

Institution:	University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Unit of Assessment:	17 - Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology
Title of case study:	Changing the way we think about women and men in disasters: The Gender and Disaster Network
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research disseminated through the Gender and Disaster Network (GDN) has played a pivotal role in changing attitudes and increasing recognition of the importance of gender-insensitive disaster policy and practice. GDN is an international collaboration between Northumbria University, UN agencies and US and Swiss government agencies that distributes research-led resources through an open access website (www.gdnonline.org) co-ordinated by Dr Maureen Fordham at Northumbria. GDN resources are used internationally by practitioners in the United Nations, national and local governments, and non-government and corporate business organisations. Gender analysis is now routinely incorporated in training for disaster management and risk reduction and this is seen in official UN documents, for example the guidance published in 2009 'Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines' for which Fordham was a contributor.</p>	
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Currently, more than 300 million people are affected annually by humanitarian crises and it is predicted that vulnerability and humanitarian needs will increase significantly within the coming decades. During the 1990s Fordham and a small group of applied disasters scholars became aware of a shortcoming in the practice of disaster management concerning the differential impact of disasters on men and women. Women, it seemed were disproportionately impacted by disaster but were often invisible in humanitarian practice, and were often denied a voice in recovery after disasters.</p> <p>Before the 1990s, discussion of "gender" or "women" was rarely present in hazard and disaster journals. The early gender and disaster researchers drew from work in the development studies field to inform and influence the dominant forms of disaster research in the natural hazards paradigm and the sociology of disasters which were largely gender-insensitive [3.1, 3.2]. Fordham was the first to apply this gender lens to the UK as part of research for the EUROflood Project (1992-96) [3.7 and 3.8], during her time at Middlesex University.</p> <p>In 2002 Fordham moved to Northumbria, and significantly expanded and developed her work in this field, for example making a political case for explicitly addressing gender equality in disasters due to the increased likelihood of violation of women's rights [3.4], and demonstrating in joint work with Professor Collins that it is beneficial to recognise and involve children in disaster risk reduction strategies [3.5]. Subsequent to her move to Northumbria Fordham was also a key partner in two successful EC Framework Programme research projects, MICRODIS (2007-11) [3.8] and emBRACE (2011-15) [3.9]. Both of these projects aim at understanding and building resilience amongst communities in Europe and Asia at risk of, or struck by, disasters and include specific reference to gender issues. Key findings of gender and disaster studies by Fordham and others addressed inter alia: re-balancing the disempowering effects of representing women as always vulnerable through recognising women's rights and their positive and active role in creating community, household and individual gains in disaster risk reduction; the specifically gendered conditions of men; and, most recently, considerations of sexual orientation.</p> <p>While Fordham and collaborators have published extensively in the academic literature on gender analysis, most research and outreach has been targeted at practitioners, donors and decision-makers through reports and direct learning exchanges via policy meetings and workshops. The development of gender and disaster research as a collaborative and applied venture, aiming to generate broad and meaningful impact in disaster-prone areas in both developed and developing countries, grew out of an early recognition of a dissemination gap. Key material, critical to the survival and equal treatment of women and children in disasters, had to be made available to all practitioners and policy makers. The foundation in 1997 and subsequent development of the Gender and Disaster Network (GDN) by Fordham and other international scholars and</p>	

practitioners was a direct response to this issue. A key goal of GDN was to “foster information sharing and resource building among network members”. This led directly to the development of the GDN website, www.gdnonline.org, by a strong volunteer base, and later supported (financially and in kind) by Northumbria University, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID), UNDP, UNISDR, UN Women, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Collaboration.

3. References to the research

Selected peer-reviewed publications:

- [3.1] **Fordham, M.** (1998) ‘Making Women Visible in Disasters: Problematizing the Private Domain’, *Disasters*, 22(2), 126-143. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00081>
- [3.2] **Fordham, M.** (1999) ‘The intersection of gender and social class in disaster: balancing resilience and vulnerability’ *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, 17(1). <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/2855>
- [3.3] Comfort, L., Wisner, B., Cutter, S., Pulwarty, R., Hewitt, K., Oliver Smith, A., Weiner, B., **Fordham, M.**, Peacock, W. and Krimgold, F. (1999) ‘Reframing Disaster Policy: The Global Evolution of Vulnerable Communities’, *Environmental Hazards*, 1(1), 39-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3763/ehaz.1999.0105>
- [3.4] Enarson, E. and **Fordham, M.** (2002) ‘From women’s needs to women’s rights in disasters’, *Environmental Hazards*, 3, 133-136. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3763/ehaz.2001.0314>
- [3.5] Manyena, B., **Fordham, M.** and Collins, A. (2008) ‘Disaster resilience and Children: Managing food security in Binga District in Zimbabwe’, *Children, Youth and Environments*, 18(1), 303-313. <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/1443>
- [3.6] Gaillard, J.C., Wisner, B., Benouar, D., Cannon, T., Dekens, J., **Fordham, M.**, Gilbert, C., Hewitt, K., Kelman, I., Lavell, A., Morin, J., N’Diaye, A., O’Keefe, P., Oliver-Smith, A., Revet, S., Sudmeier-Rieux, K., Texier, P., Diderot D. and Vallette, C. (2010) ‘Alternatives pour une réduction durable des risques de catastrophe’ (Alternatives for sustained disaster risk reduction), *Human Geography*, 3(1), 66-88. <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/13780>

