



PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN DRM IN ZIMBABWE

It is the women, men, girls and boys who matter most... and without them we have no disaster

Zimbabwe is particularly vulnerable to climate induced hazards such as drought, dry spells, floods, and cyclones which, combined with limited adaptive capacities, has resulted in peaks of food insecurity. The country also experiences a combination of the natural and man-made risks, including HIV/AIDS pandemic, crop pest and diseases, animal disease outbreaks and diarrhoeal diseases. Some of the underlying risk drivers include rapid unplanned urbanization, construction on wetland areas, land degradation and deforestation.

These disasters affect women, men, boys, and girls in different ways as they face increased risk of death, injury, and loss of livelihoods. Women, girls, men, and boys are not a homogenous population hence the need for gender mainstreaming in disaster risk management to enhance the dignity and rights of those affected, to build resilience and create safer and more inclusive environments.

This Policy Brief highlights the gender specific gaps and opportunities for gender mainstreaming in disasters related national and local-level policies, institutions and programs in order to give equal weight to the rights as well as capacities of both men and women.

POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

International level Global commitments for gender equality and disaster risk reduction

The government of Zimbabwe is party to the Sendai Framework, the CEDAW and many other international frameworks related to gender and DRM/climate change. Whilst efforts have been made to implement these obligations, more still needs to be done especially, in setting clear gender targets in all priorities for action and to strengthen gender integration in DRM.

National level legislative frameworks on gender equality and disaster risk reduction

The Zimbabwe Constitution of 2013 upholds gender equality as one of its principles. As a result, gender mainstreaming is embedded in Government policy as a critical strategy for the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment across all sectors.

The Revised National Gender Policy of 2017 and its implementation strategy, has Climate Change as one of its thematic areas, to which gender sensitive programming and inclusivity has to be fostered in order to attain inclusive sustainable development. The National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1), mentions gender and inclusion as one of the cross-cutting themes and emphasises on the need to mainstream gender in all national developmental initiatives.

Zimbabwe has a Civil Protection Act (CPA) (1989) and a National Policy for Civil Protection (2003) which need revision in light of the constitution of 2013 and various normative frameworks that Zimbabwe is party to. The CPA is closely related to the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act (29:13), Rural District Councils Act (29:12), Urban Councils Act (29:14), The Water Act, The Environmental Management Act (20:27), Defence Act (11:02), Police Act (11:10) and the Public Health Act (15:09), which are all in need of alignment to the constitution. Currently the government is drafting the DRM Bill and it this presents an opportunity to include gender dimensions in DRM.

KEY CHALLENGES

“We must not focus on prevention and break the cycle of disaster, response and recovery”, Amina J. Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary General.

Whilst there is an increasing interest in the issue of gender mainstreaming in disaster risk management (DRM) in Zimbabwe, identified below are some key challenges identified when a gender analysis in DRM was conducted:

Policy, legal and Institutional Framework

The CPA and supporting/complementary pieces of legislation and policies are generally gender neutral.

There isn't an overarching DRM Plan and there is no clear and systematic gender sensitive plans and programmes.

The intergovernmental mechanisms for coordination and collaboration on DRM functionality is only triggered by the onset of a disasters.

KEY CHALLENGES (CONTINUED)

Participation and leadership in decision-making

- ◆ Women and other vulnerable groups are clearly underrepresented in leadership and decision-making at local and subregional formal decision-making structures, such as in the Committees for Civil Protection (including rescue committees) and at different administrative levels of local and national government.

Gender and DRM capacity building gap

- ◆ There is limited capacity on the combined skills on DRM and Gender in all the different structures of DRM at provincial, district and local levels. Therefore, education and awareness on gender is not prioritised.

Gender stereotypes persist and negatively impact women's advancement within DRM and in resilience building

- ◆ Stereotypes regarding women's and men's roles in DRM still prevail. Women's roles in disaster preparedness are clearly identified as more aligned to the household and family such as, preparing food and carework, as well as the psychological support of 'comforting', whereas men's roles are linked to areas that require physical strength such as repairing houses, working in rescue teams and reconstruction that requires semi-skilled and skilled labour.

Appropriateness of information collected and access to information

- ◆ A gap remains in packaging information to reach men, women, girls and boys effectively. Those furthest behind with regards to information access include those with disabilities especially the deaf, dumb, and blind.
- ◆ Information collected is disaggregated by sex and it is only appropriate for community level basic needs but is not adequate to determine specific needs of men, women, girls, and boys as individuals.
- ◆ There is no central information repository on disasters and there no gender sensitive integrated information management system accessible to key stakeholders to facilitate cohesion and coordination in disaster interventions.
- ◆ At local level, officials from various organisations are assisted by community cadres to collect information and monitor the vulnerability situation. These community cadres, are in most cases volunteers and the majority are women. Support in terms of mode/ means of transport and communication is in most



Disaster Response

- ◆ Temporal shelters were lasting longer than planned and the unusual living conditions create a conducive platform for conflict in relationships
- ◆ Most districts have identified evacuation centers. However, these are not easily accessible to some members of the community especially those with disabilities. They are also not well equipped and offer inadequate privacy and security.
- ◆ Whilst the rescue process and the personnel involved always have expertise to deal with issues of health and well-being (including sexual and reproductive health and rights, social protection systems, prevention of gender-based violence and abuse) it is mostly inadequate and overwhelming. This results in unmet various needs of those affected.
- ◆ Assistance tends to focus on women mainly due to their reproductive needs than men. Inclusion of items for male dignity, and information that meets both men's and women's reproductive health needs, (including protection against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases) is needed. .

