

Second Plenary Panel Breakout Session: GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES
DISCUSSION NOTES
Kaniela Room
3:15 – 4:15 pm

Facilitator: Sharon Mielbrecht

Recorder: Emily Sjostrom

Participants: Karen Smith, Susan Cutter, Betty Morrow, Deb Thomas, Claire Reiss, Kelva Perez, Kathy Lynn, Yolanda Gomez

- 1) What grassroots initiatives are you aware of that may be similar to the experiences of the panel?**
 - a. Betty Morrow—Dominican Republic, El Salvadore—community training for women to do vulnerability assessments—guidebook available on-line International Hurricane Research Center or Gender and Disaster Network“Working with Women at Risk” (available in Spanish and English)
- 2) What have been some of the challenges of these initiatives in your organization/ country/ community that will prevent implementation of strategies?**
 - a. Using Guidebook as example---women had to be convinced they could help
 - b. Necessary to harness women’s capability and capacity...give them confidence
 - c. Suzanne--Personal focus is a challenge for communities. i.e. focus on individuals and property rights as opposed to **communities...**
 - d. Kathy--Engender disaster risk reduction...what’s the possibility of alienating men? Respecting traditional roles while incorporating gender issues. Need to start by understanding what the traditional roles are to identify what appropriate methods can be used to “mainstream gender.”
 - e. Karen Smith—Morocco, bee keeping project...gave training/focus to women but the boys were always trying to listen in...boys were excluded
 - f. Betty—after the hurricane, men felt helpless after disaster
- 3) What opportunities might you be able to use to build gender sensitive tools and implement gender fair practices at the grassroots and community levels?**
 - a. What pre-disaster opportunities (ie. Poverty alleviation...using those opportunities to start engendering disaster mitigating activities)
 - b. Targeting local groups and identifying those with the motivation to change

- c. Gender sensitive tools? What is that? maybe...traditional cultural events, school/children projects (how can we incorporate it in k-12 group?) [FEMA k-12, RED CROSS k-6 modules that may be used]
 - i. Target girls to encourage math and science learning
 - ii. Target the teachers k-12 to encourage and usher girls into the scientific fields
- d. Kelva—D.R. perspective when thinking about community...meetings for women are almost recreation...so interest is there...challenge: inclusion of men in the community groups changes the dynamics resulting in women not talking or participating
- e. Kathy—discussion of gender is part of daily routine in their traditional functions
- f. Susan—raised concern...we assume “community” what about when there is an absence of community, no sense of empowerment, belonging, so how do we reach people in that context?

4) What type of support or tools will be required?

- a. Sharon--There must be something that draws people together to create community
- b. Betty—good example, crime watch programs; Be careful that we don't have programs that dissolve community
- c. Yolanda—Philippines, strong sense of community especially in rural areas
- d. Kathy—dedicated funding/policy/support for community organizing

7) What statement about grassroots initiatives do we want to contribute to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, January 2005?

- a. Yolanda—Philippines, from the government side partner with the NGO, include a gender issue as a part of the community based disaster management
- b. Betty—bottom-up approach community involvement
- c. Deb—important that the community develops it, helping the community develop tools to make it their own
- d. Sharon—need for facilitation, someone to help communities walk thru the process
- e. Suzanne—use grassroots and traditional knowledge and not just “expert” consultation