

**BUILDING RESILIENCE TO DISASTER:  
A WINNIPEG WOMEN'S ACTION PLANNING WORKSHOP**

**Workshop Report, September 5, 2007**

**Elaine Enarson, Brandon University, Applied Disaster and Emergency Studies  
Margaret Haworth-Brockman, Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence**

**Background** International case studies have demonstrated that gender plays a role in the vulnerability of a community to hazards and disasters, and equally in its capacity to respond, cope and adapt to new realities in the aftermath. While the experiences of boys and men are equally shaped by gender, most researchers and practitioners focus on girls and women because of the inequalities arising from traditional gender relations. These often, but of course not universally or automatically, increase the vulnerability of girls and women in disasters. In the face of national and international trends increasing disaster risk, and the global shift toward a more people-centered, community-based approach to disaster risk reduction, capitalizing on the capacities and needs of all persons is all the more evident.

Toward this end, two Canadian conferences have been conducted [Vancouver 1998; Sydney 2006] to identify specific gender issues warranting more attention in disaster management throughout the planning and response cycle. A new national network of practitioners, policy makers, survivors and academics, the Gender & Disaster Network of Canada [GDNC], is one outcome of the Cape Breton conference in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

Because all disasters are local—and hence emergency preparedness is, too—models are needed for successful place-based initiatives to increase resilience to hazards and disasters. In this spirit, an action planning workshop for women and women's groups in Winnipeg was organized in the summer of 2007. The pioneering gathering marked the beginning of a conversation with local experts (in and out of government) who have context-specific knowledge about gender inequalities and gender differences that will affect girls and boys, men and women at the local level.

How would agencies serving girls and women at risk respond to a sustained health epidemic, the uncertainties of a toxic spill or armed attack, or the contained impacts of a tornado or other severe weather event? What specific issues would arise and what can be done now to help critical agencies in touch with high-need girls and women anticipate and prepare to respond? How can the capacities of high-risk girls and women be developed and strengthened, and the agencies and groups working most closely with them supported? These are familiar questions but remain unanswered in most Canadian communities and institutions.

**The Winnipeg workshop, July 27 2007** This report offers those unable to attend the meeting a sense of the group's concerns and intentions [see Appendix A: Workshop Agenda]. Following on the heels of successful consultations with seniors and with persons with disabilities in Winnipeg in the past year, the workshop was designed to engage the women's community as well.

The meeting was conducted July 27, 2007 from 9:30-1:30 in an accessible room on the campus of the University of Winnipeg with support from the Public Health Agency of Canada's Centre of Emergency Preparedness and Response [CEPR], Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence [PWHCE], and Brandon University's Applied Disaster and Emergency Studies [BU]. Their support is gratefully acknowledged.

This was conceived as a *place-specific dialogue* in order to capture the local resources in the women's community and to help identify specific gaps and areas where more outreach and education are needed. Integrating emergency management more centrally into women's health networks was the hallmark of this pilot workshop. *Key stakeholders* from women's organizations and networks were invited in order to increase their awareness of local emergency management systems and concerns, share resources and knowledge, and promote networking that might build relationships between women's organizations and local emergency management personnel and systems and promote future collaboration to reduce gender-based risk in the event of a local or regional disaster. These *intended outcomes* were met.

*Workshop presenters* included Dr. Elaine Enarson, a disaster sociologist with ADES whose comments were designed to provide international context, and Joe Eagan, part-time emergency social services coordinator for the City of Winnipeg, who introduced participants (generally for the first time) to the scope, intentions, and resources of local and provincial emergency management. John Lindsay, an experienced health emergency practitioner and chair of the ADES program at BU, also provided key information about the need for women and women's groups to strive for preparedness and self-sufficiency.

*Invited participants* were drawn from three groups. The workshop size was intentionally limited to between 20 and 30 participants. PWHCE Director Margaret Haworth-Brockman and her staff identified and contacted groups and individuals about the workshop, forwarding e-mailed invitations and making follow-up calls. Three groups were targeted: 1) representatives from Winnipeg-based groups, organizations and networks knowledgeable about the needs and interests of girls and women likely to be hard hit in emergencies and disasters; 2) women in disaster-related occupations and organizations; and 3) academics and policy makers.

