

Wageningen  
Disaster Studies



# **GENDER AND HUMANITARIAN AID**

## **A LITERATURE REVIEW OF POLICY AND PRACTICE**

Hilde van Dijkhorst  
Suzette Vonhof

Disaster Studies  
Wageningen University  
**December 2005**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... 1

ABBREVIATIONS .....3

INTRODUCTION.....4

1. GENDER OR WOMEN? .....5

2. GENDER AND NATURAL DISASTERS.....7

    Gendered vulnerability .....7

    Capacity .....7

    Women’s roles.....8

    Women’s vulnerability.....9

    Disaster impact and shift in gender relations..... 10

3. GENDER AND CONFLICT ..... 12

    Gender during conflict ..... 12

    Refugee women and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)..... 13

    Gender and peace building ..... 14

    Gender in post-conflict situations..... 15

4. GENDER AND HUMANITARIAN AID ..... 17

    Relief and development..... 17

    Gender and HIV/AIDS..... 21

5. THE TSUNAMI DISASTER ..... 23

    A gendered disaster ..... 23

    Gendered relief and rehabilitation..... 24

    Cordaid’s experiences in tsunami affected areas ..... 25

6. POLICY AND PRACTICE..... 28

    CEDAW ..... 28

    UN Resolution 1325 ..... 28

    The Code of Conduct ..... 28

    Sphere ..... 29

    ICRC/IFRC ..... 29

    IASC..... 29

    Policy tools..... 30

    Policy of organisations and institutions..... 30

    Cordaid’s gender policy ..... 32

7. CONCLUSIONS ..... 34

LITERATURE..... 35

ANNEX 1 POLICY STATEMENT IASC..... 39

ANNEX 2 GENDER POLICY STATEMENT IFRC ..... 42

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DDR	Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ERD	Emergency and Rehabilitation Department (Cordaid)
GAD	Gender and Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TEC	Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
WID	Women in Development

## INTRODUCTION

This report gives an overview of the existing literature and debates on gender and humanitarian aid. Although there seems to be abundant written material on for instance gender and conflict, the aspect of gender in humanitarian aid has for some part been neglected in theory and practice. The theories and debates on gender and conflict and gender and natural disasters will give an introduction to the realm of gender and humanitarian aid. This report will also show, by means of interviews with employees of Dutch development organisations, if and how gender has been mainstreamed in the policy and practice of their humanitarian aid programmes.

We have complemented the literature study by means of an analysis of gender issues arising from the recent tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia and Africa, December 2004. We have dedicated a separate chapter to this analysis, or case study, as it highlights some of the issues and debates that surround gender-awareness during and after “natural” disasters.

Particularly we want to mention the Dutch development organisation Cordaid for enabling us to expand this study to encompass also the recent tsunami disaster in Asia and Africa, and for allowing us to have in-depth interviews with some of their staff from the Emergency and Rehabilitation department. This has added great value to the study and has given us insight into more tangible experiences, apart from mere theoretical discussions.

## I. GENDER OR WOMEN?

Although discussions on gender and development have been around for quite some time, this has not happened on such an extensive basis for humanitarian aid. In the 1970s the Women in Development (WID) approach was introduced, advocating more attention for women in development issues to strengthen economic development. This was followed by the Gender and development (GAD) approach, as it was concluded that the one-sided focus on women of WID, did not allow taking into account the, socially constructed nature of gender roles (Razavi and Miller 1995). Looking at gender roles and relations was a way to explain what differential impacts development intervention had on both men and women.

The definition of gender can be described as the following:

“The differences between women and men within the same household and within and between cultures that are socially and culturally constructed and change over time. These differences are reflected in: roles, responsibilities, access to resources, constraints, opportunities, needs, perceptions, views, etc. held by both women and men. Thus, gender is not a synonym for women, but considers both women and men and their interdependent relationships”. (Moser, C. 1993)

Gender roles are likely to be affected in times of crises such as war, conflict and natural disasters. Although attention for gender in development policy has existed for some time now, the need for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian aid and conflict approaches has started only in the mid 1990s. With mainstreaming we mean using gender not just as an added theme in humanitarian work, but paying attention to gender aspects and gender equality throughout all projects, programmes and policy.

Gender is not just about women, as is often implicitly presumed. It deals with roles of both women and men. However, in the literature that was reviewed, the word gender was often used as being synonymous to women. This had several reasons according to the authors:

- “Almost invariably, gender constructs function in a way that subordinates and discriminates against women. This discrimination is not only reflected in individual relationships but also permeates all institutions” (IASC 2001, p.3).
- “Women’s varied, but gendered, experiences give them a distinctive starting point for critiquing familiar assumptions from the position of the oppressed. Male-dominated management and universalized experiences of disasters have stimulated most gender research to focus on women specifically (rather than on women *and* men) because of their relative invisibility and their later established greater potential vulnerability” (Fordham 2004, p.176).

The one sided focus on women, instead of gender, may have some negative consequences as some authors noted. Byrne and Baden (1995) speak of gender conflict as a result of a focus on women alone as victims. Furthermore, focusing simply on women’s activities can obscure important dimensions of their livelihood strategies that include cooperation and interdependence between men and women. The question then becomes perhaps not whether to include men and masculinity in the analysis but the degree of centrality they should assume.

In the following chapters this literature review on gender and humanitarian aid will highlight mostly women’s vulnerabilities, coping strategies and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). There

are some factors in conflict and natural disasters, however, which contribute to men's increased vulnerability. These are for instance risky search and rescue activities, self-destructive coping strategies involving interpersonal violence, and masculinity norms (ILO 2002). Furthermore, analyzing gender always brings with it the danger of generalizations on roles of men and women, excluding many exceptions to the rule. We too, cannot fully avoid making some of these generalizations when translating certain literature, policy documents and interviews into this paper.

## 2. GENDER AND NATURAL DISASTERS

### *Gendered vulnerability*

It has been traditional in disaster research to conceptualize disasters as sudden events, disrupting everyday life and causing death and destruction. Missing from this model are the historically human practices that create the actual disaster. Poverty, environmental degradation, unequal power relations can, among others, be seen as processes that influence the extent of the disaster impact. The concept of vulnerability is often used to explain these social, economic and physical processes. More vulnerable people with fewer resources will have a less developed fall back position in case of emergency, which will automatically lead to a greater risk. A hazard will only turn into a disaster when the vulnerability of people is high. In order to decrease the impact of a disaster, it is necessary to tackle the root causes of vulnerability. Moreover, dealing with causes of vulnerability is directly related to preventive measures in case of future disasters.

One element that significantly contributes to addressing root causes of vulnerability is gender analysis, the central topic of this paper. Anderson (1994, p.8) argues that gender is certainly not the only factor determining vulnerability. However, “very often an understanding of vulnerability and the development of strategies for overcoming it can be advanced through gender analysis.” While women are often considered strong and capable in the wake of, during and after a disaster, they are also regarded as belonging to the most vulnerable people. This is, among others, clarified by the following factors: in general, women often lack access to and control of resources, causing dependency on others. In addition, they are to a greater extent exposed to health dangers. Another factor is their limited mobility because of traditional expectations and home-based responsibilities. And finally, traditional role models also limit their opportunities for political involvement, education, and access to information, markets and a myriad of other resources. All these factors cause women to be highly vulnerable to disasters and it is therefore necessary to analyze the specific gender relations underlying this vulnerability.

Anderson (*ibid.*) concludes: “Understanding these linkages through gender analysis makes it clear that women are vulnerable not because it is in their physical nature to be weak but because of the arrangements of societies that result in their poverty, political marginalization, and dependence on men.” In this sense, the concept of ‘gendered vulnerability’ becomes important. It places a special focus on gender relations instead of women’s needs and positions. It also emphasizes issues of power and powerlessness in its broadest context. Moreover, interdependencies between women and men, as part of their livelihood strategies, need to be examined as well (Fordham 2004). As Blaikie (*et al.* 1994 in Enarson 1998, p.159) points out: “Gendered vulnerability does not derive from a single factor, such as household headship or poverty, but reflects historically and culturally specific patterns of relations in social institutions, culture and personal lives. Intersecting with economic, racial and other inequalities, these relationships create hazardous social conditions placing different groups of women differently at risk when disastrous events unfold.”

### *Capacity*

While emphasizing the need for a focus on gendered vulnerability one risks to neglect the importance of coping mechanisms and capacities in disaster situations. In relation to relief interventions, attention should be given to the strengths of affected communities so that programmes enhance these rather than create more dependency (Greet 1994, p.13). Byrne and Baden (1995, p.1) argue for a need to identify men’s and women’s differing vulnerabilities

as well as their different capacities and coping strategies, so that relief organizations can build on these. In emergency situations women are often portrayed as helpless victims, being totally dependent and awaiting rescue by strong-armed men. These images ignore the fact that women are active and resourceful disaster responders. In much of the literature on vulnerability and capacity analysis, women's reproductive, productive and community tasks are being put forward. "Women's local community knowledge, strong social networks, key roles in families, and active work roles make them resourceful actors in crises, yet they are rarely recognized by 'front-line' responders" (ILO 2002, p.10). To understand the complex realities of disaster it is therefore essential to focus on both gendered vulnerabilities and capacities. The following sections summarize today's literature on women's roles with regard to natural disaster vulnerability and capacity. It will become clear in which ways gender relations are altered in disaster situations, and in which ways gendered vulnerabilities and capacities are socially constructed.

### *Women's roles*

Women's central roles are often ignored in disaster management practices and cause the public-private dichotomy to be maintained. Women's domestic work and responsibilities remain most of the time invisible for outsiders, but can be regarded as the backbone of the rural economy in development countries. Any changes in the condition of women will inevitably affect the performance of the rural economy as a whole (Tichagwa 1994, p.20). The inherent hierarchy in the public-private dichotomy, however, makes the feminized domestic sphere subservient to the masculinized public (Fordham & Ketteridge 1998, p.94). Greet (1994) argues that, despite the gender concerns spelled out in policy documents of relief organizations, women's needs and roles in production and development are still being marginalized in development and disaster practice. The re-occurrence of emergencies or crises partly demonstrates this failure. In this respect, Byrne and Baden (1995) advocate the so-called Gender and Development (GAD) approach. This approach emphasizes the need to look at men and women's differential access to resources and power relations within the household. This is in contrast with the Women in Development (WID) approach that analyses an emergency situation purely from a needs perspective, resulting in a view of women solely as victims or mothers.<sup>1</sup>

Going beyond household level, several social and anthropological scientists illustrate the multi-dimensional roles played by women. To a large extent, women are responsible for food provision and the overall survival strategy of the family (Tichagwa 1994, p.20). Traditionally, women perform many activities that are associated with emergency preparedness. Noel (1998, p.215) sums up the following examples regarding Caribbean women: "They have long been involved in selecting housing sites, placement of wells, hauling, storage, and distribution of water, and promotion of sound household hygiene and sanitation practices. (...) Women's involvement in food production and nutrition is also significant, and is not limited to mere cooking and serving, but includes direct manual labor in planting and harvesting crops, handling large farm animals, transportation and marketing." Much of the literature on women's roles in disaster practice makes a division between reproductive, productive and community responsibilities. Their intersecting roles as income earners, food producers, consumers and family care givers place them at the centre of global development trends and environmental management issues (Enarson 1998). In addition she points to women's environmental stewardship, their indigenous knowledge of local resources and their knowledge of family and community history to be significant assets when

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the WID and GAD approach see also Razavi and Miller (1995).



families and communities respond to natural hazards. On the other hand, these multiple responsibilities “leave them with less time than men for political involvement, and without a voice in the decision-making processes that impact their lives and their environment” (Fordham 2001, p.8). Enarson (2001) also states that, in spite of their key roles in meeting basic family needs, women lack political influence due to inequality, marginalization and disempowerment.

