



Gender and Preparedness **3**

Gender and Preparedness

This tool provides practical tips on how to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in preparedness efforts on the ground.

There is increasing evidence that more women than men are killed in natural disasters, and that more men than women are killed in armed conflict. In natural disasters, the deficit in women's participation in preparedness and response often signals the marginalization of others, including the elderly, people with disabilities and minority groups.

Women and men are often equally active in local preparedness and efforts to build disaster-resilient communities. Both have crucial roles at the household and community level. However, women's roles in mitigating and preparing for disasters and in managing emergencies frequently go unrecognized in formal disaster management circles, and they tend to be

excluded from planning relief distribution. The presence of women and attention to gender differences evaporates at progressively senior levels until it is non-existent in national- and regional-level discussions.

Humanitarian workers can contribute to gender-inclusive disaster preparedness through the following:

- 1 Coordination structures
- 2 Gender analysis to inform preparedness
- 3 Vulnerability assessments
- 4 Information gathering and management
- 5 Planning
- 6 Capacity-building
- 7 Resource mobilization

1 Coordination structures

The key country-level players in disaster preparedness and response are the National Government's Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and relevant line ministries. The NDMO leads national coordination. The coordination efforts of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the clusters work in parallel with and in support of the NDMO. UN agencies, specifically ISDR, UNDP and OCHA, have leadership roles in preparedness.

- The Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) needs to be consulted in order to identify preparedness priorities and strategically help to bring gender dimensions into the pulse of the HCT's preparedness work.

- Strategic relationships should be built with UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and, if present, ISDR and OCHA. These agencies drive the UN's disaster preparedness.
- It is also important to pro-actively support gender and protection service providers to be an integrated part of disaster response (e.g. psychosocial and gender-based violence services).
- Consult with the RC/HC on disaster risk reduction support needed and adapt activities to identified areas.
- Establish links with the HCT, Government and UNDP.



2 Gender analysis to inform preparedness

Gender analysis should be conducted before, during and after natural disasters. It should be used to stimulate discussion on the gender lessons learned. This data and reflection give excellent focus to preparedness and contingency planning for future disasters. Field analysis should always be conducted with implementing partners' active field teams. Collaborating on gender analysis in the field presents opportunities to jointly carry out tool development, analysis and reporting. This creates an active learning experience for all.

- The entry point is to work with partner field teams to ensure that practical and relevant tools and approaches are used to conduct relevant gender analysis in communities. Cluster-specific insights should be gathered.
- Gender lessons learned and recommended actions must be discussed with individual cluster leads and their teams.
- This analysis can later make a valuable contribution to the vulnerability assessment, which is conducted when disaster strikes.

3 Vulnerability assessment

This is essential to identify who is most vulnerable and why, which capacities need to be developed and strengthened, and what relief and services are needed. Gender analysis is essential to ensure the right response for all women, girls, boys and men. Social networks, power relationships, knowledge, skills, gender roles, health, wealth and location all affect risk and vulnerability to disasters and the capacity to respond to them. Vulnerabilities and capacities of individuals and social groups evolve over time and determine people's abilities to cope with and recover from disaster.

- Tools and approaches used by assessment teams should allow the mapping of the different risks faced by women, girls, boys and men.
- Provide technical support in gaining gender-differentiated insight into the capacities and the vulnerabilities of all disaster-affected groups.
- Ensure that gender and diversity are included in vulnerability and capacity assessments.
- Provide gender technical support in monitoring hazard threats to vulnerable groups at the community level.

4 Information gathering and management

Experience shows that assessments planned in a rush often fail to collect essential gender and protection information. In the same rush, time and attention may not be paid to ensuring an appropriate gender mix in assessment teams. Ideally, women-to-women and men-to-men discussions should be conducted to identify the needs, coping abilities and best solutions for all affected people. Although the initial rapid assessment has limited opening for consultation, there are various methods and tools to help maximize the inclusiveness that is possible. All follow-up assessments need to be structured to ensure deeper capture of relevant data by sex, age, disability and context-relevant vulnerability.

