,000 people. Women in Ban SopBor village reported that immediately before the 2005 flood event, the village experienced strong winds and heavy rain for up to three days. Before the onset of the floods, the Village Head issued an early flood warning to the villagers. Women were actively involved in the early warning process and helped in disseminating the flood warning and other disaster related information to the members of the household by doing a door-to-door information campaign in the village. Women's active participation contributed to households' increased awareness of the oncoming floods, in particular among female member of the households.

Source: *Field Report Gender and DRM for East Asia and Pacific region, World Bank, 2011*.

ENTRY POINTS FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN CBDRM PROGRAMS

While the importance and value of using the CBDRM approach in efforts to address the vulnerabilities of communities to natural hazards is generally well-accepted across the East Asia and Pacific region, there is a number of institutional and cultural barriers that make gender-balanced participation challenging. For example, many countries and communities have strong social or religious norms that can result in the exclusion of women's participation, resulting in DRM programs that fail to recognise women's specific needs and capacities. Field research carried out in Laos and Vietnam (World Bank 2011) for example, indicates that disaster risk management is perceived by both males and females as a man's domain. While women's roles and abilities are often acknowledged, traditional views about the roles of women and male dominated administrative committees sometimes mean that women are excluded or play only a minor role in decision making.

Mainstreaming gender into DRM refers to a process of including women and men's voices equally both in the preparation and the implementation of the project. It is important that DRM projects encourage and support the equal participation of men and women. Institutional arrangements need to make sure project management boards or teams at the different levels have female representation. Furthermore, it is important that women and women's groups are consulted to inform the design, explore opportunities for participation in implementation of project activities, and increase the possibility that women benefit on equal terms from project activities. Ensuring women's participation in DRM planning may require actions such as:

- separate consultations with men and women due to cultural norms, and organizing the consultations at times that are convenient for women;
- finding ways to lower the workload of women (which often increases post-disaster) and making childcare arrangements;
- setting up formal spaces where women can organize, learn new skills, gather and share information on the reconstruction and recovery process, start individual and collective businesses, etc.

Before rolling out a CBDRM program, it is important to put together a good and mixed team of women and men, who are capable and experienced in community engagement, and understand the gender dimensions of DRM. To be effective, it is important that the team is gender-balanced and comprises gender and sectoral specialists.

Table 1 identifies a number of entry points within the CBDRM process in which World Bank staff, partners and clients can incorporate gender dimensions.

As an Annex to this Guidance Note, a step-by-step approach to gender-based community mapping, using focal groups and community discussions is provided as a practical example of how women's and men's separate voices and concerns can be obtained as part of the DRM consultation process.



Table 1: Entry points for gender mainstreaming in the CBDRM project cycle

| Project cycle | Phase | Entry Point | Action |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Identification | Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment | Hazard Assessment Vulnerability Assessment Capacity Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive for equal participation of women and men during assessments. • Include a DRM / gender expert on assessment team • Gather information on traditional roles of women and men during each stage of the DRM cycle. • Gather information on women and men access and control over resources and other assistance (training; credit facilities). • Gather information on short-term and long-term (change) needs of women and men. • Gather information on influencing factors that shape / contribute to roles of women and men (e.g. community norms, religion, law, education). • Analyse vulnerabilities, capacities, risk perceptions of women and men. • Analyse the capacity of women and men to actively engage in DRM activities, and note the presence of strong women leaders as well as women's groups (formal and informal). |
| Preparation & Appraisal | Participatory DRM Planning | Participatory Risk Assessment Management Plan Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equal participation of women and men during planning exercises. • Encourage gender equality in government and community DRM decision making bodies. • Use participatory tools (see Annex) to ensure gender prioritization of CBDRM interventions and consideration of gender dimensions in the nature and timing of activities. • Ensure specific targets for both men's and women's needs (e.g. health, education, safety). If needed, develop initiatives that aim to increase women's participation and access to employment, technology, financial resources and time. |
| Implementation | Capacity Building & Training | Training Design and Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ gender training specialist. Ensure good mix of male and female trainers. • Integrate gender awareness training into general CBDRM training exercises. • Advocate equal participation of women and men. Set quotas for female participation. Schedule training times around women and men's normal duties / seasonal patterns. Ensure that language barriers are addressed. • Focus on women leaders, existing women's groups and government agencies. |
| | Community Managed Implementation | Implementation and implementation guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage existing women's groups and government agencies as equal partners. • Ensure women have leadership positions during project implementation. • Identify, utilize and strengthen women's resources including leadership; informal and formal networks; family, community, environment knowledge; and professional / technical expertise. • Include gender dimensions in the project operational manual including context specific guidance for disaster preparedness and response in the project area. |
| Monitoring and Evaluation | Participatory M&E | Design and implementation of community based M&E | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equal involvement of men and women in bottom up reporting mechanisms. • Ensure gender disaggregated information is recorded and fed up from local to national level and used in future policy and planning exercises. • Undertake participatory monitoring (e.g. focus groups) with women, girls, boys and men. |

Source: This table has been adapted from ADPC 2004; WB 2008.

GENDER AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT - GUIDANCE NOTES



Annex: Gender-Based Community Mapping

Guidance Note 4 on **Gender Issues in Community-based Disaster Risk Management** focuses on tools to support a gender conscious approach to community based DRM efforts. As an Annex to Guidance Note 4, a step-by-step approach for gender-based community mapping, using focal groups and community discussions is provided as a practical example of how women's and men's separate voices and concerns can be obtained as part of the DRM consultation process.

