



ENSURING GENDER RESPONSIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Good Practices from ASEAN

2022



Foreword

ASEAN is facing a more complex and challenging disaster risk landscape. Studies show that the impacts of disasters, however, are not gender neutral, with women, children, youth, the elderly, the poor, and people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups among the most impacted. The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2025 considers gender and social inclusion as one of its guiding principles. It encourages ASEAN to inculcate a whole-of-society approach in disaster management that leaves no one behind by recognising the key roles and unique needs of the communities, especially those that are most affected during disasters including women, children, youth, elderly, the poor and people with disabilities as well as other vulnerable groups.

In this regard, the ACDM has taken further steps to mainstream gender and social inclusion into disaster management efforts in the region, most notably in the establishment of the Technical Working Group on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (TWG-PGI) in disaster management in 2020, bringing together unique perspectives from the relevant sectoral bodies in ASEAN and the launch of the ASEAN Regional Framework on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in Disaster Management 2021-2025 which sets a common vision for promoting PGI in disasters across the region.

ASEAN strongly supports the implementation of the Ha Noi Recommendations for Action on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction, which provides concrete actions for national governments of the Asia-Pacific to strengthen the integration of gender equality in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030. The publication of the *Ensuring Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction - Good Practices from ASEAN* offers the region a wide range of recommendations and practical experiences spanning across the SFDRR priorities.

On this note, I would like to commend the ACDM for working closely with relevant stakeholders in finalising the publication as well as their continued leadership in advancing disaster resilience in our region. I would also like to convey my appreciation to the Viet Nam Disaster Management Authority (VNDMA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) for their support on this publication as well as their active collaboration in disaster management in ASEAN region.

As we commit to addressing the impacts of disasters in a holistic manner, I am hopeful that the publication of the *Ensuring Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction - Good Practices from ASEAN* will contribute to a sustainable and resilient ASEAN Community.



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Table of Contents

FOREWORDS	3
INTRODUCTION	6
PRIORITY 1: UNDERSTANDING DISASTER	7
Case Study 1 - From Data to Resilience: Viet Nam’s Experience in Developing Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	7
Case Study 2 - Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Profile: Thailand’s Action towards Gender Inclusive Disaster Database.....	10
PRIORITY 2: STRENGTHENING DISASTER RISK GOVERNANCE TO MANAGE DISASTER RISKS	12
Case Study 1 - Policies Matter: Indonesia’s Legal and Institutional Framework in Disaster Management.....	12
Case Study 2 - Putting Gender at the Center of the Table: the Philippines’ Experience in Gender Sensitizing its Disaster Management Mechanism.....	14
PRIORITY 3: INVESTING IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION FOR RESILIENCE	19
Case Study 1 - The Use of Technology in Building Safer and Resilient Schools in Lao PDR.....	16
Case Study 2 - Cambodia’s Action for Women’s Economic Empowerment and Disaster Resilience through Renewable Energy.....	19
PRIORITY 4: ENHANCING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSE AND “BUILD BACK BETTER” IN RECOVERY, REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION	22
Case Study 1 -Gender-Responsive PDNA: Lao PDR Puts an Extra Mile on its Disaster Impact Assessment Methodology	22
Case Study 2 - Empowering Women to Empower Community: Viet Nam’s Gender-Responsive Disaster Preparedness Strategy	25

Introduction

In March 2015, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) which provides global guidance on disaster risk reduction (DRR) was adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan. One of the guiding principles for the implementation of the Sendai Framework states that *'a gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices'* and that *'women and their participation are critical to effectively managing disaster risk and designing, resourcing and implementing gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes and adequate capacity building measures need to be taken to empower women for preparedness as well as build their capacity for alternate livelihood means in post-disaster situations'*. Under Sendai Framework Priority 4, it goes on to state that *'empowering women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches is key'* for disaster preparedness for effective response.

In the Asia-Pacific region women are significant contributors to disaster preparedness, prevention, and overall risk reduction. Women play a greater role in risk management and resilience building than often acknowledged. On the other hand, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to disasters due to structural barriers and socio-economic discrimination based on their gender. They often lack access to resources, skills and information necessary for disaster preparedness and for securing livelihoods that will enhance their resilience. For example, 77% of the dead from the 2004 Tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, were women and girls and 55% of the dead from the 2015 Nepal earthquake were women and girls. Women are among those that make up more than 80% of those living below \$2 per day in Asia, which means they have limited access to savings to cope with disasters. Furthermore, women in Asia and the Pacific have the lowest decision making and political power in the world, thereby limiting their say and influence in DRR decision making processes.

In response to these concerns, the Regional Asia-Pacific Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction was held between 16 and 18 May 2016, organized by UN Women and the Government of Viet Nam, in collaboration with UNISDR, UNDP, and other partners, with support from the Government of Japan. The conference brought together over 300 participants from Viet Nam and twenty-two countries across the Asia-Pacific region to identify actions to ensure implementation of the Sendai Framework in the region will be gender responsive and inclusive. The participants agreed on a set of recommendations for action, and agree to work towards incorporating these into regional and national DRR decision making processes, including the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of Sendai Framework that is expected to be adopted at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in November 2016, and the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific, which is expected to be endorsed by the Pacific Islands Development Forum leaders in 2016.

On 10 November 2021, the first ASEAN Forum on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction was jointly organised by the ASEAN Secretariat, Viet Nam Disaster Management Authority, UN Women, and supported by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Under the theme of "5 Years after the Enforcement of the Ha Noi Recommendations for Action on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction", the Forum provided a platform to promote commitments of ASEAN Member States on integration of gender in the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2025 and the ASEAN Regional Framework on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in Disaster Management 2021-2025. The Forum revisited the Ha Noi Recommendations to sharpen the recommendations and informing ASEAN Member States with practical experiences. This book is a compendium consolidating 8 good practices from ASEAN member states along side Ha Noi Recommendations for Actions on Gender and DRR.

Priority 1: Understanding Disaster

Case Study 1 - From Data to Resilience: Viet Nam's Experience in Developing Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)



Data and analysis are the cornerstone of a sound development policy and program. A comprehensive set of data will generate a solid analysis which serves as a firm basis for policymaking. In the context of disaster, data availability becomes paramount as it serves as a prerequisite of vulnerability and risk assessment to determine the probability of disaster occurrence and its possible impact. At this juncture, there has been an increased urge for more availability of SADDD specifically to assess the level of vulnerability of at-risk groups during disasters and the types of assistance that can be rendered accordingly. The SADDD is also expected to lead to improved agency, representation and leadership of women, youth, and people with disabilities (PWDs), among others, in community resilience building.