Specifically, efforts were made to invite those who work with low-income women, single mothers, frail senior women, women living with physical and/or cognitive disabilities and/or chronic health problems, socially marginalized or isolated women, women in domestic violence or homeless shelter, new immigrant and non-English speaking women, aboriginal and visible minority women, women working in stigmatized occupations. Other women who may be at increased risk were also invited, e.g. women whose income derives from home-based work, those who own and operate small-businesses, women with extensive care giving responsibilities. Additionally, representatives were invited from Winnipeg-based child care associations, independent living centres, home health care and community nursing, midwifery, K-12 teachers, environmental/natural resource organizations, women's labour and advocacy groups, community workers and family counselors. The third group of invitees included elected municipal officials, international gender experts, researchers, representatives from NGOs historically active in disasters and key municipal and provincial emergency managers.

*Those who attended* on July 27 best represented the first category (women's groups active with high-need women) and included key actors whose activities and networks are, in many cases, both regional and national though they are based in Winnipeg. Importantly, the strong voice of rural women was also heard due to the active participation of two experts in the area. [See Appendix B: List of Participants]. We were fortunate to have a number of participants from PHAC's regional offices. *Regrets* were often received due to the summer workshop date resulting in under-representation of indigenous and immigrant women, home health workers, child care centre managers, and women living with disabilities. Invitations to all participants indicated the availability of sign interpretation and other accommodations as needed. A second workshop in the early fall is planned to reach out to these groups.

*Workshop facilitation* was provided by Paula Kierstad who also represented the newly developing Manitoba chapter of Disabled Association of Women Network (DAWN). We are grateful for her effective facilitation and thoughtful comments.

*Background materials* were provided to all those whose participation was solicited. These were selected with attention to Canada-based resource such as an emergency preparedness guide developed for women's crisis centres in British Columbia, CIDA's gender-sensitive guide to humanitarian relief, gender-focused academic papers on the Red River floods, conference proceedings from the 1998 and 2006 Canadian meetings as well as international gender and disaster conferences, advocacy documents from international organization such as the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and the Gender and Disaster Network website and sourcebook. [See Appendix C: Selected On-Line Resources on Women, Gender and Disaster]

*Workshop packets distributed at the meeting* included practice-oriented handouts and guides on gender-sensitivity, selected academic papers, a fact sheet prepared for Sociologists for Women in Society by Elaine Enarson and other original research papers, a critique of the invisibility of gender in the wake of hurricane Katrina, a violence against women in disasters fact sheet, and related materials. While this first workshop was not planned to provide tools or strategies for changing practice, the workshop packet did include guidelines for gender-sensitive practice and organizational self-assessment guides.

*Workshop activities* included presentations by Elaine Enarson and Joe Egan followed by open discussion, and focused discussion organized around the questions below:

1. What specific practical issues do you think will arise for the women you know best in the event of a natural, technological or human-induced disaster?
2. What personal, cultural, economic or organizational resources will these girls and women draw upon in a crisis? How can these be developed and strengthened?
3. How would your agency or others working with high-risk groups of girls and women be affected?
4. What is needed to increase your organizational or professional capacity to anticipate, prepare for, cope with, respond to and recovery from a disaster?
5. What opportunities do you see locally for bridging the activities of women's organizations and emergency planning?

*The workshop rappateur* was Shannon Pidlubny whose minutes are attached (see Appendix D: Workshop Minutes). Thanks are in order to Shannon for her effective note-taking while also actively joining in the dialogue.

*A high level of interest and concern* in the immediate issues raised by disasters and disaster risk management was expressed. Many women leaders sought a better understanding of the emergency planning process locally, and of how their organizations might become involved and indicated this is a very new area for them. Equally important was the need stated by many for practical, step-by-step tools that can assist women's groups and organizations aiming to increase their capacity to mitigate hazards, reduce vulnerabilities, prepare for emergencies and respond as needed in the event of a disaster impacting their organization, clientele or neighborhood. Increased awareness was seen as an essential step, both among women's groups and organizations and

among emergency managers, public officials in related sectors such as health and housing, and the general public.

