***TITLE OF SUCCESS STORY:* Integrating Women into Community-Based Risk Reduction Projects in Indonesia - Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia)**

***Agencies names, address and focal contact person:* Arifin Muhammad Hadi – Disaster Management Division – Indonesian Red Cross HQ (Palang Merah Indonesia), Jakarta arifin\_mhadi@pmi.or.id**

  

Gender inclusion in Integrated Community Based Risk Reduction\_Indonesian Red Cross

Elisa Panjaitan\_Indonesian Red Cross Volunteer photo by Indonesian Red Cross Anggun Permana Sidiq

**THE PROBLEM:**

The Indonesian Red Cross recognised that gender differences were not taken into consideration in Intergrated Community Based Risk Reduction (ICBRR).

This was considered an important issue to address. It is recognised that women more often carry additional disadvantages in disaster scenarios (due to gender) than men.

The combined effect of inequalities in their access to, and control over, resources (who inherits land or can get credit from the bank) and decision-making powers (who has a voice and sits on community councils and committees)means that women and girls different types and levels of exposure and vulnerability to natural hazard risks and disaster impacts.

Conversely, women have special knowledge and capacities which contribute to building community resilience and risk reduction.

**THE ACTIVITIES**

The project was implemented in 100 villages and 75 schools within 4 target districts of Aceh (Sabang, Aceh Besar, Banda Aceh, and Aceh Jaya).

The project had several activities, which were to:

1. Establish trained and equipped Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMC) consisting of key village leaders, and village disaster response teams called Community-Based Action Teams (CBAT). The CDMC is responsible for overseeing and coordinating project implementation at the village level, as well as for responding when a disaster strikes. In line with the results of the hazard Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA), the project consulted with community members to develop a Community Action Plan and a Community Contingency Plan. Furthermore, the project also conducted regular risk reduction awareness activities, and formulated a disaster mitigation plan in accordance with the Community Contingency Plan. The project also provided communities with a small amount of funding (around 1,000 US Dollars) that can be used by community members to respond to small-scale disasters at the village level. which is managed by the village committee and is meant to be replenished by the community regularly.
2. Establish and train school disaster management committees consisting of school principals and school committee members (parents) to oversee the implementation of the project at the school level, and created school disaster response teams composed of teachers and male and female students. In addition, the project also developed school contingency plans based on the results of the hazard VCA results, and conducted risk reduction awareness sessions and disaster drills.
3. The project provided training on basic disaster management, emergency disaster response and preparedness, ICBRR, early warning systems and community participatory techniques to the staff and volunteers of PMI chapters and branches. The branch disaster response teams, called Satgana, were also given training, materials and equipment to strengthen their disaster preparedness and response capacity.
4. The project worked with the Tsunami Disaster Management & Research Center, of Syiah Kuala University to strengthen local governments’ disaster management capacity and research efforts in risk reduction.

Besides advocacy and the improved guidelines, National Society volunteers also approached potential female candidates to encourage them to register and become more involved. As a result, 46 per cent of CBAT members (1,312 out of 2,826) are now women, and 10 per cent of village CBAT teams are chaired by women (10 out of 100).

Additionally, during disaster mitigation planning, several communities in the Aceh Besar and Aceh Jaya districts proposed constructing a stairway as part of an evacuation route to a hill they had identified as a safe location in case of a flood or tsunami. After consulting with women during the gender review, the stairway was re-designed to include a handrail and to reduce the height of the steps in order to facilitate its use by women holding babies, the elderly, children and the disabled.



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| **THE OUTCOMES**There has been a positive response from the beneficiaries towards, and acceptance of, the involvement of women in the Community Disaster Management Committees and Community-Based Action Teams, as well as increased levels of self confidence among women who have become either members or leaders. Consulting with both male and female beneficiaries has also made significant improvements in the ability of the project to address the needs and concerns of male and female community members. Most importantly, these gender-sensitive approaches have increased the overall level of community safety, as evacuation routes, contingency plans and physical mitigation activities are more accessible and user-friendly for women and children than they would otherwise have been.The results have been encouraging. Project team members who initially did not take gender issues seriously have changed their attitudes and are now aware of the benefits of improving gender equality in the ICBRR, as well as the risks of not doing so. They are also more confident about implementing gender-sensitive programming as a result of the checklists provided to them and the technical support they received.The inclusion of gender mainstreaming into senior staff members’ and managers’ job descriptions and objectives has encouraged them to consider gender seriously, and the fact that they are assessed against objective accomplishments has provided further motivation. |

**WAY FORWARD**

1 . The gender mainstreaming process should be started in the initial design stage and the project plan should be flexible enough to make necessary changes during implementation based on new information and feedback received.

2. Having a strong gender policy framework is important for achieving gender integration objectives. However, if it is not supported by relevant tools such as checklists, Information, Education, and Communication materials and capacity building for all levels of National Society personnel – board members, staff, and volunteers in the headquarters, chapters, and branches - it is unlikely to be successfully implemented.

3. The staff and volunteers involved in community facilitation roles must have a good level of gender awareness and gender analysis skills, as well as an understanding of the local context and dynamics, in order to effectively facilitate a participatory assessment process such as the hazard VCA. The ability to gather information from both men and women from different groups in the community makes a big difference in the quality and accomplishments of projects.

4. Promoting the participation of women in project committees (CDMC) and decision-making bodies, and providing quotas for community volunteers (CBAT) are effective ways of challenging the existing power dynamics while at the same time promoting the participation of women in decision making, thereby giving them shared access to, and control over, project resources.

IMPLEMENTING AND PARTNER AGENCIES LOGOS:

 