



***ADVANCING COLLABORATIONS ON
GENDER WITHIN INDO-PACIFIC DRR
AND HA/DR STRATEGIES***

BY MARYRUTH BELSEY PRIEBE AND
TEVVI BULLOCK

Maryruth Belsey Priebe (maryruth@pacforum.org)
Director for WPS Programs and Senior Fellow at Pacific Forum, as well as Gender in Health and Climate Security Project Co-Lead. She applies expertise in WPS and gender perspectives to leading engagements and publishing research that offers critical international and climate security insights and policy recommendations.

Tevvi Bullock (tevvib@pacforum.org) is *Gender in Health and Climate Security Project Co-Lead. She researches the intersections between gender, the climate crisis, and disasters. She is a PhD Scholar at Monash University's Global Peace and Security Centre.*

[Recent heat waves](#) have set new temperature records across the Indo-Pacific region, causing health crises, agricultural damage, and infrastructure strain in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and India. In Myanmar, [climate change is exacerbating conflict](#), creating a feedback loop where environmental stress exacerbates violence, further diminishing human security and destabilizing the region. Experts predict that these and many other climate-related environmental and health security challenges will detrimentally impact stability in the Indo-Pacific, with a recent [World Bank report](#) suggesting that by 2050 climate change could force 216 million people to migrate within their own countries due to worsening living conditions. The defense and security sector is not paying adequate attention to the complex ways in which gender influences the state of human, national, and international security in a regional context of the climate crisis.

The US Indo-Pacific Command's Office of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) sponsored Pacific Forum International's "Gender in Health and Climate Security" project, which included two workshops in January and April/May 2024. They highlighted the critical need for integrating gender perspectives in climate and disaster response within the Indo-Pacific. This initiative recognized the disproportionate impacts of climate crises on diverse groups of women and girls, especially those already marginalized by discriminatory, systemic inequalities. The project aimed to elevate the voices and leadership of women from civil society organizations (CSOs) in Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu, and Vietnam. Through a series of virtual and hybrid workshops, the project facilitated inclusive, respectful spaces for mutual learning, collaboration, and co-creation of gender-responsive actions and approaches to disasters between women CSO representatives and defense and security personnel.

The workshops were pivotal for making space for more collaborative consultations on gender within disaster and health crisis responses in the Indo-Pacific. Despite their depth of knowledge and capabilities, women in all their diversity are often excluded from participation, leadership and decision-making on critical climate, health, environment, and disaster issues. The workshops underscored the necessity of involving women, women's civil society organizations, and gender equality allies of all identities in these areas, highlighting their unique expertise and contributions to resilience, adaptation, and disaster response efforts.

Further, the workshops aimed to improve the inclusiveness and human security focus of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) in the region through the incorporation of fundamentally intersectional gender perspectives. Participants, including CSO representatives and defense and security personnel, engaged deeply with the workshop topics, forging new relationships and producing a list of priority action areas for advancing gender-responsive HA/DR drawing on their unique country contexts.

The project's outcomes include two reports and a gendered risk assessment and action plan tool (GRAAPT). The [first report](#), "Proactive Resilience and Opportunities for Gender Equity in Security & Sustainability (PROGRESS)," examines how gender dynamics influence health outcomes during crises. The report covers a range of topics, including the impacts of gender on health security, the role of women in health crisis responses, and the challenges diverse women face in accessing health services during emergencies. It highlights how gender-sensitive approaches can serve to enhance the effectiveness of health security measures and—importantly—improve outcomes for all. Given the inadequate attention paid in defense and security sectors to gender roles and norms, and the complex needs of women in crisis contexts, this report is a valuable resource for defense agencies and personnel as it seeks to advance more inclusive, gender-responsive, and thus effective crisis strategies. The report is also available in a [report in-brief format](#).

The [second report](#), "Gender in Civil-Military Climate Security and Disaster Response," explores the complex interplay between gender, climate, and security in the Indo-Pacific. It highlights the climate-security risks faced by seven partner countries and underscores the importance of integrating a gender perspective into humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) planning. The report explores international laws and frameworks, including the WPS agenda, emphasizes the crucial role of women and women's CSOs in climate security and disaster response, and stresses the importance of feminist perspectives in offering guidance towards less militarized, more peaceful futures. The report also delves into best practices for civil-military cooperation while also drawing attention to the potential limitations of these relationships. The report culminates with a focus on gender-transformative action plans and monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) processes. The report is available in English, with a report in-brief version in [English](#), [Thai](#), and [Vietnamese](#).

Third, the GRAAPT (currently available in English and detailed in Appendix 3 of the "Gender in Civil-

Military Climate Security and Disaster Response" report), was co-created by the workshop participants. It represents and emphasizes the importance of including the expertise and knowledge of diverse women and practitioners in civ-mil disaster planning and response to achieve more effective and equitable disaster and health crisis responses. The GRAAPT is therefore a valuable tool which provides guidelines and indicators for comprehensively integrating gender considerations into health and disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies or HA/DR strategies. Organized in two sections (by line of effort and by indicator) to enable users to engage with the tool in both a holistic and targeted manner, the GRAAPT covers three phases: pre-crisis (DRR prevention/mitigation/preparation), during the event (HA/DR response), and post-crisis (relief and recovery).

Pacific Forum's *Gender in Health and Climate Security* project demonstrates the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing the gender-climate-health-security nexus. By bringing together diverse actors from local women's CSOs, the civil service, and defense and security forces, the workshops fostered multiple levels of fruitful learning and co-creation. Aiming for more effective and equitable responses to crises in the Indo-Pacific, these interactions generated new insights and ideas for women's security and empowerment across the region and for multi-sectoral gender-transformative approaches to disaster response.

All versions of the reports and the GRAAPT are [available here](#) (within the Major Report).

**Disclaimer: The "Gender-Climate-Security Indicators" and "Appendix 3. Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT)" sections of the "Gender in Civil-Military Climate Security and Disaster Response: Co-Creating Gender-Transformative Approaches Amid the Global Climate Crisis Major Report" were originally developed by: Maryruth Belsey Priebe, "Gender All the Way Down: Proposing a Feminist Framework for Analyzing Gendered Climate Security Risks" (master's thesis, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, 2022),*

<https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/37373596>. The GRAAPT was updated with input from the Project Contributors who may freely use the content for their own purposes. Otherwise, all rights to these sections, including but not limited to their use, reproduction, and distribution, are reserved by Maryruth Belsey Priebe.

The views expressed here are those of the author and do not represent the positions or opinions any part of the US government.

PacNet commentaries and responses represent the views of the respective authors. Alternative viewpoints are always welcomed and encouraged.