As the minutes suggest, there was particular concern expressed about poor women and those lacking transportation, women with children in care, women in domestic violence shelters or living with abuse, women living with mental illness and with other physical and/or cognitive constraints, and planning structures that do not recognize these as vulnerabilities or accord women a strong voice to help raise and address them. The realization that only very modest funding is earmarked for local emergency preparedness demonstrated to many an unacceptably large service gap, and several participants spoke to the need for strong advocacy to increase funding levels.

Participants also noted that women's everyday experience coping with crisis is a strength in disaster contexts. Many suggested the need for stronger and better relationships with local media to help debunk myths about women and men in disasters and to portray the full range of women's and girls' responses to disaster. It was noted that "disaster" may be defined too narrowly to accommodate crises such as BSE which is indeed a disaster for women in farming, and that national attention to "panic planning" geared to terrorism may undermine local efforts to identify realistic and probable hazards and disasters in the future.

*Women's personal and organizational networks* were identified as under-utilized resources for effective emergency preparedness and response. Specifically, food banks, women's resource centres, and domestic violence shelters were identified; also, the new Gender and Disaster Network of Canada, the international Gender and Disaster Network, DAWN, the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, local and regional branches of the National Council of Women and women's health networks in the region were cited as important potential partners. Leaders from many of these networks attended the workshop.

Generally, there was a strong sense that existing networks and capacities should be strengthened and existing resources used to support emergency preparedness, for

example by earmarking modest amounts of funding in existing grant-funded projects and programmes.

There was also a clear sense that women's organizations, like other stakeholder groups currently under-represented in provincial and city emergency planning, have many competing claims on time and resources and will need concrete support to move emergency preparedness up on "the radar screen." User-friendly materials (one-page fact sheets, short handouts, documents with strong graphics and first-person voices) were identified as resources currently lacking which would enable women's organizations to better educate their constituencies about hazards and disasters.

*Continued communication* was sought by those who attended this pioneering workshop in order to exchange information, share resources, undertake joint activities or develop collaborative interventions. Toward that end, the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence agreed to establish a *new electronic mailing list* of all workshop participants.

*Follow up:*

- All participants will be forwarded a copy of the workshop report, including contact information for all those who attended;
- All participants will be forwarded information about the GDNC website and how they may join and participate;
- Elaine Enarson will liaise between the Winnipeg group and the GDNC, for example by creating space for Manitoba issues and action on the new website of the GDNC and posting this report and others;
- Elaine Enarson was pleased to accept two invitations to speak in October at "lunch and learn" sessions of the National Council of Women in Winnipeg and in Brandon;
- The workshop report will be incorporated into the 2007 presentation about the development of the Gender and Disaster Network of Canada for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Risk and Hazards Network meeting in Vancouver;
- Margaret Hawarth-Brockman and Elaine Enarson will follow up with a number of workshop participants with specific ideas about potential collaboration;
- PWHCE and ADES will seek support for a follow-up workshop in the fall of 2007 which will include key groups not able to attend the summer workshop;

- At the conclusion of the second workshop, Elaine Enarson and Margaret Haworth-Brockman will use the electronic email list to discuss formation of a small steering group of local women leaders for the purposes of follow-up action planning.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Workshop Agenda

Appendix B: Workshop Participants

Appendix C: Selected On-Line Resources on Women, Gender and Disaster

Appendix D: Workshop Minutes

Appendix E: Final Financial Statement

## APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP AGENDA

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**Building Resilience To Disaster:  
A Winnipeg Women's Action Planning Workshop  
July 27, 2007, 9:00 Am - 1:30 Pm  
University Of Winnipeg, Room 2m70**

*The workshop will take place in an accessible building and room  
and sign interpretation provided.*

