



Week 9

From Policy to Practice / Case Study: Helping & Empowering Women (3)

Week 9 further proceeds with a case study about **women (1)** in humanitarianism & development & the challenges of **helping (2)** & **empowering (3)** them. ‘Women’ are adult female human beings according to the most general definition. With the increase of humanitarian crises around the world, women, whether young or older, have often shouldered a heavy burden. Indeed, the impact of conflict & natural disasters on them has been especially dramatic, leading to the development of specific gender-oriented approaches in both humanitarianism & development to better grasp their situations & needs. In war in particular, women face different sets of risks than men, confronted with sexual violence or even slavery, forced marriage, and human trafficking. It is thus vital for humanitarianism and development to help and empower them as actors of positive change able to keep societies standing.

1. WOMEN IN HUMANITARIANISM & DEVELOPMENT



- At the UN World Humanitarian Summit of 2016, the goal was adopted to achieve increased gender equality and greater inclusivity.
- It is now widely recognised as one of the five core areas of humanitarian action.
- 2016 was a watershed moment, which sparked a change toward systematically meeting the needs of women and girls affected by conflict or disasters.
- The objective for humanitarianism and development is promoting their role as active decision-makers and leaders.
- After decades of discourses on ‘gender in development’ and a history of international law and practice on women, undeniable progress has been realised on this front.
- ‘Gender’ is understood here as synonymous with women and girls, their fragility, and the challenge of changing realities of gendered power relations.
- The focus on sexual violence, in particular, has brought renewed attention to some of the critical issues that most women and girls are confronted with in both human conflict and natural disasters.



► For more information, please consult the ProQuest eBook and additional readings.

WHY IS GENDER EQUALITY ESSENTIAL TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION?

BECAUSE GENDER INEQUALITIES ALREADY EXIST BEFORE AN EMERGENCY



2. HELPING THROUGH HUMANITARIANISM & DEVELOPMENT

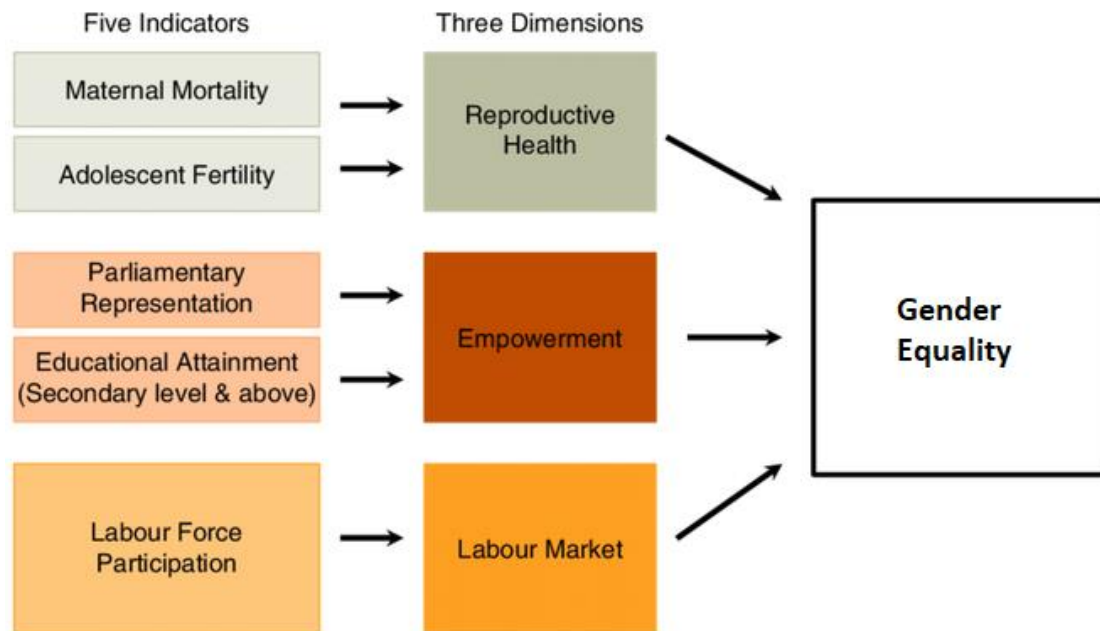


- Humanitarian and developmental programmes seek the participation of women and girls because these are considered the most vulnerable.
- Women are targeted for aid as a proven means to improve the wellbeing of children, foster peaceful conditions.
- Emphasis on women and girls also prevents the misdirection of resources & international aid thus

