



Gender equality is achieved when women and men, girls and boys, have equal rights, life prospects and opportunities, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society.

The Gender Tool Box gathers knowledge material and method support on gender equality in the form of Tools, Briefs and Thematic Overviews.

## [ TOOL ]

# Gender Equality in Humanitarian Assistance

There is an increasing recognition amongst humanitarian actors of the urgency to ensure that the different needs of women, girls, men and boys are taken into account and included in all humanitarian assistance. Failure to do so hampers an effective humanitarian response and may put beneficiaries' lives at risk.

### NATURAL DISASTERS AND CONFLICT AFFECT WOMEN AND MEN DIFFERENTLY

Natural disasters and conflict impact women, girls, men and boys differently. Experiences from natural disasters have shown that mortality rates are often higher for women than for men. This can be linked to differences in the vulnerability of women and men as a result of socially constructed gender roles.

During the 2004 Asian tsunami for instance, there were three to four female deaths for each male death. More women than men died both due to the fact that women were on the beach or close to the beach and in charge of children and elderly while men were further away working on the fields or in the cities. Another explanation is that women were not expected to, and had therefore never learned how to, swim or climb trees.<sup>1</sup>

As social relations are destabilised by conflicts, a gender equality perspective is crucial to understand power disparities and shifting gender roles. While women and girls are often exposed to a greater degree of gender-based violence (GBV)<sup>2</sup> in the context of crisis and conflict, men and boys are more frequently exposed to forced recruitment into armed forces and armed groups, and make up the majority of casualties caused by small arms and light weapons<sup>3</sup>. As a consequence, an increasing number of women are left behind to head households.

Generally, women and children make up the majority of any given refugee population.<sup>4</sup> Due to a combination of different factors, including gender-based discrimination in access to resources, education and employment, poor reproductive health care and exclusion from decision-making processes, refugee and internally displaced women constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in the world.<sup>5</sup>

### Gender Equality in Humanitarian Assistance

A gender equality perspective in humanitarian assistance takes into account that:

- Crises affect women, girls, boys and men differently;
- Existing power inequalities between women and men exacerbates during crisis;
- Women, girls, men and boys have different needs and different coping mechanisms;
- Women, girls, men and boys have different opportunities to benefit from support; and
- Women and girls are an important resource in designing and delivering humanitarian assistance.

A gender equality perspective is also about assistance being designed and delivered based on the "do no harm" approach, in a way that does not trigger armed conflict, exacerbate tensions between population groups or expose people to violence and other forms of abuse such as GBV.<sup>6</sup> Programmes that lack a gender perspective risk being off-target, not reaching the most excluded, providing support in an inadequate manner or even inadvertently causing harm.

1 Oxfam Briefing Note, "The tsunami's impact on women", Oxfam International, 2005.

2 Sida defines GBV as any harm or suffering that is perpetrated against a woman or girl, man or boy and that has a negative impact on the physical, sexual or psychological health, development or identity of the person. The cause of the violence is founded in gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination.

3 El Jack, A., 2002, 'Gender Perspectives on the Management of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Sudan', in V. Farr and K. Gebre-Wold (eds), Gender Perspectives on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Regional and International Concerns, Brief 24, Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion.

4 See e.g. UNCHR (2014) Global Trends 2013: War's Human Cost. Geneva.

5 Security Council Open Debate on "Women, Peace and Security: Displaced women and girls: leaders and survivors" (2014).

6 <http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/protection-principle-1-avoid-exposing-people-to-further-harm-as-a-result-of-your-actions/>

### DO WE HAVE TIME FOR GENDER CONSIDERATIONS?

Humanitarian assistance is designed and delivered with the primary objective of saving lives and alleviating suffering. It is commonly argued that “paying attention to gender issues may not be timely or practical on the ground”, i.e. the so called “tyranny of the urgent”. Evidence shows though, that considering the differences in needs according to sex and age is crucial for effective relief and lifesaving assistance. It will inform needs assessments and engage and empower beneficiaries.

#### Sex and age matter

In order to perform a gender analysis there is a need for gender and age disaggregated data. The report “Sex and Age Matter: Improving Humanitarian Response in Emergencies” clearly shows that the humanitarian community has not invested enough in collection and using sex and age disaggregated data to inform programming.<sup>7</sup>

### LINKING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender equality serves as a strategic link between the humanitarian response and long term development. Humanitarian assistance can lay the foundation for gender equality, mitigate risk and build resilience against recurrent and predictable crises by actively mainstream-

ing gender equality. Similarly, humanitarian responses can be designed and delivered in a way that supports better recovery and development by actively supporting women’s and girl’s participation and leadership. Evidence shows that an increased number of women in the labor market in conflict-affected areas tend to increase overall household and community-level welfare, including investments in the education of girls and boys.<sup>8</sup>

If done in the right way, investment in women’s livelihoods can be relevant as a protective measure but also as a long term strategy for recovery and reduced vulnerability.