Answering to the call, the Government of Viet Nam, through its National Disaster Management machinery, has kicked start the process of integrating SADDD into its national disaster risks database. This will add significantly to the country's existing efforts in collecting data on deaths, injuries, and missing persons in large-scale disasters.¹ The collection and utilization of SADDD was formalized through the enactment of the country's guideline on statistical data collection to assess impacts of natural disaster in 2015. An initiative with UN Women recently under EmPower Project to translate the available regional indicators on gender in DRR into Viet Nam's national indicators and VNDMS has also been started and piloted in the provinces of Ca Mau and Gia Lai. In 2021, three other provinces of Da Nang, Lao Cai and Quang Tri are following the same path. The new and improved indicators shall integrate the SADDD specifically in the aspects of exposure to disaster, vulnerability, coping capacity, human, physical dan economic impacts as well as access to health service, household decision-making and women's political leadership.² In the long run, the data and indicators shall be critical in producing gender analysis which will be referenced to in formulating and monitoring gender inclusive emergency response plans as well as recovery, prevention, and mitigation strategies, for instance in identifying the number of women and girls in the disaster affected region, as well as specific characteristics and vulnerabilities of the groups (i.e. poor or near poor, minority group, female heads of households). The data will be used to further determine the most suitable approach and strategies to extend support and protection. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism is set in place accordingly to ensure the data is regularly collected and utilized.

Alongside the progress, the Viet Nam Disaster Management Authority (VNDMA) has also established the Vietnam Natural Disaster Monitoring System (VNDMS) in 2018 to effectively monitor and manage natural disaster responses.³ The VNDMS stores

1 See <https://www.desinventar.net/DesInventar/profiletab.jsp?countrycode=vn>

2 Yi-Chen Han, J., Nguyen, H., & Pross, C. (2020). Review of gender-responsiveness and disability-inclusion in disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific. UN Women.

3 The VNDMS is available for public access on <http://vndms.dmc.gov.vn>. To access raw data however a log in account is required. VNDMA will provide special account to fully access the data to related stakeholders, if needed.



Photo 1: National disaster risks database

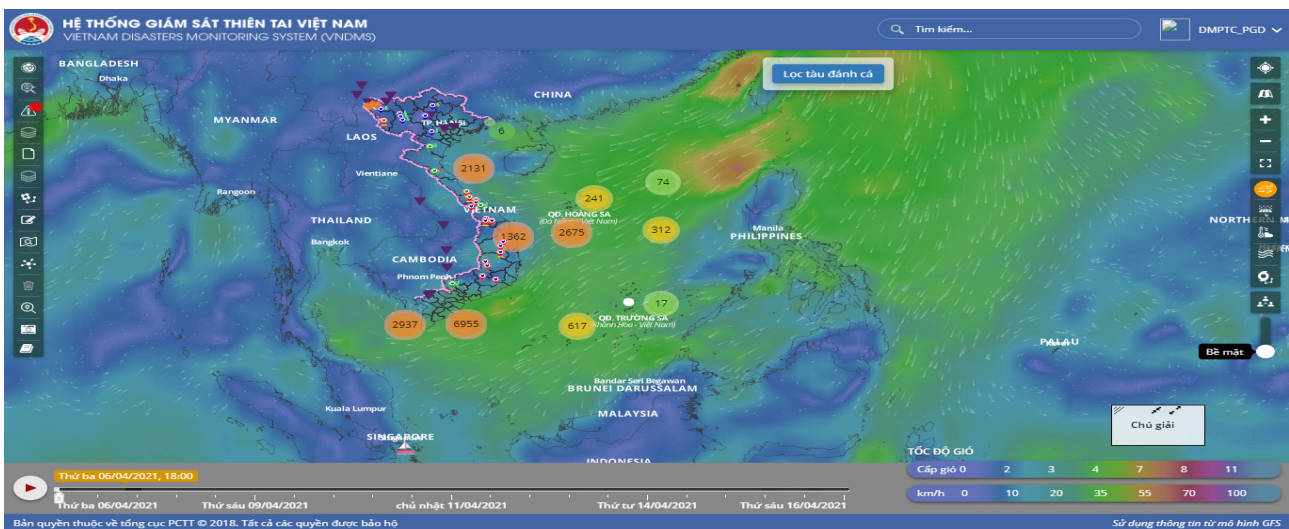


Photo 2: Vietnam Natural Disaster Monitoring System

real-time and near real-time data (e.g., hydro-meteorological, reservoir and ship at sea data, etc.) combined with pre-existing data on relevant infrastructures including dikes and waterways, as well as natural disaster prevention works and resources. The system has been proven useful for officials at the central and local levels to monitor and keep track of disaster risks and occurrences in the country. The SADDD and the subsequent gender inclusive indicators will automatically be integrated into the VNDMS to ensure comprehensive and inclusive monitoring mechanism.

To support the effort, the country has also started to revamp its National Statistical Indicator System (NSIS) by releasing the National Gender and Development Statistical Indicators in July 2019⁴ based on the Circular of the Minister of Planning and Investment No. 10/2019/TT-BKHDT. Among others, the set of data includes population and population density, disability rate and number of natural hazard events and level of injury broken down by sex. Acknowledging the key roles of the people who are driving the efforts, Viet Nam has also invested in the capacity development in the collection and use of SADDD in disaster responses and DRR planning to ensure the officials are capacitated and equipped with relevant knowledge and skills. The trainings on the SADDD in DRR have been conducted at the national level and currently being implemented in 5 provinces of Ca Mau, Gia Lai,

4 Nguyen, T. T., Bui, Q.H., Gardner, J. (2019). Assessment of gaps, needs and priorities for gender related data on climate change and disasters in Viet Nam. Un Women.

