Gender-Responsive DRR in Haiti

Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security
Mayesha Alam and Briana Mawby
GIWPS examines and highlights the roles and experiences of women in peace and security worldwide through cutting edge research, global convenings and strategic partnerships.

Led by Ambassador Melanne Verveer

Secretary Clinton serves as Honorary Founding Chair

Focus on women, peace, security and economic empowerment.
Research Questions

To what extent did the 2010 earthquake in Haiti exacerbate gender inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities?

How did international aid organizations and local Haitian organizations respond to women’s needs in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake? Were gender mainstreaming policies incorporated in the emergency responses?

To what extent have international aid organizations and local Haitian organizations revised disaster response policies in the past five years to ensure a gendered response to disaster relief assistance?
January 12, 2010: Haiti experienced an earthquake of 7.0 magnitude
230,000 people killed and 300,000 more injured
2.1 million people displaced
Of the displaced population living in camps in Port-au-Prince, over 50% were households headed by single women
Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) aims to reduce the damage caused by natural hazards (e.g. earthquakes, floods, drought, and cyclones, focusing on prevention).

4 phases
- Preparedness, emergency response, recovery and reconstruction, and prevention
Gender-Responsive DRR

Women are often less well equipped to receive warnings about natural hazards and to respond when a natural hazard occurs, putting them disproportionately at risk. More women than men die from natural hazards, and this disparity is linked most strongly to women’s unequal socioeconomic status. Women’s inclusion and participation are emphasized in the Yokohama Strategy, Hyogo Framework, and Sendai Framework on DRR.
Many development programs overlooked women and neglected support for policy for gender equity,
    Gender equality and programming pushed aside in favor of more technical responses to DRR in Sri Lanka
Sexual violence plagued Haitian society before the earthquake, and this particular disaster exacerbated violence against women in many different ways.
Following the earthquake, women lacked security and protection within camps that were often poorly lit at night, which contributed to their insecurity and sexual based violence.
Gender-Responsive DRR in Haiti

Gender mainstreaming is crucial for effective response

Gender mainstreaming can bring a woman’s perspective into DRR in post-disaster environments to lessen suffering.

Two steps:
- Identification of women’s DRR knowledge and needs
- Integration of their identified DRR knowledge and needs into DRR in their environment.
OCHA’s focus on programming and policies for women in post-earthquake Haiti were very limited.

By 2014, OCHA was discussing the need for protection for women and completing a vulnerability analysis to better understand issues surrounding women and gender in Haiti. This was not done four years earlier as the emergency response was formed.
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Focuses on long-term political reform and economic empowerment.
USAID emphasizes legislative action, effective law enforcement, community outreach, increased literacy, and economic empowerment.
USAID’s guide to disaster risk reduction: DRR programs should identify needs within existing systems and increase resilience through targeted capacity building activities.

No mention of women, gender, SGBV, or security measures related to women in the earthquake section of the report.
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP’s gendered mission is to highlight the importance of women’s role in sustainable development and managing the environment and natural resources.

From 2006 through 2010, UNEP implemented a Gender Plan Action that integrated gender perspectives into all divisions, branches, and units of the organization.

While the organization states that gender is a priority, there are no records of the success of their gendered programming or of the Gender Plan Action.
UNHCR’s discussion of women in post-earthquake Haiti occurs in a single report.

Very few reports are available about the Haiti earthquake at all.
   2012 press release states that UNHCR partnered with a local organization, KOFAVIV to combat sexual violence.

UNHCR’s discussion of women focuses primarily on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
The literature focuses overwhelmingly on SGBV Organization reports, academic literature, and news coverage. The literature says little about women’s capacity to participate in DRR programming and build resilience.
Research Next Steps

Mapping of stakeholders and individuals (current and past)
Semi-structured interviews
Drafting of analysis and review
Dissemination of final report with findings and recommendations