

WHAT IF GENDER BECAME AN ESSENTIAL, STANDARD ELEMENT OF VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS?

Recommendations for integrating gender into vulnerability assessments to achieve a more accurate and in-depth view of the risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities of people and institutions in a given landscape.

KEY FINDINGS

At present, gender is not systematically or robustly incorporated into vulnerability assessments in the development sector. Our exploration shows that integrating gender into these assessments is not easy, and requires a lot of work.

We provide a list of recommendations on how to integrate gender into vulnerability assessments which includes:

- Choosing a methodology with a landscape-wide contextual understanding of vulnerability and the root causes behind it.
- Including women's organisations, women's groups or leaders within mixed organisations.
- Improving women's access to information and knowledge prior to meetings.
- Identifying and addressing harmful coping mechanisms.

KEY IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Our findings suggest that vulnerability assessments should be multi-stakeholder, inclusive exercises, where women play protagonist roles. They should be run at landscape levels (not exclusively at local levels) and promote a holistic, qualitative, and socially-centred approach to understanding developmental and climate-related challenges. These considerations should not be afterthoughts, but rather planned and properly resourced from the outset.

WHAT WAS DONE, AND WHAT WAS NOVEL?

This paper claims that a vulnerability assessment that intends to be truly representative must explore gender relations as part of its analysis, and include women representatives from various social groups throughout the process.

It also highlights the benefits of involving stakeholders from various levels of governance, from the local or community levels to national levels, as the developmental challenge is one that requires the collaboration of a wide group of actors.

Finally, it argues that a narrative-focused, qualitative understanding of risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities, is an ideal way to understand the context of the landscape.