### AGENDA

- |             |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00- 9:30  | Meet and greet, round table introductions                                                                                                                                   |
| 9:30-10:20  | Women, Gender Relations and Disaster: Making the Connections (Elaine Enarson, Ph.D, Brandon University)                                                                     |
| 10:20-10:50 | Planning for disasters in Winnipeg (Joe Egan, Emergency Social Services Public Aid Coordinator for the City of Winnipeg)                                                    |
| 10:50-11:00 | Refreshment break                                                                                                                                                           |
| 11:00-12:00 | Open discussion of local women and women's organizations: vulnerabilities and capacities before, during and after a disaster here                                           |
| 12:00- 1:00 | Small-group action planning over lunch.                                                                                                                                     |
|             | <i>We are pleased to offer you lunch and light refreshments. Please call 982-6632 to let us know about any special dietary considerations other than a meatless option.</i> |
| 1:00- 1:30  | Reports back/discussion of possible next steps                                                                                                                              |

## **FIVE GUIDING QUESTIONS**

6. What specific practical issues do you think will arise for the women you know best in the event of a natural, technological or human-induced disaster?
7. What personal, cultural, economic or organizational resources will these girls and women draw upon in a crisis? How can these be developed and strengthened?
8. How would your agency or others working with high-risk groups of girls and women be affected?
9. What is needed to increase your organizational or professional capacity to anticipate, prepare for, cope with, respond to and recovery from a disaster?
10. What opportunities do you see locally for bridging the activities of women's organizations and emergency planning?

## APPENDIX B: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Baskerville, Marlene	Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
Bertrand, Marlene	Manitoba Women's Advisory Council
Cox, Robin	University of Manitoba
Deschenes, Nicole	Public Health Agency of Canada
Dugas, Camelle	Communications, Public Health Agency
Egan, Joe	City of Winnipeg
Forsey, Caitlin	Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence
Harrington, Cate	Public Health Agency of Canada
Kelloway, Jodi	Disaster Management, Manitoba Health
Kehler, Lisa	Public Health Agency of Canada
Kilpatrick, Sharon	Family Violence Intervention
Kuropotwa, Sharon	Family Violence Prevention Program
Lachance, Pat	Public Health Agency of Canada
Lindsay, John	University of Brandon
Majano, Myrna	Public Health Agency of Canada
McBee, Jane	Women's Directorate
Pidlubny, Shannon	Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence
Reinsch, Simone	Nursing
Ridd, Dawn	Healthy Populations, Manitoba Health
Scott, Mary	Past Chair, Provincial Council of Women
Sigvaldason, Merrilee	Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Wylie, Gail	Healthy Start for Mom & Me

**APPENDIX C:  
SELECTED ON-LINE RESOURCES ON WOMEN, GENDER AND DISASTER**

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**Prepared for the Winnipeg Women's Workshop on Disaster Resilience**

**with attention to Canadian resources**

**July 27, 2007, enarsone@brandonu.ca**

**Start here!**

*Gender and Disaster Sourcebook*, an international compilation of case studies, policy frameworks, practice guides, academic papers, community education materials and more: <http://www.gdnonline.org/sourcebook.htm>

Some history--conference proceedings and recommendations:

*Gender and Disaster in Canada: New Thinking, New Directions*, fall 2006, Cape Breton University. Proceedings forthcoming.

*Gender Equality and Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop*, summer 2004, Honolulu, Hawai'i. Proceedings:

<http://www.ssri.hawaii.edu/research/GDWwebsite/pages/proceeding.html>

*Gender Equality, Environmental Management and Natural Disaster Mitigation*. 2001. UN Division for the Advancement of Women, Expert Working Group meeting in Ankara, Turkey. Proceedings: [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/env\\_manage/documents.html](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/env_manage/documents.html).

*Reaching Women and Children in Disasters*. Miami, FL, summer 2000. Available through the Gender and Disaster Network:

[http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/geography\\_research/gdn](http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/geography_research/gdn)

*Women in Disasters: Exploring the Issues*, Vancouver, BC, spring 1998. Proceedings and recommendations:

<http://www.ssri.hawaii.edu/research/GDWwebsite/pdf/VancouverConf.pdf>

## **Networks:**

*Gender and Disaster Network*, an international network of academics, practitioners and policy makers in support of gender equality in disaster risk reduction. On-line publications and reports, member information, and listserv: <http://www.gdnonline.org/>

*Gender and Disaster Network of Canada* was an outcome of the Nova Scotia conference and the website, hosted by the Women's Health Research Unit, Institute of Population Health at the University of Ottawa, will soon be operational. Watch for it and join!

