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Task Force 01
FIGHTING INEQUALITIES, POVERTY, AND HUNGER

Pathways to Integrate Gendered Care Work into Climate Crisis Preparedness and Response

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Abstract

In 2019, weather-related hazards displaced 24.9 million people. By 2050, projections indicate that more than 200 million people will require humanitarian assistance each year as the result of climate-related disasters. This is significant for G20 countries, both due to climate risks within their borders and the indirect impacts stemming from disasters in their supply chain countries. Such disasters disproportionately impact people with care responsibilities. Though care responsibilities are overwhelmingly borne by women, initial humanitarian aid tends to overlook the related, gendered vulnerabilities. As a result, targeted interventions are needed to address the disproportionate risks and leverage the transformative potential of crises.

This brief offers six evidence-based, actionable recommendation pathways for emergency preparedness, response, and crisis governance that can leverage gendered caregiving for solutions in climate-related emergencies. We recommend: Redistributing care responsibilities equitably, establishing shock-responsive social protection, institutionalizing care-sensitive risk mapping, bringing caregiver voices into crisis management, sharing knowledge effectively, and integrating gendered care responsibilities as cross-cutting issues in international cooperation. These measures can help avoid disproportionate, negative impacts on caregivers, reduce wider societal vulnerabilities, and better optimize financial aid in coming years when needs are expected to escalate.

Keywords: Gendered care work, crisis governance, shock-responsive social protection, Sendai Framework, community resilience, emergency preparedness and response, climate change

Diagnosis of the issue

Climate change poses an unprecedented global challenge, with far-reaching impacts on ecosystems, economies, and societies worldwide. Climate-related crises such as extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and ecological disruptions represent additional challenges. In 2019 alone, weather-related hazards displaced 24.9 million people (IDMC 2020, 8). Projections indicate that by 2050 more than 200 million will require humanitarian assistance because of climate-related disasters (IFRC 2019, 3). The ten countries most at risk, according to the Global Climate Risk Index, include two G20 nations: Japan and India (Figure 1) (Germanwatch 2021, 37-42).

	G20 Country	Women's time spent on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to men's	Global Climate Risk Index rank 2019
1	India	10	7
2	Japan	5	4
3	Republic of Korea	5	60
4	Brazil	4	27
5	Türkiye	4	64
6	Argentina	3	55
7	Italy	3	35
8	Mexico	3	54
9	China	3	32
10	South Africa	2	24
11	Russia	2	39
12	Australia	2	19
13	United Kingdom	2	102
14	France	2	40
15	United States	2	No available data
16	Canada	2	62
17	Germany	2	56
18	Indonesia	No available data	14
19	Saudi Arabia	No available data	75

FIGURE 1. G20 Countries: Time spent on unpaid care and domestic work by women, compared to men (OECD 2021, 42-290); and rank in the Global Climate Risk Index 2019 (Germanwatch 2021, 37-42).[1]

Source: Authors'own, based on OECD and Germanwatch data.

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[1] More recent data are not yet available.

Moreover, while the severity and specific consequences of climate-related crises may vary based on factors such as geography and socio-economic conditions, no G20 country is immune to their effects. The interconnectedness of global supply chains implicates G20 nations in trans-boundary climate risks, affecting critical sectors such as food and energy security (European Environment Agency 2024, 17). As such, optimizing aid investments is paramount. G20 countries have an interest in fostering better use of aid investments, both for their own climate adaptation needs and to enhance the efficacy of the humanitarian aid, for which they are major donors.

In G20 countries and in countries on which G20 nations depend, climate-related crises disproportionately impact individuals with care responsibilities for children, dependent adults, or seniors, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities (UN Women 2023). Worldwide, women perform disproportionate amounts of unpaid domestic and care work compared to men. The disparities range from 1.5 times more in Canada, Germany, and the US, to 9 times more in India (Figure 1) (OECD 2021, 13). Sustainable Development Goal 5.4 emphasizes the need for equitable distribution of unpaid care and domestic labor responsibilities within households and access to essential services and social safeguards. Integrating gender and power (Oxfam 2022, 1) considerations into crisis preparedness and response is essential for crafting effective and inclusive policy responses and promoting just and sustainable development.

