The World Bank has increasingly integrated gender considerations into Country Assistance Strategies and lending operations, recognizing that gender inequality is a key barrier to poverty reduction. In 2007, the World Bank launched the Gender Action Plan (GAP) to improve women’s economic opportunity and promote investments on the improvement of women’s access to jobs, land rights, financial services, agricultural inputs and infrastructure. The 2012 World Development Report provides a thorough analysis that focuses on the roles of economic growth, households, markets and institutions in determining gender differences in various sectors.

In line with the World Bank’s gender mainstreaming strategy and recognizing the vulnerability of women to natural disasters, GFDRR is taking concrete steps to help to integrate a gender perspective into DRM policies and decision-making processes in developing countries. In collaboration with partners, GFDRR offers an e-learning course on “Gender Aspects of Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction”. The goal of this course is to facilitate the mainstreaming process by improving the understanding of gender concerns in disaster management. It also aims to contribute to improving knowledge of relevant policies, regulations and tools for implementing gender sensitive disaster management practices with a specific focus on disaster recovery and reconstruction. GFDRR and GAP are also supporting the development of a series of Guidance Notes that focus on practical elements of mainstreaming gender considerations into DRM programs in the East Asia and Pacific Region. These notes offer relevant tools for Bank staff, clients and development partners to address key issues and bottlenecks, mainstream gender into DRM projects, and help task teams design and implement gender dimensions into DRM work across the Region.

GFDRR supports regional projects that promote experience sharing and information exchange on gender sensitive disaster management. A South - South initiative is bringing together policy makers and practitioners from 2 disaster-prone regions (South Asia and Central America) and 3 countries (India, Guatemala, and Honduras) to exchange lessons on community led DRR practices with community based women groups and local government. A project in Lao PDR and Vietnam is looking at current disasters and developing a sex-disaggregated dataset to enable more strategic and improved design of disaster management programs and public policy responses.

As a part of sustainable recovery initiatives, GFDRR’s Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) play an important role in providing a comprehensive perspective on disasters’ short and long term impacts and needs, disaggregated by gender. The PDNAs take into consideration gender-specific impacts and needs, including the assessment of affected population by gender, damages and losses that cause gender specific challenges and needs of specific vulnerable groups. The implications of PDNA’s policy recommendations on gender-related issues are significant due to possible leveraged post-disaster development assistance.

Way forward

GFDRR will continue to promote gender equality by mainstreaming gender into its DRM Country Programs, supporting the building of women’s and men’s capacity and recognizing and addressing the different challenges that vulnerable groups have when threatened by disasters and climate change in different regions of the world.