

## **RESEARCH ON ATTENTION TO GENDER AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER DISASTERS IN ASEAN COUNTRIES**

### **SUMMARY**

This concept note – shared by IFRC Asia Pacific Regional team with the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation – proposes a research initiative to be undertaken by both parties in collaboration with their membership. It addresses the issues of gender and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in emergencies, with a specific focus on SGBV before, during and after disasters in the ASEAN region. The research aims to:

1. Directly contribute to component 6 of area 4 PROTECT in the AADMER Workplan and enhance implementation of ASEAN Agreements related to the themes of gender, trafficking in persons especially women and children, human rights and disaster management;
2. Fill knowledge gaps by collecting data on and analyzing impacts of SGBV during and after disasters, including social and economic;
3. Make practical humanitarian policy recommendations to support ASEAN Member States to meet commitments under the “Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,” specifically Section V (Two-year action plan 2017-2018), Regional Level Actions part e) “Promote and support gender-sensitive DRR actions at national and local level including universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, prevention and response to gender-based violence and women’s leadership.”

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT: GENDER AND SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN DISASTERS AND POLICIES**

It is widely acknowledged that disasters affect women and men and boys and girls in different ways. Due to existing socio-economic conditions, traditional practices and cultural beliefs, women and children are often affected disproportionately by disasters as reflected in global data on disaster-induced death, injury, loss of livelihoods and the increased risk of SGBV. In many contexts, gender inequality and discrimination limit women and girls’ access to resources and the influence and control over decisions governing their lives. Therefore, attention to the gender and SGBV response and prevention before, during and after disasters, are critical factors in building resilience, response and recovery and in creating safer, more inclusive environments.

Although the area remains under-researched, in the past decade there has been an increase in both research and humanitarian advocacy literature addressing SGBV in natural disasters and other non-conflict emergencies (such as displacement and health emergencies). What is known about SGBV in any situation is that it directly endangers the sense of personal security and violates the dignity of the individual, which is further exacerbated by the emergency context that limits access to security and protection measures. Such forms of violence also limit the survivor’s full participation in society, and has costly economic impacts (Ariyabandu, 2004; Horton, 2012, KPMG, 2012). These are experienced both as loss of labour hours for survivors who may experience physical and emotional injury, and in net healthcare costs owing to SGBV as a leading cause of premature death and disability for women and girls aged 18-45 years in many societies.

The literature has specifically grown since the 2004 tsunami that struck a number of countries in both Asia and Africa, and particularly after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and floods in Pakistan (DFID 2013<sup>1</sup>). Despite limited evidence, available empirical data (quantitative and qualitative) and anecdotal evidence depict a number of different forms of SGBV during and following disasters, largely perpetrated by men against women and girls.<sup>2</sup> In 2011, a study by The Women's Refugee Commission identified a number of risk factors for gender-based violence in crisis situations, including inadequate legal or policy frameworks, lack of basic needs, lack of economic, educational and social opportunities, socio-cultural norms, insecurity and lack of physical protection<sup>3</sup>. In the ASEAN context, some of the following research has been conducted:

- **Indonesia:** "Girls in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka have been pressed into marriages with so-called 'tsunami-widowers,' in many instances to receive state subsidies for starting a family. After the 2004 tsunami, early marriage increased in Indonesia as families in refugee camps saw it as the only protection for their daughters from rape" (Singh, 2012 –PLAN UK)
- **Myanmar:** Out of 4,841 respondents interviewed three months after Cyclone Nargis, 31.4% were afraid they were going to be raped and 20.4% were worried about increased violence at home. (Women's Protection Technical Working Group, 2010)
- **Philippines:** In Compostela Valley, from January to December 2012 there were 40 reported GBV cases. This was before Typhoon Pablo. After the typhoon, between December 2012 to April 2013, **there were 110 reported GBV cases** (7 of which were rape). Similarly, in Davao Oriental, between 2007 to November 2012, there were 50 reported GBV cases. Between December 2012 to January 2013, there were 19 reported GBV cases (1 case of trafficking and 1 case of rape). (UNFPA Philippines, 2015).

