

### 100 Years of IWD: Triumphs & Tribulations

This year marks two historic events for women around the world.

First is the centenary of International Women's Day adopted in 1910 in Copenhagen "to honour the movement for women's rights and to build support for achieving universal suffrage for women."

Second is the 15th year of the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted in 1995 by 189 UN member states as an agenda for women's empowerment, to enable them to actively participate in all levels of decision-making.

Despite these milestones, the women's struggle against discrimination and inequality continue, leading many women activists to question what has been really achieved.

#### *Why are women still left out?*

In a recent UN meeting on climate change, the UN SecGen announced a new high level advisory group on climate change financing consisting of 19 people, without any women.<sup>1</sup>

The gender gap is increasing despite economic growth. Women are still underpaid and underemployed. The number of "invisible women" is growing. These are snapshots of a UNDP report<sup>2</sup> issued the same day the world celebrates International Women's Day.

*"Where's the money for women's rights?"* While women's organisations are recognised as indispensable

agents of development, they are often underfunded. For instance, in a 2005 survey of 1,000 women's organisations worldwide conducted by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), two-thirds have annual budgets of less than US\$50,000. The same survey revealed "729 women's rights organisations worldwide had a collective income of only US\$79 million, less than four percent of World Vision International's 2005 budget of almost US\$2 billion<sup>3</sup>."

These same questions can be asked in disaster risk reduction. How much of the drumbeating about gender-sensitive approach in the prevention, mitigation and post-disaster reconstruction actually translates into action? We ask this in light of the recent earthquake in Haiti where once again we are reminded of the disproportionate impacts of disasters to women and children. We do not want a repeat of the experience of Indonesia after the tsunami in 2005 whereby gender concerns are systematically left out from the multi-billion dollar funds for reconstruction<sup>4</sup>. We could only hope that lessons have been learned from previous disasters.

There are difficult challenges ahead which cannot be resolved overnight. After all it took us 100 years to get to where we are now. Taking advantage of today's technology to network, mobilise and collectively demand for a genuine recognition of our rights, we are hoping it would not take that



*Towards gender equality. A mind mapping exercise, UNDP Training of Trainers on Mainstreaming Gender in Disaster Risk Reduction, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. M. Fordham. 2009.*

long to achieve what we have been fighting for.

#### References

- 1 "Why are women being left out of climate decision-making?" <http://www.grist.org/article/2010-03-08-why-are-women-being-left-out-of-climate-decision-making-u.n/>
- 2 2010 Asia-Pacific Human Development Report. UNDP.
- 3 The State of Women's Organisations. AWID 2008. <http://www.awid.org/eng/content/download/23036/293037/file/factsheet1-1.pdf>
- 4 Empty Promises - Gender Scorecard of World Bank Managed Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Indonesia. Gender Action 2008. <http://www.genderaction.org/images/GAGenderAnalysisMDF-Tsunami.pdf>

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## In solidarity with Chilean women's groups

On behalf of the Gender and Disaster Network, we strongly express our solidarity with the Chilean community at this difficult time. We would like to extend our support to the women's networks in Chile that are responding to the needs of communities and vulnerable groups affected by the earthquake on February 27.

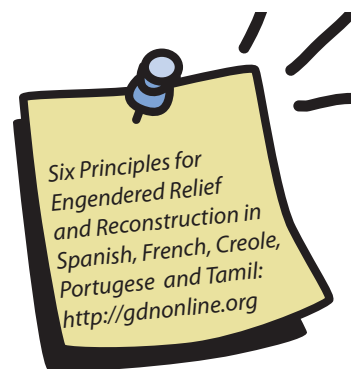
We are aware that rehabilitation of the affected population, particularly women and girls, involve long and short-term actions. Please let us know how we could help either in our capacity as a Network or as individuals.

Our Network is always open should you wish to send communication to the larger community.

