



**DISASTER  
WATCH**

[www.disasterwatch.net](http://www.disasterwatch.net)

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY TRAINERS

Across the GROOTS International network there are grassroots women's groups who have done innovative work to rebuild their communities after disasters or build resilient communities that can cope with disaster. These innovators are disaster survivors themselves and are thus best equipped to train and teach other disaster hit communities on how they can shape resilience and recovery processes; and how they can change government, NGO and donor led programmes to the advantage of disaster affected families and communities.

As those who were present at the Grassroots Academy this summer know, the GROOTS International network in partnership with the American Jewish World Service is embarking on an innovative global initiative to build on the expertise of grassroots leaders in disaster prone areas to create a global network of grassroots women trainers who can be called upon to support and teach each other disaster-affected communities. As part of this project, workshops bringing together grassroots leaders in three disaster-prone regions - Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the 2004 tsunami affected region - were held in late November-early December 2006.



DISASTER BRIEF

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THIS UPDATE IS BROUGHT TO  
YOU BY SWAYAM SHIKSHAN PRAYOG  
FOR HUIROU COMMISSION

### Strengthening Community Trainers: Jamaica Latin America and Caribbean Regional Workshop Report

The Latin America and Caribbean Regional Workshop meeting was held from November 27 to December 1, 2006 in Kingston, Jamaica.

It was hosted by the Construction Resource and Development Center, a grassroots women's organization that organized their community in response to Hurricane Ivan.

Twelve leaders from GROOTS member organizations Honduras, Jamaica and Peru came together to update each other on the strategies they are developing to teach through their disaster response teams. From communities struck yearly by hurricanes, tropical storms or small earthquake tremors, the three groups shared what strategies best represent their expertise.

Together, the women reflected on each other's strategies and the teaching tools they will make to transfer the strategies to other communities. At the end of the five day meeting, each group left with a plan to develop their teams over the next nine months. *Read the report*

<http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/Jamaica.pdf>

### Grassroots Academy, Uganda

Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare in Partnership with Huairou Commission and the Commission on Legal Empowerment for the Poor organized Grassroots Academy on Legal Empowerment on 17th November 2006 at Iganga District, Uganda.

Grassroots women from 17 districts participated in the academy and spent their time sharing and exchanging knowledge on legal empowerment for the poor and making recommendations for policy reform.

The participants highlighted the fact that as much as every Ugandan has a right to property and its protection as provided for by the constitution, many of the grassroots people are too poor to afford the acquisition of properties such as land.

It was also highlighted that those that have property like land, only have user rights.

This situation is even worse in relation to rural and urban poor women and children.

Read the report:

<http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/ucobac.pdf>

### Gender & Social Issues

First India Disaster Management Congress, New Delhi, Nov 29-30, 2006



First India Management Congress Gender Session was viewed as a platform for debate using presentations that highlighted the role of women in response and rehabilitation esp. after the tsunami and the floods in Western India. It was heartening to note the many examples of interventions from floods in Maharashtra, W.Bengal, Orissa and tsunami in Tamilnadu stressing the need to recognize the role of women as responders and actors in relief and rehabilitation.

Read the report:

[http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/Gender\\_report.pdf](http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/Gender_report.pdf)

## Multiple identities of women

### Excerpts from World Disaster Report—2006

**G**ender inequality can be subtle or explicit. It can mean more women die in disasters than men. Last year's *World Disasters Report* related how 3,972 women died when the Indian Ocean tsunami hit Ampara, Sri Lanka, compared with 2,124 men. In the Bangladesh cyclone of 1991, 71 women per 1,000 died compared with 15 men per 1,000 (aged 20–44). This has been blamed on male-to-male warning systems, women not getting men's permission to evacuate and cyclone shelters not designed for women's needs.