*Disaster Watch*, an initiative of the Huarion Commission and Groots, a global network of grassroots women's organizations, supports the growth & development of women - centered community based, post disaster response. Co-ordinated by Swayam Shikshan Prayog, India. For updates, resources, advocacy and action: <http://www.disasterwatch.net/>.

Also visit *Groots Canada*: <http://www.groots.org/members/canada.htm>

## **UN position statements and publications:**

*Women, Disaster Reduction and Sustainable Development:*

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/risk-reduction/gender/Women,%20disaster%20reduction%20and%20SD.pdf>

*Making Risky Environments Safer: Women Building Sustainable and Disaster-Resilient Communities.* Women 2000 and Beyond publication (April 2004, E. Enarson), UN DAW (available in French and Spanish):

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/w2000.html>

## **Practice guides and tools:**

*It Can Happen To Your Agency! Tools for Change: Emergency Management for Women's Services* (emergency planning manual for shelters). 2001, BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling:

[http://www.pep.bc.ca/management/Women\\_in\\_Disasters\\_Workbook.pdf](http://www.pep.bc.ca/management/Women_in_Disasters_Workbook.pdf)

*Gender Equality and Humanitarian Assistance: A Guide to the Issues*. CIDA, 2003:  
[http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Africa/\\$file/Guide-Gender.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Africa/$file/Guide-Gender.pdf)

*Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs, Equal Opportunities. Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action*, UN InterAgency Standing Committee, December, 2006:  
[http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/documents/subsidi/tf\\_gender/IASC%20Gender%20Handbook%20\(Feb%202007\).pdf](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/documents/subsidi/tf_gender/IASC%20Gender%20Handbook%20(Feb%202007).pdf)

*Weaving Gender in Disaster and Refugee Assistance*, and accompanying Field Checklists. Report prepared by Interaction: American Council for Voluntary International Action. Washington, D.C. Includes conference papers and field practice checklists. Available on-line through InterAction: [www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org). Also see Best Practices for Gender Integration in Organizations and Programs From the InterAction Community (1998) and the many additional gender mainstreaming resources offered to organizational members.

*Working With Women at Risk: Practical Guidelines for Assessing Local Disaster Risk*, E. Enarson et al. 2003, available in Spanish:  
<http://gdnonline.org/resources/WorkingwithWomenEnglish.pdf>

### **Advocacy and Observation:**

*Vulnerability of Women in Disaster Situations*, Kate Wood, President of the Canadian Red Cross and Special Representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, in New York, March 7, 2005: <http://www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=012396&tid=001>

*Gender and Disaster Network Oral Statement* to the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, 2007: [http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/first-session/docs/Wednesday\\_Statements/Org\\_and\\_Other\\_Statements/GDN\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/first-session/docs/Wednesday_Statements/Org_and_Other_Statements/GDN_Statement.pdf)

*Gender Equality in Disasters: Six Principles for Gender-Fair Relief and Reconstruction*,

Gender And Disaster Network, January 2005:  
<http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/genderbroadsheet.doc>

*Women and girls last? Averting the second post-Katrina disaster.* E. Enarson, 2006:  
<http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Enarson/>

*Women and Disaster Fact Sheet* prepared for Sociologists for Women in Society, E. Enarson, 2006: <http://www.socwomen.org/socactivism/factdisaster.pdfvww>

*Battered Women in Disaster: Case Study of Gendered Vulnerability*, E. Enarson, 1998. Transcript and related materials from on-line emergency management discussion, including planning guidelines for shelters, programs, and emergency management agencies: <http://www.emforum.org/vlibrary/980603.htm>

*Regional Perspectives on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction.* Commentaries from participants in the Honolulu Workshop on Gender Equality and Disaster Risk Reduction, 2004:  
<http://www.ssri.hawaii.edu/research/GDWwebsite/pdf/WorkingGroups/COMMENTARIES.pdf>

### **Case studies:**

*The Needs of Women in Disasters and Emergencies.* R. Wiest, University of Manitoba, Jane Mocelli and Thandiwe Motsisi, 1994. Report for the UN Development Programme and the Office of the US Disaster Relief Coordinator:  
[http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/geography\\_research/gdn](http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/geography_research/gdn).