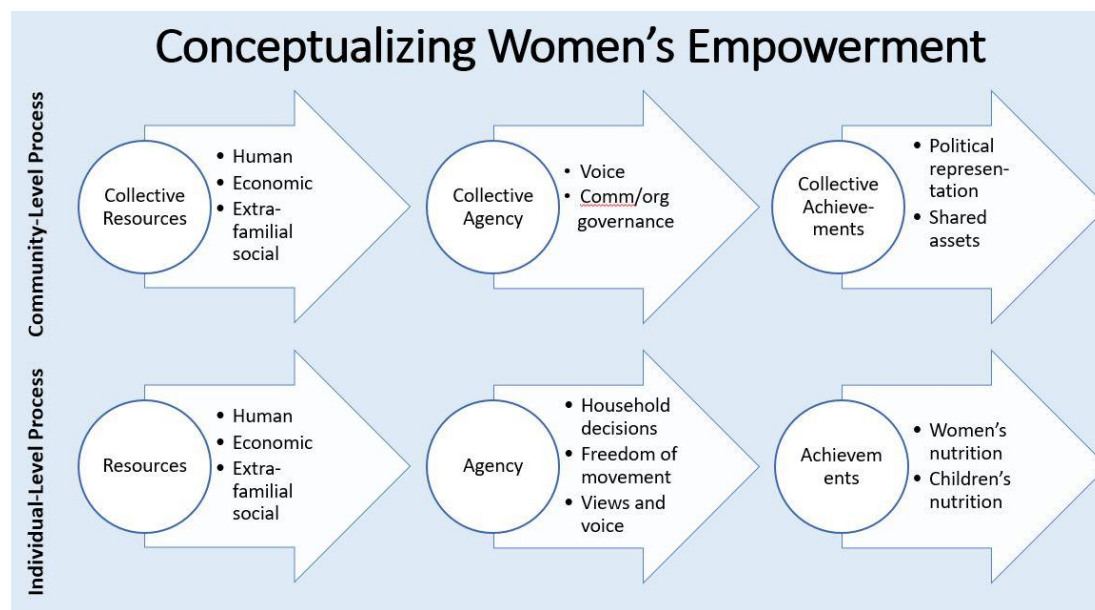
often aims to structurally improve the position of women in society.

- UNICEF, for instance, considers engaging women as a positive step towards women's rights and their increase and consolidation.
- The 'humanitarian-development-peace nexus' provides, in this regard, a new pathway towards greater collaboration and coherence in addressing the fundamental causes and factors of gendered inequalities and fragility.
- As one factor of fragility, continued gender inequalities impact effective international engagement in humanitarian assistance and developmental aid.
- Gender equality is essential to nexus approaches as it provides an overview of how supporters of the nexus have taken a gender equality perspective.
- They have also taken gender into account in their concrete strategies and guidance for humanitarian and developmental implementation.
- In doing so, gender provides guidance and actions derived from practices that can be viewed as strengthening gender equality in humanitarianism and development.

► ***For more information, please consult the ProQuest eBook and additional readings.***



3. EMPOWERING THROUGH HUMANITARIANISM & DEVELOPMENT



BIBLIOGRAPHY

The below-reading materials can be found on ProQuest through your VLE platform (Online Library).

ProQuest eBook

▪ Kevin M. Cahill, *History and Hope: The International Humanitarian Reader* (Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 84-96.

Additional readings

▪ Ricardo F.-D. Santos, *Empowering Difference: Gender Equality & Culture in Humanitarian Action* (Journal of Humanitarian Affairs, 2021).
 ▪ Audrey Verdier-Chouchane, *Women in Inclusive Development: An Overview* (Région & Développement, 2016).