



Have you read section A ?

GENDER AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN EMERGENCIES

In an emergency, the focus is on primary needs and on meeting them through the delivery of aid as quickly and equally as possible. Complex emergencies have **different impacts on women and men** and often change households' dynamics. We need to be sensitive to women's and men's different needs and interests in food distribution. In other words, gender perspectives must be mainstreamed from the outset in design, data collection, needs assessment and vulnerability analysis, targeting, programme planning and management and, ultimately, monitoring and evaluation. To this end, we must:

- understand the cultural and social context of women's and men's roles as they relate to all aspects of food aid interventions;

- understand how gender relations affect access to and control over food;
- understand the variability of food consumption, health and nutrition between women, girls, boys and men and how these factors affect their use of food;
- analyse how the benefits of food aid interventions can be effectively targeted to both women and men and used to promote gender equality; and
- anticipate any negative impacts food aid may have on women or men (e.g. protection concerns for women), understand the power dynamics in the community and ensure that women's leadership structures are understood.

THE RIGHT OF EVERYONE TO AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING, INCLUDING FOOD

- Article 25 of the UDHR and article 11 of the ICESCR guarantee the right to food. The principle of non-discrimination, protected by these two instruments, also applies to the right to food.
- The right to food is realized when every woman, girl, boy and man, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to quality, adequate and culturally acceptable food, or means for its procurement. Such access must be guaranteed by the State. The right to adequate food shall not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with a minimum package of calories, proteins and other specific nutrients.

LACK OF TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION INCREASES RISK TO PEOPLE OF CONCERN

We must inform communities (host, refugees, IDPs, others) about who qualifies for food aid, the selection criteria, targeting and distribution arrangements (timing, composition and size of food rations), entitlements and so on, so that the intervention does not heighten risk and insecurity for anyone. Consultations with various sectors of the population can help identify potential sources of risk and entry points to resolve tensions early on. During a focus group discussion in Colombia, for example, women reported tensions between people receiving food aid and other members of the community not receiving food who were questioning their exclusion from food aid activities.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT A GENDER-RESPONSIVE FOOD DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN EMERGENCIES?

What are the population demographics?

- Total number of households/family members — disaggregated by sex and age.
- Number of single female- and male-headed households and number of households headed by children (girls and boys).
- Number of unaccompanied children, elderly, disabled, pregnant and lactating women.

What is the social, political, cultural and security context? What has changed as a result of the emergency?

- What are the existing power structures (formal and informal) within the community?
- Are there differences between women's and men's positions/roles and responsibilities in relation to their ethnicity, religious beliefs?
- Are members of the community equally affected by the emergency? Have women, girls, boys and men been affected differently?
- How many people were previously highly vulnerable? What has changed?
- What are the customs, culture and traditions that limit access to and control over food to any members of the household/community/population at large?
- If there are weapons in circulation, who controls them and who is most at risk? How does this affect access to food?
- What are the religion-based food restrictions/preferences for women and men in the community?
- What are the cultural food restrictions/preferences for women and men in the community?

What are the food security and nutrition needs?

- Is food available, accessible and usable by all members of the household/community/population?
- How do gender disparities affect food insecurity?
- How is the food shared within households? (Intra-household food distribution and consumption: who eats first?)

- What is the nutritional status of the affected population (disaggregated by sex/age)?
- Are there any food taboos or restrictions for women, men, children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women? What are the eating habits of the population as a whole?
- Who receives food aid on behalf of the household? Who decides about its use?

ACTIONS TO ENSURE GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMMING IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Ensure equality in targeting and registration

- Collect sex-disaggregated data for planning, implementation and evaluation of food aid.
- Involve women and men equally in programme design and targeting.
- Analyse and understand the impact of food aid intervention on women, girls, boys and men.
- Consult with women and men separately to anticipate and address any negative impact food aid interventions may have on women, girls, boys or men.
- Ensure that each household ration card for free food distributions is issued in a woman's name.
- Register households receiving food aid to facilitate equal distribution.
- Ensure that female- and adolescent-headed households and other vulnerable groups are included in food distribution lists.
- If polygamy is widely practised, ensure that women are recipients of food aid for themselves and their children.

Ensure equal participation of women, girls, boys and men in decision-making and capacity building

- Assess the different roles of women and men in food management and consumption, both at the community and household levels.
- Ensure equal participation of women and men in food management and asset-creation committees, including at executive-level positions.
- Provide training opportunities to women and men on leadership and negotiation skills.

- Determine factors that might hinder women's or men's regular participation in committees, trainings or other activities and address them (e.g. provide child care facilities; schedule the meetings so that they do not coincide with traditional meal/prayer times).

Distribute food aid equitably

- Ensure that distribution points are as close and accessible to beneficiaries as possible (distance should be no more than 10 km, Sphere Standards).
- Ensure that the distribution arrangements (time, place, schedule, size and weight, etc.) do not discriminate against vulnerable or marginalized groups.
- Arrange food distribution so it does not add burdens on women.
- Adopt positive measures to redress the discrimination in allocation of food resources (e.g. ensure that children under 5, the sick or malnourished, pregnant and lactating women and other vulnerable groups are given priority for feeding).
- Incorporate strategies to prevent, monitor and respond to violence, including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, at all stages of the project cycle, for example early distribution to allow beneficiaries to reach home during daylight.
- Ensure that all people of concern are equally and fully informed about the food aid interventions, for example the size and composition of the ration, beneficiary selection criteria, place and time of distribution, no service required in exchange for receiving the ration and proper channels for reporting abuse cases.