### *Women’s vulnerability*

The combination of fulfilling a central role in everyday life on the one hand and lacking decision-making power and access to resources on the other, make women to a great extent vulnerable to natural disasters. As a report of the International Labour Organization (ILO 2002, p.7) points out, women’s subordination is a root cause of their disaster vulnerability. With respect to this subordinated position, their economic insecurity, ideological constraints, male dominance, sexual and domestic violence, extensive care-giving responsibilities, and heterosexist practices and kinship relations<sup>2</sup> are mentioned as factors that contribute to women’s vulnerability.

According to Fordham (2004, p.176), claiming women’s greater vulnerability is based on the fact that, in general, women and girls are disadvantaged compared to men and boys. They more frequently occupy a position of dependence on other persons and their triple role in society is often invisible. They must deal with reduced educational and employment opportunities, less political representation and fewer civic freedoms. Moreover, women’s work in the informal sector is a vital component of the household’s budget. “In post-disaster construction, however, it is the formal sector that attracts attention and resources” (*ibid.*, p.177).

Bradshaw (2004) makes a distinction between technical, political and social vulnerability. Regarding the last, she elaborates on six different gender elements, namely: poverty, health conditions, malnutrition, female-headed households, illiteracy and housing conditions. As far as poverty is concerned, she points to the fact that women and children may live in poverty because the resources available to them are far fewer than the total household resources. They therefore constitute a vulnerable group. Bradshaw further mentions that access and control over resources, employment sources and credit facilities determine the degree of social vulnerability of women. The author additionally pays attention to the vulnerability aspects of female-headed households in disaster situations. “Female-headed households are considered to be vulnerable on account of their poverty and lack of access to other social and economic resources. Reasons for this include the fact that they are situated in areas at greater risk or because women must choose between the two roles that they perform, that of a woman –caring for the children- and that of a man –protecting assets-, which causes greater losses” (Bradshaw 2004, p.22).

Having elaborated briefly on intra-household dimensions in disaster situations, it is important to conclude that households of any class, culture, or ethnicity are not necessarily unified in their coping strategies or that individual members share equally in their vulnerabilities to disaster (Bolin *et al.* 1998, p.42). Natural disasters, like food crises and famines, deepen and intensify already existing unequal power relations between classes and genders, pointing to inequality as a factor in disaster vulnerability. As far as relief interventions are concerned it is crucial to understand how both the emergency itself and relief responses will have a

---

<sup>2</sup> “Heterosexist practices and kinship relations place women outside the norm (e.g. widows, single women, lesbians, single mothers) at greater risk when relief programs are designed to reach women through male-headed households” (ILO 2002, p.7).

differential impact on individuals within the household, and how the power and resource distribution is affected (Byrne and Baden 1995, p.10). Wiest (1998, p.63) argues that people's responses to emergencies are grounded in an ongoing domestic social structure that simultaneously provides the context, form and meaning for response. The needs, strengths and relative power of various groups need to be analyzed, so that 'equitable inequalities' will be established (Fordham 2004, p.181).

#### *Disaster impact and shift in gender relations*

What becomes acceptable behavior may change in times of crisis. For example, petty commerce or the sale of alcohol or drugs, or in extreme cases entering into prostitution, may turn into acceptable activities for women, where they have no other options. Real transgressions of cultural norms are rarely done without cost and women risk losing the support of their social network permanently. They also run the risk of being infected with HIV/Aids, which we will elaborate on in chapter 4. On the other hand, there may also be positive gains for women in some survival strategies, through learning new skills and entering new areas of participation. As is stated by El Bushra and Piza-Lopez (1994, in Byrne and Baden 1995, p.34), "crisis often leads to changes in gender situations, notably shifts in or a loosening of the division of labour, changes in household structure and marriage relationships. Women's organizations may have developed, or grown in strength. (...) Rehabilitation thus offers many possibilities for positive change". However, such changes are not supposed to result in increased responsibilities without women increasing their access and control over resources. For instance, women may have become increasingly involved in processes of crop production, but at the same time lack land rights or access to credit. The process of rehabilitation may cause potential conflicts "as both men and women adjust to shifts in their respective patterns of control over resources and responsibilities" (Byrne and Baden 1995, p.36). The increase of women's work burden in times of crisis may also lead to a reduction in their participation in the public sphere.

Tichagwa (1994) sums up economic, environmental, social and health impacts of drought on women. Food deficits, increased male labour migration, and an increased burden of women to take care of children and agricultural production result in reduced agricultural productivity, causing a vicious circle. "In some cases, the trappings of city/town life have turned the otherwise seasonal migrant workers into permanent urban dwellers, with a second wife or more in their second homes. A husband in town may even require his wife in the rural areas to send food to him and his other wife after the harvest" (*ibid.*, p.23). Next to the rise in number of female-headed households, Bradshaw (2004, p.31) mentions the psychological impact of natural disasters on women. Interviews with women after Hurricane Mitch in Honduras illustrated their concern about the population's mental health, and about the lack of resources dealing with the situation. Most of them also noted a feeling of insecurity in the streets, and the high number of teenage mothers and pregnant adolescents. Furthermore, one year and a half after Mitch, overall levels of violence had risen, as had violence against women, including domestic violence.

Enarson (2000) points to the fact that natural disasters cause women's economic insecurity to increase. They lose economic resources, like land and livestock. Especially women who lack land rights or who farm small plots are among the most vulnerable. Wiest's study (1998) of single mothers in Bangladesh rearing children on the least desirable riverplain found that flooding forced women heading households from bad to worse land and eventually into involuntary low-wage agricultural labour on local plantations. Earning income to replace lost crops or livestock is a crucial strategy for women and men alike. However, women's care

responsibilities make them less mobile and they are therefore less able to migrate outside the impacted area than men. Women also suffer more than men because of their weak bargaining position in the household. This contradicts with the view that household resources are distributed equally, as relief agencies often assume. “Women’s assets are depleted, their income-earning options become inferior, and they are less mobile, leaving men in crisis a stronger ‘fall-back position’” (Enarson 2000, p.11). In addition, self-employed women lose work and are typically slower than men to return to their jobs. This is because public transportation shuts down, day care centers and hospitals close or family needs intensify. Many women also lose their job as domestic workers, because of destroyed houses and evacuated employers. In addition, the increased workload of women dramatically reduces the time available for working outside the house. In disaster situations, traditional tasks become more complex and are performed under difficult conditions, but also new tasks arise. Several studies<sup>3</sup> illustrate the active role of women, even more proactive than the role of men, in disaster preparation and mitigation, and emergency response activities.

This outline of women’s roles and responsibilities in everyday life and the changes that occur in disaster situations illustrate a myriad of factors that constitute their vulnerabilities and capacities. It is important to note that a gender perspective not only addresses women’s practical needs before, during and after disasters, but also looks at the responsibilities of men and women and the relations between them. It is better to speak of ‘strategic’ needs that are based on women’s subordination in society. Women’s strategic needs are designed to overcome this subordination; “they include access to credit and other resources; and they involve the elimination of institutionalized forms of discrimination, initiative to counter domestic violence and alleviation of the burden of household tasks” (Bradshaw 2004, p.20). It is therefore plausible to conclude that more egalitarian social relations enable societies to learn to live more securely with hazard and risk in safer environments.

---

<sup>3</sup> Examples and references are mentioned in: Enarson 2000, page 16-18.

### 3. GENDER AND CONFLICT

In this chapter we will investigate how gender-roles are affected during and after conflict. We will also highlight some gender-differentiated expectations during the peace building process.

#### *Gender during conflict*

In early literature gender was simply not an issue; conflict was a man's domain exclusively. Later literature became very black and white; men were per definition the perpetrators whereas women were victims, now literature is starting to bring nuances in the way they view gender in humanitarian aid and conflict (Moser and Clark eds. 2001). In times of conflict, women and men tend to be forced to acquire new social roles. Although women traditionally and stereotypically are pictured primarily as victims and or peace builders, whereas men are the aggressive, warring parties, evidence shows that these images are very generalized, with exceptions on both sides. "Women may actively promote the notion that they are the guardians of cultural or ethnic identity as this role can give them status, power and a public voice. Women may use this position to incite violence, becoming the agents, rather than the victims of violence" (Byrne & Baden, p.17-18).

Women can be actively involved in a conflict, for instance, by being recruited as fighting forces for the national army or rebel forces (or becoming suicide bombers as in: Sri Lanka, Chechnya, Palestine, etc.). An example of a female rebel leader is Alice Lakwena, the spiritual leader of Uganda's rebel movement Holy Spirit Movement, responsible for attacking her own Acholi people. Women currently make out about 10 percent of combatants, both state-army as rebel forces (Bouta et al 2005). However, their presence in armed forces does not automatically lead to equity, nor change the character, culture and hierarchy of the army (Cockburn 2001).

Women that do not actively participate in the fighting, often need to fill the labour gaps that their husbands, brother, fathers, etc, leave behind when they join rebel or army forces. In times of war and uncertainty this new division of labour may include all agricultural labour and further maintaining their livelihoods and household economy, next to their more traditional roles of caring for their families. The amount of female-headed households, unsurprisingly, dramatically increases in times of conflict.

One of the violent ways in which people are targeted during war and conflict, is through Gender-Based and Sexual Violence (GBV): "GBV is defined as physical, sexual, and psychological violence against both men and women that occurs within the family and the community and is perpetrated or condoned by the state. In conflict situations, GBV is committed against civilians and soldiers. It is not an accidental side effect of war, but a crime against the individual and an act of aggression against the entire community or nation" (Bouta et al, 2005, p.33). GBV during war and conflict does not just happen; it is part of a strategy, a weapon of war to undermine the opponents' morale. Turshen (2001) speaks of "the political economy of rape", pointing at underlying strategic reasons for the widespread rape of women in Mozambique and Rwanda during the war. She looks at the political economy of rape as twofold; women *as* property and women *and* property. The first is described as following: "There are two aspects of reproductive labour to consider: rape to impregnate, making women bear children for the 'enemy' community, and rape to prevent women from becoming mothers in their own community, by making them unacceptable to their community or by so injuring them physically that they are unable to bear children" (Turshen

2001, p.62). The idea of women *and* property as a political economy of rape is illustrated by pointing at, for instance, the many “marriages” between soldiers and women, these forced marriages often occur so the soldier can benefit from the women’s possessions (Turshen 2001). Alternatively, women also enter in relationships with rebels or soldiers in order to get access to food or money (Bennett et al. 1995). GBV, forced marriages and the children that are born out of these circumstances, create enormous stigmatisation for women within their communities. The shame and trauma are further exacerbated by the risk of being infected with HIV-Aids. “Rape exacerbates women’s vulnerability because of the many social and cultural issues related to women’s ‘cleanliness’ and ‘behaviour’” (Turshen 2001, p.65). Mass rapes have and are still occurring in countries like Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. A report by Human Rights Watch (1996) says that at least 250.000, and maybe as many as 500.000 women in Rwanda were raped during the Genocide in 1994, which lasted only 100 days. Literature on GBV against men is hard to find, which can undoubtedly also be contributed to the taboo that exists on sexual violence against men. “Regarding gender-specific roles related to GBV, women are more vulnerable to GBV than men because of prevailing oppressive gender relations” (Bouta et al, 2005, p.33). One author who has written an article on GBV against men is Zarkov (2001). She described the media representation of men who were sexually assaulted during the conflict in former Yugoslavia. She argues that reasons behind these assaults are to strip men from their masculinity, showing the world how weak and lacking in power the enemies are (Zarkov 2001).