### AN INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATION AND A SWEDISH PRIORITY

Sweden has an obligation to address gender equality and the different needs of women, girls, men and boys in natural disasters and conflicts as reflected in the Swedish Aid Policy Framework and related strategies. Sweden also has responsibilities in accordance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and landmark human rights instruments like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security that protect the rights of women and girls in crisis and conflict. As one of the largest humanitarian donors in the world, Sweden must lead by good example, continuing to work strategically with gender mainstreaming and support global processes promoting gender equality and preventing GBV in emergencies.

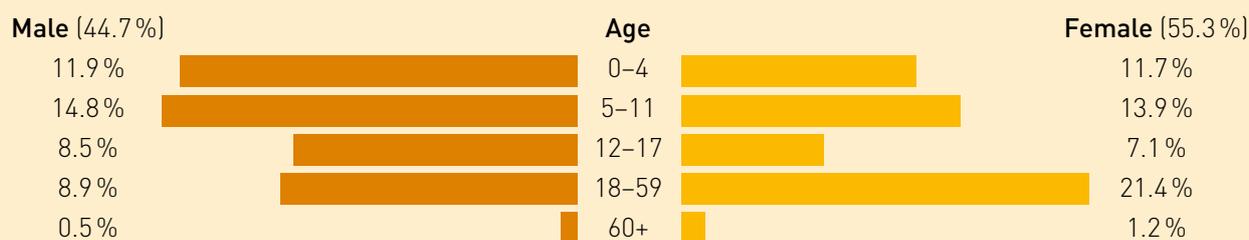
<sup>7</sup> <http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/sex-and-age-disag-data.pdf> and FAO (2013) “A Guidance Note: Striving for Gender Equality in Emergencies”.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/media/publications/en/05bwomen-workingforrecovery.pdf>

### The Demographic Profile of a Refugee Population Exposes the Differing Needs

After nearly a year of conflict that has devastated the lives of the majority of South Sudan’s people, killed tens of thousands and ravages key parts of the county, almost two million people has been forced from their homes. In December 2014, 618,521 people were registered as refugees from South Sudan residing in neighbouring countries. To be able to respond adequately to refugees’ specific needs and protection concerns, it is necessary to collect information based on sex and age. Doing this allows operational agencies to deliver assistance more effectively and efficiently.

#### The Demographic Profile of Refugees from South Sudan in neighbouring countries, as of December 2014



Source: UNHCR Information Sharing Portal – South Sudan Situation

### West Bank and Gaza Strip – investing in the collective Power of Women

“By supporting around 80 women’s associations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGs), FAO is helping Palestinian women to achieve greater social and economic empowerment. The projects provide motivated groups of women with the livelihood assets and entrepreneurial skills to produce, process, package and market a wide range of quality food items. This led many women to realise economic success as well as greater self-confidence, civic participation and influence in a place where 35% of women work in the informal agriculture sector as unpaid family labour.”<sup>9</sup>

### SIDA’S APPROACH: MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND PREVENTING GBV

Gender equality is a thematic priority to be mainstreamed<sup>10</sup> throughout Sida-funded humanitarian assistance. This means that gender equality has to be mainstreamed in needs assessments and in design, implementation and follow-up of humanitarian programs and projects.

**Needs Assessments** are the first entry point and a precondition for humanitarian assistance of quality. Sida strives to ensure that the Humanitarian Crises Assessments (HCAs) that are developed annually are based on a gender analysis, as well as our partners’ needs assessments. This means that the assessments take the different needs and opportunities of women and men, boys and girls into account and have data disaggregated by sex.

**Gender equality has to be integrated throughout the programme cycle** – in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. For successful mainstreaming, inclusion of specific gender sensitive results and indicators is necessary and must also be budgeted for. Sida has an important role in supporting capacity building of humanitarian actors and local communities enabling them to provide a gender sensitive humanitarian response, including prevention of GBV.

To ensure that gender equality is integrated in needs assessment, project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, Sida uses two complementary tools; The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Marker and the Gender Assessment tool. (See tool box at the end of the document).

**GBV Prevention and Protection a priority.** Despite a growing international concern, not all humanitarian agencies consider prevention and response to GBV a lifesaving activity. Sida however prioritises prevention and response to GBV from the onset of an emergency as a key protection concern, either as targeted support or integrated into programmes whenever relevant. Such interventions may focus on provision of services to GBV survivors, including sexual and reproductive health services and psycho-social support. It may also focus on prevention of GBV, combining immediate preventive actions such as sufficient lighting in refugee camps, separate toilets and gender training of security personnel, with more long-term prevention strategies that seek to change unequal power relations through increased safe economic opportunities and access to education, life skills, community awareness and engagement of men and boys in promoting gender equality.

In the humanitarian system, the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR leads the Global Protection Cluster under which UN Population Fund UNFPA and UN Children’s Fund UNICEF co-lead the GBV Area of Responsibility Working Group. The IASC Guidelines on GBV interventions in humanitarian settings provide operational guidance for all sectors.

