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# RESOURCE CAPABILITY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: EVIDENCE FROM BANTUL INDONESIA

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**ABSTRACT:** Understanding how local government responds to gender vulnerability and gender capacity is important to make cities safer both for women and for men. However, little is known on how local government is empowered in terms of provision of capacity, resources and abilities to mainstreaming gender into disaster risk reduction and community resilience. The case of Bantul post-earthquake reconstruction Indonesia pinpoints district government capability is vital to promote gender equality within local disaster risk reduction and resilience. The district government capability means the ability of local government to organise resources, competence and knowledge to meet the needs and concerns of women and men within disaster risk reduction process. This capability has been transformed into their ability in institutional and human resources policy and for providing financial, technical and leadership capabilities to promote gender equality into local disaster risk reduction and resilience. Experience of Bantul earthquake reconstruction shows an achievement has been made by this district in terms of local capability in mainstreaming gender. Among the most important factors related to district capability are women leadership, support from non-government organisations, women participation, financial resources and capacity of local gender institutions. The findings highlight the value of mainstreaming gender for disaster risk reduction, but policymakers should aware key resources capabilities that are needed to achieve effective implementation.

**KEYWORDS:** local government capability, gender mainstreaming, disaster risk reduction

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender and built environment studies highlight that gender mainstreaming is one of important aspects that should be considered to create effective disaster risk reduction and community resilience (Delaney & Shrader, 2000; Ariyabandu & Wickramasinghe, 2003). Increasing decentralisation across developing countries during the last three decades has transformed local government into the central actor in local development (World Bank, 2008). They have now been given many responsibilities, provided with

increased resources, and allowed greater autonomy to decide local policies and services at promoting sustainable development. Hence, the capability of local government in managing disaster risk reduction and building local disaster resilience including integrating gender mainstreaming strategy into local disaster risk reduction and resilience is vital (UNISDR, 2012). However, it is less understood how local government responds to gender vulnerability and gender capacity to make their cities safer both for women and for men.

The objective of this study is to flesh out the capability requirement of local government institution in mainstreaming gender that can act as a useful guide for policy makers and implementers in integrating gender mainstreaming into local disaster risk reduction strategy and building resilience. In doing so, it explores drivers of mainstreaming gender within local level disaster risk reduction and resilience. It addresses gender mainstreaming issues within earthquake regions in Indonesia, in particular in Bantul district of Yogyakarta province.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The research is an exploratory and intrinsic case study. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with 18 informants from policy makers, NGOs, and local leaders who dealt with and had knowledge post-earthquake reconstruction at Bantul. In addition to in-depth interview, a set of questionnaire measuring local government capability in mainstreaming gender was distributed to 100 key policy makers, implementers and community leaders both from government and from NGOs involve at disaster policy and management in Bantul district. The questionnaire was administered in June 2013 and completed January 2014.

Qualitative data were analysed using qualitative content analysis in particular to explore how local government response to earthquake disaster. It requires in-depth enquiry about respondent's attitudes and opinions about these issues (Remenyi et al., 1998). Meanwhile, quantitative data were *t*-statistics in particular to identify key determinants of local resources capability for mainstreaming gender into disaster risk reduction and resilience (Child, 2006).

## 2. FINDINGS

Integrating gender within post-disaster reconstruction management is important to achieve sustainable reconstruction. Enarson and Chakrabarti (2009) points out that when women are empowered, they have the capacity and the inner will to improve their situation and gain control over their own lives and families. Hence, women are not only vulnerable to natural disaster but they are also effective actors or agents of change in relation to both mitigation and adaptation (Delaney & Shrader, 2000). Women often have indigenous skills, knowledge and expertise that can be used to create community resilience and sustainable post disaster reconstruction strategies. Furthermore, women's responsibilities in households and communities, as stewards of natural and household resources, positions them well to contribute to livelihood strategies adapted to changing environmental realities.

Mainstreaming gender into post-earthquake reconstruction in Bantul shows that women grassroots have insight, information, experience, networks and resources vital to ensure sustainability of reconstruction outcomes. None of the three dimensions of sustainable development can be achieved without long-term investments in economic, social and environmental capital. In Bantul, reconstruction of housing, water and sanitation were not only creating healthy environments of affected communities but also protect land and its ecosystem from disasters in the future. Women grassroots include women voluntary labour organisations, women credit and saving associations, and women family welfare groups have vital roles in achieving sustainable post-disaster reconstruction through their capacity in improving environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Women grassroots organisation have involved in various activities to maintain environment. For example, they have promoted to use organic farming and food production rather than modern farming using pesticide. Organic agricultural products (i.e. organic rice, fruits, and vegetables) have become an iconic product of Bantul district since reconstruction. Women roles in creating friendly housing environment were shown across villages. Women grassroots mobilise themselves to plant green trees along villages roads and garden. They established *TOGA (Tanaman obat keluarga)* groups, which is purposed to protect and to plan indigenous herbs and medical plantation around the houses. Debris and savage management were another issue in which women groups involved to solve it through creative waste recycle contribution (i.e. rubbish bank arcade, vertical garden from soda bootless, and handicrafts). Women were also actively involved within village voluntary labor or *kerja bakti* and *kampong* improvement program, which aims to create and to maintain healthy and clean community environment across villages.