In early 2015, the IFRC commissioned a study - Unseen, Unheard: Gender-based violence in disasters - Global study – which draws together findings from 9 country studies. Three of the main areas the global study focused on was to understand the prevalence of SGBV during and after disasters, which actors were able to respond and how and which nation legal and policy frameworks can address SGBV during times of disaster. One of the case studies included Myanmar and its contextual situation after Nargis. The findings from the desk review and the research in nine disaster-affected countries<sup>4</sup> established that:

***While all the countries studied have national policies on disasters and national legislation on gender, and a few refer to gender in their national disaster policies, none of their disaster plans include arrangements for preventing and addressing GBV. This reflects and contributes to the generally low awareness of GBV in disasters.***

Based on a wider literature review conducted for the case studies that took place in the Asia-Pacific region (including Myanmar, Bangladesh and Samoa), other significant issues related to SGBV that emerge during times of disaster in the ASEAN region include disaster-induced displacement and trafficking in women, boys and girls (and some men) for sexual exploitation. The prevalence of SGBV in general and the link between SGBV and disasters, or other crises (such as migration crises), have not been systematically researched in the disaster-prone Southeast Asia region. What is clear is that for government authorities there

<sup>1</sup>DFID (2013) Violence against Women and Girls in Humanitarian Emergencies. Chase Briefing Paper.

<sup>2</sup> Despite GBV being largely perpetrated against women and girls, men and boys can also experience GBV. Furthermore, while GBV is predominantly perpetrated by men, women can also enact various forms of GBV.

<sup>3</sup> Women's Refugee Commission (Dec. 2011) Preventing Gender-based Violence, Building Livelihoods: Guidance and Tools for Improved Programming, p. 12

<sup>4</sup> Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, El Salvador, Haiti, Malawi, Myanmar, Namibia, Romania and Samoa

are vital policy implications for disaster management of this realm of enquiry – such as ensuring that domestic violence, rape and early marriage legislation continues to be implemented in times of disasters and continuing to meet the Sustainable Development Goals even when SGBV prevention and response is not actively pursued as a government priority in times of emergency.

### **How does this research link to the AADMER Work Plan, Area Four: PROTECT?**

**This research will be a direct contribution to Component 6: “Ensuring social protection and establishing social safety nets in the context of disasters.”** The study results have two key outputs:

1) Assistance in formulating the Regional Dialogue on standards of social protection engagement during disaster management. *This research output is directly linked to Output 6.1 in the AADMER Workplan: “Develop a regional social protection protocol under AADMER” and to Activity 6.1.2: “Establish a multi-government agency dialogue on the standards of social protection in disaster management.”*

2) Assistance in the development of part of the humanitarian assistance toolbox, dealing with gender and GBV issues of affected communities. *This research output is directly linked to Output 6.2 in the AADMER Workplan: “Support mainstreaming of DRR and CCA into national policies, strategies and mechanisms to strengthen social protection programmes.” It also contributes to Activity 6.2.1: “Compile and share case studies and best practices of social protection initiatives as a prevention and mitigation instrument in high risk communities;” Activity 6.2.3: “Develop capacities on formulating social safety nets;” and Activity 6.2.4: “Adopt social protection and safety net programmes on disaster management.”*

**How this can contribute to SGBV prevention and response during disasters:** *As the focus of this area is social protection for the most vulnerable and ensuring the economy remains resilient – it is important to mention that GBV has high economic costs and these only worsen during disasters. For example, a 2010 study in Vietnam estimated the economic cost of violence against women and domestic violence in the country is 1.3 billion US Dollars (1.4% of the overall GDP). Social protection interventions can emphasize economic empowerment and microfinance components for women and men, contributing to violence prevention.*

### **Proposed Research Objectives**

1. Understand how SGBV<sup>5</sup> affects boys, girls, men and women differently **in all disaster affected ASEAN countries**<sup>6</sup> during and after disasters;
2. Map essential SGBV response services in the health, legal, security and psychosocial sectors, that remain functioning during a disaster;

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<sup>5</sup> This definition is directly in line with the Beijing Platform for Action definition of violence against women, used by the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW)<sup>5</sup> The specific types of SGBV that will be included in this research are rape, domestic violence and early/forced marriage. The choice to focus on these three types emerges from past studies conducted on SGBV during disaster and/or conflict situations.

<sup>6</sup> The intention is to cover all ASEAN Member States. It is proposed to commence with the most disaster affected countries in the first phase and then seek further guidance from the ACDM in October 2017 on how to continue implementing the project. Non-disaster affected ASEAN Member States shall also be consulted in the entire process. Specifically, research results shall be shared to inform GBV related response, services and programming. A validation workshop shall also be held before the second phase of the project commences, in which the less disaster affected ASEAN Member States shall be included and consulted.



