

Humanitarian Responses: Women, Girls and Gender Equity

GENDER EQUALITY KNOWLEDGE NOTE



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Knowledge Note: Purpose and Application

Purpose

This Knowledge Note aims to increase the impact and effectiveness of all humanitarian work, including emergency responses, by integrating gender equality and women's empowerment across responses, activities and policies.

Rationale

Natural and humanitarian crises are discriminatory; some sectors of society are more adversely affected than others. Responses that do not take these existing inequalities into account will not only be ineffective in saving lives but will further entrench those inequalities.

Women and girls are not helpless, vulnerable victims. Like men and boys they have much to contribute in preparing for, and responding to, crises. Women must be included in decision-making about the assistance and protection they need. They often play a lead role in caring for those who are vulnerable: the elderly, disabled, children, pregnant women, those in poor health. Their needs, rights and voices must be acted on. Humanitarian action also presents opportunities for new and progressive gender roles and relationships to emerge.

In general, natural disasters kill more women than men and kill women at a younger age than men. More than 75 per cent of those in need of emergency assistance are likely to be women and children. Women and girls are disproportionately exposed to risk and increased loss of livelihoods, security and decision-making during and in the aftermath of disasters. The likelihood of rape and sexual exploitation greatly increases along with unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and complications regarding maternity and reproductive health.

Globally, research shows that gender discrimination is often overlooked by governments and humanitarian actors, with dire implications for adolescent girls. Girls are given less food when it is scarce, are overlooked in rescue efforts and girls are more likely to be pulled out of school and less likely to return. It also found that disasters and emergencies increase the likelihood of girls being forced into child marriage, domestic work or sexual abuse.

Application

Gender analysis is critical to understanding the context of any humanitarian activity, including emergency responses. It is informed by an analysis of the political, economic and cultural gender relations and divisions of labour at a family, community and national level and their implications for a humanitarian response. The analysis includes an assessment of needs, rights, vulnerabilities, coping strategies, equity, access to services, participation and capacities of women and men, girls and boys.

The *Knowledge Note* aims to stimulate thinking, discussion and analysis; it should not be seen as a definitive guide or a compliance checklist. It can be used to inform or appraise:

- Strategy and policy formulation and implementation
- Criteria for contestable funds
- Gender analysis in humanitarian responses and disaster relief
- Discussions with partner governments, agencies and stakeholders
- Terms of Reference for scoping, design, evaluations etc.
- Contracting and briefing contractors
- Concept Notes, Activity Design and Appraisals, field visits
- Results frameworks, evaluations, reviews, progress reports

Disaster Relief, Humanitarian Responses and Gender Equality

Activity and Policy Context

"A gender analysis should be integrated into the humanitarian needs assessment and in all sector assessments or situational analysis."

(Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Handbook)

Taking into account the distinct experiences, needs, rights and capacities of women, girls, boys and men makes humanitarian responses more effective, sustainable and equitable and does save lives. Effective assistance and protection requires equitable participation and robust gender analysis and responses should reflect the different experiences such as access to and control over food, health, shelter, clean water and sanitation and productive resources. Failing to address gender differences can increase disparities, further marginalise vulnerable groups and compromise impact. In the worse cases, it can also lead to further harm.

(Adapted from OCHA and the IASC GenCap)

Gender Analysis in a Humanitarian/Disaster Response

A gender analysis is essential for an effective humanitarian response, activity or policy. It also ensures New Zealand complies with, and goes beyond, International Standards and good practice. A gender analysis would primarily address 4 key questions:

1. Are the different needs, rights and voices of women and girls, boys and men identified and addressed?
2. Are women able to meaningfully participate in decision-making throughout the humanitarian response including needs assessment, delivery, monitoring and advocacy?
3. Are women and children safe from sexual and gender based violence?
4. What are the opportunities to empower women during the crisis response and for them to voice their needs and rights?

The following section provides a series of questions that will guide planning and decision making when considering gender equality in a humanitarian context.

Context Analysis, Basic Needs and Women's Participation

- Does the analysis refer to and target differentiated needs and rights of women and men, girls and boys? Does this include single women, women headed households, widows? What are the priority needs for women and girls and are they addressed? What are the barriers to doing this?
- Women are often responsible for the care and welfare of vulnerable members in the community e.g. disabled, children, elderly. How has this been integrated into the analysis and implementation?
- What barriers the barriers to women's effective participation and decision-making throughout the crisis, from design to needs assessment to delivery to monitoring? How are they addressed? ,
- In the short term, are there opportunities and resources to empower women and girls, for example participation in needs assessments, distribution, monitoring, safe spaces, women's fora?
- Does the Response ensure equitable access to basic services, supplies, and resources based on a gender needs assessment?

Partner Organisational Capacity

- Does the NDMO, in-country cluster or partner organisation have the capability to address gender issues i.e. staff training, gender balance, leadership, resourcing, policing?
- Are data and indicators sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive?
- Are information management systems and communication strategies gender sensitive?
- Do deployments and field teams have the capability to address the needs of women and girls? Is there some gender balance?