#### *Refugee women and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)*

During conflict and disasters, whole communities are forced to leave their homes and move to safe havens, like refugee camps in neighbouring countries. An often-used figure, from the IASC (2001), points out that 80% of all IDPs and refugees are women. Baden and Byrne (1995) object to the use of this figure because it gives a distorted image of reality: “This figure, in itself, is not particularly significant, given that women and children might be expected to make up around that percentage in a ‘normal’ population” (Baden and Byrne 1995, p.8). They do however contradict this criticism, by stating that looking at the demographics, there are large amounts of female-headed households. The men that have remained in refugee camps are usually the elderly and disabled. “Displacement tends to increase the number of households headed by women, particularly by widows, and change gender roles. Moreover, displacement has different gender impacts in each phase of displacement: from the cause of flight, to considerations of protection and assistance while displaced, to specific problems arising in the resettlement and reintegration phase. In all cases, fundamental rights are put at risk” (IASC 2001, p.2). Women are often denied a refugee status, because of the tendency to only register male-headed households in the refugee camps (Baden and Byrne 1995). This does not only pertain to their refugee status, but goes beyond that to areas of entitlement, distribution of cash and goods, etc.

The new reality in refugee camps can challenge existing social and cultural structures. Turner (2004) gives examples of the changes that occur in Tanzanian camps for refugees from Burundi, adjusting many socio-cultural norms that existed. For instance, “big men” are no longer respected as they used to, because they don’t have the property and special status that they had prior to arriving in the refugee camps. This is blamed on UNHCRs politics of “equality in aid”. Village leaders in the camp became younger and younger, reasons being that the current leadership required different skills than before. Young refugee men from Burundi needed to be mobile in order to bridge the distances between the different institutions, they also needed to be able to speak different languages than before (Kiswahili and English instead of French and Kirundi), not being shy was another virtue which contradicted the shyness

that is typical for Burundians. “Old values and norms are being challenged, old authorities are losing their grip and a new authority – represented most strongly by UNHCR – is in control of resources, livelihoods and ideological formations (e.g. the ideology of equality between men and women)” (Turner 2004, p.99). For gender relations, life in refugee-camps also had some consequences. There are some women that have gained positions at the various organisations, thus becoming the breadwinner of the household, and therefore suddenly having the biggest say in that household. The men felt they had lost respect, because of not being able to provide for their families, and having to ask for money from their wives. Although one might say that this shift in gender roles leads to gender equity and better gender relations, Turner (2004) noted that this is not the case. “However, the refugees interpret the structural shift towards gender equality (equal food rations etcetera) in a completely different manner to what was intended by the agencies themselves. The unintended consequence is that existing gender ideologies are strengthened through the male refugees’ attempts to combat what they perceive as social and moral decay” (Turner 2004, p.104).

Various authors have mentioned the importance of a gender sensitive approach to the infrastructure of refugee camps. “A lack of gender sensitivity in refugee camps may also expose women to risk and violence; for example, the camps may not have well-protected women’s quarters or may have inappropriate sanitary facilities” (Bouta et al, 2005, p.35). Also the distance between the facilities and their tents, and insufficient light in the camp may lead to unsafe situations in which women are put at risk of GBV.

#### *Gender and peace building*

During the peace building process, gender roles are reinforced into stereotypical images of good and bad. Where men tend to be represented as aggressive soldiers, women are represented as mothers and passive victims who desperately want peace and could be profoundly good at bringing people together to achieve this. Women would be more peaceful by their very nature, are better in communicating, and are more flexible and caring. These generalizations can be seen throughout the discourse on women and their involvement in peacebuilding (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 2005).

Women apparently organise themselves around peacebuilding initiatives, and have an even stake in achieving peace as men do, however they tend to be completely ignored in the official peace negotiations (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 2005, UNDP 2002, Bouta et al. 2005). Although everyone would agree that leaving out rebels, warring parties, ethnic representatives, or army officials would be detrimental to achieving a solid peace agreement, hardly anybody seems to question the wisdom of systematically leaving out 50% of the affected population. The UN in 2000 has adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security to point at the need to include women in peacebuilding activities. In chapter 6 we will elaborate on this resolution and its implications.

A gender perspective on peace building might generate some different outcomes, like:

- Different interests and strategies with regards to gender relations and empowerment (Moser 2001).
- The inclusion of women in formal peace talks would ensure a wider popular support for the outcomes (Bouta et al. 2005).
- Women would be able to connect more with the former enemies and bridge political gaps through uniting experiences as motherhood and family (Bouta et al. 2005).

### *Gender in post-conflict situations*

In situations of post-conflict and with the influx of aid agencies, peoples newly acquired roles and skills can easily be overlooked. As the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has pointed out, there is an opportunity for aid agencies to engage in gender mainstreaming in a post-conflict situation: “The issue here is how agencies can help enhance and protect these opportunities and gains, particularly in the post-conflict phase where there may be a tendency to revert to tradition and new constraints imposed” (IASC 2001, p.7).

According to El-Bushra, et al. (2002) the roles indeed seem to change during and after a conflict situation, allowing women to have somewhat more negotiating and political decision making power. However, although the roles shift, the ideology underpinning those roles do not. Rather, the ideology on gender-specific roles may even become stronger. “Conflict may create space to make a redefinition of social relations possible, but in so doing it rearranges, adapts or reinforces patriarchal ideologies, rather than fundamentally changing them (El-Bushra et al. 2002, p.6)”. Palmer and Zwi (1998) also noticed this societal or gender change, calling it cultural norms and cultural identity that were enforced during and after conflict. Byrne and Baden (1995) also acknowledge that gender-roles indeed can change during conflict, but are less straightforward about whether this change is necessarily positive for gender-equity and power relations. “As wars are inherently political events, the ideological formulation of gender identities may be subject to change, offering either a liberated vision of women, or stressing traditional ideals of women as the reproducers of fighters and the guardians and transmitters of culture” (Byrne & Baden 1995, p17-18). In fact they argue, “Conflict is on balance more likely to disempower women than to empower them...” (Byrne & Baden 1995, p17-18).

In a post-conflict situation, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) commences. This process does not always reach women for various reasons. For instance, female combatants remain rather invisible, they are not regarded as a major security threat, etc. (Bouta et al 2005). “Women may find that any gains, or extensions, of their control over resources and their lives made in crisis situations are lost in the process of rehabilitation, for example if seeds or other inputs are provided to men rather than women. Conversely, rehabilitation can be a period of positive transformation in gender relations, with opportunities to increase women’s skills and income earning opportunities, and thus their autonomy” (Byrne and Baden 1995, p.16). Men also face difficulties during reintegration, returning home they may find themselves having to adjust to new roles and patterns, and having to try and regain control over resources and decision-making. There is an increase noted in the occurrence of GBV in this post-conflict period, due to the “culture of violence” and men being frustrated and traumatized by their experiences during the conflict (Ward 2002). This increase in violence may also have to do with men trying to regain control in the household.

Within the window of opportunity, where the post-conflict period offers room for positive change of gender roles, DDR can be used to prevent gender-roles from falling back into the pre-conflict traditional patterns and divisions. Not involving women in rehabilitation projects could make them more dependent on food and material assistance (Bouta et al 2005, Byrne and Baden 1995 and ILO 2002). Women’s social reintegration after war usually entails going back to their roles in the family and losing any entitlement to land and resources, which they might have been able to obtain during war. DDR programmes could offer the opportunity to address these imbalances in rights, but more often than not DDR offers men the chance to regain their livelihoods and social position, whereas women are left with nothing. In the

DDR process in Liberia, the UN made efforts to incorporate 21.000 women in the demobilisation process.

Recently, important steps have been made to ensure gender sensitivity in peacekeeping operations; resulting in a Code of Conduct of the UNHCR and in UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This could have positive effects on the DDR process, reaching both women and men, involving women in formal peacebuilding activities, and could potentially make an end to the stream of incidents of sexual misconduct by peacekeeping troops. In chapter 6 we will elaborate on this Resolution. In the Windhoek Declaration of 2000 Plan of Action on “mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations” a few provisions were made for gendering peace keeping operations, such as: recruitment of female soldiers in peacekeeping missions, gender-training for UN personnel).

Concluding this chapter on gender and conflict it can be noted that the impact of conflict is gendered. Certain gender roles are exaggerated and polarised, picturing women as passive victims whose main aim is to achieve peace, whereas men are portrayed as aggressive fighters that are unwilling to put down their arms. The truth lies somewhere in the middle, with major exceptions on both sides as we have seen in this chapter. However, it is clear that although women only make up 10% of active forces during conflict, they bear a tremendous burden and do not emerge unharmed after peace has been achieved. During conflict they become sole nurturers for their families, having to sustain a livelihood next to their household responsibilities. Conflict and resettlement in refugee camps transform social and cultural structures, which can either lead to new gender patterns occurring, or lead to gender conflict, with both sides trying to regain control over resources and the household.



## 4. GENDER AND HUMANITARIAN AID

The previous chapters illustrate that gender as a theme in natural disasters and conflict has been sufficiently addressed in literature. The translation to humanitarian aid, however, is not always made. The need for quick action is often used as the primary reason for ignoring the gender dimensions of needs and capacities. As Fordham (2004, p.178) argues: “It might be argued that a concern with ‘gender’ is out of date – a preoccupation of the 1980s that has subsequently been dealt with”. However, as we have seen in previous chapters, not taking gender and gendered vulnerabilities into account can lead to a greater disaster impact.

### *Relief and development*

A gender perspective in humanitarian aid can have two main aims:

- a short term perspective on equal aid distribution and keeping in mind gender-specific needs;
- a longer term perspective towards equitable gender roles and relationships, taking into account participation, negotiation and decision making power.

One could argue that the longer-term aim does not fall under the responsibility of humanitarian aid agencies, but is something that development organisations should keep in their mandate. However, the post-conflict or -disaster period provides space to address more structural unequal gender roles, as conflict and disaster have a profound effect on gender relations. Leaving this responsibility up to development projects may mean that traditional roles and divisions could soon be reinforced after conflict or disaster. This period leaves a so-called ‘window of opportunity’ for aid agencies to address gender inequalities. “Relief programmes which seek to develop capacities, for example by training women to maintain facilities in refugee camps, or by extending the coping strategies available to women, may fall foul of the distinctions funders make between development and relief” (Byrne and Baden 1995, p. 42). Lack of time and funding are the most cited reasons for humanitarian agencies to not address the issue of gender. “The culture of speed would seem to prevail in many relief organisations, even when emergencies are not acute. In these circumstances, consideration of gender issues can seem to be irrelevant, or a luxury” (Byrne and Baden 1995, p.42).