Examples of research grants consolidating this theme:

- [3.7] EU FP4 Environment Programme (1992-1996). EUROflood 1: Improving Flood Hazard Management Across Europe (EV5V-CT93-0296), £810,000 (£265,000 awarded to the Flood Hazard Research Centre, Middlesex University: Fordham was Technical Coordinator).
- [3.8] EU FP4 Environment Programme (1992-1996) EUROflood 2: The Management of the consequences of climate change: extreme sea surge and runoff events (EV5V-CT93-0296), £1,263,103 (£276,088: Fordham was Joint Technical Coordinator).
- [3.9] EU FP6 Global Change and Ecosystems (2007-2011), MICRODIS – Integrated health, social and economic impacts of extreme flood events: evidence, methods and tools, (GOCE-CT-2007-036877), £ 3,523,337 (£370,606 to Northumbria).
- [3.10] FP7-ENV-2011 (2011-2015), emBRACE – Building Resilience Amongst Communities in Europe (Project 283201), £2,780,245 (£414,782 to Northumbria).

GDN peer-reviewed outputs:

- [3.11] Gender Notes series: Detailing challenges and opportunities for action around specific topics, such as ‘*Hazards and Hazard Mitigation*’, ‘*The Hyogo Framework for Action*’ and ‘*Men and Masculinities*’.
- [3.12] Research papers such as ‘*WOMEN, GIRLS AND DISASTERS: A review for DFID*’ by Sarah Bradshaw and **Maureen Fordham**, August 2013 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/236656/women-girls-disasters.pdf
- [3.13] The Gender and Disaster Sourcebook: An electronic guide and repository answering critical advocacy questions addressing the link between gender equality and disaster risk, the lessons learned through research and how this knowledge can be applied in practice to reduce risk and respond equitably to disaster events.

Grants to develop GDN:

- [3.14] Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance United States Agency for International

Impact case study (REF3b)

Development and the United States Department for Agriculture (2007-2012) Development of the Gender Disaster Network, **£142,700**.

[3.15] UNDP (2007-2010), Gender and disaster risk reduction training awards in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Indonesia. **£15,150**.

[3.16] Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) (2010-2012) GDN. **£10,825**.

4. Details of the impact

Increasingly, and in response to the research and outreach of the GDN, academic, policy and practical work has begun to include a gendered analysis; highlighting inequalities, inequities and inefficiencies in humanitarian practice. This has resulted in recognition in government and agency policies of the increased risk, vulnerability and impoverishment of many millions of women around the world before, during and after disasters. The research undertaken by Fordham and others in the field has been applied by actors seeking to change conditions on the ground for vulnerable people, especially women and girls. Key impacts described in this section are therefore on policy and practice.

www.gdnonline.org, the GDN open access website, allows the exchange of knowledge, resources and training material towards the aim of empowering women and children in particular to survive and then rebuild their lives following natural disasters. The website is run by Fordham and the accompanying members' email discussion list is hosted by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), and has been supported by Northumbria University since 2002. Background indicators of web-site impact are:

- In the year March 2012 to April 2013 the website received nearly half a million hits with 1,828,365 pages viewed. Visitors came from six continents and over the last three years have included web hits from over 80 different countries, including Australia, Brazil, China, Japan, Indonesia, South Africa and Ukraine.
- The registered membership list has grown from a recorded 592 members in 2008 to 1,082 registered members on 22/04/2013. Of those who have listed their details in the Browse Members section (290), it shows the members include: practitioners in the United Nations system (6%) including UNDP, UNAIDS and UN Women; national and local governments and donors (9%) including Canada, USA and Nepal; Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) (32%) including CARE, Plan and Oxfam; the private sector (3%); Community-Based Organisations working in disaster contexts (CBOs) (4%); academic researchers (26%); independent scholars and consultants (21%); the membership is drawn from several continents.
- USAID/OFDA has funded the development of Gender and Disaster Network Regional Hubs in: North America; Latin America and the Caribbean; the Pacific–Oceania region; and Africa (further supported by North-West University South Africa), indicating the broad international reach of the GDN.

