



# MAKING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION GENDER-SENSITIVE: POLICY AND PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

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# Why we made the guidelines

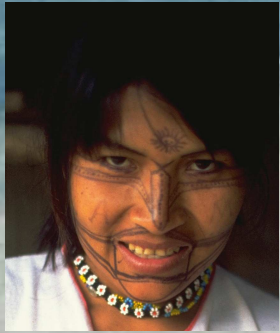
- Natural disasters, when they strike, do not discriminate between people. Disasters have no mind. Anyone and everyone in the disaster zone is affected
- However, whereas disasters do not discriminate against people, humans most certainly do
- In the before and in the aftermath of disasters, humans perpetuate social patterns of discrimination, and these entrenched patterns of discrimination cause certain groups of people to suffer more



# Why we made the guidelines

London School of Economics analyzed disasters in 141 countries -decisive evidence that gender differences in deaths from natural disasters are directly linked to women's economic and social rights. When women's rights are not protected, more women than men will die from disasters. The study also found the opposite to be true: in societies where women and men enjoy equal rights, disasters kill the same number of women and men





# Why we made the guidelines

## Efficiency

- Innumerable studies have proven the irrefutable fact that equal inclusion of women and men pays off
- A World Bank review of 121 rural water supply projects found that women's participation was among the variables strongly associated with project effectiveness. Furthermore, it was found that the failure to take gender differences and inequalities into account could result in failed projects



# Why we made the guidelines

## Compliance with international mandates

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Agenda 21
- Millennium Declaration
- The Hyogo Framework for Action



# Why we made the guidelines

## Compliance with internal UN mandates

### ECOSOC 2005/31

- All entities of the United Nations system, including United Nations agencies, funds and programs, to intensify efforts to address the challenges involving the integration of gender perspectives into policies and programs



# Structure of the guidelines





# Guidelines structure

- I. Mainstreaming Gender into Disaster Risk Reduction: Progress and Challenges
- II. Policy Guideline for Gender-Sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction
- III. Gender-Sensitive Risk Assessment
- IV. Gender-Sensitive Early Warning Systems
- V. Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Disaster Risk Reduction

## II. Policy Guideline Gender-Sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction

- Revision of international, regional and national mandates
- International frameworks such as those related to the Hyogo Framework and MDGs, have not yet led to much significant change in policy, legislation, financing or programming for gender mainstreaming in DRR



## II. Policy Guideline Gender-Sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Increase genuine political accountability and financial resources for global advocacy and action on mainstreaming gender in DRR
2. Improve conceptual and practical understanding of the linkages between gender and DRR, particularly at the national level
3. Build institutional and individual capacity and tools for mainstreaming gender into DRR



### III. Gender-Sensitive Risk Assessment

#### Why do we need to make risk assessment gender-sensitive?

- Women and men experience, perceive and identify risks differently. Everyone can be equally exposed to a hazard, but women and men have different levels of vulnerability and access to resources, and have therefore developed different coping skills



# Starting point: vulnerabilities

- Vulnerability depends in large part on the assets (physical, financial, human, social, and natural) available: the more assets, the less vulnerable one person is
- Worldwide, compared to men, women tend to have more limited access to resources that would enhance their capacity to adapt to climate change—including land, credit, agricultural inputs, decision-making bodies, technology and training services



# Starting point: vulnerabilities

- Social prejudice keeps girls and women from learning to swim and tree climbing
- Face constraints in their mobility or behavior that hinder their ability to relocate without a male relative's consent



# Starting point: vulnerabilities

- In many cases, women do not receive hazard warnings because their behavior patterns or information preferences are not taken into account. It is assumed that they will simply absorb information from men in the community
- In the case of the 1991 Bangladesh Cyclone, warning information was transmitted by men to men in public spaces, meaning women did not receive information directly



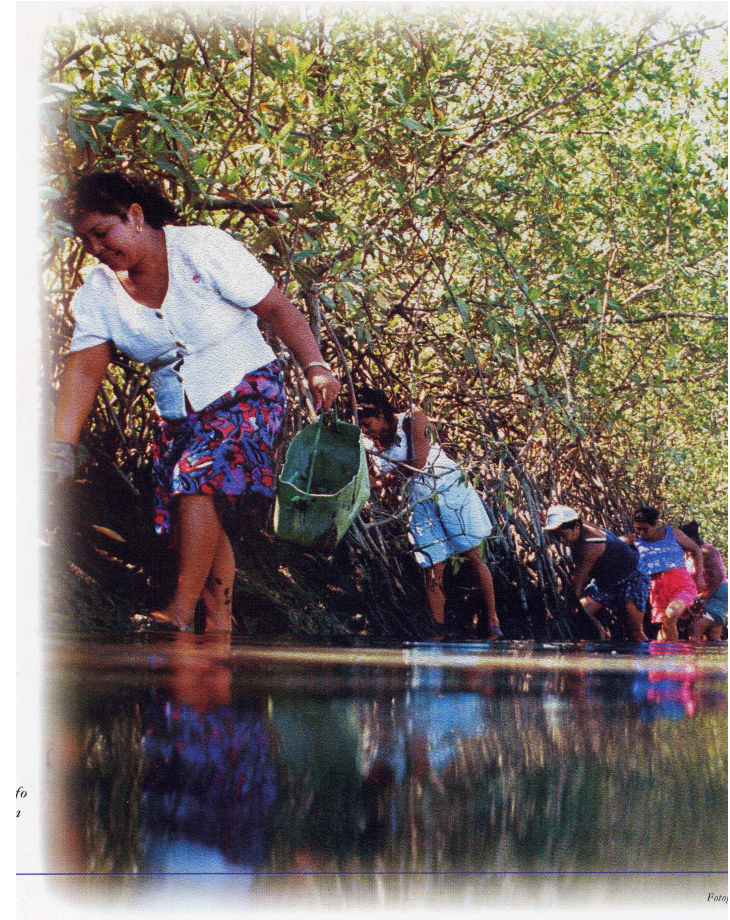
**Women are powerful agents of change** and their leadership is critical. They have unique knowledge and skills that are crucial when addressing or managing risks





