



The Gender Dimension of Disaster Risk Management

Editorial

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by disasters and threats, including the effects of climate change. Due to gender-specific barriers and inequalities, women are more likely to be killed or injured, and are confronted with higher economic losses and longer recovery time.

Across the board, from life expectancy to education, housing, health, safety, job security, and nutrition, women and girls face different challenges than men. Yet, women are largely excluded from decision-making, including in shaping disaster risk reduction and resilience policy, strategies, and programmes. Evidence shows that gender-responsive Disaster Risk Management is better informed, and more effective.

But how can the gender dimensions, and other intersecting factors of discrimination and exclusion in Risk Management be assessed?

How can gender-responsive and socially inclusive measures in disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery be strengthened?

How are women and minority groups empowered as agents of change in a DRM project?

In a recent workshop, SDC and the Swiss NGO DRR community brought the Gender and the DRR constituencies together, to jointly reflect on these aspects, related concepts, and practical experience. The present newsletter features selected case studies for continued learning and wider sharing in the DRR and Gender networks. Thanks to all who contributed to this Newsletter !

Enjoy the reading

[Jacqueline Schmid](#), Senior Sector Policy Advisor DRR, SDC DRR Network, SD C Head office

[Corinne Huser](#), Senior Gender Equality Policy Advisor, SDC Head office

[Judith Macchi](#), Climate Change and Resilience Advisor, HEKS

[Isabelle Providoli](#), Backstopping Mandate SDC DRR Network, CDE, University of f Bern

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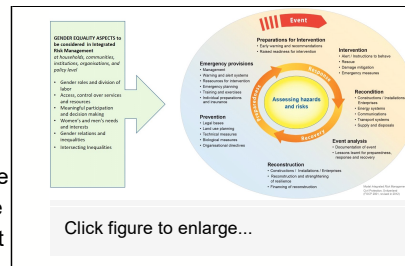
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Understanding gender dimensions of disaster risk (management)

'There is no such thing as a natural disaster' is a common saying in the DRR community. As a matter of fact, disasters occur in a risk situation, i.e. when a hazard hits a situation of vulnerability and exposure - where people, and their assets, are not protected in time from the impact of a hazardous event.



$\text{Risk} = \text{Hazard} \times \text{Vulnerability} \times \text{Exposure} / \text{Coping capacity}$

Effective Disaster Risk Management will thus need to be based on a comprehensive understanding of hazards and vulnerabilities, exposure and coping capacities. Assessing such elements requires a differentiated analysis and understanding of how and to what extent different segments of society are exposed to risks and impacted by disasters. Read here [SDC's basic concepts of gender](#). Thereby, the different situations of men and women need particular attention to understand implications for more nuanced measures to prevent and/or respond to natural disasters, and are relevant in all parts of the Disaster Risk Management Cycle.

The [Disaster Risk Management](#) (DRM) cycle is a fundamental guiding concept for the international DRR community and governments to identify and plan DRR measures. The approach links and coordinates humanitarian concerns and development issues expressed in appropriate DRR interventions and projects.

We clustered the "stories from the field" according to the DRM cycle: prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, build back better/ build back forward.

Read [more](#).

[Corinne Huser](#), Senior Gender Equality Sector Policy Advisor, Gender Network, SDC Head office

[Jacqueline Schmid](#), Senior DRR Sector Policy Advisor, DRR Network, SDC Head office

Videos

Gender and Climate change in Bangladesh – Sisters on the Planet

The annual monsoon rains in Bangladesh are getting heavier and more unpredictable. Women have taken the fight against climate

change into their own hands. Sahena Begum is spear-heading community efforts to deal with changing weather in Kunderpara village.



See [here](#).

Gender and Climate Change 2020, Bhutan



The video depicts how climate change impacts men and women differently. It highlights the gender-climate change nexus in the country, particularly in the areas of agriculture, energy and waste.

See [here](#).

Gender and Climate Change in Bhutan



Interview: participatory risk assessment

A gender specific lens to assessing climate and disaster risks with the PACDR Tool

Interview with PELUM Uganda

The network PELUM Uganda has used the [Participatory Assessment of Climate and Disaster Risk \(PACDR\)](#) tool in community-led resilience building processes for a decade. Josephine Akia Luyimbazi (Country Coordinator PELUM Uganda) shares their experiences with us.



