

## Working with women at risk: practical guidelines for assessing local disaster risk

*Enarson, E., Meyreles, L., González, M., Hearn Morrow, B., Mullings, A. and Soares, A.*

International Hurricane Research Centre, Florida International University

### Organisation

---

The International Hurricane Research Center (IHRC) at Florida International University (FIU) aims at conducting multi-disciplinary research to safeguard people, the property, and the built and natural environments from hurricanes.

Website : [www.ihrc.fiu.edu](http://www.ihrc.fiu.edu)

### Bibliographical details

---

Published by: International Hurricane Centre, Florida International University

Year: June 2003

pp. 1-104

Link to document: [www.ihrc.fiu.edu/lssr/workingwithwomen.pdf](http://www.ihrc.fiu.edu/lssr/workingwithwomen.pdf)

File size: 1.3MB

### Abstract

---

The goal of this document is to enable local individuals/organisations to conduct a community based risk assessment from start to finish. It provides a context within which to understand risk, especially the gendered aspects of disasters.

### Intended end users

---

Institutions and individuals working at the level of the community who are seeking to manage/coordinate a community risk assessment with an explicit focus on women. Such local communities/individuals would include:

- ♦ **community based organisations,**
- ♦ **trainers of trainers,**
- ♦ **community development workers,**
- ♦ **emergency managers,**
- ♦ **risk researchers.**

## Geographical focus

---

Although the manual was developed in the **Caribbean** context, it can be used in communities throughout the world with the purpose of carrying out a gendered community risk assessment.

## Type of Material

---

**Comprehensive manual** on undertaking community risk assessment with a theoretical framework explaining the need for a community-based approach to risk assessment. The framework views risk in terms of root causes of both vulnerability and hazards. The document also contains an extensive list of appendices containing detailed guidelines for the procedures (such as meeting formats) required when undertaking a community risk assessment. Case studies illustrating key concepts and methods are also found throughout the manual.

## Language

---

This document is available in English and Spanish.

## Scale of assessment

---

The scale of assessment is at the **community**-level.

## Type of assessment

---

The manual is based on a project run in the Caribbean. It is focused primarily on a Gendered Community Risk Assessment approach. There is detailed and explicit explanation of the link between gender and disasters, as well as guidelines on how to undertake participatory risk assessment derived from Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodologies.

## Analytical methods

---

Two methods are presented in the manual including:

- ◆ **Gendered Community Risk Assessment**
- ◆ **Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

## Tools

---

The *participatory tools* presented in the manual include

- ◆ **Oral histories**
- ◆ **Focus group interviews,**
- ◆ Photo essays
- ◆ **Risk mapping**

The methodology is focussed largely around conducting research which uses rich, narrative data sources in order to assess risk and determine the root causes thereof.

*Technical Assessment tools* include:

- ◆ **Semi-structured interviews**

## **Notes on methods**

---

- ♦ The manual requires previous risk assessment capabilities.
- ♦ Although the document is explicitly about community risk assessments which focus on women, there is much to be taken from it in assisting with more generic community risk assessments.
- ♦ Generates an understanding of risk through the interaction of hazards and vulnerability.
- ♦ Explains how to summarize and analyse data as well as how to utilize research findings.
- ♦ It provides some context in which to apply the different participatory information gathering tools provided in the document.

## **Case studies / practical examples**

---

The manual contains several examples, taken from training workshops and assessments in the Caribbean and Central America, illustrating key methods and tools discussed in this document.

## **Resource person(s)**

---

Elaine Enarson, Evergreen, Colorado

Lourdes Meyreles, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: [lourdesmeyrelles@yahoo.com](mailto:lourdesmeyrelles@yahoo.com)

## **Author of guidance note**

---

Kristy Evans was commissioned by the Disaster Mitigation for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme (DiMP) at the University of Cape Town.

Contact: [cra@ifrc.org](mailto:cra@ifrc.org)