



## **Best Practices: Making Disaster Risk Reduction Policies Inclusive**

The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) released a case study in October 2016 on the immediate relief efforts and long-term recovery following the 2010 Haiti earthquake. The report analyzes the gender-responsive policies that four humanitarian relief and recovery organizations (OCHA, UNHCR, UNEP, and USAID) had in place in 2010 and the varied effectiveness with which these policies were operationalized following the Haiti earthquake. The study also explores the progress the agencies have made from 2010-2016 to advance gender-responsive policies and their implementation. Some best practices that emerged from the study include:

**Policy Structure:** Design emergency-response and long-term recovery policies and procedures that explicitly reference gender; include or call for sex-disaggregated data; reference women's specific needs and capabilities; and call for women and girls to be involved in decision-making processes. Since the earthquake, each agency has strengthened the gender-responsiveness of its policies. OCHA's policy, for example, now delineates in more detail the procedures and tools to be integrated into daily tasks, making the requirements more concrete and providing clearer guidance for implementation (45).

**Accountability Mechanisms:** Create accountability mechanisms to ensure that program implementation and evaluation are indeed gender responsive. For example, the policies and guidelines for multiple organizations discussed the intentional mapping of latrines and lighting in camps to prevent gender-based violence (GBV). However, these policies were not successfully implemented in Haiti in 2010. Providing adequate lighting near WASH facilities in camps, mapping GBV service providers, creating mixed-gender patrols in IDP camps, and planning for safety around food distribution proved to be significant challenges in the aftermath of the earthquake (35).

**Organizational Culture:** Formalize and socialize requirements and expectations for staff related to gender. Organizational cultures must seek to incorporate women's voices. It is individual staff members and offices that ultimately work to include women's needs, abilities, and perspectives into programming on a daily basis. Staff at UNHCR report that following the earthquake, the agency has allocated increased institutional attention to gender mainstreaming, holds staff accountable through specific indicators, and provides more support for the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies (48). This has contributed to a shift in organizational culture.



**Budget Allocations:** Review budget allocation policies to allow adequate resources for gender mainstreaming. Too often, resources are allocated in such a way that cross-cutting issues such as gender mainstreaming cannot be addressed. For example, UNEP’s integration of gender mainstreaming in Haiti was curtailed by low levels of resource allocation. Resource allocation at UNEP was tied to programs, making it difficult to fund initiatives on cross-cutting issues such as gender (38). However, following the earthquake, UNEP policies shifted to ensure that all UNEP projects and programs are reviewed for gender analysis, potentially generating increased resources for gender mainstreaming more broadly (50).

**Coordination and Partnerships:** Assess dependence on partner organizations. The Georgetown study finds that while OCHA had a strong inclusion of gender in its construction of Flash Appeals in the wake of the earthquake, its dependence on partner organizations for implementation and data limited its abilities to ensure that resources were distributed in a gender-responsive manner (28). This is a common challenge across agencies. Following the earthquake, USAID implemented a new policy to address this issue, which enforces mandatory gender mainstreaming guidelines for partner and implementing organizations (51).

**Nuance:** Clarify the distinction between gender, gender mainstreaming, and gender-based violence to incorporate the broad range of women’s needs and capabilities and delineate clearly the roles of gender advisors and gender focal points. USAID’s early response in Haiti focused on women almost exclusively through the lens of gender-based violence (39). While this is an important priority, women must be thought of as more than victims or potential victims of violence. The agency’s revised policies now embrace a more holistic approach towards gender equality and women’s empowerment (51).

*Haiti: Making Disaster Risk Reduction Policies Inclusive* was informed by semi-structured interviews with key informants at OCHA, UNHCR, UNEP, USAID, and at implementing partners of these organizations, alongside a comprehensive textual analysis of 167 publications and reports released by the organizations.