



Policy Brief

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Recognising the rights, concerns and strengths of people with diverse SOGIESC for inclusive disaster risk reduction policy and action

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

- *Inclusive planning and policy making process at all levels, recognising SOGIESC groups as relevant stakeholders in CCA and DRR.*
- *Decentralised CCA and DRR planning and actions to strengthen capacities of local governments and response organisations.*
- *Monitoring and evaluation of past, on-going CCA and DRR projects and planning for future projects from a SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics) lens.*
- *Support ongoing and promote new academic research for inclusion of SOGIESC groups into mainstream climate change and disaster scholarship.*

INTRODUCTION

People with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) gather people who do not identify within the heteronormative and/or Western woman-man binary. These groups include LGBTIQ+ minorities as well as non-Western gender identities such as Waria in Indonesia and Bakla in the Philippines. The voices of people who claim SOGIESC identities have long been silenced, unheard or, at best, insufficiently heard when it comes to designing policies and actions geared towards adapting to climate change and other natural hazards. Members of diverse SOGIESC groups not only face unique challenges but also display a wide range of unique resources, skills and knowledge when dealing with the impact of climate change and other natural hazards. It is crucial that both these unique challenges and capacities be recognised and considered in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), including Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)¹, policy and action to ultimately stop discrimination and strengthen policies and actions for the broader society.

This policy brief is an output from a series of national and regional online workshops held between November 2020 and May 2021, that brought together representatives of gender and sexual minorities from across Indonesia and the Philippines to discuss their experience of climate change and other natural hazards; and opportunities for advocacy, policy and action. The project was funded by the Swedish Government Agency for Development (SIDA) through

¹ For the authors of this brief, Climate Change Adaptation must be understood as a subset of Disaster Risk Reduction.

the Stockholm Environment Institute (Bangkok) and organised jointly by the University of the Philippines Resilience Institute (Philippines), the Resilience Development Initiative (Indonesia), the University of Auckland (New Zealand), the University College London (United Kingdom), the NGO Edge Effect (Australia) and the international Gender and Disaster Network. Within the context of this platform, four national events in the Philippines (one face-to-face event, one online forum, a Training Needs Analysis workshop, and one online Training of Trainers); two national events in Indonesia (including one online workshop to bring together participants and one national advocacy workshop to be held in June); a two-day virtual regional workshop; one regional follow-up virtual event; and a stakeholder virtual workshop were organised.



Chart 1. Events held through the Platforms for the inclusion of non-normative genders and sexualities (NNGS) in CCA policy and action project between November 2020 and May 2021

PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE SOGIESC RIGHTS

The Yogyakarta Principles (2007) and Yogyakarta Principles + 10 (2017) recognise that people of diverse SOGIESC are entitled to the same human rights as all other persons and that discrimination and violence on the basis of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) violates human rights (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2011). In parallel, all the three major global frameworks/conventions on DRR and CCA - Conference of the Parties (COP) 21 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) refer to the significance of inclusion in policy and action. However, they fall short in recognising SOGIESC groups as relevant stakeholders in DRR, including CCA.

In practice, many states continue to discriminate against people of diverse SOGIESC through criminalisation, through the absence of SOGIESC within anti-discrimination laws, and missing legal and policy frameworks to enable dignified lives. In emergencies, such discrimination, violence and exclusion are exacerbated because CCA, DRR and humanitarian actors fail to take into consideration the concerns and capacities of people from SOGIESC groups before, during and after disasters. Disaster laws and government response organisations rarely address diversity of SOGIESC. Non-government organisations have been slow to adapt assessments, planning, funding and partnership approaches to be safe and relevant for engagement with people with diverse SOGIESC. This compounds fear of doing harm, especially where there is stigma generated by politics, institutions (such as faith-based organisations), and wider society. As a result, DRR and CCA policies and actions often sustain, instead of challenging, the exclusion and marginalisation of SOGIESC populations. Recognising and addressing the concerns and strengths of SOGIESC groups in the face of climate change and other natural hazards is crucial for addressing, protecting, and promoting their human rights and to implement the principles of non-discrimination, equality, participation and inclusion in DRR and CCA policy and action.

PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE SOGIESC CONCERNS

Discrimination, violence and stigma are SOGIESC groups' daily concern before, during, and after disasters. This discrimination, violence and stigma tends to undermine people's potential to live dignified lives, and to survive and recover from disasters and finds its roots in existing

social norms and discriminatory laws, institutions and practices. Processes around DRR, including CCA, are usually designed and implemented around hetero- and cis-normative assumptions. This creates barriers for gender and sexual minority communities to receive aid and support and to access government services. Many SOGIESC people report being denied access to food, bathing spaces, relief materials, shelter, and ex-gratia compensation following a disaster. Others report experiences of sexual harassment and violence. Yet, CCA and DRR policies and actions often fail to recognise and/or address this discrimination, violence and exclusion. This necessarily results in SOGIESC individuals having to find their own solutions and tends to reinforce this existing state of violence and exclusion.

PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE SOGIESC STRENGTHS

SOGIESC communities have a number of strengths, especially a solid extended informal network and a strong capacity to learn and work together, that they already mobilise and will continue to mobilise to support their communities' ability to adapt to climate change and deal with other natural hazards. These strengths materialise in projects providing safe spaces, HIV facilities, and psychosocial support to SOGIESC people, before as well as following disasters. But they also materialise in the ability to share and raise awareness about experiences of discrimination, violence and exclusion in pre-emergency, relief and recovery phases. On the local level, SOGIESC communities are able and often use unique skills like arts and theater to share their experience of climate change and disasters. On the international level, diverse SOGIESC civil society organisations have already proved, especially with the 2018 'Pride in the Humanitarian System Consultation'², their ability and crucial role as both actors and consultants of the DRR and CCA sectors. There is much potential in supporting, reproducing, and drawing from these existing strengths and actions already developed and implemented by SOGIESC communities and civil society organisations at the local, national and international levels.

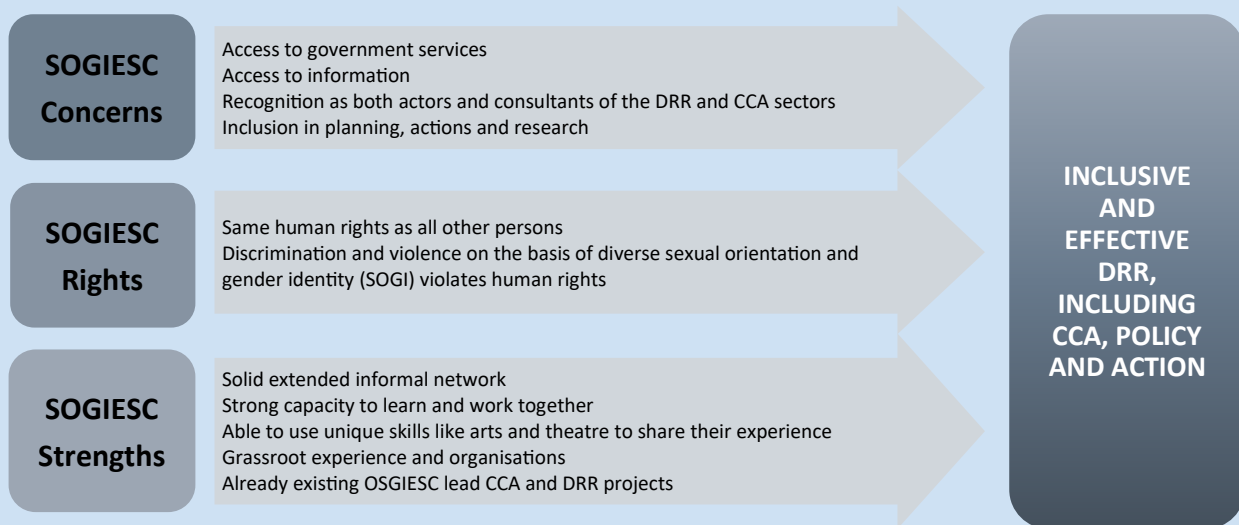


Chart 2. SOGIESC concerns, rights and strengths towards inclusive and effective DRR, including CCA, policy and action

WHAT ABOUT INTERSECTIONALITY?