The PACDR tool is used to gather and analyze information on community-level vulnerabilities and capacities to climate change. Through its gendered and participatory approach, the tool gives a special emphasis to ensure that all voices are heard, and differentiated risk perceptions integrated in the assessment process that suggests solutions to address impacts of climate change. Working along this PACDR process reportedly leads towards a change of mindset from vulnerable (handout mentality) to empowered community members with adequate re-sources to respond to climate disasters. This has catalysed climate action on the ground.

Read full interview [here](#).

PELUM UGANDA, [Josephine Akia Luyimbazi](#) – Country Coordinator
HEKS/EPER, [Judith Macchi](#) – Thematic Advisor Climate Change and Resilience

Stories from the field

Working through community structures

How the Red Cross integrates the gender dimension in disaster risk management

The Swiss Red Cross (SRC) pledges in its Charter on Gender and Diversity (2019) to main-stream gender and diversity within the organisation and in all its domestic and international activities and services. SRC sector projects, particularly in the health domain,

address specific gender needs and integrate gender transformative processes, such as the transformation of adverse gender norms and behaviour patterns.



First Aid volunteers during a simulation exercise (@ SRC Nepal).

In **Haiti**, Women Leadership in Disaster Management Committees is crucial for the protection of the natural environment and Disaster Risk Management. The Project in **Nepal** shows that the participation of women in local risk governance is fundamental, yet, still on a rocky path-way, and in **Bangladesh**, the

participation of Women in the Disaster Management Committees leads to more inclusive service provision.

Read more about the gender transformative achievements in DRM, from Haiti, Nepal and Bangladesh [here](#).

[Anton Jöhr](#), DRR Advisor, [Swiss Red Cross](#)

Prevention

Floods, Menstruation and School Attendance

Many young people in **El Salvador** lack the knowledge, supplies and safe spaces they need to comfortably manage their menstruation. Many young people who menstruate stop going to school due to limited supplies and hygienic facilities and stigmatization. The situation worsens, e.g., during a flood where access to privacy and sanitation facilities can be limited. As a member of the [Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance](#), Plan International are working with four communities in El Salvador to demystify menstruation, working together with young people as well as their family members challenging taboos and misconceptions.



Read more [here](#).

[Manuel von der Mühlen](#), Global Program Coordinator, [Plan International Switzerland](#) and

Preparedness

Gender transformative disaster risk reduction

When Practical Action conducted research into the gender and age dimensions of disaster risk, serious gaps in the existing data encouraged the development of analytical approaches for better determining what the differences are, and how projects, policies and planning procedures can be geared to all segments of society.



Read about the learnings and implementation in several projects on including studies into disaster impacts, early warning, and disaster risk financing in Nepal, Malawi, Dominica, Bangladesh, and the Philippines.

Read more [here](#).

[Sarah Brown](#), Thematic Lead for Disaster Risk Reduction, Practical Action
[Dr Mirianna Budimir](#), Senior Disaster Reduction Advisor, Practical Action
[Alison Sneddon](#), Disaster Risk Reduction Advisor, Practical Action

Mitigating gender-based violence (GBV) risks: how anticipatory action supports safety and access to services for women and girls

In disasters, women and children are



14 times more likely to die than men due to a range of factors. Early warning messages are typically less



likely to reach women than men, and women and girls have fewer options and less flexibility to flee when facing an emergency; for example, they are less likely to be able to swim or climb than men and boys. They can also be hindered by social norms around menstruation, a lack of menstrual products, or because they have to stay behind to care for children or elderly relatives who cannot flee. These circumstances are all rooted in prevailing gender inequality and women's lower status, which means they have less bargaining power and lack access to assets and information. The combined effect is that they are more vulnerable than men when experiencing disasters, hazards or conflict.

UNFPA has articulated several steps to integrate attention to GBV in anticipatory action plans.

Read [more](#).

Preparedness towards Protection of women and girls in emergency situations

Some 500 women die globally during pregnancy, or while giving birth in emergency settings. Building capacities to address protection issues requires adequate



development strategies, and trained staff. The disaster response programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, funded by Switzerland and United Nations, strengthens local capacities by training professionals in humanitarian assistance and protection in regions prone to natural disasters through the Minimal Initial Services Package (MISP).

Read [more here](#).

