



UN World Conference on
Disaster Risk Reduction
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UNFPA AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

in ASIA AND THE PACIFIC - THE MOST DISASTER-PRONE REGION IN THE WORLD

Across Asia and the Pacific, and indeed globally, women weave and mend the social fabric of our communities. When emergencies and disasters strike, women overcome immense obstacles to provide care and safety for others. But they also need care and safety for themselves on a variety of fronts, including gender-based violence, sexually transmitted infections, help with managing pregnancy and ensuring safe childbirth.

The United Nations Population Fund's 23 country offices across the region, supported by the UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office in Bangkok, assist governments and civil society partners in responding to emergencies, reducing immediate risk and preparing for future disasters -- underpinned by UNFPA's unique mandate encompassing sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, population data and youth empowerment.



PHILIPPINES

An estimated 250 000 pregnant women were among the millions affected by Super-Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in the Philippines (2013).

UNFPA delivered lifesaving reproductive health services, along with the organisation's trademark 'dignity kits', to isolated communities affected by the disaster. Almost 24 000 pregnant and lactating women were served through over 200 UNFPA-supported medical missions.

UNFPA's post-Haiyan GBV awareness programs have reached over 100 000 women and girls and some 28 000 men and boys. Youth peer educators have interacted with 20 000 young persons on GBV issues.

Critical reproductive health services under the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for SRH are being integrated into local and community-level disaster and risk reduction management systems.

NEPAL

On a global scale, Nepal is high at risk from earthquakes and floods. It ranks 4th among 16 countries worldwide listed as being at extreme risk from climate change. In 2014, Nepal was once again hit with flash floods and landslides.

UNFPA provided 3 sets of essential reproductive health kits and more than 4000 dignity kits - which included much needed sanitary supplies and winter clothes - to the most vulnerable women and girls in flood-affected areas, and reached over 7000 people with GBV prevention and referral messages.

UNFPA supports the government in strategizing better for disaster preparedness, with a focus on women and girls' SRH needs during emergencies, and pushes for women and young persons to be included in the planning process.

UNFPA also assists the government of Nepal in gathering data to better assess disaster response, providing more accurate information on issues of pregnant and lactating mothers, and adolescent girls and GBV.

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AFGHANISTAN

With frequent natural disasters, harsh winters and a long-running military conflict, Afghanistan faces formidable challenges in disaster risk reduction, including the well-being of women and young persons across a range of scenarios.

UNFPA has trained the Afghanistan Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) directors in all 34 provinces to strengthen district-level disaster preparedness and response plans and to better integrate SRH and GBV prevention measures.

In some of the highest-risk provinces, including Bamiyan, Daikundi and Ghor, UNFPA has profiled the most vulnerable communities, identifying crucial gaps in emergency personnel and logistics, and is working with authorities to plan ahead.

UNFPA training sessions on SRH and GBV are conducted with law enforcement officials and provincial staff of civil society organisations whose input is included in strategizing and implementing relevant disaster plans.

INDONESIA

Part of the Asia-Pacific 'Ring of Fire', Indonesia has long been prone to disasters, but its vulnerability is increasing due to extreme weather events wrought by climate change. Socio-cultural factors linked to religion and ethnic identity further challenge disaster risk management.

Since 2008, UNFPA has been the only international development partner to implement a reproductive health component in the country's Humanitarian Programme, helping integrate the MISP for SRH and GBV into the existing National Health Emergency Preparedness and Response System.

To ensure sustainability, UNFPA collaborates with the Indonesian Midwives' Association to fold MISP into the midwifery programme curriculum, mandatory for all midwifery students.

UNFPA facilitates collaboration between the National Disaster Management Authority (BNPB) and BPS-Statistics Indonesia to integrate population related data within disaster programmes, allowing the government and partners to assess potential hazards in a region by reviewing historical disaster data and identifying vulnerable pockets of the population, thereby saving many lives in the wake of tsunamis and other disasters.

INDIA

India is one of the most disaster-prone countries globally. In recent years, there have been devastating floods and landslides in Uttarakhand (2013) and Jammu and Kashmir (2014), and cyclones Phailin (Odisha, 2013) and Hudhud (Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, 2014).

UNFPA has partnered with the National Management Disaster Authority to adapt international Minimum Initial Service Package standards to the Indian context. The NDMA, in close collaboration with UNFPA, developed a comprehensive training module, "Prepare to Save Lives", to address SRH in disasters.

Since the launch of the India MISP manual, UNFPA has partnered with NDMA and Sphere India to conduct several MISP trainings-of-trainers for health care providers and aid workers from across the country.

In Odisha, MISP has been integrated into the state and district disaster management plans, with almost 400 functionaries trained. This paid off during cyclone Hudhud with the successful evacuation of pregnant women, children, adolescent girls, the sick and elderly to pre-identified locations. MISP-trained personnel played a crucial role in micro-planning, prepositioning SRH supplies and ensuring a timely initial response through quick response teams at the community level.



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