

Taking 'naturalness' out of 'natural disasters': A focus on flood Risk and Gender

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OBJECTIVES

- i) To provoke disaster risk scientists' minds in order to bring about focus on gender analysis for disaster risk reduction, mitigation and response
 - Part of a paper written for Masters dissertation on a Zimbabwe community faced with flood risk



Women and Children

- The image of the suffering woman and child during a disaster is a popular one in the media
- 1. Pertinent questions which social scientists should be asking are:
 - How is gendered vulnerability socially produced and maintained?
 - How do gender relations shape disaster practice in communities?



Women and Children

- How are gender relations affected, if at all, through the social experience of disasters?

Social scientists investigating the mentioned questions can help provide more accurate and complete knowledge upon which equitable disaster risk reduction and mitigation strategies can be built



Gender and Disaster risk reduction

- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in a disaster strategy means ensuring that the needs, priorities and interests of women as well as men are considered at all levels and stages of development activities
- Research has established that women are active in disaster risk reduction by preparing their homes and stockpiling their supplies...and by heeding warnings and acting upon them



Research Findings

- Woman alerting the Police of the flood
- Women being airlifted together with their children
- Men reluctance to be airlifted because of their livestock
- Women taking an active role in hygiene promotion and education
- Men, women and children running away from helicopter



Conclusion

The presentation has shown that gender is always situated in the context of other diverse and intersecting inequalities, and therefore the recognition of such intersectionality is a current and major challenge in flood risk reduction planning strategies



Recommendations

- Deliberate policy to reach for all groups of society for effective disaster risk reduction strategy. Let us plan with them and not for them
- There is need to think about evacuation strategy for livestock etc in emergencies