[Bosko Kenjic](#), Senior Program Officer, [Embassy of Switzerland in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

[John Kennedy Mosoty](#), UNFPA Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, [UNFPA Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

Inclusion of women with disabilities in local disaster management coordination in Bangladesh

CBM in partnership with local and national organizations launched several disability inclusion disaster risk reduction projects in Bangladesh.



Gender specific inclusive interventions and building capacity of women with disabilities, can significantly reduce the risk of these women. The interventions under these projects captured the challenges of ensuring inclusion in local and national DRR coordination systems and risk reduction interventions.

Read [more here](#).

[Jonathan Baltensperger](#), Programme Coordinator Cameroon, India, Kenya, [CBM](#)
[Refata Nasim](#), Programme Officer, CBM Global Disability Inclusion

Gender identity and disaster response in Nepal

Agencies need to be mindful of the special needs of LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex) victims of disasters in order to enhance protection and minimise unintended harmful consequences of relief efforts. Although there is a need for more research in this area, there is evidence to suggest that LGBTI persons may be discriminated against during disasters in various ways: being perceived as lower priority for rescue efforts; families with same-sex partners being excluded from distribution of food and other basic supplies; and difficulty visiting injured partners and claiming the bodies of deceased loved ones. A recent study of relocation efforts following floods in southern Nepal in 2008 found that the needs of some LGBTI communities were indeed overlooked and, for some, relief efforts resulted in unintended harmful effects.

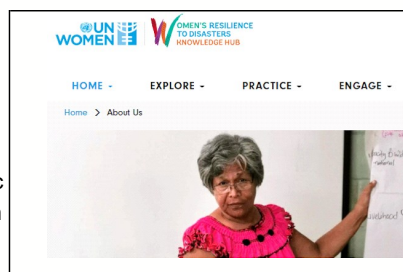
See [here](#) for further information.

Topic related platforms and knowledge products

Platform

UN women – Women's resilience to disasters (WRD) knowledge hub

The new [Women's Resilience to Disasters Knowledge Hub](#) was launched in partnership with the Australian Government in February 2022.



The WRD Knowledge Hub has been developed for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, gender, social inclusion, resilience, women's rights organisations, policy-makers, and practitioners worldwide, while providing useful material to all those interested in learning more about gender-responsive disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and risk informed development.

The new WRD Knowledge Hub includes:

- A searchable [WRD library](#) and [WRD Toolbox](#) for accessing tools, guidance, and publications;
- The [WRD Policy Tracker](#), which monitors progress national and regional progress achieving gender-responsive and inclusive laws, policies, strategies, and plans;
- Two regional pages for [South East Asia](#) and the [Caribbean](#) (we are also planning to develop additional regional pages, starting with the Pacific, and then West and Central Africa);
- A key [events page](#), which allows you to keep up to date with upcoming meetings, webinars, and training; and
- The [WRD Expert Register](#) which helps users identify experts with thematic or regional experience on disaster and climate resilience.

Join the [WRD Community of Practice](#), sign up to the [WRD newsletter](#), and share the [WRD Knowledge Hub](#) with your networks.

See for more information [here](#).

Tools

UNCCD-WOCAT gender-responsive Sustainable Land Management (SLM) tool



Gender equality is a key entry-point for SLM adoption, spread and upscaling. Therefore, the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and the UN-Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) are working together to improve gender-responsiveness of SLM practices. They designed a tool to add a gender lens to SLM practices and assess their gender-responsiveness and to identify areas of improvement for wider adoption and dissemination, making SLM beneficial for women and men alike.



WOCAT - World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies

Questionnaire on Gender-responsive Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Technologies

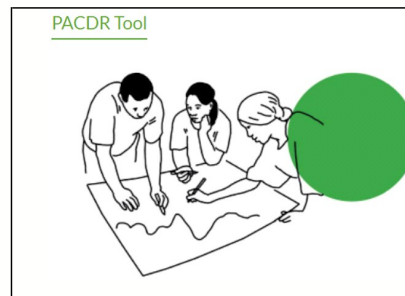
Version 2022

See for more information [here](#).