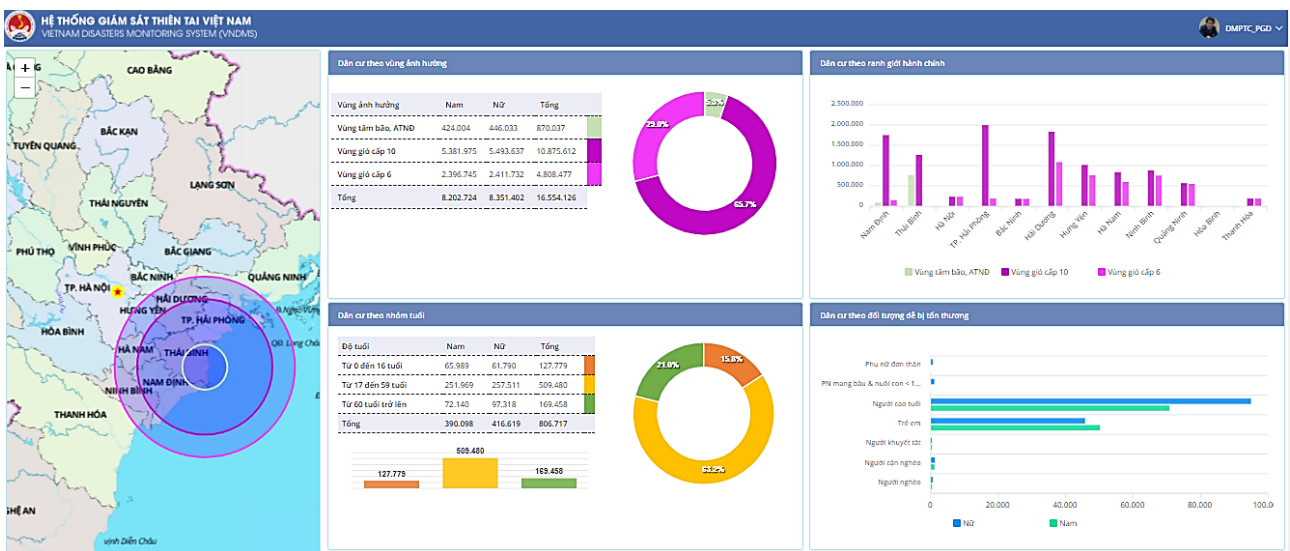
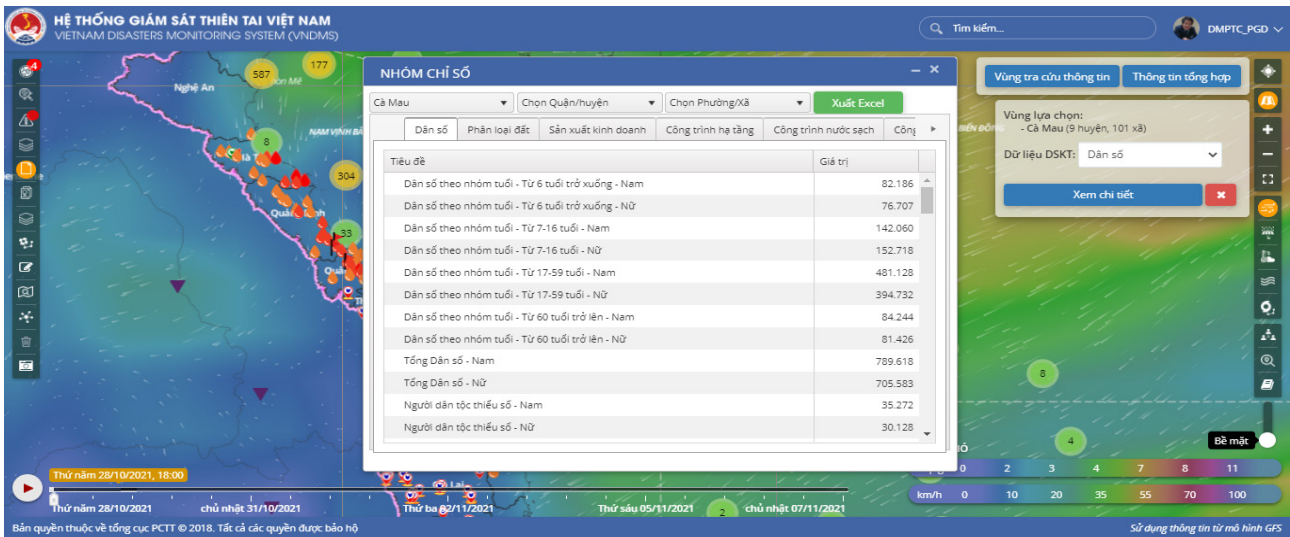


Photo 3: The set of data includes population and population density, disability rate and number of natural hazard events and level of injury disaggregated by sex.

Quang Tri, Da Nang, and Lao Cai aiming to train 300 officials in total. The initiative has so far provided the officials better understanding on the importance of SADD and step-by-step guide on how to make use of the data to inform disaster policies and to monitor its progress.

With the SADD and gender inclusive DRR indicators available, Viet Nam shall be the first country in ASEAN to widely initiate a comprehensive integration of the SADD into its DRR initiatives and at the same time, contributing directly to the achievement of recommendation 1 of Ha Noi Recommendations for Actions on Gender and DRR. Viet Nam is also aligning its national priorities closer to the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2015 in which collection and use of disaggregated data for disaster risk assessment is specifically promoted. This in itself serves as Viet Nam's significant milestone to mark the start of its journey from gender inclusive data to disaster resilience.

Priority 1: Understanding Disaster

Case Study 2- Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Profile: Thailand's Action towards Gender Inclusive Disaster Database



Ha Noi Recommendations for Actions on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) specifically calls for an improved availability of sex, age, and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) and socio-economic baseline and its further utilization to inform gender responsive disaster policies and interventions. According to UN Women's recent review, all ten ASEAN Member States have in fact collected and compiled sex-disaggregated data in their national socio-economic statistics. However only Cambodia and Indonesia, have included sex-disaggregated data in their DesInventar Sendai, and only Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar have integrated the data in their Post Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA). Of the 10 Member States, six have included age-disaggregated data in their national statistics, however only two, Cambodia and Indonesia, have done so in the Sendai DesInventar, and five countries, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam have taken further steps to include age-disaggregated data in their respective PDNAs.⁵ Despite the urgency, the SADDD is a work under way in the region.

Hoping to change the discourse, Thailand, with the support of UN Women, is currently initiating the development of Gender and DRR Profile as part of its concerted efforts to kick start the availability and use of gender analysis in disaster risk approaches. The Profile is expected to provide a better picture on the existing national policies, action plans and mechanisms on gender and disaster risk reduction as well as the available human resources, budget allocation and capacity of government officials and other relevant stakeholders in formulating gender inclusive DRR strategies. At the community level, the Profile also seeks analysis on different impacts of disaster by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation and socio-economic background on women, youth, people with disabilities, the elderly and other marginalized groups and map out different factors contributing to resilience building including access to information, infrastructure and services, and availability of platforms and community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) initiatives for the communities to speak up and raise their concerns. Assessments are currently being conducted to collect quantitative and qualitative data through consultations with local disaster management agencies and social development offices as well as CSOs, head of villages, community leaders and disaster volunteer groups in selected sites in two Provinces namely, Pattani and Nakorn Sri Thammarat, two areas known for their high flood-susceptibility.

