



Impact of Disasters on Women of Color: Lessons Learned

from
Hurricane Katrina

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**"When a natural disaster strikes,
women are more vulnerable to its strains
-because of traditional social, economic and
- cultural roles, which marginalise and
-discriminate against them. "**

-Kiran Soni Gupta 2002



How women cope with natural disasters

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) , 2004

- disaster-reduction policies and measures need to enable societies to be resilient to natural hazards, while ensuring that development efforts decrease the vulnerability to these hazards
- gender relations structure is part of the social and cultural context that shapes a community's ability to anticipate, prepare for, survive, cope with, and recover from, disasters
- several studies show that increased violence against women is often a secondary effect of post disaster stress all over the world
- the pro-active role of women after a disaster can improve their standing in society
- gender equality in disaster reduction policies and measures require promoting women to have an increasing role in leadership, management and decision-making, as well as recognising women's positions in their community and the larger society
- functions associated with disaster reduction need to be viewed not as an expense, but as an investment in a society's future, and consideration of the needs and roles of women is crucial in this context.



Women and Disasters: Social Justice

Hurricane Katrina: Social Demographic Characteristics in the Impacted Area

Congressional Research Service
(2005)

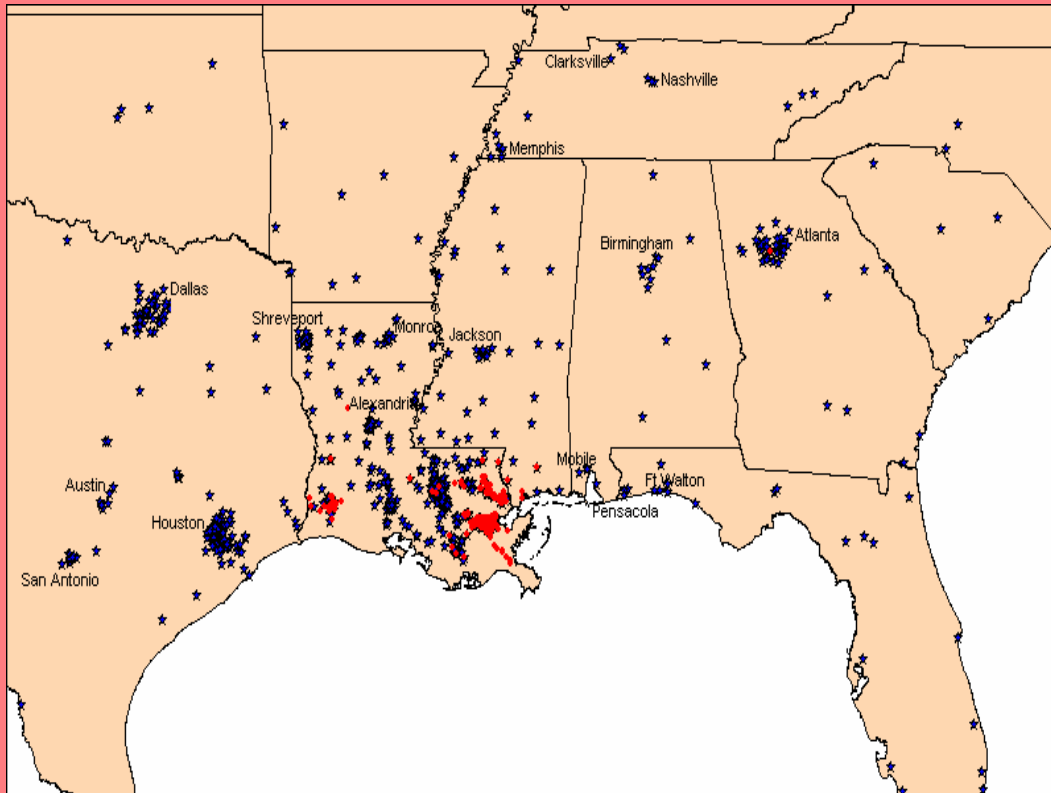
Impact Disparity: Women Caught in the Storm

The Global Fund for Women
(2005)

Women Leaders: The Calm in the Storm

Women Funding Network
Ms. Foundation for Women
(2006)

Displaced Children from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita



- Over 189,000 children in Louisiana displaced following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita
- Approximately 1500 displaced children ages 0-6 with concentrations in 21 parishes

The Mental Health Aftermath of Katrina

- PTSD, Major Depression, and possibly other anxiety problems
- Suicide?
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- How people and communities respond to and recover from man-made and natural disasters may differ
- Predictive factors: presence of violence, predictability and duration, sense of control (Baum, A et al 1983, Berren et al 1980)





Post-Katrina Public Mental Health Considerations

- Ethno-cultural Issues
- Special Populations: Children, Women, Elderly and Infirm
- Systems Issues
- Legal Considerations



Comments

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