

Gender and Protection Checklist | Disaster Response

Why does gender and protection matter in disaster response?

- Natural disasters don't affect everyone in the same way. Social structures, customs and roles mean that people are affected differently, some worse than others. More vulnerable people may include women, girls and boys, people with disability and older people.
- A disaster response can keep community members safe, help maintain their dignity and provide protection (i.e. prevent and respond to exploitation, abuse, violence and injury).
- People have different needs and capacities, and face different risks during and after a disaster. All people have a right to assistance in and following a disaster so it is important to make sure that everyone, including vulnerable people, have their needs assessed and addressed by disaster responses.
- Involving women, children/youth and people with disability in disaster response helps the whole community recover faster and build resilience.

Early Warning and Evacuation

- Step 1 |** Make sure women, girls and boys, and people with disabilities are aware of and engaged in early warning and evacuation processes.
- Disseminate early warnings through a range of mediums, (e.g. phone, radio, television, loudspeaker, newsletters and community networks), so that information reaches everyone (e.g. literate, illiterate, deaf, blind or children). E.g. women could be put in increased danger if they have to rely on information provided by their husbands or rely on husbands to make a decision before evacuating.
 - Use existing communication networks and make sure Community Disaster Committees (CDCs) have a communication plan (that includes getting information to vulnerable groups) that can be activated in an emergency.
- Step 2 |** Train women, girls and boys, and people with disability in evacuation procedures and ensure their participation in simulations.
- The lower status of women, children and people with disability means they are usually left out of decision making in an evacuation. Vulnerable people need information and the power to make decisions to save their own lives and the lives of others.
 - Train women, girls and boys, and people with disability in evaluation procedures and involve them in evacuation simulations.

Assessments

- Step 1 |** Make sure vulnerable people (e.g. women and people with disability) are included in assessment teams.
- Include equal numbers of women and men on assessment teams to make sure that women's and men's needs are recorded and form part of the assessment findings. Women in communities will feel more comfortable participating in assessment processes and providing information if they can engage directly with other women.
 - Include people with disability on assessment teams to make sure people needing additional assistance are recorded and included in assessment findings.
- Step 2 |** Conduct separate consultations to target vulnerable groups.
- In some communities, women will not feel comfortable sharing information with men in an assessment, particularly sensitive information. Establish female assessment teams to conduct consultations with women separately from men, to promote equal participation.
 - Conduct separate consultations with girls and boys to identify their specific needs, risks and capacities.
- Step 2 |** Ensure the safety of female assessment team members, particularly in remote locations.
- It is important that female assessment team members are safe, especially when travelling in small groups. If female teams need to be accompanied by men for safety reasons, this should be a priority and should not be used as a reason not to complete the assessment.

Coordination

- Step 1 |** Involve vulnerable people in decision-making regarding the response.
- When a disaster occurs, women are likely to have increased responsibilities in the home and/or in the community and may not be able to commit as much time as men to coordinate activities. Make special effort to include women in decision-making, such as arranging different meeting times, providing child care or using other methods to engage women.
- Step 2 |** Involve vulnerable people in decisions regarding distributions of supplies.
- Consult women, girls and boys, and people with disability in decisions related to the time, place and method of distribution in the community to ensure equal access.
 - Make sure vulnerable people are aware of distribution plans (especially female and child heads of households, unaccompanied children and people with disability).
 - Monitor numbers of beneficiaries by sex, age and disability, and respond to inequalities in distributions.
 - Make sure that relief items meet the different needs of women, girls, men and boys.

Information

- Step 1 |** Disseminate information on response activities through women's groups and other networks, as well as through community leaders.
- Make all members of the community aware of response activities to ensure accountability. If information is only given through the chiefs or community leadership, there is a possibility that vulnerable people will not be aware of distributions or activities.
 - In the CDC communication plan, outline how information will be distributed to the community and include methods to reach women and girls in particular.
 - Consult with gender based violence specialists on ways to respond safely and confidentially to cases of exploitation and abuse, including where to refer survivors to services and support.
 - Set up accessible, confidential and well-understood mechanisms for suggestions and complaints.