The primary purpose of the website is to host and act as a distribution hub for gender and disaster resources. These documents and links, posted by users, are peer-reviewed by members and utilised by actors in the disaster risk reduction field. In addition to foreign language posts, core resources have been translated into Urdu, Tamil, Creole, Portuguese, French and Spanish. Resources are regularly updated, to meet specific regional requirements, for example, UN Women Pakistan provided support to increase the scope and volume of the widely-used South Asian resources.

The success of the online resource has led to a number of exemplar training courses that reflect the impact of the online resource. In 2008 Plan International arranged training for Plan staff in El Salvador, Bangkok and London on resilience and disaster risk reduction with an emphasis on child protection and gender equity [**Corrob. 5.2**]. This training used resources developed by GDN based on research by Fordham. 12 staff attended this training, as well as testing the ideas with local people in three Salvadorean communities. The UNDP commissioned training based on GDN research to build gender mainstreaming capacity in national governments, UNDP Country Offices and local NGOs in many parts of Asia [**Corrob. 5.1**]. In 2008 training sessions were run in Nepal (with 28 trainees), and in 2009 in Indonesia (with 26 trainees). In 2010 UNDP commissioned Fordham and GDN to design a training manual on '*Gender and DRR for UNDP BCPR*', for use in 5 UN Regions: Africa; Arab States; Asia and Pacific; Europe/CIS; and Latin America and Caribbean

[Corrob. 5.1].

Following the advocacy work of GDN international policy increasingly considers the importance of gender in disaster management and risk reduction. Specific examples include:

- ‘UNISDR 2007 Words into Action: A Guide for Implementing the Hyogo Framework’. Fordham was one of a small team of gender experts charged with contributing a gender analysis to this document on behalf of GDN, the impact of which has occurred since publication **[Corrob. 5.3]**.
- ‘UN 2009 Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines, UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN’. Fordham was the GDN contributor **[Corrob. 5.4]**. The Senior Communications Officer at UNISDR has worked with Fordham to feed related material into the International Day for Disaster Reduction 2012.
- GDN also works closely with GenderCC Women for Climate Justice and WEDO. Together these groups contributed to policy advocacy and interventions at UNFCCC meetings including Bali (2007), Poznań, Poland (2008) and Rio+20 (2012).
- In 2011 the UNECOSOC Commission on the Status of Women adopted a resolution on ‘Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting empowerment of women in climate change policies and strategies’.
- In 2012 GDN were invited to contribute to the Asian Ministerial conferences and policy development initiatives. Fordham was a Gender Core Group member for the drafting of the gender annex to the declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction **[Corrob. 5.5]**.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [5.1] Training for UNDP: ‘Training Manual on Gender and DRR for UNDP BCPR’, http://www.gdonline.org/wot_keyresources_undp_srilanka_training2007.php
- [5.2] John Twigg 2009 ‘Characteristics of a Disaster-Resilient Community: A GUIDANCE NOTE, Version 2’ (Footnote 13, p19) <http://community.eldis.org/.59e907ee/Characteristics2EDITION.pdf>
- [5.3] UNISDR 2007 ‘Words Into Action: A Guide for Implementing the Hyogo Framework. Geneva: UNISDR’ http://www.unisdr.org/files/594_10382.pdf (p ii Acknowledgements).
- [5.4] UN 2009 ‘Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines, UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN’. Geneva, Switzerland, June 2009 http://www.preventionweb.net/files/9922_MakingDisasterRiskReductionGenderSe.pdf (see Acknowledgements p iii).
- [5.5] Gender annex to the declaration from the 5th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, October 2012 <http://5thamcdrr-indonesia.net/>
- [5.6] Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UNISDR corroborates claims of impact of GDN website and wider network on disaster policy and practice.
- [5.7] Partnerships Advisor, UNDP BCPR, corroborates claims of impact of gender mainstreaming training based on Fordham's research.
- [5.8] Global Gender Advisor, Oxfam, corroborates impacts of GDN website on policy and practice of Oxfam.
- [5.9] DRR and Resilience Adviser, Plan UK, corroborates impacts of GDN resources derived from Fordham's research on Plan International training on child protection and gender equality.
- [5.10] Senior Communications Officer, UNISDR, corroborates impacts of GDN research on UNISDR reports and policy documents.