

- Country: Sri Lanka and others
- Project Name: Gender and Diversity in Disaster Risk Reduction (Invitation program and Knowledge Co-Creation Program)
- Cooperation Period: 2015–2018
- Training target: Administrative officials in charge of disaster management, officials in charge of gender equality, and representatives from civil society organization.

Project Information

1. Background

The contents and degree of damage caused by natural disasters vary due to gender, age, disabilities and other socio-economic factors. Particularly in developing countries, death tolls are higher for women than for men due to gender inequality persistent in societies. For instance, a survey revealed that at the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami occurred off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, out of the total number of dead and missing persons 65% were women, and, female mortality rate revealed highest at 79% in the age group from 19–29 years.

In disaster reconstruction stages, the unemployment rates tend to become higher in women than in men. Furthermore, gender-based violence increases aftermath. In addition, after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, it was reported that local male leaders took charge of distributing aid materials at the emergency shelters, thus women faced difficulties with voicing and acquiring undergarments and other necessary goods.

Thus, disasters do not impact all people in the same way, but impact those in more vulnerable positions, such as women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities.

Based on these findings, the Japanese government announced the "Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)" at the Third UN World Conference on DRR held in Sendai in March 2015. The Initiative emphasized the importance of the participation of women in all stages of disaster prevention, relief, restoration and reconstruction, and proposed to provide support to promote women's leadership in DRR.

2. Project Summary

In March 2016, JICA invited seven Asian countries and held the training project: "Gender and Diversity in Disaster Risk Reduction". Continuing from FY2016, disaster management administrative officials, gender equality officials, and representatives of civil society organizations participated in the training project.

By learning from Japanese disaster experiences, challenges and effective practices, and sharing their own

experiences with other countries, the participants learned how to improve their disaster management measures that include women and vulnerable groups in DRR. In order to propagate what they learned in Japan in their own countries, they developed action plans, which they implemented in their own countries after return.

3. Mainstreaming Gender into DRR

Through the above mentioned training project, trainees learned about how men and women are affected differently in disasters and what sort of gender issues emerge aftermath. They realized the active roles that women play for DRR in their communities, and the importance of developing gender-responsive DRR policies and programs. Additionally, they acquired new knowledge and measures towards DRR with a gender and diversity perspective to be adopted by government and municipalities.



After returning to Sri Lanka, the participants organized a national workshop. The following proposals were made by the participants as action plans at the workshop:

- 1) Ministry of Disaster Management staff provides Ministry of Women and Child Affairs with staff to be deployed to local communities with information related to disaster risk reduction (DRR), which is utilized for local disaster prevention. (The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs already provided with budget for this proposal.)
- 2) The communities can utilize schools as places for DRR education, not only for children but also for their parents and people in the community.
- 3) The government promotes the improvement of media's knowledge and its ethics concerning DRR reporting, and utilize the media for spreading DRR information.
- 4) The government promotes the participation of female military veterans in local DRR activities.

Japan is by no means far advanced in its efforts for promoting gender and diversity perspectives in DRR. It is, therefore, important that Japan and developing countries learn together and share experiences and lessons learnt through various workshops. The above mentioned national workshop held in Sri Lanka was not only effective for including gender and diversity viewpoints in Sri Lanka's disaster management plans, but also providing as a learning opportunity for both Sri Lanka and Japan. Similar national workshops have been held in Bhutan, Indonesia and Nepal.