3. Understand how public authorities (including ASEAN coordinated response) and humanitarian actors (especially the Movement actors) have responded to disaster affected communities in the areas of SGBV prevention and response. Collect and document good practices but also make recommendations for Movement actors and public authorities (with a focus on ASEAN government representatives) to prevent and respond during future disasters.

### **Proposed Research Questions**

#### **Overall research question:**

**How can public authorities (focus on national ASEAN governments) and humanitarian actors (focus on National Societies and IFRC) prevent and respond to SGBV during disasters?**

#### **Sub-research questions:**

1. What characterizes SGBV in disasters? How does SGBV, during and in the direct aftermath of disasters, affect boys, girls, women and men differently?
2. To what degree are gender issues incorporated in the national disaster risk management acts and policies?
3. How could the existing legal and policy framework be strengthened to better address gender (including participation of women) and prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) issues?
4. What kind of response system exists or needs to be developed for helping SGBV survivors during and right after disasters when traditional, essential services have broken down?

### **Key Terms and definitions**

- **Gender** refers to the social differences between females and males throughout their life cycles. Although deeply rooted in every culture, these social differences between females and males are changeable over time and are different both within and between cultures. Gender determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture.<sup>7</sup>
- **Sexual and Gender-based violence (SGBV)** is an umbrella term for any harmful act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, man, girl or boy on the basis of their gender. Gender-based violence is a result of gender inequality and abuse of power. Gender-based violence includes but is not limited to sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced or early marriage, forced prostitution and sexual exploitation and abuse.<sup>8</sup>

**This definition is directly in line with the Beijing Platform for Action definition of violence against women, used by the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW)<sup>9</sup>. The specific types of SGBV that will be included in this research are rape, domestic violence and early/forced marriage. The choice to focus on these three types emerges from past studies conducted on SGBV during disaster and/or conflict situations.**

<sup>7</sup> IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues, 2013-2020, p.2

<sup>8</sup> IFRC and ICRC Background Report on Resolution 3 "Sexual and gender-based violence: joint action on prevention and response," p.2, October 2015 (in preparation for the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference).

<sup>9</sup> Please see p.6 of ASEAN RPA on EVAW "Definition and Forms of Violence Against Women"

- **Social Inclusion** is the experience of individuals or groups being systematically restricted from having the same access to resources, opportunities and rights as the rest of society, reducing personal and community resilience.<sup>10</sup>
- **Disaster** is a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.<sup>11</sup>

**IFRC standing operating procedures define disasters according to three levels: 1) RED (such as Typhoon Haiyan), 2) ORANGE (such as the eruption at Mt.Sinabung volcano and 3) YELLOW, such as the recent floods in LAO PDR. This categorization shall be considered in the country eligibility criteria for the study.**

*The proposed research objectives and questions are also closely aligned to all areas of the ASEAN Vision on Disaster Management 2025, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Workplan, the Committee of Women (ACW) Workplan, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) Workplan and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025.<sup>12</sup>*

### **Scope of the Collaboration**

Kindly refer to ANNEX 1: Term of Reference of ASEAN-IFRC Research Project on SGBV.

### **Proposed Timeline for Phase 1**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Goal and Outcome</b>
<b>January/February 2017</b>	Concept note and draft terms of reference submitted to ACDM Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation.
<b>February 2017</b>	Formation of Project Steering Committee
<b>March 2017</b>	Concept note and draft terms of reference endorsed by the ACDM Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation prior to ACDM meeting / Formal project steering committee is formed
<b>April 2017</b>	Concept note and finalised draft terms of reference endorsed at ACDM meeting / Data collection commences for Phase 1
<b>May – August 2017</b>	Continuation of data collection in more ASEAN Member States for Phase 1
<b>September and October 2017</b>	Data analysis
<b>October and November 2017</b>	<u>Write up of – Progress report of Phase 1</u> Presentation/Submission to the ACDM; the Progress Report of Phase 1 for further inputs and comments.

<sup>10</sup> IFRC working definition, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations' International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)

<sup>12</sup> For specific linkages, kindly see ANNEX 1; Term of Reference: ASEAN-IFRC Research Project on SGBV.

<b>January 2018</b>	A validation Workshop between IFRC, ACDM and related ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to proceed with the research project and ensure that all ASEAN Member States benefit from the results
<b>February 2018 onwards<sup>13</sup></b>	Phase 2: Continuation of data collection in remaining disaster affected ASEAN Member States

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<sup>13</sup> Separate proposed timeline for Phase 2 will be drafted by end of 2017