Rima Mekdaschi Studer, WOCAT, CDE, University of Bern

Participatory Assessment for Climate and Disaster Risk – PACDR Tool

Changing climate patterns, extreme weather events and resulting disasters are severely challenging poor communities all over the world. To support them in dealing with climate change, Bread for all, HEKS and Brot für die Welt together with FAKT have developed and applied the tool Participatory Assessment of Climate and Disaster Risks (PACDR).



The PACDR tool is used to gather and analyze information on community-level vulnerabilities and capacities to climate change.

See for more information [here](#).

Publications

Gender dimensions of disaster risk and resilience – existing evidence

The report prepared by Erman et al. 2021 is a review of evidence and data on how men and women, boys and girls are impacted by, prepare for and cope with disasters. The objective is to map out, understand and identify the most important knowledge gaps in the channels through which gender dynamics affect outcomes in disaster impacts and resilience. The review contributes to existing knowledge by providing an up-to-date, in-depth, and comprehensive analysis of gender dynamics in disasters, their impacts, and consequences.

See [here](#).



Reports and studies on gender and climate change by UN Conventions

The topics of gender and climate change are high on the agenda by UN Conventions. The following reports and studies have been published recently.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The UNFCCC prepared a report on the “Dimensions and examples of the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, the role of women as agents of change and opportunities for women”.



United Nations

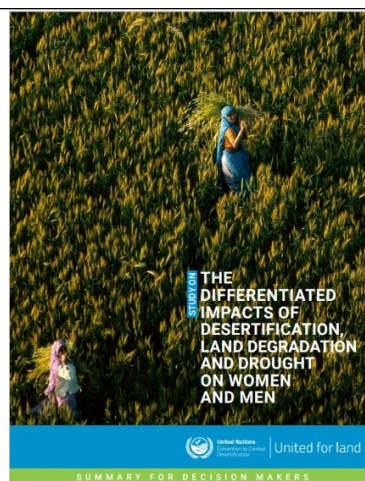
Framework Convention on Climate Change

The report synthesizes information on gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, the role of women as agents of change and opportunities for women in the context of climate change.

See [here](#).

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

The study on “Differentiated Impacts of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought on Women and Men” launched at the UNCCD COP15 May 2022 revealed that women are twice more affected by drought, land degradation, and deforestation. The study highlights some of the most relevant problems, as well as solutions, associated with how deforestation, land degradation, and drought affect women and men differently, with an overall impact on the environment and on the societies in general. It also considers gender equality in the context of the UNCCD with the aim to inform decision-making processes that relate to gender equality in the context of the UNCCD, specifically around the formulation of concrete policies and measures aimed at the implementation of the UNCCD’s Gender Action Plan.



See [here](#).

Further news and events

E-discussion on Early Warning – Early Action

An e-discussion took place from 19th of January to 8th of February 2022 hosted by the [SDC DRR Network](#). The main aim was to offer the participants (DRR Network members and non-members) a learning, reflection and networking opportunity on how to make use of Early Warning – Early Action (EW-EA) approaches, also referred to anticipatory action (AA).



The discussions included the following aspects:

- Learn more about the topic and get linked to relevant know-how, experiences and peers.
- Express participant's thinking and ideas about pushing the topic further in their sphere of influence.
- Understand the elements needed for effective anticipatory action, with good practices, and challenges

For the summary of the e-discussion see [here](#) .

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** has chosen 'climate change, environment and disaster risk reduction' as the priority theme for its annual session in March 2022. The focus was on "gender equality at the centre of solutions". Member States adopted an outcome document with jointly agreed conclusions to promote women's and girls' full and equal participation and leadership in DRR policies and programmes.



Read more [here](#) .

Seventh Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2022)

The seventh session of the Global Platform (GP2022) was organized by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) from 23 to 28 May 2022, in Bali, Indonesia, hosted by the Government of Indonesia. The event was co-chaired by the Government of Indonesia and UNDRR. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is the main global forum to assess and discuss progress on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.



Have a look at the co-chair's summary, the proceedings, and the speeches and statements [here](#)

Who is who: new face in the DRR team

New colleague at the SDC Regional Hub in Lima, Peru

Nicole Clot has been recently appointed as Senior Regional Advisor in Lima. She is responsible for the DRR and RR portfolio in the Andean countries – Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia.



She is a Geographer and has been a member of the Humanitarian Corp of the expert group DRR and Environment while working as an Advisor on DRR and Adaptation to Climate Change in many different countries.

Read [more](#).

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