Women who survive disasters are often worse affected than men. According to American writer Kathleen Bergin, Hurricane Katrina was "a highly racialised and gendered event" which hit African American women hardest. "More than half of the women in the city of New Orleans were single mothers, independently responsible for ensuring they and their children survived the storm," says Bergin.

#### Women's Community Role

Following all disasters, formal teams are set up in camps, villages and at higher administrative levels to manage disaster response. But these often lack gender equity because:

- Socially constructed restrictions on mobility – especially regarding female safety – may prevent women from participating. brother for women to engage in activities outside the immediate family.
- Responsibility for multiple roles (e.g., domestic, childcare) leaves women little time for activities outside the home or workplace.
- Officials may lack gender awareness and see no need to engage women.
- Women themselves often lack confidence to play a public role – especially in male-dominated disaster management.

These barriers hinder women's participation in formal recovery – so specific measures are necessary to include women.

#### Windows of opportunity

Disasters, although destructive in so many ways, can open windows of opportunity for empowering women and enabling them to take an active role in building disaster-resilient communities.

**Source:** *World Disasters Report—2006: Focus on neglected crisis.* International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

#### Human Development Report 2006—Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis

In a world of unprecedented wealth, almost 2 million children die each year for want of a glass of clean water and adequate sanitation. Millions of women and young girls are forced to spend hours collecting and carrying water, restricting their opportunities and their choices.

The Human Development Report continues to frame debates on some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity.

<http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/pdfs/report/HDR06-complete.pdf>

#### Tools for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction: Guidance note for development organisations

Provention Consortium, 2007

This ProVention project on Tools for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction supports this process, providing a series of 14 guidance notes for use by development organizations in adapting programming, project appraisal and evaluation tools to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development work in hazard-prone countries. The guidelines are deliberately intended as short, practical briefs supplementing existing more general, guidelines on programming appraisal and evaluation tools.

[http://www.proventionconsortium.org/mainstreaming\\_tools](http://www.proventionconsortium.org/mainstreaming_tools)

#### Recovery to resilience: Strengthening community trainers

On November 14-16, 2006 Swayam Shikshan Prayog and Groots International, supported by AJWS, organized the first of a series of workshops to strengthen community trainers on recovery and resilience.

The workshop brought young women leaders with a few months of experience face to face with senior leaders with more than ten years of experience. And the areas of expertise presented ranged from emergency response to organizing federations for enterprise and improving community access to health, water & sanitation.

After the tsunami & other disasters grassroots women's groups have done innovative work to rebuild their communities and are working build resilient communities that can cope with future disaster. These innovators are disaster survivors themselves and are thus best equipped to train and teach other disaster hit communities on how they can shape resilience and recovery processes ; and how they can change government, NGO and donor led programmes to the advantage of disaster affected families and communities.

[http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/pondy\\_wks\\_report.pdf](http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/pondy_wks_report.pdf)

#### Strengthening the ISDR system: Background and Discussion Paper

For the Consultation Process with ISDR Stakeholders. 7 December 2006

The World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDR, Kobe, Japan, 2005) represented a landmark in worldwide commitment to implementing a disaster reduction agenda. The 168 States attending the Conference adopted The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (A/CONF. 206/6), which was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 60/195.

Developed through exhaustive negotiations between States, experts and collaborating organizations, the Framework's 10-year plan reflects the intention to take a holistic approach in identifying and putting into action complex multidisciplinary disaster risk reduction measures.

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/gpdrr/docs/background-ISDR-doc.doc>

## Statement of Action Grassroots Woman Network

High Level Commission on Legal Empowerment for the Poor (HLCLEP)

One of the efforts to handle the poverty is by formulate a commission called Commission on Legal Empowerment for the Poor, which on 24-25 November, 2006 held a National Consultation in Jakarta. By looking the poverty condition and the efforts of Commission on Legal Empowerment for the Poor.

