

SADD in Humanitarian contexts - WASH

Over the last decade, analysts have given increased attention to improving the quality of humanitarian emergency relief (e.g. Macrae 2002), and the drive to improve assistance has been central to humanitarian sector reform. However, decisions taken in humanitarian situations remain largely driven by anecdote and precedent, rather than by evidence. This is in part because humanitarian actors - mainly United Nations (UN) agencies and international and local non-government organisations (INGOs and NGOs) - show significant weaknesses in the collection, analysis, and use of sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) in all stages of a crisis or emergency. For instance, there is evidence to suggest that in recent disasters, UN Cluster leads have failed in their duty to collect SADD. Elsewhere, INGOs and local NGOs often argue that collecting SADD is complicated and time-consuming. In other cases, as our examples show, SADD are collected and used by agencies and authorities close to the affected communities. However, this sex and age related detail is lost as data are incorporated into larger datasets by higher-level authorities and organisations. This is despite acceptance of the fact that collecting and analyzing information based on sex and age in all phases of a crisis is a prerequisite to understanding vulnerabilities, needs, and issues of access, in regard to the provision of life-saving services (Mazurana et al.2011).

Gender analysis examines the relationships between males and females and among males and among females, while generational analyses examine the relationships among age groups. Combined, these analyses enable an examination of power dynamics and how they shape gender and generational roles and responsibilities, access to resources, and the constraints or advantages each group of people face in relation to others. Such information is vital in designing appropriate humanitarian assistance.

For example, between February and March 2010, IOM carried out a WASH assessment in the main camps in Haiti for people displaced following the earthquake. IOM's data showed that 33 per cent of all latrines built were not being used, and 57 per cent were only occasionally used. The reasons were almost entirely due to gendered cultural constraints: respondents complained that latrines were not separated by gender nor granted sufficient privacy for females, were too far away from living areas, were not lit, and lacked locks. Alarmingly, instances of sexual violence were reported at 29 per cent of the latrine sites (Blay 2011). The reasons for these inappropriately designed facilities lie in the failure of initial WASH assessments to consider gender. According to the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) Operations Manager and two regional GenCap Gender Advisers in Haiti, the initial assessment for water and sanitation needs largely overlooked gender and cultural factors. In addition, much of the limited SADD that were collected were lost when the data were synthesized. In this case, failure to collect or analyse SADD and carry out a gender analysis hampered the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the relief effort, and also put women and girls at risk due to poorly planned facilities.