

Gender in Emergencies

Why is this issue important?

The term gender refers to the social differences between females and males throughout the life cycle that are learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. "Gender" determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture. Historically, attention to gender relations has been driven by the need to address women's needs and circumstances as women are typically more disadvantaged than men. Increasingly, however, the humanitarian community is recognizing the need to know more about what men and boys face in crisis situations.

In emergencies, women and men, boys and girls are affected differently. Available data suggest that there is a pattern of gender differentiation at all levels of the emergency process: exposure to risk, risk perception, preparedness, response, physical impact, psychological impact, recovery and reconstruction.

Due to social gender norms and their interaction with biological factors, women and children- particularly girls- may face increased risk for adverse effects and violence. They may be unable to access assistance safely and/or to make their needs known. Additionally, women are often insufficiently included in community consultation and decision-making processes, resulting in the needs of women not being met.

Understanding gender differences, inequalities and capacities and responding to them improves the effectiveness of our humanitarian response. The overall goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.

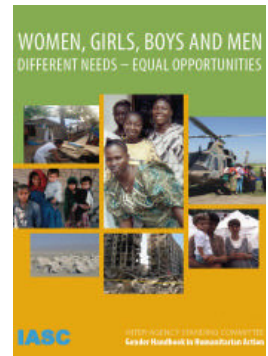
Tools and resources

Gender Capacity Standby Project: GenCap

GenCap is a pool of senior gender advisers to be deployed on short notice to support the HC/RC, the humanitarian country teams and gender networks in humanitarian emergencies. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) administers **GenCap**. **The primary role of the gender advisers is to build capacity to ensure that the needs and capabilities of women, girls, boys and men are taken into consideration in the planning and implementation in all sectors/clusters of emergency response.**

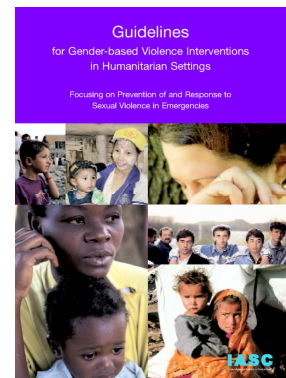
Women, Girls, Boys & Men, Different Needs – Equal Opportunities, a Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action

The IASC Gender Handbook is a sector-by-sector guide on how to ensure gender equality programming in humanitarian situations. It provides practical tips on how to mainstream gender and checklists to measure the progress in meeting the needs and ensuring the equal participation of women, girls, boys and men in all aspects of humanitarian response.



IASC Guidelines on Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings

The Guidelines specifically detail minimum interventions -by functional/sectoral areas -for prevention and response to sexual violence to be undertaken in the early stages of an emergency. The primary purpose of these guidelines is to enable communities, governments and humanitarian organizations, including UN agencies, NGOs, and CBOs, to establish and coordinate a set of minimum multi-sectoral interventions to prevent and respond to sexual violence during the early phase of an emergency.



UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict



UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action) unites the work of 12 UN entities with the goal of ending sexual violence in conflict. It is a concerted effort by the UN to improve coordination and accountability, amplify programming and advocacy, and support national efforts to prevent sexual violence and respond compassionately to the needs of survivors.

IASC Website on Gender

For more information please contact the **IASC Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action**

<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/gender>