Productive Roles, Livelihoods and Division of Labour

- Have the different economic roles, responsibilities, employment and resources for women and men been considered?

- What is the gender division-of-labour in natural resource management and food security including control, access and benefits?
- What are the gender differences in communal responsibilities, and property and asset ownership and how are these reflected in the Response?

Health, Reproductive Health and Women's Safety

- Violence against Women, and especially domestic violence, increases in emergency and disaster situations. Does the response address current and on-going threats to women's safety and security?
- Are the needs of ante- and post-natal women and their unborn/new born children been identified and addressed?
- Are organisations and agencies that deal with protection, violence against women, women's rights and reproductive health engaged in preparedness and response?
- Have the reproductive roles and needs of women (and men) been considered, e.g. sanitary needs, family planning, shelter, reproductive health, water and sanitation?

Recovery and Resilience

- When building resilience capability what opportunities, decision-making and resources are there to empower women and girls? Has women's experiences, knowledge and agency been identified?
- What strategies are in place to ensure the Response does not reinforce gender inequalities and negative stereotypes or entrench economic disparity?
- How have organisations and agencies that work with women, especially on violence against women, women's rights, reproductive and maternity health been engaged?

The following table lays out issues to be considered in relation to basic needs and reproductive health, economic and natural resources, security and protection, and women's participation in decision-making during the four humanitarian response components: disaster risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery.

Humanitarian Responses, Disaster Relief and Gender Equality

| | Participation and Basic Needs including Reproductive Health | Economic resources, assets and roles including natural resource management | Security and Protection: Violence Against Women, human rights |
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| Response - saving lives, basic needs, alleviating suffering - protection - information | <p>Girls and women have equal and direct access to food aid</p> <p>Nutritional needs assessed on gender basis</p> <p>Food relief, nutritional needs, fuel and water reflect gender differences/ needs. Consider supplies directly to women.</p> <p>Recognise that women headed households often unable to access services or basic needs without childcare and/or transport</p> <p>Lactating mothers receive supplementary food and clean water.</p> | <p>Consider cash transfer responses and where possible prioritise women</p> <p>Provision of economic resources and services recognises women's economic role especially in food production, agriculture and food security</p> <p>Asset and resource replacement recognises gender differences i.e. men's ownership of assets.</p> | <p>Agencies working on protection and security, especially Violence against Women, are involved in all responses.</p> <p>Women able to safely access services, food outlets, markets, water sources, evacuation centres, farm and gardens and distribution centres during daylight (or when there is adequate lighting)</p> |
| Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) - resource management, land use planning - climate change adaptation | <p>Women's needs, priorities, vulnerabilities and capabilities recognised and integrated into all DRR activities</p> <p>Women only forums, reference groups and women led NGOs included in all phases of a response</p> | <p>Gender roles in natural resource management, food production and agriculture climate change impact and adaptation analysed.</p> <p>Women participate in land use planning, water and other resource management and allocation.</p> | <p>Partners implementing legislation and international agreements on gender equality and human rights</p> <p>Rights of women during emergencies, including re VAW, reflected in all DRR</p> <p>Increased women's participation in decision-making increases transparency and decreases corruption</p> |

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| <p>Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - response planning - information and awareness - monitoring hazards and threats - supplies - capacity development | <p>Gender balance and participation in NDMOs and on DRR committees. Staff trained in gender equality in relation to disaster relief. Teams have gender balance, e.g. assessors, translators, distributors, monitoring</p> <p>Information, education, communication includes gender issues and targets women, i.e. considers literacy, language, assumptions that men will disseminate information</p> <p>Prepositioned supplies include family planning supplies, sanitary pads, water, clothing, home delivery kits. Food relief/water in containers < 25kgs</p> <p>Role of women as care providers to vulnerable people recognised, e.g. disabled, elderly, people with HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Sex disaggregated data and research.</p> | <p>Women's role and opportunities for empowerment in building resilience identified.</p> <p>Women only activities, capacity building and opportunities to participate considered.</p> | <p>Violence Against Women often increases within 24 hours of an emergency. A national level response plan, network and coordination role must be established.</p> <p>Women's safety and access in transport, relief centres, markets, toilets, police stations, schools etc.</p> <p>Women headed households are more vulnerable and often restricted from accessing services and supplies</p> |
| <p>Recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reconstruction | <p>All user committees (e.g. shelter, water, health) have 50% women</p> <p>Needs assessment done with women, girls, boys and men together and separately</p> | <p>Rigorous gender analysis of livelihoods, employment, food security, agriculture, basic services.</p> <p>Market reconstruction a priority; include replacement of women's personal and economic/productive assets.</p> <p>Cash transfer responses identify and where possible prioritise women, e.g. markets.</p> | <p>Ensure women's participation in recovery committees, reconstruction planning, rehabilitation from violence.</p> <p>Recovery and reconstruction an opportunity to address gender inequalities and empower women</p> |