Thailand is not the first country in ASEAN to have geared up itself to collect disaster related data. Various real time information on different types of natural disasters (i.e., flood, drought, landslide, earthquake and tsunami, storm, fire, forest fire and smoke, transportation) are stored in web portal administered by the Disaster Mitigation Information Center.⁶ The information is widely available and easily accessible by the Thai public. Currently there is no published data however on the social gender aspects of the disasters, including number of deaths, injuries and/or lost livelihoods,

disaggregated by sex, age and disability and other socio-economic factors. While the existing data diligently provides estimates on which area in the country is at risk for certain disaster occurrence, the current mapping does not yield analysis on the possible impacts to the communities and their level of vulnerabilities. This is critical as the latter serves as a useful reference for first responders in determining the type of emergency responses that need to be dispatched during disasters or for planners and builders in deciding the most suitable infrastructure designs that are disaster resilient and responsive to people's needs.

The on-going Gender and DRR Profile is hoped to be the game changer. Thailand, through the leadership of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) and the expertise of UN Women and the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) are keen on making the Profile as the starting point of an improved disaster database system that is gender responsive and socially inclusive. Moving forward, the Profile is expected to serve as the baseline for DDPM in integrating SADD into its national disaster database



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Photo 1: Development of Gender and DRR Profile

and risk measurement system. The more widely documented gendered impacts of disaster are, the more analysis can be done to measure the specific risks and vulnerabilities of specific groups in the communities during disasters. Thailand is on its way to make sure this happens.



Photo 2: Planners and builders in deciding the most suitable infrastructure designs that are disaster resilient and responsive to people's needs.

Priority 2: Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance to Manage Disaster Risks

Case Study 1 - Policies Matter: Indonesia's Legal and Institutional Framework in Disaster Management



Indonesia's disaster management efforts are mainly guided by the Law No. 24/2007 on Disaster Management. The law specifically mandates the country to apply an extensive cross-sectoral collaboration that involves various line ministries and agencies. The national cluster or termed as "Klasnas", short for *Klaster Nasional*, is joined by the police and military, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Religious Affairs, with each are responsible for specific tasks throughout different disaster management cycles. The protection and promotion of the rights of women, children, and other socially marginalized groups are housed under the Ministry of Social Affairs while their specific health needs are looked after by the Ministry of Health. It is unfortunate however the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection is not part of the cluster which raises question on how far the concerted efforts to protect and serve the most vulnerable, including GBV related, are gender inclusive.

Aside from *Klasnas*, gender and social inclusion are integrated in other forms of policies. In its 2014 guideline on minimum standard logistics for disaster, Indonesia has included the urgency of providing relief and logistics based on the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, elderly, women, and children. The document however is lacking further specification on the type of logistics, what needs it serve to fulfil along with its provision and dispatch mechanism. To fill in the gaps, the Ministry of Health, with the support of UNFPA, further issued the guidelines for logistical support of minimum initial service package for reproductive health in health crisis situations while the Ministry of Public Works and Housing developed a checklist for universal design of buildings for rehabilitation and recovery to ensure accessibility and safety of vulnerable groups.

Realizing the need to integrate social inclusion aspect in disaster risk assessment, the National Disaster Management Agency (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana/BNPB*) released a regulation on General Guidelines for Assessing Disaster Risk No. 02/2012. The guidelines specifically list various data on sex ratio, population density, poverty, disability, and other vulnerable groups to come up with a social vulnerability measurement to determine disaster risk index. Indonesia's regulation on gender mainstreaming in disaster management in 2014 moreover marks another important milestone for the country's efforts in acknowledging the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, children and marginalized groups, and at the same time, promoting gender-responsive disaster management cycles.⁷ The document emphasizes the urgency for women and men to have not only equal access and participation in any disaster management initiatives, but also control over resources and decision-making and gain equal benefit from related policies and programs. It promotes the availability of sex-disaggregated data, use of gender analysis pathway and formulation of gender-responsive budgeting, whilst further lays out gender-responsive interventions in all

⁷ [Head of National Disaster Management Agency \(BNPB\) Regulation No. 13/2014 on Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Management.](#)

disaster cycles from prevention and mitigation, preparedness, emergency response to rehabilitation and recovery. The regulatory framework is further supported by the regulation of Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection No. 13/2020 that specifically outlines the potential gender-based violence (GBV) against women and children during disaster and the need to establish necessary approaches to ensure women and children's needs and safety are prioritized. This serves as an important guiding document for BNPB and other relevant stakeholders, in addressing GBV in the event of disaster.

Moving beyond protection, Indonesia moreover piloted the concept of Disaster Resilient Village ("*Desa Tangguh Bencana*") as part of its community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) policies in 2012. Gender equality which translates into the condition where women and men are equally able to exercise their rights and abilities to fully contribute to development, is included as its one of guiding principles. This is further reflected in the requirement for women to sit in the Disaster Risk Forum at village level and the development of 60 indicators of Disaster Resilient Village in which representation of women's groups is highlighted. However, this does not automatically translate into women's improved agency and leadership on the ground. While women actively participate in relief programs and essential health services during disaster, they are often excluded in management committees and decision-making bodies.⁸ In the context of disaster, women are still generally framed as merely victims, not agents of change. Despite the commitment at national level to address GBV, the initiatives to prevent incidences from happening and to establish redress procedures on the ground are still very much driven by the CSOs.⁹

Indonesia's experience is an affirmation of how important legal and institutional framework is in integrating gender and social inclusion in disaster management initiatives. Policies serve as the first building block of any intervention and a prerequisite for any program to sustain. Above all, however, there is a need to link policies with actual implementation and in turn, transformative changes. There is no better way to move forward for Indonesia than to step up to the challenge.

Priority 2: Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance to Manage Disaster Risks

Case Study 2 - Putting Gender at the Center of the Table: the Philippines' Experience in Gender Sensitizing its Disaster Management Mechanism



The Philippines has always been regarded as one of the leading countries in Southeast Asia in advancing the issues of gender equality and women's empowerment. This is indicated, among others, by the enactment of the Republic Act (R. A) No. 9710, or famously known as the Magna Carta of Women in 2009 which serves as the country's ultimate legal basis in promoting and protecting the rights of women. Social and gender barriers faced by women are acknowledged and accordingly, the state has the obligation to ensure women are equally represented and able to meaningfully participate virtually in all development spheres. Safety and security of women in the events of disaster, calamities and other crisis situation moreover are guaranteed by the law with a specific focus given on the potential incidences of sexual exploitation and other sexual- and gender-based violence in all phases of relief, recovery, rehabilitation and construction efforts. The one initiative administered by the law that may be unique to the Philippines is the institutionalization of Gender and Development (GAD) Budget of minimum 5% that needs to set aside by each government agencies and local government units to finance gender-related programs. This has set the course of the country's concerted efforts in mainstreaming gender into its national development, including disaster management.