Humanitarian interventions are characterised by quick responses to human suffering. Donor agencies set strict time limits to available budgets and implementing agencies have to conform themselves to these conditions. Affected people are portrayed as desperate victims waiting for outside help, so that western civilians give financial help. As we have illustrated in the previous chapters, affected people are everything but passive victims. Their capacities and vulnerabilities actively shape the impact of the disaster on their individual lives. We have seen that, among others, vulnerability and capacity are constructed by gender relations. Unequal power relations, different roles and responsibilities determine the ways in which men and women respond to crises. These power relations also make it more difficult for women to obtain their humanitarian assistance entitlements (UN/SEAGA 2003). When relief organisations do not take into account these gendered processes, they run the risk of not being able to meet specific women’s needs and this can eventually lead to a further deterioration of the unequal relationships between men and women. “International aid providers often fail to pay enough attention to the role of affected communities and may further undermine women’s coping strategies and ability to influence decision-making. When

trying to respond rapidly and save as many lives as possible, relief organisations may inadvertently undermine attempts to promote gender and cultural sensitivity within projects and programme activities (Palmer and Zwi 1998, p.243)”.

Relief interventions should instead be directed towards addressing the processes that cause increased vulnerabilities to disasters and conflict. It is necessary to understand the different aspects of (gendered) vulnerability in order to mitigate the effects of disaster and conflict and make use of coping strategies and capacities (Byrne and Baden 1995). However, the understanding that women and children suffer more during emergencies does not lead to an analysis of gender relations and action towards addressing these vulnerabilities. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), to which most NGOs and UN bodies adhere their policy, has identified 6 main areas of gender concerns that need to be addressed in humanitarian assistance. These 6 main areas make it possible to understand gendered vulnerabilities and address them accordingly:

- Prevention of Violence and Protection;
- Targeting and Relief Distribution;
- Health and Reproductive health;
- Nutrition and Household Food Security;
- Income Generation and Skill Training;
- Disaggregated Data, Information and Advocacy Materials.

Humanitarian aid has been highly scrutinized in recent years, and was linked to allegations of sexual abuse of aid beneficiaries in West-Africa in 2002 (Willitts-King and Harvey 2005). UN peacekeeping forces as well as humanitarian NGOs were accused of sexually exploiting women and children. Cash, goods and relief were given in exchange for sexual favours. Action has been taken outlining stricter codes and guidelines for humanitarian organisations and UN peacekeeping forces. In response the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) established a Task Force on Protection for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises, which developed a plan of action towards the behaviour and principles for humanitarian workers. The UNHCR implemented a quite elaborate new Code of Conduct, introducing guiding principles for the behaviour of its staff, explicitly stating the following: “I undertake not to abuse the power and influence that I have by virtue of my position over the lives and well-being of refugees and other persons of concern. I will never request any service or favour from refugees or other persons of concern in return for protection or assistance. I will never engage in any exploitative relationships – sexual, emotional, financial or employment-related – with refugees or other persons of concern” (UNHCR 2002).

When integrating a gender perspective into relief intervention, it is essential to ask the following two questions (Byrne and Baden, 1995, p.10):

- Do interventions serve to further weaken women’s access to and control over resources?
- Or do they support women’s capacity to cope with crises, enhance their skills and provide them with the means to rebuild their lives?

Additional arguments for a gender-sensitive approach towards humanitarian aid programmes are the following:

- Involving women throughout the whole programme will increase their self-esteem, give them access to health services and reduce their exposure to risk (Palmer and Zwi, 1998). The reduction of vulnerabilities in this case should also be seen as part of

disaster risk reduction programmes. Another issue that has not yet been fully picked up by policy-makers and practitioners.

- “If gender is not considered, there is a danger that women become invisible in relief programmes, with men receiving most resources and participating in the planning and implementation of programmes. This can lead to increased gender inequality and may also hamper the effectiveness of relief programmes, with women’s capacities remaining under-utilized and their needs not being met” (Byrne and Baden 1995, p.3).
- “A gender perspective highlights women’s capacities and can indicate where opportunities are missed by relief interventions for making aid more effective by supporting and developing women’s skills and capacities” (Byrne and Baden 1995, p.9).
- “Women are generally the chief providers of food and emotional security in most family situations. Our approach should highlight these strengths rather than undermine them, as would many ‘quick response’ programmes” (Greet 1994, p.12-13).
- Creating equal participation in (local) peacebuilding initiatives increases the chances for sustainable peace.

A possible model would therefore be one where relief and development interventions are implemented harmoniously, mitigating the impact of disasters and conflict, and easing rehabilitation. Yet, an understanding of the complexities of gender issues is even made more difficult as gender relations undergo rapid transformations during crisis. Especially in situations, which are intensely politicised, community opposition may make implementation of gender policy extremely difficult (Byrne and Baden 1995). Integration of developmental and gender concerns, requires a fuller understanding of gender relations, and more bottom-up, participatory methods. Current relief practice seems to favour top-down, donor-dependent and expatriate-run operations, again due to time and budgetary constraints (Byrne and Baden 1995).

Having argued for integrating a gender perspective in relief interventions, here are recommendations for action found in literature on gender and natural disasters, they do however, for a great deal, also apply to humanitarian aid in (post-) conflict settings. In an ILO working paper on Gender and Natural Disasters (Enarson 2000), the following recommendations are made:

- *using gender analysis in capacity and vulnerability assessments*

To anticipate resources or needs in the wake of a disaster it is essential to answer key questions about women’s and men’s lives. With regard to women’s capacities, information about their employment and work patterns, their work skills and organizational networks is needed. “Planners should identify key groups of women whose local knowledge, community languages, social networks, and insight into community history may be needed in vulnerability assessments” (*ibid.*, p.24). As far as women’s vulnerability is concerned, the following gender-specific data are needed: household structure, demographic trends, labour division, local power structures, women’s poverty and unemployment rates, working conditions, relative control over key economic assets, and the needs of vulnerable home workers, disabled women, migrant workers, sole providers, and others. It is important to note here that “development work cannot be effective which does not take into account *the relationships between people*. As the relationships between males and females form the basis of human society, the analysis of the implications of these relations must form the basis of development and relief interventions” (Eade and Williams 1995, in: Enarson 2000, p.25).

- *gender-fair disaster interventions*

As hazards cannot be entirely mitigated, household and community preparedness is essential to minimize damage. Mitigation strategies should always be gender-sensitive, for example including women in education preparedness programs and risk mapping. Moreover, emergency communications need to be organised in a gender-specific way, so that both women and men are reached. In the case of a disaster, relief organisations should anticipate gender bias in access to services and gender-specific needs. “Women’s effective access to relief is often restricted by differences in social power, social esteem and physical mobility” (Enarson 2000, p.26). The involvement of women relief workers is essential as well. “Following a major Turkish earthquake, women were included on outreach teams after it was found that female survivors felt unable to freely discuss their needs with male outreach workers or invite unrelated men into their homes” (*ibid.*, p.28).

- *sustainable income-generating projects*

Employment can be regarded as a form of ‘non-structural’ mitigation in two ways: firstly, direct employment can reduce exposure to hazards (e.g. infrastructural projects or education campaigns), and secondly, employment reduces social vulnerability through increased economic capacity. “Micro-enterprise is often promoted as an economic development strategy for women, but is more effective when initiated by women’s groups” (*ibid.*, p.30). Involving women in employment opportunities provides a ‘window of opportunity’ for social change after disasters.

- *responsive employers*

Contingency planning with respect to local enterprises can reduce the impact of extreme events on workers and their families. It is necessary to focus on female-dominated sectors as well. “Grassroots organisations providing services to senior or disabled women, women immigrants, or women subject to violence need emergency plans, as their services are likely to be in greater demand after a natural disaster” (Enarson 2000, p.32).

- *partnering with women’s organisations*

It often happens that the capacities of women’s organisations are not known, because of a lack of gender-aware vulnerability and capacity assessments. During Hurricane Mitch emergency managers rarely consulted women’s groups with expertise about gender and disaster. “Partnering with working women’s organisations, environmental groups, grassroots advocacy organisations, female-dominated NGOs, and other community-based women’s groups affords disaster planners new opportunities for social mitigation and effective crisis response and reconstruction” (*ibid.*, p.33). Also, partnering with and involving women’s peace groups in peacebuilding activities, ensures more equal participation and a say of women in the future of their country and communities.

- *promoting women’s empowerment*

“Most disaster relief efforts have concentrated on meeting immediate needs, rather than on addressing and lessening vulnerabilities” (Anderson and Woodrow 1989, in: Enarson 2000, p.35). It is necessary to develop new initiatives that help reduce women’s subordination, linking gender equality to sustainable development on the one hand, and to disaster mitigation, on the other. The design and implementation of interventions that promote broad social goals necessarily involves disaster agencies in controversial work, probably not accepted by local elites or those who benefit from existing relief structures. “But fully engaging women as decision makers, planners, monitors, and implementers – as well as beneficiaries – is essential and must be institutionalized” (*ibid.*, p.37).

### *Gender and HIV/AIDS*

HIV/AIDS has created an added catastrophe for many people already affected by natural disasters and conflicts. Currently, more women than men are infected. Women make up nearly half of the 37.2 million adults aged 15-49 living with HIV worldwide, as figures show. In sub-Saharan Africa about 60 percent of those with HIV are women. Only focussing on young people aged 15-24, this rises to 75 percent.

As is illustrated in previous chapters as well, gender inequalities go far deeper than only sexual relations. Because of women's lack of property or access to financial resources, they become dependent on men for support. Without any resources, the risk of being subject to (sexual) abuse of power increases. "The low social status of women in the developing world magnifies their vulnerability to infection and constrains their ability to deal with its impact" (HPG 2004, p.8).

In conflict as well as natural disaster emergencies it is essential to take into account the number and life circumstances of HIV/Aids infected people. The disease and its impact on individual and community life extremely contribute to the degree of vulnerability to crises situations. In a UN report on Women and HIV/Aids, it is argued that "at its heart, this is a crisis of gender inequality, with women less able than men to exercise control over their bodies and lives" (UN 2004, p.7). The rates of HIV infection among women and girls in combination with the workload of caring for Aids patients, orphans and their own families are a cause for deep concern. Because of the additional work, fields are lying fallow, children (usually girls) are being taken out of school to help and households are not being maintained.

In situations of crises, the threat of infection from HIV/AIDS and the effects of its damage are multiplied. Women and adolescent girls and boys are vulnerable to sexual violence, leading to unwanted pregnancies, unsafe and complicated abortions, abandoned babies, HIV/STI (sexually transmitted infections) transmission, rejection by family and community and even suicide (Doedens 2000). The spread of HIV is promoted by poverty, powerlessness and social instability. Populations sometimes need to migrate into areas where more people are infected. An inflow of armed forces or peacekeepers consisting of sexually active men can also lead to increased transmission. Soldiers may have minimal knowledge of HIV prevention. Furthermore, fighting leads to a growing demand for blood transfusions. When there is a breakdown in the normal system of blood screening and universal precautions, HIV transmission through contaminated blood may be high. "Having to support a high number of people living with HIV/Aids affects the economic and emotional well-being of the refugee community. HIV/Aids can lead to social rejection, isolation and loss of income, poverty and economic dependence. The community may have to support an increasing number of orphans" (Doedens 2000, p.2).