The way people with diverse SOGIESC suffer disproportionate or differential impacts from climate change and other natural hazards is never solely related to their sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation; but also to their economic status, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, and any other locally-relevant socio-economic factors. Instead of considering SOGIESC disconnected from these other factors, an intersectional approach to DRR and CCA would address the rights, needs and strengths of people in all of their diversity.

² The Consultation Report and CSO-led call-for-action are available at <https://www.edgeeffect.org/project/5003/>

³ Dwyer, E. (2021). *The Only Way is Up: Monitoring and encouraging diverse SOGIESC Inclusion in the Humanitarian and DRR Sectors*. Commissioned by UNWomen. Retrieved from the Edge effect website: <https://www.edgeeffect.org/>

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS³

These recommendations are informed by rainbow community members who took part in the *Platforms for the inclusion of non-normative genders and sexualities in CCA policy and action* project along with the Edge Effect/UNWomen systems review of diverse SOGIESC inclusion across the humanitarian and DRR sectors: *The Only Way Is Up*.

Inclusive planning and policy making process at all levels, recognising SOGIESC groups as essential stakeholders in DRR, including CCA

- Review the lack of diverse SOGIESC inclusion in DRR, including CCA global frameworks and inclusion standards, provide guidance for organisations to be more inclusive within the constraints of the current frameworks and standards, and ensure diversity of SOGIESC is included in future revisions or new frameworks and standards.
- Ensure that people with diverse SOGIESC are addressed in all relevant thematic and cluster areas, not just through gender and social inclusion or safety and protection areas of work.
- Support the engagement of diverse SOGIESC Civil Society organisations in DRR, including CCA, programmes as genuine humanitarian and development actors.
- Support the development of a broad coalition of SOGIESC organisations that can allow for a stronger and more unified voice in advancing the SOGIESC agenda in DRR and CCA.
- Reform laws that criminalise or discriminate against people with diverse SOGIESC, include SOGIESC within anti-discrimination laws, and pass laws to enable people with diverse SOGIESC to live dignified lives.

Decentralised and localised DRR, including CCA, planning and actions to strengthen capacities of local governments and response organisations

- Encourage local governments and response organisations to support and build on existing strengths, capacities and actions to plan effective and inclusive DRR policies and strategies.
- Ensure that risk assessments and DRR plans routinely, specifically and substantively address the rights, concerns and strengths of SOGIESC people.
- Ensure that sexual orientation, sex characteristics, class, race, in/ability, age, ethnicity and any other locally-relevant socio-economic factor are addressed alongside diversity of gender identity and expression in diverse SOGIESC inclusion measures.

Monitoring and evaluation of past, on-going DRR projects and planning for future projects from a SOGIESC lens

- Build diversity of SOGIESC into DRR , including CCA, programmes as a routine expectation and requirement, and monitor progress.
- Develop organisational and staff capacity to address the rights, concerns and strengths of people with diverse SOGIESC in DRR, including CCA, programmes.
- Support programs that reduce stigma, discrimination, violence and exclusion against people with diverse SOGIESC within communities, both in everyday life and during disasters.

Support ongoing and promote new academic research for inclusion of SOGIESC groups into mainstream climate change and disaster scholarship

- Support ongoing research on diverse SOGIESC groups in the context of climate change and disaster scholarship and promote new academic research on SOGIESC inclusion for gender sensitive and inclusive DRR, including CCA, research, policy and practice.