[http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/Indonesia\\_statement.pdf](http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/Indonesia_statement.pdf)

## CRED Releases the 2006 Disasters in Numbers

The Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) releases today, 29 January 2007, the figures of disasters triggered by natural hazards for the year 2006. A total of 395 disasters were recorded in 2006 with 226 caused by floods, 66 by windstorms and 30 related to extreme temperature events. The 2006 disasters killed 21,342 people. While Asia was the continent hit most by disasters triggered by natural hazards, three European countries - Netherlands, Belgium and Ukraine - ranked among the top ten countries most affected by deadly disasters. The economic damages in 2006 were around 19 billion US Dollars.

### > 2006 Disasters in Numbers

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2007/2006-Disaster-in-number-CRED-ISDR.pdf>

### > See the press release:

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2007/pr-2007-01-Top-ten-deadliest-disasters-2006.pdf>

## The State of the World's Children 2007

Women and Children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality

The State of the World's Children 2007 reports on the lives of women around the world for a simple reason: Gender equality and the well-being of children go hand in hand. When women are empowered to live full and productive lives, children prosper. UNICEF's experience also shows the opposite: When women are denied equal opportunity within a society, children suffer.

Full report at: <http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/>

## YWCA International Women's Summit, Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS: July 4-7, 2007, Nairobi

Huairou Commission and GROOTS International are invited to participate in the upcoming two events in Nairobi, Kenya:

\* Grassroots Academy: Building the Home-Based Care Alliance-June30-July2

\* World YWCA's International Women's Summit: Women's Leadership Making a Difference on HIV and AIDS (July 4-7)

These events present an exciting opportunity to take account of grassroots women's efforts to provide care for the sick, support sustainable livelihoods, secure land tenure and property rights and engage with local authorities to increase transparency in aid distribution - all within the context of HIV and AIDS. The Academy will be a learning and teaching exchange between GROOTS Africa members and other members of the Huairou Commission and GROOTS International from Africa, Latin America, South Asia and the Asia/Pacific. At the Summit, stakeholders ranging from YWCA delegates, women living with HIV and AIDS, researchers, activists, donors and representatives from governments, the United Nations and other multilateral agencies will attend.

For further information about the Summit, visit: [www.worldywca.org](http://www.worldywca.org)

## Poor Success Stories

There are many creative ways—legal or extra legal—urban poor can conduct to comprehend their life cycle. These following are examples of their success.

**River for our lives:** In the early 2002, two kampongs at Surabaya's riverbanks names Nginden and Panjangjiwo have received letter of eviction from the local government. They continuously received second letter of eviction, and finally end up by eviction on houses in Nginden and Panjangjiwo located in the riverbank.

[http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/Poor's\\_best\\_practices.pdf](http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/Poor's_best_practices.pdf)

## Disaster Data: A balanced perspective

Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters  
December 2006

This issue is devoted to droughts and famines, which have devastated communities for centuries and continue to do so today. While droughts are relatively frequent phenomena, famines occur rarely. But when they do, the ferocity with which they affect populations does not compare with most other disasters.

<http://www.em-dat.net/documents/CRED%20CRUNCH%207%20-%20December%202006.pdf>

## Global Survey of Early Warning Systems. UNISDR

An assessment of capacities, gaps and opportunities towards building a comprehensive global early warning system for all natural hazards

The present report synthesises the findings of this survey, which was carried out by the ISDR secretariat in collaboration with a multi-party working group established at the 11th session of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) in May 2005.

<http://www.unisdr.org/ppew/info-resources/ewc3/Global-Survey-of-Early-Warning-Systems.pdf>

## Women, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development: A gender perspective

Helena Molin Valdes, Deputy Director, ISDR Secretariat UN, Geneva.

Gender approach in disaster reduction is built on the understanding that both women and men are part of the same society, which as we know, does not mean we have the same rights, education and options to manage - nor in "normal" times, neither when a disaster strikes. Examples from recent tsunami-stricken South Asia, Central America, India and the Pacific, show that women can act as agents of change. Several studies do confirm, however, that women are most of the time much worse affected than men when a disaster strike and less benefited when recovery begins. We therefore need to address the specific concerns of women already when designing disaster reduction policies and measures.