See the *Gender and Disaster Sourcebook, section 7*, for citations to numerous empirical studies around the world on the gender dimensions of hazards, disasters and disaster risk reduction: <http://www.gdnonline.org/sourcebook.htm>

*Forthcoming--Gender Dimensions of Disasters in Canada*, E. Enarson with the Gender & Disaster Network of Canada, scoping paper prepared for the Public Health Agency of Canada/Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response.

## APPENDIX D: WORKSHOP MINUTES

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### **Building Resilience To Disaster: A Winnipeg Women's Action Planning Workshop**

**Co-hosted by Elaine Enarson of the Applied Disaster and Emergency Studies and  
Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence  
With support from the Public Health Agency of Canada  
Held July 27, 2007 in Winnipeg, Manitoba**

#### ***1. Opening and Welcome***

Dr. Elaine Enarson, professor at ACEDS at the University of Brandon and Margaret Haworth-Brockman, Executive Director of PWHCE gave words of welcome to workshop participants and provided an introduction to the purpose of the day. Dr. Enarson introduced workshop facilitator, Paula Kierstead. Paula welcomed the participants and introduced the day's agenda and intent.

#### ***2. Roundtable Introductions***

The workshop activities began with each participant introducing themselves, their affiliation and the reasons why they chose to attend the workshop. Participants included university researchers, community researchers, women leaders, advocates, service providers and regional disaster planning staff in Manitoba. Full list of participants attached in appendix.

#### ***3. Women, Gender Relations and Disaster: Making the Connections***

##### ***Elaine Enarson***

Elaine Enarson gave an hour-long presentation as an overview about preparation and resilience for women and disaster, and disaster and gender by using examples of how disaster has affected women's lives around the world.

Key points:

- Including gender and women in planning for disaster is essential to building resilience to disaster, and appropriate preparedness and response. Women have knowledge about the vulnerable people in their community and who will need special attention.
- Other countries (jurisdictions) have included gender and women's needs in planning for disaster by consulting with women and involving women in the process. These stories of success could be incorporated in Canada including: food saving, financial savings, financial sharing, involving children in preparedness.
- When disaster plans include women in planning, there is a better outcome. For example in Central America women there were two separate disasters, one of which included women in the preparations, and that did not. The case in which women were involved had less casualties and devastation to families.
- After a disaster or crisis women provide emotional support, take on and more importantly carry on with care giving roles, have needs related to sexual orientation and culture (e.g. specific diet) that haven't been considered have relationships with the military and authority that increases women's fearfulness and ability to speak up for themselves, have increased strain and stress within the home related to gender relations and social roles such as being responsible for children, meal preparation and providing emotional support to family.
- Childcare and public transportation on which women rely more heavily are often not set up or restored right away This affects whether women can participate or return to the work force, how they care for their families, whether they can reach food and shelter.
- Violence against women consistently increases following disasters, even after the immediate danger or crisis is over. This must be taken into consideration in emergency preparedness.
- The Gender and Disaster Network is an online resource and networking tool <http://www.gdnonline.org/>

## **Planning for disasters in Winnipeg; Joe Egan**

Joe Egan, Emergency Social Services Public Aid Coordinator for the City of Winnipeg gave a half-hour long presentation on the role of the emergency response team in Winnipeg, using examples of disasters that have occurred in Winnipeg.

