Promoting Gender Equality in Disaster Risk Reduction: Strategies Currently in Place

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There are plenty of strategies but what about achievements and outputs?

- UN system policy documents, freely available on the WWWeb, suggest an advanced level of gender awareness and action.
- To what extent are these policies translated into action?
- What is the extent of policy influence?
- How much policy evaporation is there?
Gender mainstreaming as defined by ECOSOC

• "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated."

(E.1997.L.O. Para.4. Adopted by ECOSOC 17/7/97)
Take the Millennium Development Goals...

http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development
Is gender mainstreamed in the MDGs?

• Important advance to have gender equality recognized in the MDGs but...

• UNDP study of 13 MDG Country Reports found:
  - Gender not reflected as a cross-cutting issue
  - Tendency to ghettoize gender issues under MDG 3
  - Gender issues were not found under MDG 7 and MDG8 in any reports

• This also found in the WEDO report *(Women’s Empowerment, Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals)*
MDG4: Reduce child mortality

- Target: To reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
- "In developing countries on average, more than 100 children die before age 5, for every 1,000 born."


- But if the data were to be disaggregated by sex then a very particular picture would emerge that has been obscured by the general statement...
Where are all the missing girl children?

- Female infanticide/foeticide
- “Abdul Kalam ... was holding his children together and fighting against the wind – fearful of the rising water. In his struggle to survive, Abdul Kalam released his daughters one after the other, so his son could survive”
  (Farida Akhter 1992 also cited by Elaine Enarson ILO Report)
- Why are we still calling for sex-disaggregated data – even here?
- We have to keep asking the gender questions
Plan - gender equality policy for all children

- Equality for newborns in the context of increasing female infanticide/foeticide in India
- Availability of ultrasound scans and amniocentesis linked to sharp decline in number of girl children
- Paradox: technological progress alongside retreat in social development
- Plan’s strategy:
  - In partnership with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Plan produced a Bollywood style film which challenged the preference for a son
Strategies & policies must be actively maintained

• Strategies are in place but need to be followed through with monitoring and evaluation at all levels

• “Without progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, none of the MDGs will be achieved”

http://www.mdgender.net/
Good example of a gender assessment

• See “A Gender Assessment of DEWA and UNEP” by Joni Seager and Betsy Hartmann (2004)

• Everyone should be required to give a gendered account of their work
Their findings: Components of Failure

- A hostile or indifferent institutional culture;
- “Ghettoization” of gender;
- Gender mainstreaming framed as a single and finite target;
- Inadequacies in indicators, data, and analysis that reveal gendered dimensions of issues or that support gender-disaggregated work.
Their findings: Components of Success

- An institutional culture open to gender perspectives
- Gender as a cross-cutting responsibility
- Gender mainstreaming understood as a continuous, fluid, and evolving responsibility
- Data, indicators, and analysis
End: at an individual level - just ask the gender questions

- Challenge the dominant idea of gender neutrality
- Challenge gender neutral and sexist language – “man-made disaster”
- Remember that mainstreaming gender – although important – is not the goal but just a strategy to achieve the real goal – equality between women and men
Some links and references used

- Dankelman Irene 2004 Keynote Address to the ECOSOC Roundtable on Gender Mainstreaming in Sectoral Policies, New York, 6 July 2004
- Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals
- Hunt Juliet 2004 “Effective Strategies for Promoting Gender Equality” OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality, April 2004
- Plan (no date) Equality for newborns. Plan India
- http://www.proventionconsortium.org/toolkit.htm
- http://www.mdgender.net/
Links and references

- Seager Joni and Hartmann Betsy 2004 “A Gender Assessment of DEWA and UNEP” Final Report submitted to Dr Steve Lonergan, DEWA Director, June 22, 2004
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http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/geography_research/ddc/