Women roles in creating social sustainability in Bantul were shown from their activities in creating community safety and security, strengthening community social capital, enlarging access to public services, and improving village decision making. As a women activist explains the following: “*women groups across villages have engaged to maintain community security...for example they mobilise themselves to patrol and to monitor around communities in the morning when their husband going to works...*” (Interview with a women activist). Moreover, women across the village were involved within *Posyandu*, a community based vehicle to improve child and mother survival and development.

*Posyandu* addresses basic maternal and child health problems such as family planning, antenatal care, immunization, simple diarrhoea intervention and nutritional problems, which are identified and tackled at the community unit level. Through this group, women and children can get cheap and free access to health services provided by the government.

With regard to economic sustainability, women role at improving well-being is vital given the increasing of women poverty following earthquake. Generating income to support their families was a priority for most of the women in Bantul. However, to start their own business most of them did not have enough funding. Therefore, women grassroots organisation initiates to build Rotating and Saving Credit Association (ROSCAs) where each member can access funding. In some villages ROSCAs have enlarge their activities as an income generator. As a women activist explains the following: “*Not only do we save money by circulating low-interest loans but also we have started making and selling products such foods and drinks with the money that we have saved. The profits from the sales go back to our savings group. So it gives us both an income and great empowerment (Interview with a women activist)*”. Many ROSCAs work together with local government to facilitate loan from government and technical assistantship to rebuild business and to promote the growth of new micro and small enterprises. Gender inclusiveness is strongly embedded in promoting local economic program to ensure sustainability.

The effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in Bantul’s local government cannot be separated from a good cooperation with communities and NGOs

during re-building communities. Table 1 shows results of resource local capability assessment conducted among policy makers, implementers and community leaders involved during reconstruction process. The term capability in this study means the ability of government and communities to organise assets, competence and knowledge to protect gender vulnerability and improve their resilience from a disaster's potential effects and how it has been transformed into local ability in institutional and human resources policy for effective implementation and providing financial, technical and leadership capabilities which are specifically relevant to the situational contingencies of a given community disaster.

Table 1 Resource local capability assessment of mainstreaming gender into DRR

	mean	t-statistics		rank
		t	sd	
Strong women leadership	4.8	58.9*	0.5	1
Strong support from NGOs for promoting gendered risk reduction	4.8	58.5*	0.5	2
High women groups' participation	4.7	58.8*	0.5	3
Adequate financial resources supporting gender mainstreaming program	4.7	58.4*	0.5	4
Capacity of local gender institution	4.7	56.6*	0.5	5
Policy and program design linked disaster risk reduction and resilience	4.7	56.6*	0.5	6
Appropriate tools for gender mainstreaming	4.7	56.6*	0.5	7
Political will of government	4.7	57.6*	0.5	8
Gender sensitive budgeting	4.6	57.3*	0.5	9
Availability of gender vulnerability assessment	4.6	56.5*	0.5	10

\* $P < 0.01$

The assessment of local capability in mainstreaming gender into disaster risk reduction shows that strong women leadership, support from NGOs, high women groups participation, adequate financial resources and capacity of local gender institution are among the most important factors for effective

mainstreaming gender in Bantul district. Strong women leadership and high women groups participation represents the important of integrating gender capacities within disaster risk reduction. Hence, gender capacities reflect skills, relationships and knowledge gained particularly through women's life experience.

In hazardous environments, women's capacities are frequently credited though women leadership at the grassroots level and women group networks and skills that are vital survival and recovery resources in risky environments. Such gendered capacities are essential to increase the capacity of communities to adapt to identify and mitigate known hazards, adapt to change and recover from disaster in ways that reduce future vulnerability to hazards and disasters. In Bantul for example, women grassroots organisation have insight, information, experience, networks, and resources vital within disaster relief and reconstruction as it is increasing resilience and sustainability of reconstruction outcomes. Meanwhile, support from non-government organisations particularly International donors are related to adequacy financial support for rebuilding communities. In the case of Bantul's reconstruction, abundance support from International and national donor helps communities not only in providing financial resources but also in providing gender expertise. Existing gender expertise is useful to enhance the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in reconstruction process. Capacity of local gender institution focuses on ability of district institutions especially women empowerment agency in promoting gender equality within each process of reconstruction. Effectiveness of local women empowerment agency is vital since they have responsibility to ensure gender inclusiveness after

reconstruction finished and all international donors leave Bantul. 2002).

