

Relief Goods: Sensitive to Women and Girls During Calamities and Emergencies

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Abstract – This study determined the profile, common relief goods received, their usual practice during planning, repacking and distributing of relief goods and their sensitiveness relating to their profile. During disasters and emergencies affects various aspects of people's well-being in their physical, social and economic domains but particularly women. About 75% of displaced people are women and girls, due to separation from their families which their vulnerability to reproductive and sexual health problems increased rates of domestic violence is evident. Relief goods are essential in alleviating their worries and problems considering the different types of relief goods but mostly the family package goods but few on the personal needs of women and girls. Descriptive survey design utilized, questionnaire-checklist and interview were used. The locale of the study includes the four cities and 12 municipalities representing the six (6) districts and with a total of 168 respondents. Percentage and weighted mean was utilized. Sex-disaggregated data pre and post is observed. Repacking stage is mostly female while in distributing of relief goods mostly are male. Plans should be adjusted to people's needs in order to overcome their being vulnerable. Train more women leaders to institutionalize gender-equal project planning, implementation and monitoring initiatives. Enhance women's capacity to manage risks on reducing their vulnerability and maintaining or increasing their opportunities in development.

Keywords: relief goods, emergencies, displacement, vulnerability

INTRODUCTION

A worldwide issue on natural disasters and emergencies is more than 50 percent of 200 million people affected are women and girls [1]. Gender inequality in different aspects in social, economic and political domains often results in vast differences between men and women in emergencies. The aftermath of the events displayed more issues discriminatory gendered norms, power abuse resulting to prevalent violence against women and girls (VAWG) which subsequent to risks [2].

About 75% women and children particularly girls are affected by emergencies and became displaced. The reason for their displacement is the separation from their families and homes which threatens physical safety and vulnerability to reproductive and sexual health problems and domestic violence. Women and girls are vulnerable to abuse because of their gender, age or dependence on others for assistance or safe passage but it should be noted that young boys and men might also be victims of such

abuse too [3]. Their vulnerability comes before, during and the aftermath of the disasters/ emergencies. Human beings perpetuate social patterns of discrimination cause certain groups to suffer more than the others [4]. What leads women to vulnerability are the unequal, gendered power relations which limit women's access to and control over resources [5]. Gender relations plays a critical role to better understand power dynamics which could be a challenged to exacerbate before and after crisis [6]. Therefore, it is important to consider in targeting an entry points for humanitarian assistance and also help build community resilience.

An emergency is any event endangering the life or health of people from a natural, man-made, technological, or societal hazard [7]. A disaster is an occurrence that causes human suffering it maybe physical or psychological that needs assistance [8].

According to the 2012 World Risk Report Philippines ranked third out of 173 countries, based on exposure to hazards [9],[10]. Disaster can strike anytime and anywhere. Beijing Agenda for Global Action on Gender-Sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction highlighted on the increase awareness of the public and media on the gender-sensitive vulnerabilities and capacities, of women and girls and their gender-specific needs and concerns [11]. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2017), held at Cancun (Mexico) last May, an opportunity to assess its priorities and evaluate both the output performance and challenges since 2015 in the implementation of the Sendai Framework [12].

Relief goods plays an important part in helping individuals in cases of disaster and emergencies particularly needs and concerns of women and girls. The first CARE meaning Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere Packages were “Ten-in-One” US army rations packs (designed to contain a day's meals for ten people)[13]. CARE Package is a registered trademark, the term has been widely adopted as a generic term for a parcel of food or supplies sent for relief or comfort purposes,. The first package consists of canned meats, powdered milk, dried fruits, and fats along with a few comfort items such as chocolate, coffee and [cigarettes](#) and delivered at the Le Havre, France These packages contained. CARE supports continuously and gives emergency relief not just goods but also programs/ activities on prevention, preparedness, and recovery. In 2014, CARE reportedly reached more than 7.2 million people through its humanitarian response’ 13]

The present upgrading of relief goods by CARE’s made positive response to some unmet needs of women and girls during emergency are Food Security, Shelter, WASH and Sexual & Reproductive Health. During the Kashmir and Northeast rescue rehabilitation operations sanitary napkins were deemed essential supplies by volunteers and relief agencies. This is a very good manifestation of what mainstreaming gender specific concerns in disaster management is all about by meeting the needs of the clientele. Furthermore, they emphasized also easy and safe access to toilets, availability of wheelchairs, private areas for women to change clothes/bathe and special provisions for pregnant and nursing women. For women who are not pregnant but are of childbearing age, safeguarding that women have

access to necessary sanitary products, disposable underwear’s and brassiere is also key to their wellbeing[13].