STEPS FOR GENDER-BASED COMMUNITY MAPPING, USING FOCAL GROUPS & COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS

The Disaster Specialists will coordinate the holding of the gender-based community mapping, using focal group discussions (FGD) and community discussions in collaboration and consultation with the local facilitators, documenters and reporters.

Step 1: Invite female and male participants from all community sectors, with good gender representation. Have a "runner" announce the meeting well in advance to ensure good participation.

Step 2: Divide the participants into groups (one group of women, one group of men, or several parallel groups if the community is large). For communities with ethnic groups or other vulnerable groups, additional small and separate group discussions may be necessary with these groups.

Step 3: Group assigns facilitator, documenter and reporter. The facilitator, documenter and reporter come from the pool of participants. They must be capable of leading the discussion, writing down notes and reporting to the group. They are briefed of their roles and provided with the set of questions for facilitating.

- Facilitator guides the group in its discussion of the guide questions.
- Documenter puts the main points of the discussion on the poster/flip chart.
- Reporter presents the output of the group discussion to the members of the two groups.
- All members of the groups review secondary data gathered before the group discussion.

Step 4: Provide each group with a village base map. Using some markers and signage, ask the male/ female participants to locate and provide the following information on the base map:

- What makes their village prone to typhoons, floods and droughts?
- Ask the participants to draw on the base map the geographical characteristics, which make their village prone to the three hazards such as:

- ❖ village location in relation to nearness to major rivers, reservoirs and other water bodies;
 - ❖ topography: location of low-lying areas and elevated areas (identify which areas are at risk to floods and which areas can be used for evacuation purposes);
 - ❖ road network and transport systems in relation to possible evacuation routes and systems;
 - ❖ key landmarks and services which are important for emergency purposes;
 - ❖ location of vulnerable residences, farms, factories;
 - ❖ location of community hall, public buildings, office of village officials and schools, which can be used for evacuation purposes;
 - ❖ location of clinic/health centres, water facilities and pipes, sewerage (drainage facilities), gas station, and other critical infrastructures found in the community
- Ask the participants to indicate on the map the areas which were flooded in the past two years.
 - Ask the participants to indicate on the map the areas which should be protected from flood disasters FGD/ community discussion.

Step 5: After drawing the community map, two documenters will be asked to write and record the main focal group discussion / community discussion points on poster papers. The village facilitator/discussion leader will be requested to ask the following questions:

- What were the two most devastating local disaster experiences in the past two years?
- Before the events, what were the environmental factors which greatly contributed to the unsafe conditions in the community?
- What elements in the community were subjected to disasters, such as houses, farms, etc.?
- How many people died because of the disasters? How many were injured?
- Who were the households / groups (such as women, men, elderly, children, disabled people, and ethnic groups) most affected in the village?
- What socio-economic and political factors contributed to the disaster vulnerabilities of men/ women/ elderly/ disabled/ ethnic groups?
- What were the most devastating impacts of the disasters to the different vulnerable groups?
- What two priority actions were undertaken by men/women during disaster events? Why these?
- How did men/women prepare for the disaster events?
- What capacities, knowledge and resources for dealing with disasters did men/women have?
- What were the roles played by men/women in receiving/ disseminating disaster warnings?
- What were the roles played by men and women in planning and undertaking disaster preparedness measures (such as contingency planning, stockpiling of equipment, supplies and other needed logistics, setting up, receiving and disseminating warnings, training on emergency operations, undertaking drills and simulation exercises to develop readiness)?
- What were the roles played by men/women in first aid, relief and emergency provisions (such as implement search and rescue, ensure public safety, procure food ration and relief services including hygiene kits for women, accessing drinking water, fuel supply and reducing possibilities for attacks by stressed sexual predators in evacuation centres, etc.)?
- Did men/women have access to relief assistance, livelihood provision, legal assistance, etc, in the past? List the forms of assistance and who provided them?
- What roles did men/women and women play in collaboration with district officials on data collection/gathering on emergency preparedness and provision, evacuation and relief assistance, recovery and post-disaster reconstruction in the past two years? Were they effective? Why?
- Were international groups or community organizations involved in DRM in the village? What are these organizations? How did men/women in the village collaborate with them?
- How did men and women's participate in economic production after the disaster events (such as in production of goods and services, earning cash, taking care of livestock animals, procuring farm supplies)? What were the household maintenance roles provided by men/women after the disaster events (such as care-giving to household members, taking care of sick family members, house cleaning and undertaking house repair)?
- After their flood experiences, do men/women believe that best DRM practices can help reduce the damages that will be brought about by future disaster occurrence?

Step 6: The reporters from each group will be asked to present the outputs of the gender-based community mapping and community discussion to every participant in a joint male/female wrap-up session. Each group will be asked to listen attentively to the other group's report. They will be asked to note the different ways men and women respond to disasters impacts.

Step 7: After the groups have reported, an open discussion will be held for questions, clarifications, and comments on the two groups' respective reports. The Disaster Specialist will thank the participants and close.

Source: World Bank field report, 2011.





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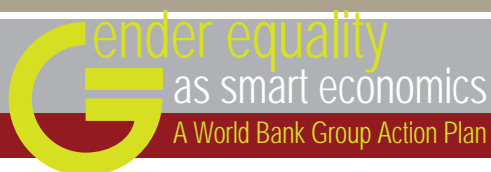
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