The Philippines' latest National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan 2020 – 2030 (NDRRMP) further acknowledges gender mainstreaming as one of its key cross-cutting concerns and is committed to addressing gender inequalities in disaster while at the same time, promoting equal participation and decision-making roles of women and men in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). Recognizing that addressing the persistent gender gaps in DRRM is fundamental in resilience building, the recently updated NDRRMP also highlights the need to foster women's and girls' leadership, empowerment and engagement in decision-making, design, planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of gender-responsive and inclusive NDRRMP. To support the effort, needless to say cross-sectoral coordination is key. The Philippines' disaster management governing agency, or widely known as the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) is currently made of forty-four members in total mostly from line ministries and government units as well as the private sector and civil organizations.¹⁰ There are moreover two government bodies that are specifically given the tasks to ensure integration of gender equality and social inclusion in any disaster interventions; the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). This constitutes as a bold move for the Philippines in showcasing its commitment on gender mainstreaming considering the PWC is the main policymaking and coordinating body on gender equality in the country. It is also worth pointing out that the DSWD in this regard, functions not only as implementing body, but also the vice-chair in overseeing disaster response initiatives; making sure the most vulnerable at-risk groups are receiving the much-needed support and assistance.

Keen to be seen as actual implementation of the GAD budget, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), the NDRRMC's executive arm and national secretariat, has started mainstreaming gender and inclusion in its National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2018-2028. Further, it began to report its gender and development plan through the Gender Mainstreaming Monitoring System (GMMS)¹¹ under the PCW. The agency moreover has appointed gender focal points in its national and regional level to oversee gender mainstreaming work, incorporated gender considerations in its operational guidelines and procedures, as well as provided capacity building in governance bodies and training on community-based DRR customized for specific at-risk groups, including women, older people and people with disabilities (PWDs).¹² Recently, the OCD has implemented various awareness raising, knowledge sharing and capacity building programs as well as gender-responsive infrastructure improvement initiatives funded by its annual GAD budget.

As part of its mechanism in amplifying women's voice and advancing gender advocacy work across actors in disaster, the Philippines has also established Women in Emergency Network (WENet) comprising of 30 women's organizations working on the ground. With the support of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program, the organizations took part in trainings on gender and DRR to build their knowledge and skills in gender sensitizing preparedness and response plans and DRR strategies, as well as policy dialogues on prioritising and financing women's rights and resilience in emergencies.¹³ Throughout 2020 the network played an important role in disseminating public health information and updates on COVID-19 and tropical storms to the communities in remote areas through SMS and other online means.¹⁴

The country's far-reaching mechanism on gender mainstreaming in disaster however does not immediately equate to smooth gender transformative

11 The GMMS is the online system for the submission, review, and endorsement of the Gender and Development (GAD) Plan and Budget (GPB) and GAD Accomplishment Report (GAD AR) of the national government agencies (NGAs), government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), state universities and colleges (SUCs) and other government instrumentalities.

12 Yi-Chen Han, J., Nguyen, H., & Pross, C. (2020). Review of gender-responsiveness and disability-inclusion in disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific.

13 See <https://www.dfat.gov.au/development/who-we-work-with/ngos/ncp/news/promoting-womens-rights-and-resilience-emergencies-philippines>

14 Ibid.



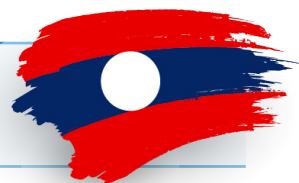
Photo 2: The Philippines has also established Women in Emergency Network (WENet) comprising of 30 women's organizations working on the ground.

changes on the ground. While it is evident that women actively participate in community-based disaster-related trainings and activities, only few are seen to be sitting in the lead positions.¹⁵ Not much different from its counterparts in the region, women in the Philippines are still largely portrayed as victims of disaster, rather than leaders in their own right. However even so, there are instances where reproductive health and specific needs of women affected by disaster are often overlooked in rescue and evacuation stages.¹⁶

Nonetheless the Philippines has taken the single most important step to create a supporting institutional framework. The next tasks ahead would involve not only continuously refining the framework and mechanism, but also making sure it is operational and implementable. A task when fulfilled will bring the country one step further in mainstreaming gender in DRR.

Priority 3: Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience

Case Study 1 - The Use of Technology in Building Safer and Resilient Schools in Lao PDR



Technology has become more and more inevitable in our society. It is now difficult, if not impossible, to separate life advancement from the use of technology. When put into good use, technology is instrumental in uplifting people's quality of lives and well-being. With this as the point of departure, Lao PDR has been applying the Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Assessment Suite as part of its disaster resilience building, a new technology in assessing disaster risks and safety of school buildings. The instrument aligns itself with the Comprehensive School Safety Framework initiated by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES)¹⁷ in 2014 and further comprises of three tools: (1) CSS First Step, (2) CSS School Safety Self-Assessment Survey (SSSAS), and (3) Visual Inspection for Defining Safety Upgrading Strategy (VISUS). All of which aim at providing a complete data and information to assess the level of disaster risks schools might face.

Save the Children in partnerships with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) piloted the use of the SSSAS and VISUS in Lao PDR in 2015 as part of the ASEAN Safe School Initiative (ASSI) with support from the Australian Aid, European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Government officials and schoolteachers were trained to use the SSSAS, a table-based application developed for easy use of school administrators to assess school hazards and risks. They were asked to complete a quick survey on the schools' level of safety by inserting photographs, data, and information on school demographics, including number of female and male students and students with disability, along with possible hazards, risks, and Comprehensive School Safety Indicators. The exercise showed that many schools were actually at risk for drought, landslide and health-related disasters and were not equipped with potable water and early warning systems.¹⁸ The teachers and officials found the tablet-based tools useful and easy to use although there were concerns on its accessibility considering the country's low internet penetration and exposure to



Photo 1: School Safety Self-Assessment Survey tool

18 GADRRRES. (2017). All Pillars: Scaling-up Comprehensive School Safety Assessment in Laos and Indonesia, GADRRRES Comprehensive School Safety Policy Case Studies Series. <http://www.gadrrres.net/resources>