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) launched new system for packing relief goods that has capacity to produce 50,000 family food packs a day as compared before only 10,000 to 15,000 family packs produced by volunteers. The machine does the measuring, sorting, repacking and storing, and able to monitor the expiration date of the package as to lessen the food spoilage as according to Sec. Dinky Soliman, but this machine is not available yet in Pangasinan [14].

The World Bank Group said that women can make difference in disaster risk management (DRM) efforts through participation and empowerment in the planning, decision-making and implementation processes; these are many actions that can be taken to mainstream Gender issues into DRM like; facilitate change by improving information awareness and participation. Identify a gender champion and train more women leaders to institutionalize gender-equal project planning, implementation and monitoring initiatives[15].

The objectives in this study are to determine the profile, common relief goods received and their origin. The usual practice during planning, repacking and distributing of relief goods and their sensitiveness in planning, repacking and distributing as related to their profile.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was utilized. In this study the researchers administered personally questionnaire-checklist and interview to be answered by the respondents from MDRRMC/ PDRRMC (Municipality of Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council) / Provincial of Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council) and DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) whom in-charge in repacking and distributing. Pangasinan consists of six (6) districts with 40 municipalities and including the four (4) cities (Dagupan, San Carlos, Alaminos and Urdaneta).

The locale of the study includes the four cities and 12 municipalities representing the six (6) districts and with a total of 168 respondents. Percentage and weighted mean was utilized.

Results and Discussions

The demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age most of them are on their 33-38 years and 39- 44 years whom belonging to middle adulthood with 19.6% and 17.2% respectively as according to psychologists that middle adulthood have stabilized motor efficiency but only 2.9% belongs to 63-68 years old with decline motor efficiency. Majority are generation X's and millennial group. Majority are female with 71.4%, married, with bachelor's degree, in a rank and file, with the position of administrative aide, belonging to social welfare unit, with less than 1 year to 5 years in their present job and are considered new.

In terms of the relief goods family package as commonly distributed composed of rice, sardines/ other canned goods, coffee, noodles and sugar less on clothes. The sleeping package with blanket, mat and tent were also distributed but minimal. For the medicine package mostly for fever, cough , colds and for diarrhea but for personal hygiene package, toothbrush and toothpaste followed by shampoo and soap. The least are brassiers, sanitary napkin, underwear and feminine wash. Sanitary napkins were provided by the non-governmental organization in District 1. It implied that in government agency family package was their priority. Those personal hygiene package were distributed only at the evacuation center., same as true with the tent, mat and blanket. Some evacuation centers may have more than enough supplies depending on the leadership and cooperation of each constituents. Reporting and documentation play an important role in the listing of the needed supplies for their needs.

The scope of practiced in terms of planning, repacking and distributing among respondents during emergencies and disasters the findings shows that overall weighted mean in planning is very much practiced with 2.27, considering the items like priorities along women's needs on personal hygiene and performing sex disaggregated data, and making suggestions publicly on the needs of women and girls implies that the planners are sensitive to the needs of women and girls but then there is a need to mainstream further among planners and implementers because only few among the municipalities distribute personal hygiene package but according to some those packages are usually given in the evacuation center. On repacking stage the overall weighted mean is 2.70, means very much practiced. Participation during

repacking stage is mostly female. Distribution stage with an overall weighted mean of 2.64 which means very much practiced, they strictly follow what is in the list to be given and male are the one in-charge of distribution of relief goods.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, and it can be concluded that most common relief goods are family package, are considered priority, clothes and personal hygiene package be considered as priority as well by planners and implementers during planning so to meet the needs of women and girls. Sex- disaggregated data pre and post is observed. Repacking stage is done mostly female while in distributing of relief goods mostly managed by males.

Recommendations

Plans should be adjusted to people's needs in order to overcome their being vulnerable. Train more women leaders to institutionalize gender-equal project planning, implementation and monitoring initiatives. Collection of sex-disaggregated a requirement at the policy level and ensure that sex-disaggregated data collected both pre- and post-disaster situation. Enhance women's capacity to manage risks on reducing their vulnerability and maintaining or increasing their opportunities in development.

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