The causes of the increase of HIV/Aids infected people cannot only be explained in terms of individual risk-taking behaviour. There is a relationship between HIV infection and poverty, inequality, the status of women in society, social disruption, illiteracy, human rights violations and many other factors contributing to society's vulnerability to aids. UNAIDS points out several reasons why women constitute a vulnerable group regarding HIV/Aids infection. Women are more physically susceptible to HIV infection than men, and male-to-female transmission is about twice as likely to occur as female-to-male transmission. Moreover, many in monogamous relationships do not believe they have the right to ask their husbands to use a condom, even if he had proven himself to be unfaithful and was HIV-positive. According to UNAIDS, in Asia, the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa, using sex as a commodity in exchange for goods, services or other basic necessities is becoming common

among women. In many countries, cultural norms and values have encouraged men to have multiple partners, while women are expected to abstain or be faithful. Simply by fulfilling their expected gender roles, men and women are likely to increase the spread of HIV/Aids. “Women and girls are susceptible to the growing trade of trafficking. In Southern Africa, many older men seek out young women and adolescent girls for sexual favours while providing them with school fees and food” (UN 2004, p.8).

For the Dutch development organisation Novib, AIDS as well as Gender have become important policy areas in need of addressing in all their activities, projects and programmes. They see the deadly interwovenness that conflict and AIDS have on the position of women. “AIDS spreads fastest where there is poverty, powerlessness and social instability. The disintegration of community and family life in humanitarian crises, armed conflicts and refugee situations lead to the break-up of stable relationships and the disruption of social norms governing sexual behaviours. Women and children are frequently coerced into having sex to obtain basic needs, such as shelter, security, food and money” (Novib 2001a, p.7). “The aim of aids prevention to change sexual behaviour cannot be achieved without a concerted effort to change women’s and men’s attitudes about gender roles as they relate to sexuality and the sexual risk to HIV. (Novib, 2001a, p.13) Taking a gender approach means that it is not about women’s activities and empowerment only, it is also about men. PANOS, a Novib partner organization has published a study on “men and Aids” and has successfully persuaded UNAIDS to make men the theme of its World Aids Campaign in 2000: ‘Men make a difference’. This research concluded that the willingness of (heterosexual) men to make sexual activities safe has often been the missing factor in many Aids prevention programmes (Foremann 1999).

## 5. THE TSUNAMI DISASTER

The tsunami disaster, which hit Southeast Asia and Africa on the 26th of December 2004, has shown once again that natural disasters as such do not simply take victims at random; often there are underlying reasons and root causes why one group is more vulnerable than another. Relief aid after the tsunami has been highly scrutinized, partly due to the extent of the disaster, the unprecedented scale of funds, and the high media coverage. Recently a number of reports have emerged, evaluating the tsunami relief efforts. Some of these reports have highlighted the neglect of gender issues in relief programmes. As we have seen from previous chapters this is no exception. Again, time and lack of expertise have been cited as reasons for this imbalance in aid. Now, one year after the tsunami, reports are trickling in that focus on gender issues during and after the tsunami. And again, it seems that gender lessons from the past have not always been taken on during the implementation of relief programmes. “None of the initial post-tsunami national and sector based assessments conducted in Sri Lanka contained gender analysis” (Ariyabandu 2005, p.9).

The literature on which this chapter is partly based shows a number of commonalities. Because of the large region in which the tsunami hit there are many differences in the way it affected women and men and the consequences it had for gender relations. This makes it very hard to generalize; therefore most reports so far have presented their data per country. Furthermore, due to the scale of the disaster and affected region and the relatively little time since the actual disaster took place, the data is still very much anecdotal.

In this chapter we will highlight some of the root causes for increased vulnerabilities, and we will investigate how relief efforts have or have not incorporated gender-sensitive programmes. We will also show, by means of interviews with Cordaid staff that were involved in relief programmes after the tsunami, in what way gender was an issue and if those issues were consequently addressed in the implemented programmes.

### *A gendered disaster*

A few months after the tsunami struck there were reports about the fact that so many women had died in relation to men. An Oxfam briefing note (2005) showed that in certain areas of Aceh 80 percent of the victims were female. Data from India and Sri Lanka also showed a significant difference in the way the disaster affected people along the gender-lines. This, according to Oxfam had several reasons; as men were fishing at sea the waves went under their boats, whereas the women had remained home (some of them waiting ashore to collect, clean and sell the fish their men took home). Clothing, in particular sari's, was also mentioned as a factor that affected women's ability to run away and escape the disaster. As women were tending to their children when the waves hit, they had to cling on to their children and save them, leaving them little power to save themselves. It is also noted that men often are able to swim whereas many women are not. Another often heard reason is the physical difference, where women were simply did not have enough strength to climb trees or reach higher areas to save themselves. Concluding, the difference in vulnerabilities between men and women during the tsunami pertained to physical abilities, women's roles as caretakers for the children, and livelihoods.

With so many female casualties, there have been some added effects on a societal level. The women that are left in communities where the tsunami claimed so many lives are now often taking care of the children of their extended family of which the mother died. Young girls,

whose mothers have died, are dropping out of school to take care of their families (Oxfam 2005). Furthermore, men who were widowed by the disaster now have to face the impact of bearing responsibility for the household next to maintaining or re-establishing their livelihoods.

#### *Gendered relief and rehabilitation*

After the tsunami estimates are that \$14 billion was raised for the funding of relief operations worldwide. This created an unprecedented situation in which NGOs can carry out programmes for years from funds that are now available to them (TEC 2005). As the lack of time and money are usually understood to be the factors that prevent aid agencies from properly addressing gender issues, one can assume that especially the lack of money should not be an obstacle to incorporate gender issues in relief programmes in the tsunami affected areas. From evaluation reports that are now coming in a picture emerges of gender concerns in relief aid intervention that have not been properly addressed. In this part of the study we would like to list a few of the issues and concerns that arose after the tsunami.

Immediately after the tsunami warnings were given out on the problem of women and children being trafficked for sexual exploitation. Current reports do not mention this problem and apparently women's organisations have stood up to form a broad coalition to address these issues. In India, a policy was implemented in which newly-weds were offered new houses and financial compensation was promised to people who had planned to marry prior to the tsunami. This policy has created the unintended phenomenon known as "tsunami marriages" where people were getting married soon after the disaster to obtain these entitlements.

Quite a number of reports point at the lack of attention to infrastructure in camps and shelters, which attributed to the creation of unsafe conditions for women. Problems that have been identified were, lack of lights and distance of bathroom buildings, no separate bathroom facilities, lack of privacy, etc. Furthermore there were reports that women's health-needs had not been properly addressed in the initial aftermath of the disaster, which included the absence of gynaecologists in camps, and not enough sanitary supplies for women (Fletcher et al. 2005). One can question though, whether the presence of gynaecologists was sufficient in the villages before the disaster occurred.

The distribution of aid was unequal, in the sense that aid was directed towards male-headed households. "Also, officials turned away some widows seeking compensation for their lost husbands because they could not produce the body" (Fletcher et al. 2005, p.22). Widowed women had trouble in obtaining benefits and cash, due to the system that only gives out these benefits to the men as heads of the household (Oxfam 2005).

There was a lack of participation of women in post-disaster recovery planning. They were hardly consulted in decision-making on camp management and rebuilding houses. "In post-tsunami Sri Lanka, for example, women had no say in temporary housing design. As a result, dwellings actually were constructed without any kitchen facilities" (Chew and Ramdas 2005, p.3). Furthermore, there was no gender-differentiated data or gender analysis available of which relief organisations could make use during the planning and implementation of their projects and programmes (Ariyabandu 2005).

Alcohol-abuse in refugee camps had increased. According to Fisher (2005) alcohol-abuse is one of the factors that contributed to an increase in GBV as was seen in Sri Lanka after the



tsunami. “The frustration and stress associated with communal living, feelings of loss and trauma and men’s increased alcohol consumption were seen as responsible for increased likelihood of GBV” (Fisher 2005, p.26). It must be noted however that GBV was already prevalent in Sri Lankan society before the tsunami, which makes it difficult to ascertain that GBV in refugee camps has truly increased due to the disaster.

Attention for livelihoods has so far largely centred on rebuilding the livelihoods of men, for instance by providing boats to fishermen whose boats were lost during the disaster. Evidence from Thailand suggests that skills-training given to women were merely perceived as activities to keep them busy than really providing them a step towards rebuilding their livelihoods (Fletcher et al. 2005). Re-establishing income seems to be one of the key-points that need to be addressed by relief interventions. “Loss of income and inability to access cash will not only deepen the poverty of communities, and especially women within those communities, but could create dangers of immediate (sexual) exploitation, and forms of dependency from which women will find it hard to recover” (Oxfam 2005, p.13). In this case, not addressing women’s needs does not only create short-term problems, it deepens gender inequalities and vulnerabilities on the long term. So although humanitarian agencies can choose not to address gender issues because of the long-term attention it needs, not addressing them can actually exacerbate inequalities on the long-term. The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC), consisting of a coalition of humanitarian NGOs aimed at learning lessons from the aid efforts after the tsunami, have pointed at the inequalities in aid provision. “The TEC studies found that, due in part to both poor contextual knowledge and to the pressure to act quickly, relief and recovery interventions have not promoted equity. Proportionately more assistance, especially in the recovery phase, has flowed to the better-off, to males, and to the better organised. Marginalised groups have lost out in the assistance programmes” (TEC 2005, p.8).

#### *Cordaid’s experiences in tsunami affected areas*

As of December 2005 Cordaid’s Emergency and Rehabilitation Department has actually spent some 7 million Euros, of the 22 million that they have committed, on their aid activities after the tsunami. It has divided its funds over the relief phase, in which such items as tents, medical supplies and sanitation were provided, and over the rehabilitation phase where clinics, schools and houses are built and where attention is given to the rebuilding of livelihoods (Cordaid 2005). From the interviews that were held with staff of the Emergency and Rehabilitation Department<sup>4</sup> we have tried and obtain a picture of what practical issues and debates surrounding gender were dealt with after the tsunami. These interviews with Cordaid staff, involved in relief efforts after the tsunami, uncovered some contradictory images on gender-issues and follow-up given to those issues. This can also be attributed to the different countries and regions, and with that, a different starting point for gender awareness.

One example was given of a fishery project in Sri Lanka, in which gender did not play a role in the project proposal and implementation of the programme, according to one staff interviewed. A total of 4500 boats were handed out to fishermen who had lost their boats, and thus their livelihoods. Livelihoods of women were also shattered in the event, but no follow-up was given to those women in that particular project. Documentation from Cordaid does suggest that women did indeed benefit from the fishery projects, as they were

---

<sup>4</sup> Interviews were held during November and December of 2005, with: Marcel Krabbendam, Inge Leuvenink, Bina Saib, Christine Fenenga and Judith Kiers.

working in the factories that manufactured the 4500 boats. Also, women are involved in the fishery industry as they prepare and sell the fish brought on to land. Benefits are thus spread to both men and women, even though men are the primary beneficiaries in a boat scheme like we have seen in Sri Lanka. One staff member noted that livelihood approaches are almost invariably targeted at men, whereas women are offered psychosocial counselling. Although one could automatically make the assumption that once again women are neglected and victimized by this practice, this can also be turned around. From some reports the picture emerges that men's consumption of alcohol has been on the rise after the tsunami. However, psychosocial counselling was, according to the Cordaid staff member, not made available to men.