The G20 plays a pivotal role in shaping global responses to climate-related challenges (Shaw and Kishore 2023), and the establishment of the G20 Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRRWG) in 2023 underscores this commitment. The DRRWG's Roadmap aims to integrate risk-reduction measures into financing and policy decisions by G20 countries. The roadmap focuses on five action areas: 1) Universal coverage or

early warning systems, 2) disaster and climate resilient infrastructure, 3) financing frameworks for DRR, 4) disaster recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and 5) nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches for DRR. Currently, under the Brazilian G20 presidency, the group is developing a sixth action area on addressing inequalities and reducing vulnerabilities – a critical addition given the G20's historical shortfall in gender-equality commitments (Kulik 2022). Initial humanitarian responses often neglect gendered vulnerabilities; thus, targeted interventions are needed to minimize detrimental risks and leverage the transformative potential of crises (Devereux 2021). By addressing the gendered impacts of climate change and leveraging gendered care responsibilities, we can unlock innovative solutions and build resilience in the face of environmental challenges.

This brief offers six evidence-based, actionable recommendations for crisis management, leveraging gendered care responsibilities for solutions in climate-related emergencies. Proposing six pathways aligned with the priorities of the DRRWG (G20 Brasil 2023a) (Figure 2), the brief further responds to the agendas of the Empowerment of Women WG (G20 Brasil 2023b), the Development WG (G20 Brasil 2023c), and Brazil's G20 agenda to establish a Task Force for Global Mobilization Against Climate Change. Recognizing the interconnectedness of climate-related emergencies, gender dynamics, and broader crises, the brief supports Brazil's G20 agenda on fighting hunger, poverty, and inequality, and it also echoes the call for global governance reform.

G20 DRRWG objectives for Action Area 6

Develop a compendium of good practices for community organization of vulnerable populations. Topics should include a) risk mapping, b) monitoring of critical areas to prepare and respond in disasters situations, and c) setting out actions that result in systemized methodologies that support community organization of vulnerable populations. The aim should be to improve resilient urban-environmental quality and help adapt to climate change.

Include the compendium of good practices for community organization of vulnerable populations in a digital platform for sharing knowledge. The objective should be to improve resilient urban-environmental quality and help adapt to climate change.

Develop guidelines for producing informative and educational material on disaster risk aimed at vulnerable populations.

Promote cooperation among international, regional, and sub-regional governments and appropriate international organizations to build technical assistance mechanisms for developing countries. The emphasis should be on adaptation projects in vulnerable areas.

Pathway 1 Redistribution of care

Pathway 2 Shock-responsive social protection

Pathway 3 Care-sensitive risk mapping

Pathway 4 Caregiver voices in crisis management

Pathway 5 Effective knowledge sharing

Pathway 6 Gendered care responsibilities as cross-cutting in international cooperation
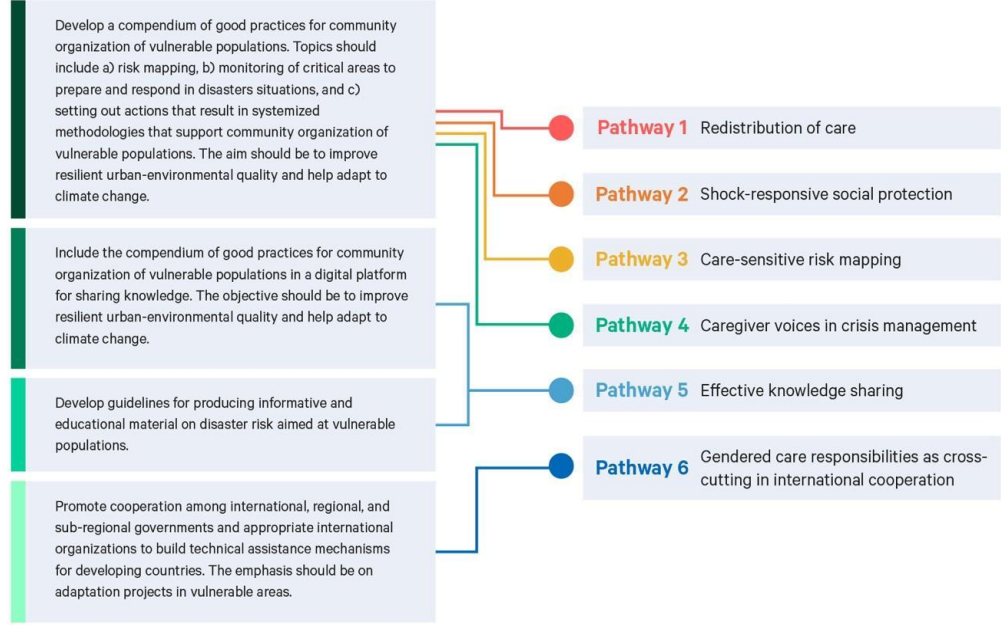
FIGURE 2. Six pathways to integrate gendered caregiving into crisis management support the G20 DRRWP's Roadmap Action Area 6 on Addressing Inequalities and Reducing Vulnerabilities (G20 Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction 2023). Source: Authors' own.