### Fighting Gender-Based Violence in a Refugee Settlement

The Church of Sweden, in partnership with Sida, is strengthening local capacity to prevent and respond to GBV, and increase access to protection services for Congolese women, girls and boys who are refugees in the Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement (RSS) in Uganda. The programme focuses on facilitating processes for empowering GBV survivors to achieve economic independence and sustainable livelihoods, as well as strengthening the capacity of RSS duty bearers to prevent GBV and provide psychosocial support to survivors.

<sup>9</sup> FAO In Emergencies, A Guidance Note “Striving for Gender Equality in Emergencies (2013)”

<sup>10</sup> Gender mainstreaming is the strategy used for achieving results. Sidas gender mainstreaming model is based on a gender analysis followed by three approaches: (1) integrated action, (2) targeted interventions addressing specific issues such as GBV and (3) dialogue. The three components of gender mainstreaming can be implemented in different combinations, depending on specific contexts and conditions.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

**GenCap – The IASC Gender Standby Capacity Project:** The GenCap project has a roster of highly qualified Gender Advisers who are deployed to Humanitarian Country Teams or other humanitarian organisations upon request.

**The IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action (2006): Women, Girls, Boys and Men – Different Needs, Equal Opportunities** is a comprehensive handbook which outlines some key principles and methods on how to apply a gender perspective in humanitarian work. IASC has an e-learning course on gender in humanitarian settings.

**Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings: The IASC GBV Guidelines** is a key tool on how to set up multi-sector GBV programmes and coordinate effectively on the ground.

**FAO in Emergencies (2013): Guidance Note “Striving for Gender Equality in Emergencies”**.

## IASC Gender Marker

### Tools to help us ensure Gender Integration:

#### 1. Gender Markers

The Gender Marker is a tool available that can help us move towards more accountable, gender sensitive and gender responsive interventions.

All projects included in a Strategic Response Plan (SRP) shall, according to OCHA's guidelines, have a Gender Marker code on a 0-2 scale.

#### Scale: Gender Marker Code

##### Code 0

Gender is not reflected in the project.

##### Code 1

The project is designed to contribute in some limited way to gender equality. Gender dimensions are meaningfully included in only one or two out of the three essential components; needs assessment, activities and outcomes.

##### Code 2a

Gender mainstreaming. Potential to contribute significantly to gender equality. A gender and age analysis is included in the project's needs assessment and is reflected in one or more of the project's activities and one or more of the project outcomes.

##### Code 2b

###### Targeted Action

Project's principal purpose is to advance gender equality. The gender analysis in the needs assessment justifies this project in which all activities and all outcomes advance gender equality.

The Gender Marker is mandatory for projects in the framework of SRPs (Strategic Response Plans). Cluster leads are responsible for the coding. Sida considers the Gender Markers an important tool to ensure that a gender perspective is taken into account in humanitarian programming and therefore only contributions with IASC Gender Marker 1, 2a or 2b, with a preference for 2a and 2b, are eligible for Sida funding.

For more info about the Gender Markers please visit:

<http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/gm-overview-en.pdf>

## Sida's gender assessment tool

When a project does not have a Gender Marker Code, it is highly recommended for the applicant organization to show how gender is integrated in the program cycle. If needed, Sida can provide a gender self-assessment which can be used as a road map for what is expected regarding gender mainstreaming, and serve as a baseline for further efforts to strengthen gender equality aspects in the program.

<b>SIDA'S GENDER ASSESSMENT OF HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS</b>	
Name of project/program: _____	
Country: _____	
1. Does the <b>needs assessment</b> reflect the different needs, opportunities and capacities of women, men, boys and girls?	Yes No Comment:
2. Are differences between women, girls, men and boys reflected in terms of <b>sex-disaggregated data</b> ?	Yes No Comment:
3. Are the conclusions regarding the different needs of women and men, boys and girls in the needs assessment reflected in the <b>program design of the project</b> ?	Yes No Comment:
4. Are the different needs and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys reflected in <b>(specific) objectives</b> as defined in the results framework?	Yes No Comment:
5. Has gender equality and sex-disaggregated data been taken into account when defining specific indicators for follow-up?	Yes No Comment:
6. To what extent is prevention of <b>Gender-based violence (GBV)</b> included in the program (specific goals and indicators)? Does the program itself create increased risk of GBV?	Yes No Comment:
7. Identify possible <b>entry-points</b> and strategic actions for strengthened gender perspective in the continued implementation of this project.	Entry points:
8. Who are the <b>strategic allies</b> that can enhance the gender perspective within the project?	Strategic allies:
9. To what extent are women and men <b>consulted and actively taking part</b> in planning, design and follow up of the program?	
10. Does the implementing partner have <b>capacity on gender equality</b> (existence of gender policy, gender experts and gender training of staff)?	Yes No Comment:
11. <b>Link humanitarian – development:</b> Besides the immediate life-saving aspects, does the program contribute to changing unequal gender relations (e.g. support women's and girl's empowerment, challenge gender discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, or engage men and boys in promoting gender equality)?	Yes No Comment:

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm  
Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: [info@sida.se](mailto:info@sida.se). Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

