Mary Farrow – Emerald Community House

THE FUTURE IS NOW FOR THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING.
An Equal Opportunity

1978

- “Bellwomen"

Landmark

AT&T Gender Discrimination Case
The Neighbourhood House Community Development Model

• **Involve** the community and encouraging participation
• **Identify** community needs and aspirations
• **Determine** appropriate actions in response to needs
• **Partner** with others organisations
• **Deliver** quality programs, activities and services
• **Evaluate** the effectiveness
### Table 1: Neighbourhood house participants - gender by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-79</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-99</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABS Employment Data

- Residential Care Services
- Child Care Services
- Other Social Assistance Services
- Total community services
- All industries

Legend:
- Males
- Females
Disaster threats for women
and those in their care

- Compounded negative outcomes from disasters
- Risk of physical, mental and emotional violence
- Financial disadvantage
- Lack of representation
- Displacement
- Loss of empowerment
- Exclusion
- Death
Obstacles for Women

- Traditional roles and responsibilities
- Diversity averse emergency management culture
- Abuse and violence
- Exclusion from decision-making
- Skills development
- Access to resources
Emergency volunteering 2030: Views from the community sector

RMIT University & Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC
August 2019
Kruger, T., McLennan, B.

**Figure 1:** Five organisational contexts for emergency volunteering (based on Dynes 1970, Figure 6-1, P. 138 [see 33]).
Stereotypes, Expectations and Rights

- Stereotypical portrayals of men and women in disasters need to be reduced
- Women are often expected to make sacrifices to look after traumatised partners, children and elderly parents.
- Women’s rights to autonomy, employment and freedom from violence – even after disasters - must be unconditional

© Gender and Disaster Pod, WHGNE, 2018
Debra Parkinson, Alyssa Duncan and Jaspreet Kaur.
Community Development
Conflict of Interest

Government employees who are working in a community development role can also have a conflict of interest when they are employed by the council or state government. They can find it difficult to represent the community’s interests.

Flirting with danger: practice dilemmas for community development in disaster recovery, Community Development, Lynda Shevellar, Peter Westoby & Meredith Connor (2015)
Gender Equity Targets

• Ensure equal access and representation of women in disaster planning, response, recovery and resilience activities
• Enforce existing laws against abuse, harassment, bullying
• Establish gender equity policies
• Provide training opportunities in the trades for women
Gender Equity

- Inclusion in planning, relief, response, recovery stages
- Resilient practices valued
- Increased leadership roles
- Balanced representation
- Reduction of harm
- Improved outcomes for all
Project goal:

To prevent violence against women by building local community, cultures and organisations that are gender equitable and support respectful and equal relationships and non-violent norms between men and women.
In general, emergency management services and Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPC) are very male-dominated, both in numbers and within their culture.

It is largely men who decide how a community mitigates, responds to and recovers from disaster. Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public life and relationships is one of the gendered drivers of violence against women.

Action Plan 2019-20
Legislation

• Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008) Section 24
• The Local Government Act 1989 (3c) (3d)
• Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
• Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984
• Vic Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
Emergency Management Reform
Victoria

• New legislation allows the Minister to issue guidelines in relation to the REMPCs’ and MEMPCs’ business and meetings.

• Ensure that there is direct community representation on the MEMPCs.

• Each MEMPC must consult the community when preparing the emergency management plan for its municipality.
UN Sustainable Development Goals

5. Gender Equality
ECH Initiative: #SDG5

• Ministerial guidelines for MEMPCs and REMPCs to ensure that at least 50% of these committees (and sub committees) be composed of women members, especially from the community sector.

• If the community is at the centre of emergency management goals, then community women need to be at the planning and decision making table.
Inclusion of Women

- Women are a key interface in community wellbeing
- Community development practitioners help to strengthen communities
- Community caring/services sectors mostly staffed by women
- Inclusion and input improves survival outcomes
- Equal representation in decision making ensures equity
Women in Trades
Building the Future
Equalizing the Past
Lessons Learned

When we invest in women, everyone benefits!
Further reading


Mary Farrow
Emerald Community House
Centre of Resilience
356-358 Belgrave-Gembrook Road,
Emerald, 3782 Vic, AU
emhouse@iinet.net.au

5968 3881
Mary Farrow
0403765314