

Gender and Protection Checklist | Food Security and Livelihoods

Why does gender and protection matter in food security and livelihoods programs?

- In disasters, food is necessary for survival. Food security and livelihoods programs can provide safety, dignity and protection (i.e. prevent and respond to exploitation, abuse, violence and injury to others).
- Responses need to be careful not to increase protection risks. E.g. livelihood programs can reduce the time parents have to care for children, resulting in girls leaving school to look after younger siblings.
- All people have a right to food security and to livelihoods, so it is important to make sure that everyone, including vulnerable people, is able to feed and support themselves.
- Vulnerable people may include women, girls and boys, people with disability and older people. E.g. while women contribute significantly to agriculture, they often have limited ownership of land or agricultural tools; when food is limited, women and girls sometimes skip meals or are forced into exchanging sex for food for their families.
- Understanding the needs of vulnerable people and targeting them in food security and livelihoods programs helps the whole community recover faster from disasters and build resilience.

Assessment

- Consult directly with vulnerable people to make sure their concerns and needs are heard e.g. encourage women, girls and boys, and people with disability to speak for themselves.
- Assess the needs for food and livelihoods of vulnerable community members by sex, age and disability, and prioritise these (e.g. include women and child heads of households, and children with disability).
- Assess access to food and participation in livelihoods activities for different community members, e.g.
 - do women, men, girls and boys have different roles in cultivating, gathering, storing and preparing food? Are their workloads different for food production and preparation?
 - how is food shared within households? When food is limited, who eats first and most often - women, girls, boys or men? Are there food restrictions for some family members; e.g. menstruating women and girls, people with disability?
 - are there daily and seasonal differences in activities for women, men, girls and boys, e.g. in fishing, forestry and natural resource harvesting?
 - who has access to, control and ownership over livelihoods assets (e.g. land, tools, seed, fertilizer), women, men, girls or boys? Can both women and men access training, tools and new technology?
 - are there customs limiting access to income generating livelihoods, e.g. traditions restricting women's movements outside the home?
- Identify any protection risks associated with food security and livelihoods, e.g. pressure on women, girls and boys to exchange sex for food; male backlash against women's income generation.

Access

- Prioritise the most vulnerable people for food distributions and livelihoods programs, e.g. female and child heads of households, unaccompanied children, people with disability and older people.
- Be flexible in registering heads of household for food aid and livelihoods activities, e.g. don't require unaccompanied minors or child heads of households to 'attach' themselves to an adult to be registered.
- Make sure distribution points are accessible to vulnerable people, e.g. accessible locations and times; separated or priority queues; allow vulnerable people to send a proxy to collect food or livelihoods materials, or to have items delivered to their home.
- Consult vulnerable people to identify their specific needs for livelihoods programs: e.g.
 - prioritise women and select activities that aim to reduce their workload

- avoid gender stereotyping by allowing men and women to choose work they prefer to do or skills to learn, rather than involving women and girls in low income, home based activities, and men and boys in skilled activities or ones with greater economic potential.
- provide targeted activities for people with disability or young women and men.
- Provide support to vulnerable people (e.g. caregivers, children) who are unable to access the 'for work' program; e.g. cash grants and other emergency measures.
- Aim for gender balanced staff teams for distributions and livelihoods activities, and identify female staff as a contact point for women and girls in the community.
- Communicate information on distributions and livelihoods activities through different methods (e.g. extension workers, radio, sms messaging, posters, newsletters, television or loudspeaker), so that information reaches everyone (e.g. literate, illiterate or children).
- Consider how cultural practices may limit access to food and livelihood materials distribution and discuss with community leaders ways to prevent discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

Safety and dignity

- Consult with vulnerable groups about ways to increase safety for food security or livelihoods activities, e.g. safe locations and routes to distribution sites; timing of distributions during daylight hours; priority queues for vulnerable people; safety patrols; accessibility features at distribution sites.
- Monitor and respond to safety concerns with distributions and livelihood activities, including risks or incidents of exploitation, abuse, violence, or injury.
- 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.

Participation, empowerment and accountability

- Provide staff with guidance and training about the situation for and capacities of vulnerable people.
- Inform beneficiaries about their right to food security and livelihoods, and where and how to access support, e.g. targeted information sessions.
- Engage vulnerable people in decision-making about food security and livelihoods programs, e.g. in decisions on agricultural activities and livelihoods training.
- Actively promote women, youth and people with disability in village savings and loans committees, agricultural committees and farmers' groups.
- Provide training and policies to staff on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Provide clear information to communities explaining that beneficiaries, particularly women and girls, do not have to pay or provide services or favours in exchange for food security or livelihoods assistance.
- Set up accessible, confidential and well-understood mechanisms for suggestions and complaints.

Monitoring

- Collect and monitor data on beneficiaries by sex, age and disability.
- Monitor to find out who is *not* able to access food or livelihoods materials or activities, and address any barriers they face.
- Monitor to make sure that beneficiaries receiving food and materials are the people using them.
- Monitor for unintended outcomes of food distributions and livelihoods activities, e.g. increased community tensions about who is accessing food; male backlash against women's income generation.

This checklist was adapted from:

- *IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, 2015*
- *Food Security and Livelihoods Programs – Tips for Protection Mainstreaming, Global Protection Cluster, May 2014*
- *Food Security 1 (Food Assistance) Gender Marker Tip Sheet, Inter-Agency Standing Committee, September 2012*
- *Food Security 2 (Agriculture and Livelihoods) Gender Marker Tip Sheet, Inter-Agency Standing Committee, September 2012*
- *Mainstreaming Child Protection into Economic Recovery programmes - Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) 2012*