Another example from India showed a different picture. Here, women had become very much involved in post-tsunami relief efforts. They were fully represented, and participated, in community self-help groups. Programmes were focussed on restoring the livelihoods of both men and women. For example, women distributed boats, and revenues and interest from these boats would also flow back to the women.

Initially some problems were encountered. India's government had decided to organize and coordinate relief efforts themselves. Women were not automatically considered in all project implementation. The transit shelters, which the government had set up, were mentioned during the interview "It was awful, they were just little shacks with, with not available latrines or bathing facilities nearby. Women would not go the bathroom during the day, but would walk at night to the borders of the camps: a very unsafe and unhealthy situation". When outside agencies came in, Cordaid being one of them, these transit shelters and their infrastructure were changed, creating safer conditions.

Assessment teams that had been sent out immediately after the tsunami did not adequately reflect equal gender-relations. The assessment team for Indonesia, for instance, did not include one woman.

Two partner organisations of Cordaid shared some of their experiences with gender-sensitive programmes. They both indicated that they did not feel the need for Cordaid to further stimulate their focus on gender, as they were already conscious of it. It seems they have developed an approach to gender in their day-to-day work, which deals with the conflict in Aceh. They structurally assess and incorporate gender aspects in their programmes. However, after the Tsunami it was not actively incorporated as a theme in their projects.

Concluding this chapter on gender and the tsunami we want to highlight some of the main gender-concerns or debates:

- The enormous loss of lives, according to some reports 3 times as many women died as men, has had deep impact on societal level. Men have been confronted with the responsibility of taking care of their households as well as rebuilding their livelihoods. Young women are reportedly marrying at young age, dropping out of school, and caring for their (extended) families.
- An increase in GBV was noted in Sri Lanka, due to unsafe infrastructure of camps and shelters, as well as an increase in alcohol consumption.
- Livelihood approaches seem to target (fisher) men almost exclusively by providing new boats, neglecting the needs of women. Skills-training and livelihood approaches targetting women were described as being more of psychosocial nature and activities to keep the women busy.

- Aid was unequally distributed, for instance by national policies which only recognize male-headed households. Women had trouble obtaining their entitlements.
- There was lack of participation and consultation of women in recovery planning.

## 6. POLICY AND PRACTICE

In this chapter we introduce humanitarian policy pertaining specifically to women and gender, on international as well as NGO level. We further introduce some policy instruments that are used (some of the instruments will be presented as annex).

### *CEDAW*

The UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is one of the main international agreements pertaining to women and gender, and the most quoted in the reviewed literature. The convention was adopted in 1979, enforced in 1999 and signed thus far by 76 countries. Its main area of concern is human rights abuse through violence against women. It also specifically mentioned violence and abuse of women in humanitarian action. The convention gives humanitarian agencies a tool to point at countries that have ratified the convention to look at gender as a point of attention. Countries that have ratified the convention need to incorporate the equal position of men and women into their legal systems. It also allows women to report any violations against them.

### *UN Resolution 1325*

In 2000 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The resolution recognizes that particularly women and children are among those most affected by conflict, and therefore emphasizes that all peacebuilding activities should include a gender perspective. More women should be included and participating in decision making in peace activities. Member states should adhere to the already existing conventions and ensure protection against gender-based violence. Furthermore, attention is called to more gender-awareness and sensitivity in UN peacekeeping forces. Critics point at the language that is used in the resolution, where gender is used synonymously to women, as being a barrier for real implementation of the policy (El Jack 2003). Also, the resolution is still very much underutilized as far as the practical implementation is concerned. This was amongst others discussed in a study by Stensrud and Husby of Care Norway (2005) where implementation and knowledge of resolution 1325 in the Great Lakes region was shown to be low. The resolution does offer NGOs that use the rights-based approach another instrument with which they can address gender inequalities in their projects and programmes.

### *The Code of Conduct*

A coalition of humanitarian NGOs has further contributed to the professionalization of humanitarian aid by developing a Code of Conduct in 1994. This policy paper brings forward 10 principles that international humanitarian agencies could voluntarily adhere to. Although the principles do not mention gender specifically, it does address some general principles in which gender sensitivity can be read between the lines. The Code for instance speaks of "Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programme. We will strive to achieve full community participation in our relief and rehabilitation programmes" (ICRC 1995: p.3). The Code further brings forth some principles on building on local capacities and keeping in mind the vulnerabilities. Gender is often an underlying concept, but has not been made tangible in the Code of Conduct.

### *Sphere*

The Sphere project has formulated some minimum quality standards for humanitarian agencies to comply with. These Sphere minimum standards have been adopted by a considerable number of humanitarian agencies. The inclusion of gender as an entire separate chapter however, seems to have met with some resistance (NGOs worried they would lose autonomy and be penalised by donors if they did not meet specific gender targets), therefore it has been mainstreamed throughout the document (Schlitt 2000). Although they do not specifically focus on gender they do hold some important agreements with regards to participation of all vulnerable groups and targeting. As most vulnerable groups they see: “The groups most frequently at risk in disasters are women, children, older people, disabled people and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH/A)” (Sphere 2004, p.27). The Sphere protocol specifically targets GBV: “The layout of settlements, distribution of essential items, and access to health services and other programmes should be designed to reduce the potential for GBV” (Sphere 2004, p.289). The Sphere Minimum Standards and the Code of Conduct are leading policy statements to which most humanitarian agencies adhere. Therefore, a powerful statement regarding gender-sensitivity in Sphere or Code of Conduct would certainly place gender more firmly on the map of current humanitarian aid practice.

### *ICRC/IFRC*

The website of the ICRC lists all treaties and texts on international humanitarian law. There is a treaty on women, which is an additional protocol to the Geneva Convention (1949) and was added in 1977. The ICRC lists a few publications on women and war and their protection under International Humanitarian Law. “Women are afforded both general protection – on the same basis as men – and special protection reflecting their particular needs as women” (ICRC 2001). This policy fact sheet further states the specific active role that the ICRC herein:

*“The ICRC carries out and promotes the dissemination of international humanitarian law (also known as the “law of war”), and refers to this law in its activities throughout the world when dealing with specific problems concerning women. Through detention visits, activities to protect members of the civilian population, relief and medical assistance programmes, and efforts to restore family links, it seeks to protect and assist victims of hostilities. Moreover, in January 2000 the ICRC began implementing a four-year pledge to ensure dissemination of provisions of international humanitarian law relating to the protection of women and the prohibition of sexual violence to parties to hostilities, and to ensure that all its activities appropriately assist and protect women” (ICRC 2001).*

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) however, has a specific gender policy paper in which they state: “This policy establishes the basis for the Federation and individual National Societies to ensure that the gender differences are taken into account and dealt with in relation to core programmes as defined in Strategy 2010, such as disaster relief, disaster preparedness, health and promotion of humanitarian values” (IFRC 1999). The full text of the gender policy statement of the IFRC can be found in annex 2. Other organisations that have introduced specific gender policies in their humanitarian aid programmes are: UNHCR, WFP, Oxfam, a.o.

### *IASC*

Another important policy agreement is the IASC’s “Policy statement for the integration of a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance”, completed on 31 May of 1999. This background paper is presented as annex 1 to this report. The report mentions several

reasons for the need of a gender perspective in humanitarian aid: “complex emergencies and natural disasters have a differentiated impact on men and women which often affect the realisation of rights” and “well-documented field practice has shown that gender-sensitive humanitarian assistance can help in mitigating the different and negative effects of complex emergencies and natural disasters on men and women” (IASC 1999, p.1).

#### *Policy tools*

Policy tools have further been developed to guide gender assessment in emergency situations. The UN for instance, has provided the Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA), which is a participatory needs assessment, recognising the differentiated needs and obstacles in fulfilling those needs due to gendered constraints. The IFRC has developed a tool in 1995 for vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCA), as part of their community-based disaster preparedness programme. The VCA tool helps to identify which vulnerabilities and capacities are present locally, as to better plan and implement relief programmes, with special attention to disaster preparedness. VCA specifically includes the vulnerabilities and capacities of women.

Some organisations take a clear approach to address gender inequalities. Novib, for instance, uses the rights-based approach, which enables them to address human rights abuses by focusing attention to the conventions and treaties to which the state in question adheres. Conventions like CEDAW, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security state some particularly clear rights for women, to which NGOs that use the rights-based approach can point, when violations of these rights occur. Novib has distilled 5 main rights from a number of legally binding treaties and conventions. These 5 rights are: The rights to sustainable livelihoods, rights to basic social services, right to life and security, the right to be heard and the right to an identity. They use the rights-based approach and these 5 main rights to hold governments accountable when they do not comply and rights-violations are recorded (Novib 2001b).

#### *Policy of organisations and institutions*

During this research we conducted a short survey with various people from Dutch development organisations, as well as international institutions<sup>5</sup>. The survey focussed on the existence of specific gender policy in humanitarian operations. We also asked for examples of policy instruments (like checklists, tools and frameworks) that are used in the humanitarian field, and include gender. We received responses from 8 Dutch development organisations, and 1 international organisation.

When asked the question whether the specific organisations had formulated gender policy for their humanitarian aid programmes, only one organisation, Novib, noted that they indeed had specific gender policy on humanitarian aid. The other organisations mentioned that they did not have their policies specifically on gender and humanitarian aid. However, they nearly all have organisation-wide gender and development policy, which should pertain to all their activities.

---

<sup>5</sup> Organisations that responded to the questionnaire: CARE Netherlands, Cordaid, ECHO, ICCO-kerkinactie, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MSF-Holland, NOVIB, St. Woord en Daad, ZOA Refugee Care

Most organisations remarked that they did adhere to the principles as has been put forward in the Code of Conduct and the Sphere Minimum Standards. These, however, do not really carry specific and outspoken gender policy in their statements. Although ECHO does not carry out humanitarian aid as such, but finances other organisation who do, they could mention some of their gender-specific policies: “Within the new Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), organised between ECHO and its 200 NGO partners in 2003, the latter are now required to disaggregate their programming in gender terms as well as in relation to particular vulnerable social groups (children, elderly, handicapped). Gender is included as a cross cutting issue in all evaluations launched by ECHO. And for most evaluations launched by ECHO the evaluation team has to include at least one man and at least one woman” (interview ECHO).

Our next question was related to specific policy instruments (checklists and frameworks, etc.) that the organisations use. Either the organisations did not have any checklists or referred to the Sphere Minimum Standards, or they do a gender-sensitivity check during the assessment of a project proposal.

Some of the problems that were mentioned, which hampered the implementation of gender-sensitive relief programmes:

- Time constraints and attitudes of donors.
- Budgetary pressures
- Too small scope of gender-sensitive programming; only focussing on GBV.
- Not respecting local culture and norms.