Source: ILO. Global Thinking for Local Development, No.3(2006)

[http://learning.itcilo.it/delnet/pg/frames/publicaciones/revista/revista\\_en3.asp](http://learning.itcilo.it/delnet/pg/frames/publicaciones/revista/revista_en3.asp)

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction Selection Process 2007

Join us in rewarding individuals and institutions from around the world who contributed, through innovative practices and outstanding initiatives, to reducing the risk and vulnerabilities of communities to natural hazards.

#### Closing date for nominations—29 June 2007

The United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is worth approximately US \$50,000 to be shared among the Sasakawa Laureate and recipients of the Certificates of Distinction and Merit. It is presented annually on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction, every second Wednesday of October.

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/sasakawa/2007/Sasakawa-Award-2007-English.pdf>

### First Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 5, 6 and 7 June 2007

#### Pre-announcement

International Conference Centre (ICCG), Geneva, Switzerland The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction: main forum for continued and concerted emphasis on disaster risk reduction

The Global Platform will build on and expand the membership of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction. Participation in the Global Platform will be open to States; hence the proposed change of name from Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction to Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Global Platform will also include United Nations and other international agencies, regional organizations, civil society organizations and technical and scientific bodies covering the social, economic, humanitarian, political, environmental and scientific fields and committed to disaster risk reduction.

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/gpdr/docs/pre-announcement-gpdr.doc>

### MARY FRAN MYERS GENDER AND DISASTER AWARD

#### 2007 NOMINEES SOUGHT

**Deadline: April 15**

The Gender and Disaster Network and the Natural Hazards Center invite nominations of those who should be recognized for their efforts to advance gender-sensitive policy, practice, or research in the areas of disaster risk reduction.

Established in 2002, the Mary Fran Myers Award recognizes that vulnerability to disasters and mass emergencies is influenced by social, cultural, and economic structures that marginalize women and girls, and may also expose boys and men to harm.

The intent of this award is to recognize women and men whose advocacy, research, or management efforts have had a lasting, positive impact on reducing disaster vulnerability. All those whose work has added to the body of knowledge on gender and disasters, is significant for gender-theory or practice, or has furthered opportunities for women to succeed in the field are eligible.

Please direct any questions and submit all materials to: **Elaine Enarson** at [enarson@brandonu.ca](mailto:enarson@brandonu.ca) or be in touch by phone (204.571.8575) or fax (204.571.8588).

You can also read this announcement online at <http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/mfmaward/>

## EVENTS

### International Disaster Reduction Conference (IDRC) Harbin, China. August 21– 25, 2007

Harbin Institute of Technology HIT.

A joint UNESCO GADR GDIN UNISDR Conference.

To achieve risk-resilient, sustainable societies, the management of unexpected events, such as natural hazards, disease, man-made hazards or terrorist attacks, must rather take an integrated approach. The International Disaster Reduction Conference (IDRC Harbin 2007) will focus on deepening the understanding of what is needed to establish an integrated risk management. IDRC Harbin 2007 is a follow-up of IDRC Davos 2006 and will focus attention on the consolidation of the conclusions gained in Davos.

For more information, visit the conference website at <http://www.harbin2007.cn> or

**contacts us on**  
E: [harbin2007@hit.edu.cn](mailto:harbin2007@hit.edu.cn); or

<http://www.davos2006.ch>  
[davos2006@slf.ch](mailto:davos2006@slf.ch).

Disaster Brief is an online newsletter from Disaster Watch, an initiative by the Huariou Commission to support the growth & development of women - centered community based, post disaster response.

Co-ordinated by Swayam Shikshan Prayog, India

[www.disasterwatch.net](http://www.disasterwatch.net)