### Key points:

- Most common disasters in Winnipeg have resulted from natural events and large accidents including: ice, and hail storms, flood, tornadoes, airplane crashes, train accidents and truck crashes involving chemical spills.
- When a disaster occurs in Winnipeg the first response is the individual. The local authority is contacted when it escalates, the local authority requests mutual aid from a neighboring community. The province is asked for support through MEMO, and the federal government is asked to help through MEMO.
- The Emergency Control Committee (ECC) is the political and senior administration committee that determines overall policies respecting the particular emergency and includes: the mayor, the City's executive policy committee, the chief administrative officer, the chief financial officer, chief emergency coordinator, the emergency preparedness coordinator and a department head chosen from each of the standing policy committees.
- Coordinated emergency response team includes the emergency sectors: police, fire paramedic, public aid, public works, public information and public utilities. During a disaster the province is asked to help through the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (MEMO).
- Part of the city emergency response team's role is to increase capacity in the community (thorough education workshops such as this one), coordinate resources and build partnerships to provide emotional support and other forms of support needed during and after a disaster.
- Building community capacity is a key component to expanding services during time of crisis and to be prepared for a disaster. Community groups should plan and have emergency and disaster plans. Agencies could, for instance, ask for funding in grant applications for disaster planning to enhance their own capacity.

## **Open discussion of local women and women's organizations: vulnerabilities and capacities before, during and after a disaster.**

### Vulnerabilities identified included:

- The City of Winnipeg has the lowest per capita ratio of disaster management staff to citizens which limits their capacity though there is a broader team of trained volunteers on whom they can call when needed. The City of Winnipeg has a relatively small budget for emergency preparedness with no operating budget.
- Majority of first responders and volunteers are women. Volunteers are prone to burn out.
- Many organizations do not have a disaster plan, or do not have adequate disaster plans for likely disasters, and the culture of fear surrounding disaster inhibits plans that focus on probable disasters (e.g., power outage).
- Women are left vulnerable to disaster as they are not included in organization's current disaster plans, particularly women who are care providers, live in poverty or have special needs related to health and mental health. Women with low incomes do not have the financial resources to save for disasters, to have a 72 hours emergency supply of food and water for instance.
- Lack of a sense of community hinders community cohesiveness and community capacity.
- There is no consistent definition of 'disaster' and current legislation imposes a constraint on what disaster is, limiting which forms of disaster can be financially compensated to those affected (e.g. BSE), lack of community driven definition that includes examining disaster in the context of women's daily lives.
- Patriarchal cultural structure devalues and excludes women
- Lack of women making decisions regarding disaster planning, women's lives not considered
- Current legislation does not include a gender gap analysis to determine which sections are excluding women.

### Capacities:

- Communities can facilitate capacity-building (women play a key role in this) community building.

- Community groups could be better networked with one another, and are a valuable resource as they are already working with identified vulnerable populations.
- Incorporate disaster management concepts into new buildings or services.
- Include women in decision making around disaster planning.
- Build planning into funding proposals before a disaster.
- DAWN Canada and DAWN Winnipeg can play key roles as advocates for women with disability could do a project on policy and best practices.
- Networking and sharing of resources through internet.

**The facilitator then invited the participants to respond to each of the guiding questions provided. This part of the agenda did not include the small groups first planned, and all participants were able to hear all the replies.**

### **Guided Questions:**

**What specific practical issues do you think will arise for the women you know best in the event of a natural, technological or human-induced disaster?**

- Structural: transportation
  - Most affected would be women in poverty, women with disabilities.
- Lack of access to services
  - Most affected would be women with disabilities and women with special needs regarding physical limitations of traveling to receive services
- Difficulty with leaving their homes
  - Women with mental illness and history of abuse and violence may have specific fears regarding leaving the home, being confined to live in shelters, privacy issues, sensitivity to authority and cramped housing conditions, women living on the street would have a lack of access to information and may not qualify for some services
  - Women with children fear being separated from children and wouldn't leave if they aren't currently with their children
- Lack of information regarding where to go to get services, how to find loved ones, how to share information

- Lack of power: to negotiate for their rights, to voice their opinions, to voice concerns over needs not being adequately met, little opportunity to voice concerns
- Lack of personal resources to plan for disaster, to save money for disaster or to save food and supplies for a disaster
- Language and literacy barriers
- Weather can affect food/water supply and temporary shelters and ability to access services
- Women's needs not included in disaster planning resulting in limited resources for diapers, feminine hygiene products, safety in shelters, mental health concerns not adequately addressed, not having access to medications/medical aids, lack of training regarding mental health needs