- Preparedness should always put priority on having agreed assessment tools and approaches in place before disaster strikes. This is a preparedness responsibility of the NDMO, with technical input and support, as needed, from the international community.
- If in-country clusters are active, this will be a priority of OCHA and the inter-cluster forum. If the NDMO does not initiate this, it is vital that the international community agrees on a practical, inclusive tool for rapid assessments in which it collaborates.
- Likewise, clusters should agree on common sectoral-assessment tools as part of their preparedness. Mandated to mainstream gender and protection, clusters should ensure that assessment tools capture relevant gender and protection information.
- Assist in the development of gender-sensitive assessment tools for the collection of baseline data.
- Assist in the development of engendered common rapid needs-assessment tools.
- Provide technical support to ensure that established early warning mechanisms have clear information and communication flows to all groups in the community.
- Support the development and dissemination of guidelines on early warning response to high-risk groups in the community.
- Provide technical support in establishing early warning systems that include all groups in the community for monitoring early warning indications.



5 Planning

Country-level contingency plans and cluster workplans are central to preparedness. Standards and guidelines need to be agreed before disaster strikes. Planning is also fundamental to effective stockpiling. With gender-sensitive planning, pre-positioning and Government-approved lists of allowed relief items can ensure that food and non-food relief meet needs and do not cause harm. Harm can take many forms including a surge of gender-based violence (GBV) when relief supplies are inappropriate, opportunistic promotion of baby formula that undermines breastfeeding, and gaps in the supply of preferred contraceptives.

- A hazard prioritization based on gender and vulnerability analysis and lessons learned from previous disasters.
- Assist in ensuring sectoral response plans include GBV and other gender concerns.
- Put contingency plans through the rigor of a simulation exercise so that value can be added by ensuring gender and protection concerns are meaningfully integrated into the simulation and the follow-up revision of the contingency plan.
- Assist in hazard prioritization based on conducted vulnerability analysis and identified gaps from lessons learned.
- Ensure that sectoral response plans address identified gaps and possible GBV occurrences.
- Ensure that gender considerations are taken on board in simulation exercises.
- Provide technical support in mainstreaming these considerations during the revision of the contingency plan.
- Facilitate a session on gender and mainstream gender perspectives in emergency preparedness trainings.

6 Capacity-Building

Engaging communities in preparing for natural disasters is key to reducing risk. The objective is to enhance and build onto the existing knowledge of women, girls, boys and men. The active and equal engagement of women and men in this process enhances the coping strategies of the community against hazard risks and reduces its vulnerability against them. For these reasons, many Governments actively support communities forming disaster management committees. International or local NGOs often partner with the Government as implementers to facilitate community committees that create and implement disaster management plans.

- Help train and build the gender capacity of key implementing partners and their trainer-of-trainer teams who work in community-level disaster preparedness.
- These capacity-building activities can be strategically used to promote meaningful participation of males and females by generation, including people with disabilities and other minority or vulnerable groups.

7 Resource Mobilization

UN resolutions, evaluations and donors all demand evidence that humanitarian investment is meeting the distinct needs of the most vulnerable women, girls, boys and men.

- An important part of contribution to preparedness is to ensure that identified gender needs are reflected in Flash Appeals, CAPs and other funding mechanisms. GenCap training on the IASC Gender Marker supports this. It helps ensure that projects are well designed to target beneficiaries, gender coding is accurate and clusters monitor that projects are implemented to fulfill their gender code.
- Ensure that identified gender needs are reflected in Flash Appeals and CAPs.
- Provide training on the Gender Marker and participate in project-vetting teams.



To find out more about gender equality work in OCHA and additional gender tools, go to:

<http://ochanet.unocha.org/TI/Gender/>
<http://http://gender.humanitarianresponse.info>