Recommendations

Pathway 1: Redistribute care responsibilities equitably.

Redistributing gendered care work can enhance women's participation in crisis preparedness and response, bolstering overall resilience. Equitably distributed caretaking responsibilities within communities allow for better support for the most vulnerable, enhancing social cohesion (Shtob and Petrucci 2021). To address the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work shouldered by women, and to avoid the potential for climate change to exacerbate such disparities, it is imperative to implement measures for redistributing care responsibilities among adult household members, the state, and communities (Oxfam 2022, 54).

Key steps include assessing the impact of climate change on care workload by developing indicators and identifying caregivers within households. This understanding enables the integration of actions promoting care work redistribution into adaptation and mitigation plans. Moreover, redistributing care work also entails challenging traditional gender norms and stereotypes that reinforce women's primary role as caregivers, and reforming or creating effective and gender-responsive care infrastructure. Environmental education campaigns are pivotal in this regard, targeting all household members and promoting equitable participation in care-related activities and household tasks (Chopra and Krishnan 2022, 43).

Pathway 2: Establish shock-responsive social protection.

All G20 nations must prioritize consistent investment in care economy and infrastructure, ensuring affordable childcare, support for single-parent households, paid paternity leave, and laws incentivizing men's involvement in care work (McDougall et al 2023, 13). However, existing social protection systems often overlook women's heightened vulnerability during crises due to their caregiving responsibilities. Shock-responsive social protection is essential for enhancing existing systems to provide targeted support during crises (Bastagli 2014, 4). It facilitates understanding of disaster risk, strengthens governance, invests in disaster risk reduction, and enhances preparedness (UNICEF 2023).

Such an approach focuses on maximizing resilience and preparedness among the most vulnerable. Safety-net measures such as cash transfers and food assistance ensure access to essential resources. Minimizing caregiving responsibilities during crises is crucial. For instance, supporting public childcare availability mitigates strains on caregivers. Gendered impacts must be carefully considered; while maintaining childcare services is beneficial, it may disproportionately burden women in the female-dominated childcare sector (McCord 2013, 32-33).

Mental health services are integral to shock-responsive social protection, particularly as women, who often care for the sick, face heightened mental health impacts, as seen during the Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics (Simba and Ngcobo 2020, 4).

Pathway 3: Undertake care-sensitive risk mapping.

Care-sensitive risk mapping is an approach that identifies and addresses the diverse impacts and needs of different groups within communities, particularly focusing on

caregivers. This method enhances understanding of differential impacts, needs, and challenges, thereby informing more effective crisis preparedness and response.

In crisis preparedness, such mapping informs strategic stockpiling of essential items and distribution plans. Resources should be allocated for initiatives supporting women's roles as primary caregivers, water managers, and providers of food and fuel in disaster-affected communities. Targeted assistance for maternal and child health services, reproductive health care, and psychosocial support programs addressing women's mental health and well-being is crucial. In emergency situations, caregivers often require items such as food, water, menstrual products, birthing kits, and other sexual and reproductive healthcare, necessitating gender- and care-sensitive approaches with rapid deployment. The potentially restricted mobility of caregivers should be considered in distribution plans.

Care-sensitive risk mapping also guides planning for safe and accessible spaces addressing caregivers' basic needs. Emergency shelters and services must include safe living spaces, clean and accessible sanitation facilities, maternal and child health services, and psychosocial support. Training shelter staff on gender- and care-sensitive practices is also essential. Specific initiatives for women-headed households are recommended, as they may struggle to access assistance. Measures targeting violence against women and girls are vital, considering their increased vulnerability during crises, especially when responsible for others (John et al 2020, 67).