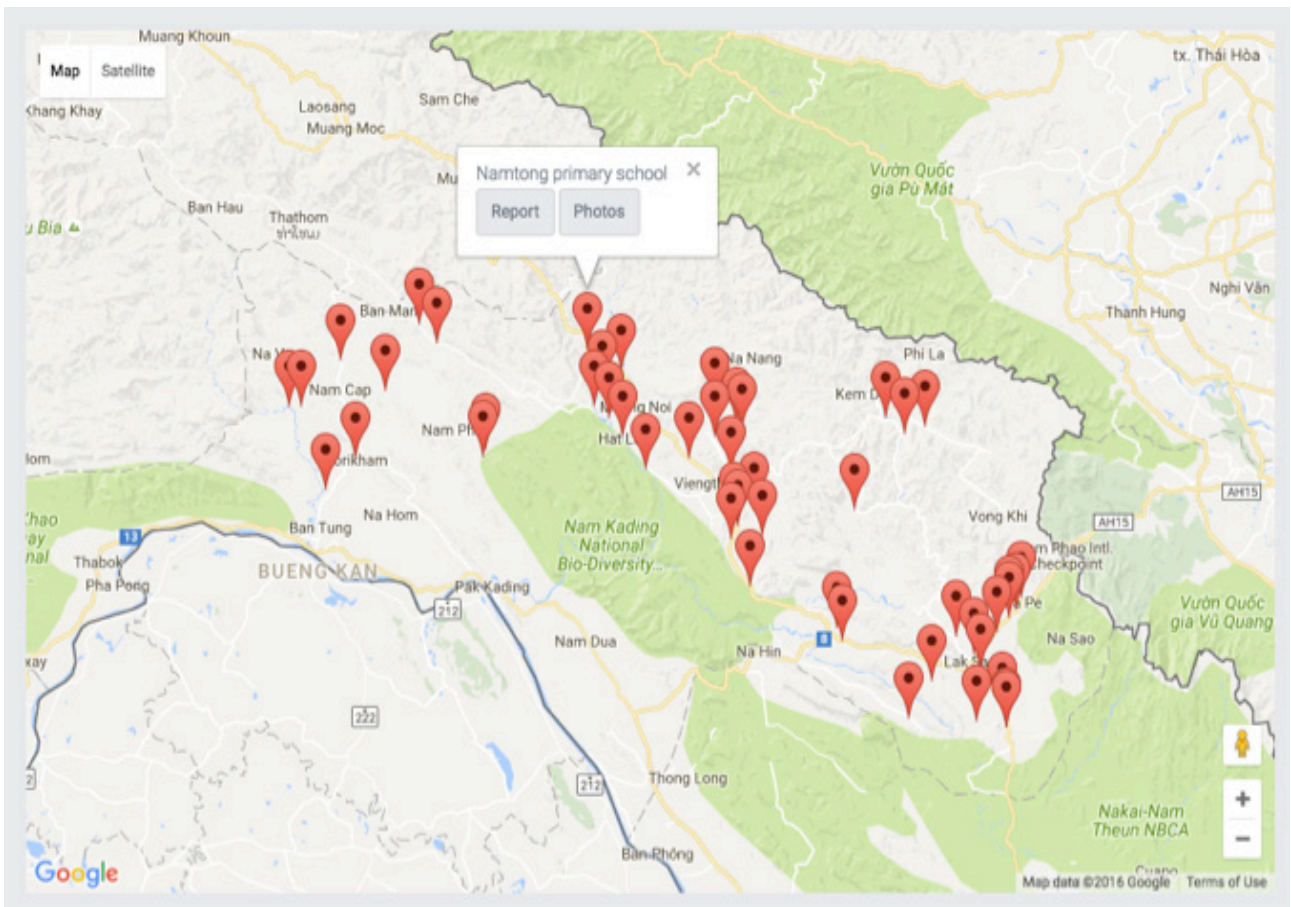


Photo 1: The information is integrated with detailed hazard and risks data generated by public agencies and academic institutions and further georeferenced with GIS mapping

Priority 3: Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience



Case Study 2 - Cambodia's Action for Women's Economic Empowerment and Disaster Resilience through Renewable Energy

Investing in sustainable livelihoods has long been dubbed as one of the keys to community's disaster resilience. Providing women with access to climate resilient livelihood activities sourced from clean energy accomplishes two things at once: women's steady stream of income and less environmental burden, both of which in turn will improve community's well-being and resilience against environmental shocks and disaster. The Ha Noi Recommendations for Actions on Gender and DRR speaks directly to this cause by underlining the need for supporting sustainable and empowering livelihoods that are directly contributing to women's resilience against disasters. Answering to the call, UN Women and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) partnering with the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Women's Affairs, National Institute of Statistics, and National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDD), has started an initiative called EmPower since 2019 in Cambodia specifically to link women's empowerment, climate change and disaster resilient communities.

The project centers around the availability of renewable energy as an enabler for climate-resilient societies which is set to further trickle down to various impacts, including community's vigilance to bounce back from disaster, reduced drudgery and increased time savings and productivity, and women's economic empowerment across value chain (Photo 1). The idea is to provide women with access to renewable

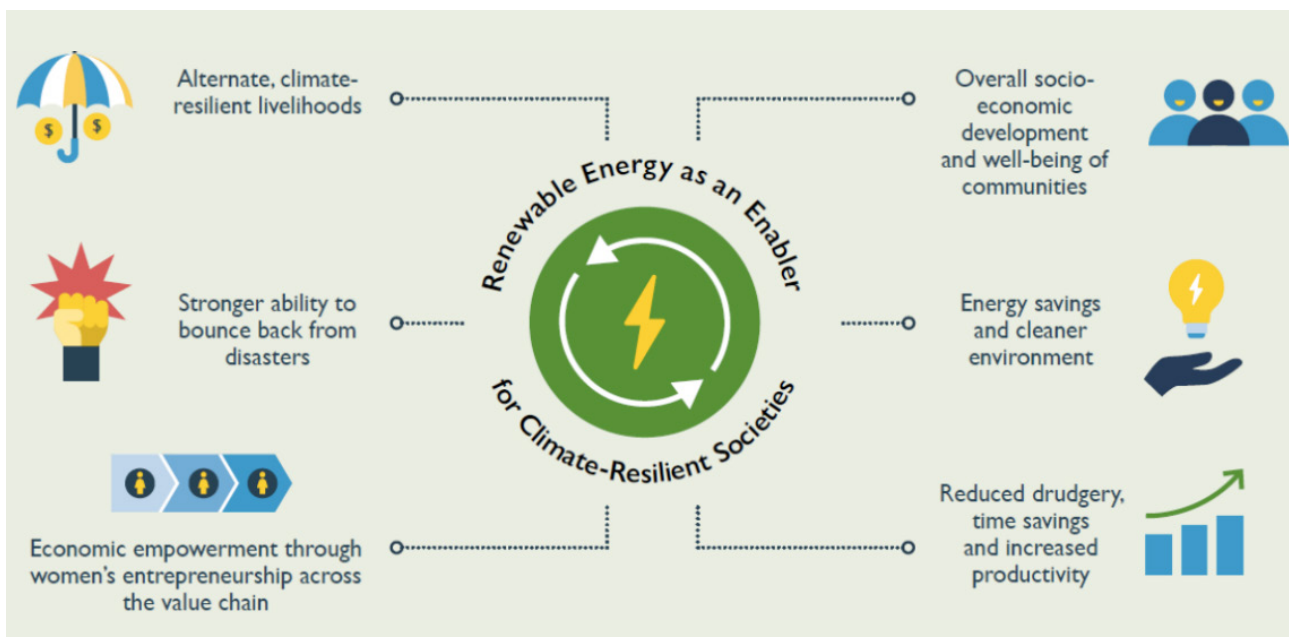


Photo 1. EmPower: Renewable Energy as an Enabler for Climate-Resilient Societies (Source: UN Women)