**What personal, cultural, economic or organizational resources will these girls and women draw upon in a crisis?**

- Health services: emergency room, family resource centres, community clinics, and friendship centres
- Self-reliance: self-care, developing their own networks through families, personal savings accounts
- Families/friends, support systems, networks,
- Formal resources: food banks, agencies that they are familiar with, church, crisis shelters, friendship centres

**How can these be developed and strengthened?**

- Increase confidentiality
- Interpreters needed
- Include cross-community building and find ways to enhance regional networking, outreach consultations,
- Resource centres, community groups and food banks could network better, crisis shelters could build capacity
- Media could play a role in information sharing
- Enhance culture of preparedness

- Larger role of advisory committees, include women in planning and have women on these committees
- City of Winnipeg to build partnerships with community groups, increase number of presentations that the City provides to community groups
- Enhance empowerment among vulnerable groups, many cultural and community groups already have natural leaders and a good network, these groups could be better partnered with city and emergency planners

**What is needed to increase your organizational or professional capacity to anticipate, prepare for, cope with, respond to and recovery from a disaster?**

- Raise awareness: MB Women’s Advisory Council could achieve this through their lunch and learn sessions, lobby the city to have adequate resources, more education around preparedness, speaking out, advocacy, policy advise
- Planning: local problems solved with local solutions, develop plan accordingly, include wellness and recreational activities in disaster plans, include the groups most affected by disaster in planning
- Build relationships

**What opportunities do you see locally for bridging the activities of women’s organizations and emergency planning?**

- Partnering intersectorally (agriculture, finance, HR) to prepare and mitigate, take culture into consideration, partnering with children’s organizations (girl guides) to increase awareness and make sure needs are met at legislative level
- Information sharing: perspectives here are shared across the province, RHAs
- Integration of communities, integration with the emergency management community groups, engage with the process of government to ensure needs are met in legislation
- Resource management: weaving existing resources, a one-page sheet for neighborhoods, annual meetings, its important to recognize its not a priority for all organizations

- Nationally: bridge with National council of women and international level, we need to talk about prevention more (building homes on safer areas), crisis prevention
- Residential programs are well positioned to be a part of the planning, network within the group as a community building tool
- Not creating panic, media can be a key partner

**Next steps:**

- Reduce the 'panic planning' (e.g. planning for a terrorist attack) and start increasing disaster planning that takes into account events that are most likely to occur.
- Synthesis of templates, include GBA in plans and templates, include GBA in vulnerabilities/resiliency
- Continuing education on disaster planning.
- Networking: stay connected, taking these ideas home to organization and start to move these ideas forward in the work they do, work with Provincial Council of Women and our other umbrella organizations, there is a network already and we need to determine how we can work with them and the organizations that aren't at the table
- City of Winnipeg can increase public presentations to build capacity
- Advocate to include women in disaster planning
- Individual organizations can add money to projects that are on going for disaster plans.
- PWHCE will maintain a mailing list and follow-up with a second meeting

**APPENDIX E: WORKSHOP EXPENSES**

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**Building Resilience To Disaster:  
A Winnipeg Women's Action Planning Workshop**

**BUILDING RESILIENCE TO DISASTER:**

	<b>Expenditures</b>		
	<b>PHAC</b>	<b>PWHCE</b>	<b>BU/ADES</b>
<b>Grant administration</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>In-kind</b>	
<b>Resource materials preparation</b>	<b>0.00</b>		<b>In-kind</b>
<b>Group communication/ mailing</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>In-kind</b>	
<b>Space rental and hosting</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>In-kind</b>	
<b>Food</b>	<b>629.00</b>		
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>290.00</b>		
<b>Lodging</b>	<b>165.20</b>		
<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>0.00</b>	*	
<b>Workshop facilitation</b>	<b>190.80</b>		
<b>Resource materials.</b>	<b>0.00</b>		<b>In-kind</b>
<b>Incidentals (as needed)</b>	<b>125.00</b>	*	
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$1,400.00</u></b>	<b><u>\$0.00</u></b>	<b><u>\$0.00</u></b>

\* Not required for registered participants