For crisis response, rapid gender analysis should examine care responsibilities and their distribution, and adapt responses accordingly. This approach complements intersectional gender-sensitive risk mapping by focusing on the roles and needs of

caregivers, integrating considerations of age, ability, and other factors to ensure comprehensive and effective support.

Pathway 4: Bring caregiver voices into crisis management.

Engaging with traditional and cultural practices is crucial to identify existing coping mechanisms and community resilience strategies. Crisis management staff, often only trained for highly technical tasks, may poorly understand caregiving concerns (Chopra et al 2013, 38). As a result, traditional caretaker voices are indispensable, offering vital knowledge and insights into facilitating aid to the most vulnerable in times of crisis (Branicki 2020, 880).

Persistent, negative perceptions of women's decision-making abilities (OECD 2021, 42-290), coupled with limited time away from caregiving responsibilities, hinder women caregivers' influence in developing contingency plans and policies. Supporting initiatives that promote women's leadership in community-based crisis preparedness and response is therefore essential. Ensuring access to social protections such as childcare is imperative to empower caregiver voices and ensure equitable participation in crisis management efforts. A participatory approach to crisis management also includes Indigenous voices and knowledges, enriching understanding of community dynamics and knowledge about the environment (UNDRR 2022, 20).

Pathway 5: Share knowledge effectively.

Recognizing gendered disparities in financial access and technology (OECD 2021, 42-290), efforts must prioritize enhancing access to timely information, particularly for women caregivers, to enable informed decision-making and preparedness planning. Contingency plans and policies should be accessible to all, and disseminated widely through channels such as radio, TV, social media, online and offline written materials, with educational resources available in local languages and accessible formats, including for individuals with disabilities.

Comprehensive training sessions tailored for response workers, community leaders, and women in affected areas are vital. Empowering local women leaders to coordinate care efforts, identify vulnerable individuals, and facilitate access to essential services boosts community resilience. For example, caregivers could receive training in basic medical, water safety, and evacuation skills. Additionally, publishing a compendium of good practices for community organization and an informative disaster-risk guide on digital platforms can help ensure effective knowledge sharing to vulnerable populations, supporting adaptation to climate change.

Pathway 6: Integrate gendered care responsibilities as cross-cutting issues in international cooperation.

Considering gendered care responsibilities as cross-cutting issues in international cooperation on climate-related crises enables better understanding and management of disaster risks. Integrating care-responsibility indicators throughout crisis preparedness and response helps assess their impact on individuals' exposure to climate risks and response capabilities (Onyango and Maguire 2022, 11).

Specific measures are necessary to ensure that communities are adequately prepared to face climate-related crises. Such measures include providing resources and support for women who have disproportionate care responsibilities, and supporting their participation in decision-making processes related to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

International cooperation actors should advocate for the development of national plans that focus on climate-related crises and outline comprehensive strategies for mitigation and adaptation. These plans should address gender disparities and care responsibilities by promoting policies supporting women's access to resources, education, and healthcare, and enhancing their resilience to climate-related shocks.

Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism is essential for ensuring accountability and effectiveness. This mechanism should include gender-sensitive indicators to assess the differential impacts on men, women, and gender minorities, and evaluate intervention effectiveness in addressing gender disparities and care responsibilities.