Some best practices, mentioned by the organisations:

- By asking specific attention for the role of women during a workshop on participation, their input was later reinforced during the implementation of the project.
- Women were explicitly asked to participate in skills training on mediation and conflict resolution techniques, next to medical care and counselling. Therefore, the project was able to address issues of gender-based violence and conflict resolution.

Some lessons learned, mentioned by the organisations:

- Giving no gender-education and training to soldiers and other UN-personnel that undertake UN-peacekeeping missions, which led to problems in Guinea, Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo, amongst others.
- Only providing food bags of 50 kilos, which could not be handled by women.
- By not educating women in female-specific activities, the participation of women in those activities did not increase. For example, women did not show up for their pre- and ante-natal test, because the tests were carried out by men.
- Looking only at women, and thereby overlooking other vulnerable groups (only providing food for female-headed households, leaving them much better off than male-headed households).
- Unsafe situations in refugee camps, enabling so called “peace-keepers” to sexually abuse the refugeewomen. Creating a situation in which women will sell their bodies in exchange for food.
- Food packets are not compiled in a gender-sensitive way; milk powder is left out while it is essential for women who are not able to breastfeed their children due to malnourishment.

### *Cordaid's gender policy*

Cordaid is one of the largest Dutch development organisations. Relief aid falls under the responsibility of the Emergency and Rehabilitation Department (ERD). Since approximately three years, the Emergency and Rehabilitation Department has a gender working group. Current gender policy at this department is based on the overall gender policy of the organisation and the Sphere standards. Cordaid gender policy objectives are formulated as following:

1. Achieving equal access for women and men, boys and girls to natural resources, and to the enjoyment of results/outcomes of the use of these resources
2. Making a contribution to increasing the decision-making power of women and girls in order to remove inequality between women and men.” (Cordaid 2002, p.20).

The Emergency and Rehabilitation department found that gender-sensitive relief programmes did not get sufficient attention, due to the very nature of emergency aid “quick and without much participation of the target group”. This is one of the reasons why the gender working group was formed. Its aim is to focus more attention on incorporating gender issues in emergency relief, on educational needs of ERD staff on gender, and on providing practical tools to make gender policy operational. One of the concrete outcomes of such an operationalization of policy can be found in the box below. The gender working group has created brief guidelines for partners that wish to send in a project proposal to Cordaid. The formulated guidelines request from partner-organisations a gender-analysis and specific information on how these new projects can contribute to addressing inequities in gender relations. So far however, project proposals are still hardly scrutinized or rejected when they lack gender-specific information. They still get funded, and as one Cordaid staff member remarked: “As soon as they get funded you have no opportunity to steer the projects in such a way that they incorporate gender issues in their implementation”.

*Card produced by Cordaid's Gender working group with guidelines on how to incorporate Gender in project-proposals*

Questions during the project formulation phase concerning gender:

1. Analyse the impact of the disaster on men and women separately. Consequently men and women have different needs, which have to be looked into separately.
2. How is the division of labour between men and women in productive, reproductive and community work: who is doing what type of work, and what is the role of men and women?
3. What is known about access and control over resources and benefits between men and women at household, community and society level in order to be able to do their work?
4. Are changes related to gender issues possible and can the project contribute to it? How to translate this into project objectives and project activities?

Pushing the gender issue into relief programmes does not always feel comfortable, according to one Cordaid staff member: “It does feel strange that we provide complete health centres with gynaecologists in refugee camps, whereas the situation before a disaster and for people not affected by such crises still rely on their regular hospitals 10 miles further”.



Furthermore, one staff member added that gender programmes take time and should not just be implemented and left at half time. “The Emergency and Rehabilitation Department cannot always carry out these strategic long-term gender and social and cultural programmes, you have to decide that either we address these longer-term gender issues properly or we do not do it at all”.

Again, the culture of speed in emergency aid prevents organisations to really incorporate gender policy into their projects and programmes. It must be noted though that partner organisations of Cordaid indicated that they already structurally incorporated gender-specific activities. They therefore did not feel that Cordaid needed to encourage them to give gender more attention. The partner organisations did appreciate any feedback that Cordaid could give them on these activities.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

From this literature study and the interviews with staff of NGOs, we would like to make the following conclusions pertaining to gender and humanitarian aid:

- There seems to be little literature that deals specifically with gender and humanitarian aid. Although for instance gender and conflict has received much attention, the incorporation of gender as part and parcel of relief interventions has not yet really come of the ground.
- More egalitarian social relations enable societies to learn to live more securely with hazard and risk in safer environments. Therefore, a focus on gender relations, strategic gender needs and gendered vulnerabilities and capacities should be incorporated in aid programmes on disaster risk reduction.
- The notion that in conflict women are victims whereas men are always the aggressor paints a too generalized picture of reality. Women however tend to be vulnerable during and after conflict, with gender-based violence as a major weapon of war targeted towards women.
- Peace negotiations, peacebuilding activities and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reconstruction (DDR) processes still occur without the participation and decision-making of women. Post-conflict settings do offer another window of opportunity to structurally address gender inequities and build on the transformations in gender relations, which often occur during conflict.
- A lack of gender awareness in humanitarian aid can lead to many unwanted, even unsafe, situations for women. There is clear evidence that for instance poor thought-out infrastructure of refugee camps can lead to an increased risk of gender-based violence.
- There is need for equal participation of both men and women in the planning and needs assessments for relief programmes, to ensure that relief is indeed equally distributed and based on the needs of all groups in that particular society.
- The tsunami disaster uncovered very clearly the vulnerabilities that women face in time of disaster. It also shows the need for disaster risk reduction programmes, focussing on taking away gender imbalances. Although the tsunami disaster showed that there was no lack of funding, gender was still not structurally and automatically taken into account in livelihood programmes and participation in planning of relief and recovery programmes.
- Where most relief organisations have indicated that they mainstream gender into their policy, there is still a lack of specific gender practices in their programmes. Gender seems to be a low priority when a disaster occurs.
- There are quite some conventions, resolutions and policy tools available which relief organisations can take at hand for addressing gender issues in their work. Most notably these are CEDAW, Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Sphere standards and the Code of Conduct. During the interviews with NGOs Sphere and the Code of Conduct were named as the policy instruments that most guided their own gender policies.
- Time and budget constraints are among the most mentioned reasons for not incorporating gender in relief aid programmes. The so called “culture of speed” prevails.

## LITERATURE

Anderson, M. B. 1994 Understanding the Disaster-Development Continuum: Gender Analysis is the Essential Tool. In B. Walker (ed) *Women and Emergencies*. Oxfam UK and Ireland: Oxford

Anderson, M. and P. Woodrow 1989 *Rising from the Ashes: Development Strategies in Times of Disaster*. Westview Press: Colorado

Ariyabandu, M. M. 2005 Addressing Gender Issues in Humanitarian Practice : Tsunami Recovery. In: Special Issue for International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction: [www.southasiadisasters.net](http://www.southasiadisasters.net)

Bennet, O., J. Bexley and K. Warnock (eds) 1995 *Arms to Fight, Arms to Protect: Women Speak Out About Conflict*. PANOS: London

Bolin, R., M. Jackson and A. Crist 1998 Gender Inequality, Vulnerability, and Disaster Issues in Theory and Research. In E. Enarson and B. H. Morrow (Eds.) *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes*. Praeger: New York

Bouta, T., G. Frerks and I. Bannon 2005 *Gender, Conflict and Development*. World Bank Group: Washington D.C.

Bradshaw, S. 2004 *Socio-Economic Impacts of Natural Disasters: a Gender Analysis*. Manual of the Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division of the United Nations: Santiago

Byrne, B. and S. Baden 1995 *Gender, Emergencies and Humanitarian Assistance*, BRIDGE Report No 35, IDS: Sussex.

Chew, L. and K. N. Ramdas 2005. *Caught in the Storm: The Impact of Natural Disasters on Women*. The Global Fund for Women: San Francisco.

Cockburn, C. 2001 The Gendered Dynamics of Armed Conflict and Political Violence. In C. Moser and F. Clark eds. *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors: Gender, armed conflict and political violence*. Zed Books: London

Cordaid 2002 Cordaid Strategy 2003-2006, Cordaid: The Hague

Cordaid 2005 <http://www.nadetsunami.nl/index.asp?mID=10025>, as seen on 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2005

Doedens, W. 2000 Sexual and Reproductive Health in Conflict Situations. *Sexual Health Exchange*. KIT: Amsterdam

El-Bushra, J., A. El-Karib and A. Hadjipateras 2002 *Gender-Sensitive Programme Design and Planning in Conflict-Affected Situations*. Research report ACORD: Nairobi

El Jack, A. 2003 *Gender and Armed Conflict*. BRIDGE overview report, IDS: Sussex

- Enarson, E. 1998a *Through Women's Eyes: A Gendered Research Agenda for Disaster Social Science Disasters* 22(2): 157-173.
- Enarson, E. and B. H. Morrow (Eds.) 1998b *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes*. Praeger: New York
- Enarson, E. and B.H. Morrow 1998 *Toward Gendered Disaster Policy, Practice and Research*. In E. Enarson and B. H. Morrow (Eds.) *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes*. Praeger: New York
- Enarson, E. 2000 *Gender and Natural Disasters*. ILO working paper. ILO Recovery and Reconstruction Department: Geneva
- Enarson, E. 2001 *We Want Work?: Rural Women in the Gujarat Drought and Earthquake*. Quick Response Report Nr. 135 University of Colorado: Boulder
- Fisher, S. 2005 *Gender Based Violence in Sri Lanka in the after-math of the 2004 Tsunami Crisis* Unpublished MA thesis, University of Leeds: Leeds
- Fletcher, L., E. Stover and H. Weinstein (Eds) 2005 *After the Tsunami: Human rights of vulnerable people*. Human Rights Centre, University of California: Berkeley
- Fordham, M. and A. Ketteridge 1998 *Men must work and women must weep: examining gender stereotypes in disasters*. In E. Enarson and B. Morrow (eds) *Through Women's Eyes: The Gendered Terrain of Natural Disasters*. Praeger: New York
- Fordham M 2001 *Challenging Boundaries: A gender perspective on early warning in disaster and environmental management*." Invited paper for United Nations Expert Group Meeting: "Environmental management and the mitigation of natural disasters: a gender perspective" Ankara, Turkey, 6-9 November 2001
- Fordham, M. 2004 *Gendering Vulnerability Analysis: Towards a more Nuanced Approach in* G. Frerks, G. Bankoff and D. Hilhorst *Mapping Vulnerability: Disasters, Development and People*. Earthscan: London
- Greet, P. 1994 *Making Good Policy into Good Practice*. In B. Walker (ed) *Women and Emergencies*. Oxfam UK and Ireland: Oxford
- Hilhorst, D. and M. van Leeuwen 2005 *Global Peacebuilders and Local Conflict: The working of a global discourse on the feminization of peace in southern Sudan*. In: T. Davids and F. van Driel (eds.) *Local Gender Globalized: Changing Perspectives and Practices*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- HPG 2004 *HIV/AIDS and Humanitarian Action*. Humanitarian Policy Group Research Report. ODI: London
- Human Rights Watch (1996) *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath*. Human Rights Watch: New York
- IASC 1999 *Policy Statement for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance*. Background document IASC: Geneva