energy technology through the means of joint investment and equip them with the knowledge and skills to use it further to earn a living. Women are also capacitated to act as entrepreneurs slash agents of change to promote the use of the clean energy sources and technology to other women and member of communities. In Cambodia, based on scoping and detailed feasibility studies including the demand from the communities, EmPower is piloted in two provinces of Takeo and Pursat, and focuses its intervention mainly on the use of solar energy for various applications, namely irrigation for agriculture and horticulture, cold storage, chicken incubation, hydroponics and potable drinking water.

Women make up an integral part of the project owing to women's immense experience in agriculture and informal economy. Women entrepreneurs are also known for their high loan repayment rate and low credit risks which makes women trustworthy business partners to make use of the energy products and services and further promote them to the communities. To support women's green businesses, subsidized credits are available for those who need additional finance to own the necessary equipment through EmPower credit facility provided by the Agricultural Rural Development Bank. Women beneficiaries of the program are carefully selected not only based on their capacity and business experiences, but also wider consideration of their vulnerabilities and commitment. Women from poor households, women heads of households as well as women with disabilities are among those being prioritized. Empowering women finally means investing in family well-being as women are more likely to spend their earnings on children's education and health. Women's everyday drudgery having to juggle farm work and house chores make them the perfect advocate for clean energy as the new technology poses significant effect of reducing their burden and time poverty.

Despite the implementation challenges brought about by the recent pandemic, the changes are already starting to show. Women's home-grown vegetable gardens in Pursat Province, an area prone to flash floods and droughts, for instance, are now enjoying a steadier water flow from the family's well, with the help of renewables-



Photo 2: Women as the perfect advocate for clean energy



Photo 3: Communities can be empowered

powered water pumps.²⁰ More and more households in Tropang Thom village are now connected to clean electricity sources generated from cow dung-based biogas.²¹ Women's reduced drudgery and increased time savings are evident direct impact as now women are spared from collecting firewood and can spend their available time to make handicraft for additional income or getting more involved in community activities. Women target beneficiaries of the program are also provided with the knowledge and skills on financial management to prepare sound business plans and impacts of RE to climate change and disaster risk reduction to ensure a not only thriving but also resilient community.

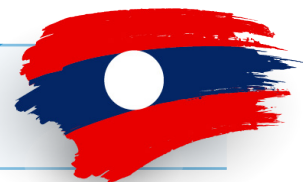


Photo 4: Women getting more involved in community activities

Cambodia's experience has shown that the economy does not have to progress at the expense of environment. With the right investments, disaster risks can be reduced, and at the same time, communities can be empowered. Sustainable livelihoods may as well be the solution for all.

Priority 4: Enhancing Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response and “Build Back Better” in Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

Case Study 1 -Gender-Responsive PDNA: Lao PDR Puts an Extra Mile on its Disaster Impact Assessment Methodology



The Post-Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA) is a widely used methodology to determine physical damages, economic losses, and cost estimates of rehabilitation and recovery after a certain disaster hit. The analysis encompasses various issues of interests from economic and social impacts of disaster, damage, losses and needs from the standpoint of social, productive, infrastructure, and crosscutting sectors as well as recommendations of action plans for recovery. The process is commonly government-led with support from international and local organizations and ideally is conducted in the first 6 – 12 weeks after the incident to allow for ample time to do field visits and collect primary data. Since it was first introduced by the European Commission (EC), the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the World Bank in 2008 and further put into practice in 2009, the PDNAs have been conducted in more than 50 countries based on official requests of the country where disasters happened.²²

It is also worth mentioning that gender forms an integral part of the methodology and analysis. Gender equity is cited as one of the building blocks of successful recovery process of a country, alongside risk reduction, public participation, and environmental sustainability.²³ It serves as PDNA’s shared core values that needs to be understood fully by all relevant stakeholders and actors. In technical terms, this is reflected in the needs for collection and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data, availability of comprehensive gender analysis based on the data along with socio-economic information and other demographic concerns, and a dedicated gender expert to facilitate the process. As people’s vulnerability and resilience make an important element in the PDNA and any other exercise on disaster-focused assessment, attention needs to be given to systematically integrate gender into every step of the PDNA as a cross-cutting issue. At this juncture, the World Bank has released a specific PDNA Guidelines on gender in 2013 aiming it to be the main reference for practitioners in assessing the different needs and impacts of disaster for women, men, girls, and boys.²⁴

22 Jeggler, T., & Boggero, M. (2018). *Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA): Lessons from a decade of experience* (No. 130985, pp. 1-72). The World Bank.

23 Ibid.

24 See https://www.recoveryplatform.org/assets/projects/PDNA/PDNAVolumeB/WB_UNDP_PDNA_Gender_SP_FINAL.pdf



Photo 1: Gender equity is cited as one of the building blocks of successful recovery process of a country

Learning from the long history of PDNAs, Lao PDR was not hesitated in undertaking its very own exercise in 2018 following the flash flooding in July 2018 caused by the Tropical Storms Son-Tinh and Bebinca in the same month. As documented in the PDNA report, as per October 2018 the series of events affected more than 600 thousand people with 56 fatalities and 35 missing, and 1,620 houses and 102,481 hectares of land across 17 provinces left destroyed. The PDNA process took place in the course of 4 weeks from 24 September to 23 October 2018 led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with active participation of other line ministries, including Lao Women’s Union (LWU), as well as provincial and local governments. Supports from prominent international communities, including the World Bank, FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, CARE, UN Women and UNICEF, were pouring in offering technical expertise and financial assistance.