Scenario of outcomes

As is the case in the humanitarian sector, gender considerations are often sidelined in crisis management due to the perceived trade-off with saving lives. However, gender and care integration enhance the effectiveness of crisis preparedness and response strategies. Integrating the recommended pathways into the G20 DRRWG's Roadmap Action Area 6 would significantly strengthen disaster-risk management along the four key priorities of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (UNDRR 2015) (Figure 3).
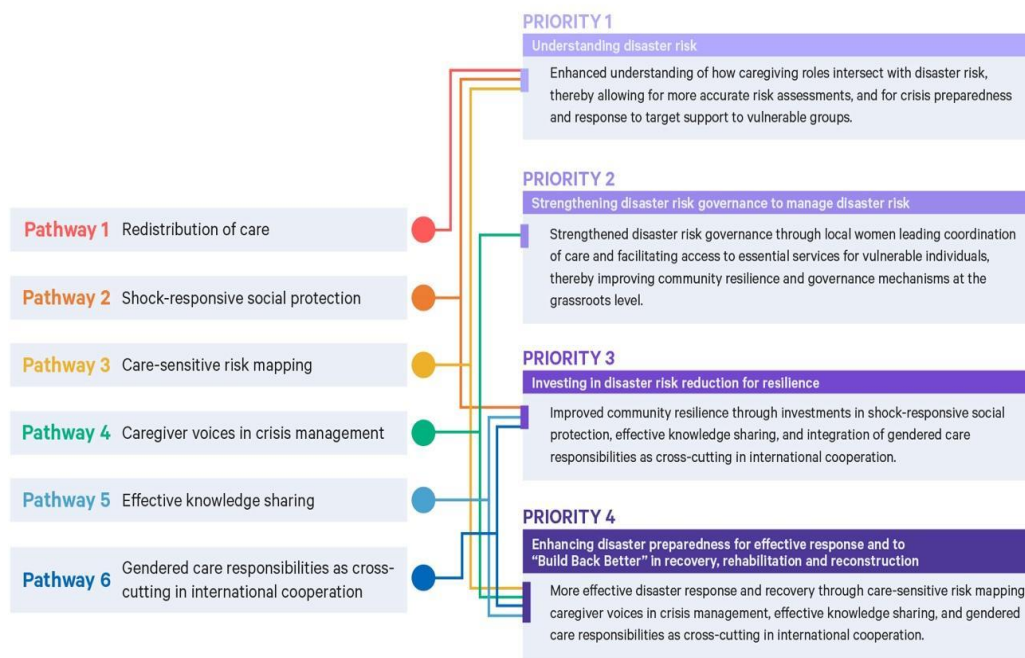
FIGURE 3. Six pathways to integrate gendered caregiving into crisis management to support the four priorities outlined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Source: Authors' own.

Priority 1. Understanding disaster risk.

Redistribution of care responsibilities, shock-responsive social protection, and care-sensitive risk mapping improve understanding of how caregiving roles intersect with disaster risk, thereby allowing for more accurate risk assessments. Crisis preparedness and response interventions can target support to vulnerable groups.

Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk.

The recommended pathways support strengthening disaster-risk governance by promoting gender equality and women's leadership in crisis management. *Pathway 4: Caregiver voices in crisis management* empowers local women leaders to coordinate care efforts, identify vulnerable individuals, and facilitate access to essential services. Such efforts can enhance community resilience and improve governance mechanisms at the grassroots level.

Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience.

Investments in three areas – establishing shock-responsive social protection, providing effective knowledge sharing, and integrating gendered care responsibilities as cross-cutting in international cooperation – can increase community resilience. Such efforts can help ensure timely access to essential resources and information, particularly for caregivers and vulnerable populations.

Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Multiple benefits accrue by undertaking care-sensitive risk mapping, integrating caregiver voices into crisis management, and sharing needed knowledge effectively. Such efforts can strengthen infrastructure resilience, improve preparedness, and enhance community-level response capabilities. Care-sensitive risk mapping informs strategic planning for disaster response by identifying vulnerable individuals and households, facilitating targeted assistance, and enhancing recovery and reconstruction efforts that prioritize the needs of caregivers and marginalized populations. Moreover, recognizing the cross-cutting nature of gendered care responsibilities in international cooperation efforts can help ensure that such efforts are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of affected communities. This, in turn, can promote more effective recovery and reconstruction processes.

Some recommended pathways may seem overly ambitious to G20 policymakers, facing resistance from those with traditional gender norms. This could hinder efforts to redistribute care responsibilities and advance women's leadership in crisis management. Balancing resource allocation between traditional disaster-response measures and innovative care-sensitive interventions is challenging, especially in resource-constrained contexts or competing priority contexts.

Additionally, additional resources and tailored approaches are needed for inclusivity and accessibility of disaster-risk-reduction measures, especially for marginalized groups. Building institutional capacity and fostering inter-agency coordination can also be difficult, particularly in nations (including G20 countries, such as the US) lacking basic social protection. Addressing data and evidence gaps related to gendered disaster impacts

and care responsibilities requires sustained political commitment, capacity building, and multi-stakeholder collaboration for effective implementation and monitoring of care-sensitive crisis management.

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