# Women and ecosystems

- Gender-sensitive ecosystem management or sound environmental management can offer **cost-effective solutions to reducing community vulnerability** to disasters
- Women's role in mangrove restoration has been crucial. These natural buffers are often **less expensive to install or maintain, and often more effective than physical engineering structures.** IUCN has produce guidelines on how healthy ecosystems and sound environmental management reduce underlying risk factors



# CHECKLIST FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE RISK ASSESSMENT

## Identifying risks

- **Actively engage women and men from the communities in local risk identification**
- **Map the available community organizations that can ensure the participation of both men and women, and involve them in consultation on hazards, and assessing risk**
- **Determine the risks faced by men and women separately**
- **Involve women and men equally in the process to review and update risk data each year**

## Determining vulnerabilities

- **Map and document the gender-differentiated vulnerabilities (physical, social, economic, cultural, political and environmental)**
- **Conduct historical analysis of disaster damage experience disaggregated by sex for vulnerability and capacity identification**
- **Identify and include women's needs, concerns, and knowledge in the community vulnerability assessments conducted for all relevant natural hazards**

# CHECKLIST FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE RISK ASSESSMENT

## Identifying capacities

- Ensure that the capacities of all women's groups, organizations or institutions are assessed along with those of men
- Identify the specific functions, roles and responsibilities carried out by women and men and build these into the analysis
- Actively engage women's organizations to assist with capacity building

## Determine acceptable levels of risk

- Involve both women and men in the development of hazard and risk maps
- Collect and analyze gender-differentiated data for assessing acceptable levels of risk
- Ensure that hazard maps include the gender-differentiated impacts of risk

## IV. Gender-Sensitive Early Warning Systems

- Demonstrate the importance of gender-sensitive early warning, and show why early warning systems that present themselves as gender neutral cannot be effective.
- Three checklists provide more detail on how to implement the three elements of gender-sensitive early warning systems



## IV. Gender-Sensitive Early Warning Systems

Ensure continuous monitoring of hazard parameters and precursors using local and learned knowledge, and the abilities of women and men in the community

Involvement of women could help identify the events earlier, which will reduce the risks (La Masica)

Women and men have a different knowledge of their surroundings because they use different resources and are in charge of different activities

1. Risk knowledge
2. A monitoring and warning service
3. Dissemination of meaningful warnings to those at risk
4. Response capability

## IV. Gender-Sensitive Early Warning Systems

Gender-sensitive dissemination and communication systems increase the benefits that a community obtains from these types of initiatives

Women and men within their social and cultural context can prefer to access information differently, which can affect the manner and medium

Women's involvement increases the number of people informed they are connected to different social networks and often have specific and different communication strategies that take into consideration women's practices, concerns and needs

1. Risk knowledge
2. A monitoring and warning service
3. **Dissemination of meaningful warnings to those at risk**
4. Response capability

## IV. Gender-Sensitive Early Warning Systems

Women around the world have played a key role in their communities and have developed various capacities to adapt, prevent and mitigate impact of disasters

Identified and value the coping strategies that women have developed

Women are usually responsible for children and the elderly; therefore the demands on them immediately prior to and during a disaster are very different from that of men's

1. Risk knowledge
2. A monitoring and warning service
3. Dissemination of meaningful warnings to those at risk
4. **Response capability**

## IV. Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Disaster Risk Reduction

- Gender-sensitive indicators are **signs** that help to take the pulse of equality between women and men in a given place, whether it is worldwide, a region, a province, or a community
- They are needed in order to measure progress or setbacks in reaching gender equality over time, in ways that may be analyzed and systematized





## IV. Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Disaster Risk Reduction

- Provides a background to indicators specifically for use in the development of gender-sensitive policy, risk assessment and early warning systems
- The principles can be used to develop indicators for other elements of the Hyogo Framework



## Examples Gender-Sensitive Indicators

- Comparative percentage of women and men that have died during disasters
- Number of women using disaster reduction technology
- Number of women involved in decision-making processes related to reduction of vulnerabilities
- Percentage of the resources provided to reduced vulnerabilities given to women
- Percentage of women involved in the consultation about risks

## Examples Gender-Sensitive Indicators

- Comparative percentage of women and men trained in risk assessment
- Number of studies with gender differentiated data and analysis of acceptable levels of risk
- Number of gender sensitive up-to-date emergency preparedness and response plans developed



# Final Thoughts

No amount of human planning, preparedness, or scientific investigation can completely prevent all catastrophes. Floods, hurricanes, and wild fires occur at random and beyond. Yet, preventing **social** catastrophes most certainly lies within our collective human capacity

By upholding gender considerations we are, in fact, making one of the most crucial preparations for disasters that any society can make





We cannot afford to make the same mistakes. By not acknowledging gender issues we are responsible for the deaths and impoverishment of thousands of people