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## Haiti - Appeal for Gendered Disaster Risk Reduction

Gender and women's networks around the world appealed for a gender-sensitive approach to the Haitian earthquake. Below are some links to solidarity statements issued by women's groups and resources for humanitarian and emergency responders:

GDN reaching out - How can we help? [http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/GDN\\_Haiti\\_Reaching\\_out.doc](http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/GDN_Haiti_Reaching_out.doc)

Oral statement at the 54th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (Huirou Commission) [http://gdnonline.org/resources/Haiti\\_CSW\\_Statement.doc](http://gdnonline.org/resources/Haiti_CSW_Statement.doc)

Statement on Haiti issued by The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) [http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/AWID\\_Haiti\\_Statement.doc](http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/AWID_Haiti_Statement.doc)

Policy recommendations from the International Coalition of Women's Human Rights Defenders [http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/pdf/FINAL.Haiti\\_Statement\\_2\\_February\\_2010.pdf](http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/pdf/FINAL.Haiti_Statement_2_February_2010.pdf)

More links can be found at: <http://blog.gdnonline.org/2010/03/06/appeal-for-gendered-disaster-risk-reduction-haitian-earthquake/>

## The US Gender and Disaster Resilience Alliance

Still in the early days of organizing, a US based network of gender and disaster resilience activists, advocates, researchers, practitioners and residents is coming together as the US Gender and Disaster Resilience Alliance (GDRA). A sister group to the global GDN, we have a small leadership circle that is communicating mainly by email but in future via computer/skype and a new website that will soon be ready for circulation. Student members have initiated a graduate student gender/disaster paper competition and we will soon invite original art work for a GDRA poster series and develop a short informational video, all to help raise awareness about these connections here at home. Our leadership structure and specific activities are yet to be determined, but the GDRA's overarching reason for being is to work here at home on reducing risk and enabling a gender-responsive disaster planning process. We will build a strong and broad base among women and their allies,

find common ground with those who work on related issues, highlight grassroots women's leadership and strive for resilience at the community level. We value and will draw upon knowledge generated and used by our colleagues in Asia, Latin America and Africa, and learn from US women and men active around gender justice, sustainability and risk reduction. We will also benefit by partnership with groups like Empower, a Washington, D.C. based organization that promotes women in emergency management and works with girls at the local level through Girl Scouting preparedness initiatives. The leadership of grassroots will be the hallmark of the US GDRA.

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## Case study: Sathi Das- Standing Against the Cyclones and Tides



*"Being a female and being a volunteer increases my responsibility to the society many times."* - Sathi Das

Sathi Das, a 16 year old girl, is a vivid example of how women irrespective of age, social status and education can play significant roles in helping the community when needed.

Sathi is from a fishing community in the Kumira village in Chittagong. Women from the community are discriminated against and marginalised. Women and girls have limited access to health and nutrition, education, and employment, which hinder their capacity to fully participate in the social, economic and political arena.

But Sathi always wanted to break free from this chain and create her own identity. Thus, when ActionAid Bangladesh's implementing partner CODEC carried out a four-day first aid training in Kumira as part of the DIPECHO V project, Sathi Das enlisted. The main objective of the training is to empower the volunteers to reduce their vulnerability.

*"It was a wonderful experience for me as the training has given me chance to think beyond our erroneous belief and practices. Earlier we used to apply dried chili in front of the fainted person to smell it. We used to drink lots of water if there was excess bleeding thinking that it will generate more blood in our body. But this first aid training has opened my eyes and helped me to have greater value in my community,"* Sathi enthuses.

She points out another important achievement, her father and brother now regard her with more admiration. They realised that girls can equally take part in challenging activities and need not be constantly protected by male members of the family.

Sathi talks about an incident involving her cousin Ratna who was severely injured from the handle of a tube well. *"Her face was bleeding as she suffered multiple injuries on her face and bruises on her cheek and jaws. From the first aid training, I learnt that bleeding should be stopped first, otherwise it may lead to shock or even death. I put pressure directly on the wounded area with gauze pads for the blood to stick together. Gradually I was able to stop the hemorrhage and bandaged the wounded area and later took her to the doctor."* Sathi now has greater value in her community and seeks her assistance in accidents. *"No one from my community ever imagined that a young girl like me will be able to help people by providing first aid therapy."*

Sathi's case affirms the importance of empowering women, enabling them to reclaim their spaces in households and their communities.