- In consultation with women, anticipate and address any negative impacts that the distribution of food to women and the issuance of food entitlements in women's names may have on the community and intra-household relationships.
- Consider, to the extent possible, direct/easily accessible distribution to the most vulnerable groups and/or the provision of means of transportation to communities or groups of beneficiaries (e.g. community-owned wheelbarrows).
- Identify, together with communities and partners, safe and easily accessible areas for distribution.

Ensure monitoring and evaluation take gender issues into consideration

- Ensure equal participation of women and men in monitoring, evaluation and review of progress and results.
- Together with people of concern, develop monitoring and evaluation tools that specifically look at the impact of food distribution on women's and men's vulnerability, including in the design of questionnaires that examine how the food needs of women and men have been addressed.
- Assess the impact of the food aid programme on women and men (needs, access and control over resources, physical and human capital, income and livelihood options, etc.).
- Consult women, girls, boys and men in the identification of remaining gaps and areas of improvement.

CHECKLIST TO ASSESS GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMMING IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION

The checklist below is derived from the action section in this chapter and provides a useful tool to remind sector actors of key issues to ensure gender equality programming. In addition, the checklist, together with the sample indicators in the Basics Chapter, serves as a basis for project staff to develop context-specific indicators to measure progress in the incorporation of gender issues into humanitarian action.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION – GENDER CHECKLIST	
Analysis of gender differences	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory assessments with women, girls, boys and men gather information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> roles of women, girls, boys and men in food procurement; cultural and religious food restrictions/preferences for women and men; differences in women’s and men’s control over and access to food resources; cultural, practical and security-related obstacles women, girls, boys and men could be expected to face in accessing services. Reasons for inequalities between women, girls, boys and men are analysed and addressed through programming. The gender analysis is reflected in planning documents and situation reports. 	
Design of services	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Services are designed to reduce women’s and children’s time spent getting to, at and returning from food distribution points (e.g. distribution organized at different time intervals to avoid crowds and long waiting time; to ensure timely distribution and to avoid long waits for food delivery by partners). Services are designed to reduce the burden that the receipt of food aid may pose on women beneficiaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> food distribution points established as close to beneficiaries as possible; weight of food packages manageable and efficient for women (e.g. 25 kg vs. 50 kg bags, etc.). 	
Access	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Women’s, girls’, boys’ and men’s access to services is routinely monitored through spot checks, discussions with communities, etc. Obstacles to equal access are promptly addressed. 	
Participation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Women and men take part equally (in numbers and consistency) in decision-making, planning, implementation and management of food aid programmes. Committees with equal representation of women and men are formed for targeting, monitoring and distributing of food items and for determining the needs of vulnerable/marginalized groups. 	
Training/Capacity building	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> An equal number of women and men are employed in food distribution programmes and have equal access to trainings. 	
Actions to address GBV	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Both women and men are included in the process of selecting a safe distribution point. Food distribution is done by a sex-balanced team. “Safe spaces” are created at the distribution points and “safe passage” schedules created for women and children heads of households. Distribution is conducted early in the day to allow beneficiaries to reach home during daylight. Security and instances of abuse are monitored. 	

Targeted actions based on gender analysis
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women are designated as the initial point of contact for emergency food distribution. 2. Women are the food entitlement holders. 3. Positive measures are adopted to redress the discrimination in allocation of food resources (e.g. ensure that children under 5, the sick or malnourished, pregnant and lactating women and other vulnerable groups are given priority for feeding).
Monitoring and evaluation based on sex- and age-disaggregated data
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sex- and age-disaggregated data on food distribution coverage is collected, analysed and routinely reported on. 2. Monitoring and evaluation tools are developed in consultation with women and men in the target population to specifically look at the impact of food distribution on women's and men's vulnerability, including in the design of questionnaires that examine how the food needs of women and men have been addressed. 3. The impact of the food aid programme on women and men (needs, access and control over resources, physical and human capital, income and livelihood options, etc.) is assessed. 4. Women, girls, boys and men are consulted in the identification of remaining gaps and areas of improvement. 5. Plans are developed and implemented to address any inequalities and ensure access and safety for all of the target population.
Coordinate actions with all partners
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actors in your sector liaise with actors in other sectors to coordinate on gender issues, including participating in regular meetings of the gender network. 2. The sector/cluster has a gender action plan, has developed and routinely measures project-specific indicators based on the checklist provided in the IASC Gender Handbook.

RESOURCES

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9. WFP. *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping in Line with the WFP Gender Policy 2003-2007*. Rome, 2004.
10. WFP. *Gender Policy 2003-2007: Enhanced Commitments to Women to Ensure Food Security*. Rome, 2002.
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