- IASC Working Group 2001 *Mainstreaming Gender in the Humanitarian Response to Emergencies*, IASC Working Group Background Paper: Geneva
- ICRC 1995 *The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*. ICRC: Geneva
- ICRC 2001 *Fact Sheet Women and War: International Humanitarian Law*. ICRC: Geneva
- IFRC 1999 Gender Policy. <http://www.ifrc.org/who/policy/gender.asp> as seen on 3 December 2004.
- ILO 2002 *Crisis, Women and other Gender Concerns*. Selected issues papers of the Recovery and Reconstruction department of the International Labour Office: Geneva
- Moser, C. 1993 *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*. Routledge: London.
- Moser, C. and F. Clark eds. 2001 *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors: Gender, armed conflict and political violence*. Zed Books: London
- Moser, C. 2001 *The Gendered Continuum of Violence and Conflict*. In C. Moser and F. Clark eds. *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors: Gender, armed conflict and political violence*. Zed Books: London
- Noel, G. E. 1998 *The Role of Women in Health-Related Aspects of Emergency Management: A Caribbean Perspective*. In E. Enarson and B. H. Morrow (Eds.) *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes*. Praeger: New York
- Novib 2001a *Linking AIDS with Poverty, Gender and Sexuality*. Novib IDS Project Group: The Hague
- Novib 2001b *Violence against Women*. Novib: The Hague
- Oxfam 2005 *The Tsunami's Impact on Women*. Oxfam Briefing Note: Oxford
- Palmer, C. and A. Zwi 1998 *Women, Health and Humanitarian Aid in Conflict*, in *Disasters* 22(3):236-249
- Razavi, S. and C. Miller 1995 *From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse*, Occasional Paper, No. 1, UNRISD: Geneva
- Schlitt, C. 2000 *Gendering Sphere*. Humanitarian Practice Network paper. HPN: London
- SEAGA 2003 *Passport to Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Emergency Programmes*. FAO and WFP: Rome
- Stensrud, E. and G. Husby 2005 *Resolution 1325: From Rhetoric to Practice, A Report on Women's Role in Reconciliation Processes in the Great Lakes in Africa*. CARE Norway and PRIO: Oslo
- TEC 2005 *Initial Report Tsunami Evaluation Coalition*, Alnap: London

The Sphere Project 2004 *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*, The Sphere Project: Geneva

Tichagwa, W. 1994 The Effects of Drought on the Condition of Women. In B. Walker (ed) *Women and Emergencies*. Oxfam UK and Ireland: Oxford

Turner, S. 2004 Angry Young Men in a Tanzanian Refugee Camp. in *Loss and Recovery; Refugees and the Transformation of Societies* (eds. Philomena Essed, Georg Frerks and Joke Schrijvers) Berghahn Press: Oxford

Turshen, M. 2001 The Political Economy of Rape. In C. Moser and F. Clark eds. *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors: Gender, armed conflict and political violence*. Zed Books: London

UN 2004: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm>, as seen on 17 November 2004

UNDP 2002 Gender Approaches in Conflict and Post-conflict Situations. <http://www.undp.org/erd/ref/gendermanualfinal.pdf> as seen on 30 November 2004

UNHCR 2002 Code of Conduct [http://www.unhcr.md/article/co\\_con.htm](http://www.unhcr.md/article/co_con.htm), as seen on 20 December 2005

Walker, B. (ed) 1994 *Women and Emergencies*. Oxfam UK and Ireland: Oxford

Ward, J. 2002 *If not Now, When? Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Refugee, Internally Displaced, and Post-conflict Settings*. The Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium: New York.

Wiest, R. 1998 A Comparative Perspective on Household, Gender and Kinship in Relation to Disaster. In E. Enarson and B. H. Morrow (Eds.) *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes*. Praeger: New York

Willitts-King, B. and P. Harvey 2005 *Managing the Risk of Corruption in Humanitarian Relief Operations*. Humanitarian Policy Group. ODI: London

Zarkov, D. 2001 The Body of the Other Man. In C. Moser and F. Clark eds. *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors: Gender, armed conflict and political violence*. Zed Books: London

## **ANNEX I POLICY STATEMENT IASC**

### **IASC Secretariat**

#### **INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE**

**Food and Agriculture Organization  
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
United Nations Children's Fund  
United Nations Development Programme  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
World Food Programme  
World Health Organization**

#### **Standing Invitees:**

**International Committee of the Red Cross  
International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
International Organization for Migration  
Interaction  
International Council on Voluntary Agencies  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons  
Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response  
World Bank**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE INTEGRATION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

**31 May 1999**

1. The agreed conclusions of ECOSOC's 1998 humanitarian affairs segment requested the Emergency Relief Coordinator to "ensure that a gender perspective is fully integrated into humanitarian activities and policies" (E/1998/L.15 of 16 July 1998).

#### **Background/Facts**

2. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is fully committed to taking the steps necessary towards this goal, in particular considering the following facts:

a) complex emergencies and natural disasters have a differentiated impact on men and women which often affect the realization of rights;

b) in complex emergencies, men account for the largest numbers of combatants while women and children comprise the largest section of civilians affected by conflict. In addition, up to eighty percent of the internally displaced persons and refugees around the world are women and children. This leads to a dramatic increase in the number of women heads of households with responsibilities and high demands for meeting the needs of both children and aging relatives, abrupt changes in women's

roles and increased workloads, access to and control over the benefits of goods and services;

c) in such situations the human rights of women and children are often directly threatened, i.e. the right to physical integrity and to lead a life free of violence, and women become more exposed to violence, especially sexual violence;

d) in emergency situations the nutritional and health needs of women, including their reproductive and sexual health needs, and of pregnant and nursing mothers and their infants are often overlooked or neglected;

e) well-documented field practice has shown that gender-sensitive humanitarian assistance can help in mitigating the different and negative effects of complex emergencies and natural disasters on men and women;

f) humanitarian aid can also be more efficient and have a greater impact if opportunities for positive change in gender roles created by crisis situations are enhanced and sustained during the emergency and post-conflict phase.

### **Principles**

3. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is committed to the principles embodied in international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It notes that the provisions of these instruments are applicable equally to men and women without discrimination.

4. In the context of humanitarian assistance, this implies embracing principles such as:

a) gender equality and the equal protection of human rights of women and men in carrying out humanitarian and peace-building activities, as well as paying special attention to the violation of human rights of women and the provision of appropriate remedies;

b) equal representation of women and men in peace mediation and decision making at all levels and stages of humanitarian assistance;

c) integration of a gender perspective and participation of women's organizations in capacity building in humanitarian response, as well as in the rehabilitation and recovery phase.

### **Commitments to Action**

5. In order to achieve the above mentioned principles, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee commits itself to ensuring that its member organizations take the following actions:



- a) Formulate specific strategies for ensuring that gender issues are brought into the mainstream of activities within the IASC areas of responsibility. Priority areas are: assessment and strategic planning for humanitarian crisis; the consolidated appeals process; principled approach to emergencies; and participation of women in the planning, designing and monitoring of all aspects of emergency programs;
  
- b) Ensure data disaggregated by sex and age and include a gender perspective in analysis of information. Produce gender-sensitive operational studies, best practices, guidelines and checklists for programming, as well as the establishment of instruments and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, such as gender-impact methodologies, in order to incorporate gender analysis techniques in institutional tools and procedures;
  
- c) Develop capacity for systematic gender mainstreaming in programmes, policies, actions, and training;
  
- d) Ensure reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming within the UN and partners, such as incentives, performance evaluations, MOUs, budget allocation analysis and actions for redressing staff imbalance.

\*\*\*

## **ANNEX 2 GENDER POLICY STATEMENT IFRC**

### **Introduction:**

The rationale for integrating a gender perspective in the activities of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies lies in the Red Cross and Red Crescent humanitarian mandate - to prevent and alleviate human suffering without discrimination. Gender equality ensures that there is no sex-based discrimination in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services.

The purpose of this policy is to define the main approach of the Federation to how to address gender issues in Red Cross and Red Crescent actions.

### **Scope:**

The Federation's focus is on *gender*, rather than specifically on women. Gender refers to the roles, responsibilities, needs, interests and capacities of both men and women. These are influenced by social and cultural factors. Therefore the term "gender" does not replace the term "sex" which refers exclusively to biological differences. Men and women often play different roles in society and accordingly they may have different needs. A gender perspective is required to ensure that men's and women's specific needs, vulnerabilities and capacities (set in the broader context of class, ethnicity, race and religion) are recognized and addressed.

This policy establishes the basis for the Federation and individual National Societies to ensure that the gender differences are taken into account and dealt with in relation to core programmes as defined in Strategy 2010, such as disaster relief, disaster preparedness, health and promotion of humanitarian values.

### **Statement:**

With regard to gender issues, the goal of the Federation is to ensure that all Red Cross and Red Crescent programmes benefit men and women equally, according to their different needs and with the input and equal participation of men and women at all levels within the National Societies and the Federation's Secretariat.

Each National Society and the Federation's Secretariat is committed to taking the necessary steps towards achieving this goal, in particular recognizing that:

- natural disasters, conflicts, social and political instability may affect men and women differently and that Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response and long-term humanitarian assistance may also have a different impact on men and women;
- the integration of a gender perspective into Red Cross and Red Crescent action is an important strategy towards the fulfilment of the Federation's humanitarian mandate to improve the lives of the most vulnerable;
- the Federation operates in a wide variety of cultures; as such it needs to take a culturally sensitive approach with regard to mainstreaming a gender perspective in Red Cross and Red Crescent work;
- the full participation of both men and women in all Red Cross and Red Crescent actions not only ensures gender equality, but also increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the organization;
- although the primary task of National Societies is to ensure gender sensitivity in their existing programmes, they may also implement projects to assist special groups of men or women, if local situations so require.

To achieve its goal, each National Society and the Federation's Secretariat shall:

1. Put in place institutional procedures which ensure that the needs of boys, girls, men and women are all met equitably in disaster response, vulnerability reduction and the provision of health and other services;
2. Formulate measures to ensure that gender-specific vulnerabilities and capacities of men and women are systematically identified and addressed;
3. Ensure that data on beneficiaries is disaggregated by sex for needs assessment and programme planning and gender analysis is integrated into programme design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation;
4. Design strategies for capacity building in gender mainstreaming as part of institutional development programmes with special attention to staff training on gender analysis skills;
5. Ensure that reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming are put in place. This includes performance evaluations, budget allocation analysis and actions to enable the full participation of men and women on an equal and meaningful basis in all Red Cross and Red Crescent activities at all levels.

### **Responsibilities:**

The *senior management* of each National Society and the Federation's Secretariat is responsible for:

- increasing awareness and skills of staff and volunteers in considering the social differences between vulnerable men and women when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes;
- conducting a systematic review of the institution's procedures to put in place gender analysis as part of programming or improving the existing systems;
- enabling a gender balance in the different levels of the structure within their organization, in particular to involve more women in the decision-making processes at all levels;
- ensuring equal opportunities among female and male staff members and volunteers in the areas of recruitment, promotion, benefits, training and working conditions.

The *governance* of each National Society and the Federation is responsible for:

- assessing the implications of their policies and decisions for men and women, and thus ensuring that all Red Cross and Red Crescent policies and programmes are gender sensitive.