### **About the Project**

ActionAid with support from the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid- DG ECHO is implementing a disaster risk reduction project in Bangladesh which aims to enhance the capacities of communities and institutions to overcome various natural disasters. This case study highlights how the project has been able to positively influence the lives of the most vulnerable sections of the community.

For more information please contact Shakeb Nabi, DIPECHO Project Manager, ActionAid International, Bangladesh at [shakeb.nabi@actionaid.org](mailto:shakeb.nabi@actionaid.org) or visit the website [www.dipecho-bd.org](http://www.dipecho-bd.org) and [www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org)

To submit case studies and other resources on gender and DRR please email: [gdn@gdnonline.org](mailto:gdn@gdnonline.org)

## Resources

### **The MFM Gender and Disaster Award 2010 // Premio Mary Fran Myers Género y Desastres 2010.**

Nominations accepted until **16 April 2010**. Details on how to submit can be found here: [http://gdnonline.org/mfm\\_award\\_nomination.php](http://gdnonline.org/mfm_award_nomination.php)

### **Women, Gender & Disaster: What's the Connection? // Femmes, genre et catastrophe : quel est le lien?**

Wednesday March 24, 12-1 p.m. EST. Webinar organised by the Canadian Women's Health Network and Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence. Speaker is Dr Elaine Enarson, founding member of the GDN and co-editor of *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives* (Sage, 2009). Please email [info@cwhn.ca](mailto:info@cwhn.ca) for registration information.

**Women's World 2011.** Call for participation. A global feminist conference to be held in Ottawa-Gatineau, July 2011. For more information, visit <http://www.womensworlds.ca/call-participation>

**The Long Wait: Reproductive Care in Haiti.** This report draws on findings from an assessment of Haiti's reproductive health response in crisis and beyond. The report highlights persistent gaps in family planning and adolescent sexual and reproductive health, particularly in remote areas. In spite of deteriorating infrastructure and short-term funding cycles, a number of local initiatives offer promising approaches to fill reproductive health gaps. Reproductive Health for Refugees Project/JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc., May 2009. <http://www.jsi.com/JSIInternet/Publications/women.cfm#rh>

**The Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI).** The CRMI is a knowledge network designed to promote best practices and build capacity in the region in the fields of risk management and climate change adaptation. CRMI also encourages gender perspective as an integral aspect of risk management. <http://www.undp.org/cu/crmi/en/>

**Climate, disasters and international development.** Journal of International Development issue Vol. 22, No. 2, March 2010. <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/5102/home>

The articles are:

Introduction to climate, disasters and international development (pp 208-217) Ilan Kelman

Vulnerability, capacity and resilience: Perspectives for climate and development policy (pp 218-232) J.C. Gaillard

Rethinking climate refugees and climate conflict: Rhetoric, reality and the politics of policy discourse (pp 233-246) Betsy Hartmann

Disaster risk reduction or climate change adaptation: Are we reinventing the wheel? (pp 247-264) Jessica Mercer

Reducing the climate vulnerability of coastal communities in Samoa (pp 265-281) Michele Daly, Namouta Poutasi, Filomena Nelson, Jude Kohlhasse

### **Responding to Climate Change in Viet Nam: Opportunities for improving gender equality**

A Policy Discussion Paper. Published by Oxfam and UNDP VietNam December 2009. This discussion paper sets out to analyze gender-climate change relationships in Viet Nam, and to recommend policy actions that address climate change challenges and gender equality. The paper addresses gender dimensions and of climate change impacts as well as of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions mitigation in Viet Nam, and recommends appropriate policy actions that will both address climate change and promote gender equality. [http://www.un.org.vn/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=110&Itemid=266&lang=en](http://www.un.org.vn/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=110&Itemid=266&lang=en)

**Social Media and Crisis Mapping.** Using technology for crisis mapping in disaster areas, experiences in Haiti and Chile. Listen to the podcast: <http://www.educationandtransition.org/resources/podcasts/technology-brings-aid-to-school-children-in-disaster-areas/>

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