### 3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Mainstreaming gender into disaster risk reduction and resilience requires not only standard planning practices but also the capability to manage it because the key characteristics of disaster that unequal to women (Fothergill, 1996). Gender mainstreaming disaster reduction is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action to reduce hazards, prevent, and mitigate the effects of disasters. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs such that inequalities between men and women are not perpetuated through the process of disaster management (Enarson and Chakrabarti, 2009).

Increasing decentralisation across developing countries during the last three decades has transformed local government into the central actor in local development (World Bank, 2008). Hence, local government capability in mainstreaming gender determines the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction and resilience. Local government capability encompasses the ability to use and access needed resources beyond actual resource availability. It is often rooted in resources which are endogenous to the community and which rely on traditional knowledge, indigenous skills and solidarity networks. The ways in which capabilities are mobilised in times of crisis reflect coping strategies. Coping strategies refer to the manner in which people and institutions use existing resources to achieve various beneficial ends during unusual, abnormal and adverse conditions of a disaster process (UNISDR,

Lesson learn from Bantul's case it is identified some essential local capability for mainstreaming gender into the process of disaster risk reduction and resilience. Some of them confirm Moser and Moser (2005) findings. This essential gender mainstreaming capability includes: (1) strong leadership and political will of government for mainstreaming gender equality; (2) ability of gender institution to ensure gender representation; (3) availability of gender analysis using gender disaggregate data; (4) adequate gender expertise who understand gender policy design in the contexts of disaster management; and (5) existing policy and program design which is linked to all aspect of disaster risk reduction and resilience.

Moreover, increasing gender vulnerability and neglecting gender capacity are two main gender inequality issues within disaster reconstruction, which challenges to achieve sustainability of reconstruction. Lesson from Bantul local government shows that gender mainstreaming strategies within sustainable reconstruction should not only incorporate strategies for protecting women vulnerability but also strategies for promoting women capacity. Both strategies are needed to create gender equality and women empowerment, which both are fundamental for sustainable reconstruction.

Table 2 show a summary of research findings that identify types of gender vulnerability and capability requirements within each stage of disaster risk reduction. Following Coppola (2008), disaster risk reduction can be divided five stages: mitigating, preparing, responding and recovering. Within mitigation stage types of gender vulnerability, which

often reveals is lack of women access in promoting hazard mitigation process. In this stage, institutional and human resources, policy for effective implementation and financial, technical, and leadership-related capabilities must address evaluation, monitoring and dissemination in order to produce a gendered sensitive warning system and gendered sensitive risk and disaster assessment.

Table 2 Gendered related capability requirement within disaster risk reduction and resilience

Stage	Types of gender vulnerability	process	capability requirement	output
Mitigating	Lack of women access and voices in hazard mitigation	Identify and analyse risks associated gender	Evaluation, monitoring and dissemination	A gendered sensitive warning system and gendered risk and disaster assessment
Preparing	Lack of women access and voices in disaster risk education and dissemination  Lack of women access to gendered disaster training and exercise	Educate and disseminate gender sensitive disaster risk reduction	Planning, exercise, training, and logistics management expertise	Gendered sensitive education program on disaster risk reduction
Responding	Lack of women access to emergency and relief services	Emergency and relief services meet gender needs and concerns	Need assessment coordination, information exchange and logistic expertise	Gendered sensitive emergency and relief system
Recovering	Shortage of women voices and leadership within recovery and reconstruction process	Restore women well-being and improve their disaster coping strategies and resilience	Disaster recovery and reconstruction assistance skill	Gendered sensitive recovery and reconstruction

In preparedness stage, women often have lack access to disaster risk education and dissemination. Hence, all related capabilities must tackle planning, exercising, training and having logistic management expertise with sensitive to the gender needs and concerns. In response stage, women limited access to emergency and relief service often challenges for effective disaster response. The capabilities are required to address the importance of gendered

sensitive need assessment, networking and communication, and logistics management. The purpose of this stage is to achieve a gendered sensitive emergency and relief system. In recovery stage, one of major gender issues is that a shortage of women leadership and voices in recovery and reconstruction. The capabilities needed to restore women well-being and improve their coping strategies and resilience for possibilities of future disaster.

Therefore, it is important for local governments to recognise and aware each types of gender vulnerability and capability that required for formulating disaster risk reduction and resilience policy and plan. Gender disaster vulnerabilities arise from barriers to resilience and a root cause of increased risk for community resilience. Gendered vulnerabilities reduce the capacity of families and communities to anticipate, survive, resist and recover from disasters. In the long term, gender vulnerabilities may result in unsustainable reconstruction and community development. Effective gender mainstreaming strategies should tackle both issues of vulnerability and capacity in the same time.

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