The PDNA exercise documented in great details the damage and losses, as well as recovery and reconstruction needs broken down by social (housing & settlements, education, health & nutrition, culture), productive (agriculture, industry &



Photo 2: Flood in 2018

commerce, tourism), and infrastructure (transport. Electricity, water & sanitation, waterways) sectors. Although not specific only to gender, each sector would have a dedicated sub-section on social impacts of the damages and losses which can be further linked to women and men’s different risks and needs. Gender, disability, and child protection moreover were included as part of human development impacts in which the trends and conditions pre-disaster were presented to showcase risks and further contrasted with that of post-disaster. Although there was limited quantitative data, the analysis on gendered impacts of the floods outlined the specific gender-barriers and challenges women were facing after the disaster. Among others, the rising incidences of gender-based violence and

sexual harassment during displacement and emergency situations, and women's lack of access to clean water, health services and paid works were highlighted. Needless to say, one of the key features of the PDNA was, the gender and GBV recovery strategy. It dwells upon some of the important interventions and approaches to address gender inequalities that were exacerbated during disaster by stages; short-, mid- and long term. The recommendations were clear and concise with each step corresponds to agencies in charge and budget allocation. The exercise however was not without its challenge. It was proven to be difficult to collect sex-disaggregated data in strategic sectors where women are involved and obtaining representable primary data to demonstrate gender-impacts of floods.

Nevertheless, the 2018 PDNA is a demonstration of how Lao PDR is committed to addressing gender inequalities in disaster and in parallel, is corresponding to the global call of Ha Noi Recommendations for gender responsive recovery actions and programming. Since its finalization in 2018, the gender recovery strategies have been gradually implemented through among others, cash for work, community based DRR and recovery training of trainers and livelihood empowerment trainings with equal participation of women. Lao PDR has also started its infrastructure rehabilitation process by repairing damaged roads, irrigation, and drainage channels for waterways as well as reconstructing community centers school buildings and health centers. To address data gaps, currently the LWU together with UN Women are in the process of collecting and compiling gender sensitive data at the community level with an aim of including the data in the next assessment. An important next step to ensure continuity of gender responsive PDNA.



Photo 3: Damage and losses from floods

Priority 4: Enhancing Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response and “Build Back Better” in Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

Case Study 2 - Empowering Women to Empower Community: Viet Nam’s Gender-Responsive Disaster Preparedness Strategy



It takes a visionary nation to invest in its people. Recognizing women’s important and indispensable roles in disaster management, the Ha Noi Recommendations urges states in the Asia Pacific to take more actions that center around people, in particular building women’s capacity and institutionalizing women’s leadership in disaster preparedness, recovery, and reconstruction at all levels. Viet Nam is one of the countries in the region who have stepped forward in realizing the vision. Through various mechanisms, the country is putting more efforts to ensure women are capacitated and represented in any related interventions. One of which is women’s representation in decision-making processes. Viet Nam Women’s Union (VWU), the leading entity for gender equality and women’s empowerment in Viet Nam, since 2013 has hold an official membership in the National Steering Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control alongside other line ministries. As the Committee operates both at national and local level, the VWU is given a room to navigate its way through the country’s disaster response plans as well as preparedness and recovery strategies up to the community level, whilst making sure that gender is part of the whole process.



Photo 1: Women’s representation in decision-making processes



Photo 2: Training for disaster risk management facilitators at administrative levels

As part of its capacity development for government officials, in 2016 Viet Nam developed a Training Manual on Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction with Gender Integration with the support of UN Women²⁵ and accordingly, delivered related trainings for disaster risk management facilitators at administrative levels. The training modules provide basic knowledge on the types of natural disasters, community's roles in disaster risk management, basic understanding of gender concepts as well as key practical approach and strategies to formulate gender analysis and mainstream gender in disaster risk reduction and mitigation programs using gender index. Keen on shattering the harmful gender stereotyping that is potentially widening the gender gap, it is also worth pointing out that the VWU back in 2010 conducted a project aiming to contest stereotypical depiction of women and men in disaster management that place women in the victim's seat and maintain men's status quo as decision makers in disaster preparedness and response, resulting in an improved understanding of communities and government officials on gender in DRR.²⁶

In parallel, Viet Nam is also keen on capacitating its people on the ground. With the expertise of UN Women, trainings to develop disaster preparedness plans were conducted in disaster-prone communes in eight provinces involving over 600 commune members with 50 percent women's participation.²⁷ The capacity building initiatives provided women in the communities the key steps of disaster preparedness and response by adopting the "4 on the spot" motto: leadership on-the-spot, human resources on-the-spot, materials on-the-spot, and logistics on-the-spot. Many women in

25 See <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/09/training-manual-on-community-based-disaster-risk-reduction>

26 Yi-Chen Han, J., Nguyen, H., & Pross, C. (2020). Review of gender-responsiveness and disability-inclusion in disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific

27 Ariyabandhu, M.M. (2018). Progress Review & Way Forward: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion for Implementing the Sendai Framework in Preparation for AMCDRR 2018. UN Women.

many societies moreover are often barred from sports or physical activities largely due to the prevailing gender stereotypes that both are men's domain, which in the end left women with barely enough survival skills. In the project, women were taught life-saving skills, such as swimming and first aid, and were further trained to become commune's "communicators", acting as agents of change to share their knowledge with other members of the community.²⁸ The project managed to unleash thirty women communications and trained more than 5,000 people, including women, men, children, and the elderly. Throughout the project delivery, women were not viewed as only victims of disaster with different needs and vulnerabilities, but also as people's leaders who are more than capable of triggering constructive changes in the community. This is particularly seen from women's involvement in the establishment of Technical Support Groups and Commune Community Groups to support localities in developing Disaster Risk Map, Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment Report and Disaster Management Plan for the period 2016-2020.

Aligning itself with Ha Noi Recommendations' of setting a minimum quota of women and diverse groups' representation in national and local mechanisms responsible for developing disaster preparedness, response, and recovery decisions, Viet Nam moreover developed a Guideline on Gender Mainstreaming in Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) which specifically regulates minimum 30 and 50 percent women's participation in assessment teams, and consultation and planning meetings respectively. One step further, the guideline also mandates the representation of other socially marginalized groups whose rights and needs are often overlooked in the disaster settings, such as older people, people with disabilities (PWDs) and children; and

28 Ibid.



Photo 3: Women were trained to become commune's "communicators"

at the same time, requires their specific needs and priorities be incorporated into CBDRM plans.

Viet Nam's work investing in its people deserves an applause. Nevertheless, making sure the mechanism stays in place and women and other marginalized groups are actually represented and have an equal say in DRR planning remain a work in progress. Empowering women to empower community should be the main agenda not only for Viet Nam, but also for other Member States in ASEAN in years to come.



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