Disaster Recovery

- ◆ Distribution of relief packages use mainstream parameters to identify beneficiaries such as, house owners and registered businesses, leaving the already vulnerable groups like lodgers and micro informal business with unregistered status.
- ◆ Disaster situations often exacerbate the gender equality gaps and issues such as the right to productive resources such as land, natural and financial resources, services, and income, gender-based violence and child marriages.
- ◆ The impact of disasters on farmers may cause migration, particularly of men and young people in search of good pastures for their animals or alternative livelihoods. Women on the other hand, face the double burden of caring for children, elderly and sick/disabled family members while still being responsible for household and agricultural work.
- ◆ Women are particularly disproportionately affected in climate-related disasters when resources are scarce. They spend additional time collecting water and firewood.
- ◆ Rebuilding of livelihoods and resilience is a fundamental part of DRM. Several Development Partners complimented government effort through direct support to communities and strengthening of local institutions.
- ◆ The level of participation and involvement of men and women in the reconstruction process is divided along skills and level of physical strength lines. This has resulted in men doing most of the hardest tasks and those tasks requiring skills more than women.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create and improve policies and Institutions on DRM to be inclusive and gender transformative

- ◆ Integrate and coordinate the implementation of gender responsive DRM plans and actions.
- ◆ There is urgent need to review and put in place the DRM Act, the Civil Protection Act and a National DRR Plan which can be replicated at local level.
- ◆ As the mandate of MWCSMED includes gender mainstreaming across ministries and sectors, it is imperative that a clear workplan to support this process within government is developed and budgeted for.
- ◆ It is imperative that the intergovernmental mechanisms on DRM and gender is strengthened and made functional.
- ◆ There is need for mapping and engagement of all stakeholders that technically and financially invest in DRM and gender.

2. Increase the number of women in leadership and decision-making in disaster risk reduction

- ◆ Support and promote women's progressive participation in decision-making processes in DRM at all levels.
- ◆ Promote and nurture the leadership of diverse women (across generations, sociocultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds) and women's rights organizations and movements through collaboration with initiatives focused mentorship and capacity development programmes to women leaders at all levels.

3. Build institutional and individual capacity to mainstream Gender into DRM

- ◆ Commit resources to build capacity of government actors at different levels and other key stakeholders at different levels to mainstream gender in DRM.
- ◆ Ensure that women and girls and all marginalized groups have equal access to training and skills-development programmes to promote their full participation and leadership in DRM initiatives.
- ◆ It is imperative to set up a Training of Trainers network at different levels, to be responsible for training as and when required

4. Improve data for informed decision making and performance monitoring

- ◆ Ensure the collection of age, sex, and other intersectionality variables on DRM to inform policy, programming, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

- ◆ Improve the capacity of ZIMSTAT and other data collectors to collect, analyse, centrally deposit, and share DRM and gender data.
- ◆ Involve both men and women in the development and dissemination of gender sensitive indicators/targets, systems, and related processes. Including DRM reports to promote accountability, inclusion, and ownership.
- ◆ Document and utilise traditional knowledge system for interventions to be sensitive and acceptable to cultural and socio-economic considerations of indigenous groups and marginalized communities.

5. Improve access to Information and Communication

- ◆ Ensure that communication on disasters come into the public spotlight inclusively and timeously.
- ◆ Use appropriate communication tools to reach even those in marginalized communities, such as videos, audios, pamphlets and even the newly launched community radios. Also make use of low-cost media that does not require high level literacy and does not interfere with women's daily workload.
- ◆ Promote the setting up of platforms to enhance research, knowledge and information exchange in

Women and men supporting disaster recovery equally (UNOPS)



6. Gender Sensitive Disaster Response and Recovery

- ◆ Ensure relief packages include the non-mainstream vulnerable groups and that relief packages are inclusive of differential needs of all community members.
- ◆ Provide a comprehensive response to disasters, with well-equipped shelters and psychosocial support.
- ◆ Recovery should be led by the principles of “leave no one behind” and “build back better”. Thus, principles of inclusion, equitable and timeliness are critical.

7. Support the development of a national and sub-national disaster risk financing frameworks

- ◆ Design dedicated funding programmes/platforms focused on improving women’s and men’s livelihoods and resilience

(Although the new EPDM bill seeks to regularise this approach into a centralised system, the urgency for a detailed financing toolbox that pre-classifies disasters, their impact levels on men and women and allocates financing tools and financing sources to such disasters in advance is crucial).

- ◆ Increase and track the use and impact of specific resources (including blended finance) targeted at promoting women’s empowerment in DRM.

“Part of the reason for the weak governance of disaster risk reduction institutions is the low level of gender sensitivity in disaster policies and programmes in addressing existing gender differences in vulnerabilities, disaster impacts, coping strategies and response measures”,

Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ARSDRR)