Guidance on mainstreaming gender and diversity in shelter programmes

Background

Women, men, girls and boys have different needs and capacities in a crisis. It is vital that shelter programmes recognise these differences and incorporate a gender equality perspective into the design and implementation of projects. Gender equality concerns "the equal rights, responsibilities, treatment and valuation of women and men, and girls and boys."[1]

Gender refers to the social differences between men and women. These differences are learned and deeply rooted in every culture, varying from place to place and community to community - neighbourhood, tribe, ethnic group or village. Gender determines what role, power and resources a woman or man has. Inequality takes many forms and is rooted in ethnicity, age, class, tribal affiliation, clan membership, religion, sexual orientation, HIV status, disabilities and types of employment. Men and women are not uniform groups of people, therefore it is necessary to disaggregate between different groups of women and men in terms of their diversity, their needs and vulnerabilities in a crisis, remembering that gender not only changes over time, but disasters and conflict can be triggers for changes in the roles and responsibilities that women, girls, boys and men have (i.e. gender roles). We are a step closer to gender equality when the rights, responsibilities, treatment and opportunities of men, women, boys and girls no longer depend on their sex or their perceived gender role.

The shelter cluster is committed to enhancing gender equality and in implementing the gender marker as one tool to promote gender equality programming in the shelter sector. This document highlights some practical ways in which gender concerns can be incorporated and articulated in shelter programming.

Dangerous or misleading assumptions

- ➢ Gender is not just about women and girls.
- ➢ Equating veiling or segregation to lack of female power.
- ➢ Listening to only what is said. What is not said or talked about is also relevant.
- ➢ All men have higher status than all women in a community.
- ➢ Not understanding 'who' belongs to a family.
- ➢ Not understanding the division of labour and complimentary roles between men and women.
- ➢ Women or men can only function or are only interested in activities within their assigned 'traditional roles'.
- ➢ Hiring key community members will maintain them as good informants - interfering with local status and power structures can destroy their influence.

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[1] Global Protection Cluster Working Group, Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons (March 2010), p. 14.

Shelter concern	Shelter actions	Gender link
Assessments *Data on affected populations should be broken down by age, sex and other relevant factors (e.g. people with disabilities, sexual orientation).*	a. Ensure needs assessments include sex-and age-disaggregated data. • To identify primary shelter needs and facilitate appropriate response. • To identify and locate the groups with specific needs or at heightened risk for priority assistance.	Qualitative data and analysis are key to identifying which groups are marginalised and why, including underlying difficulties in tenure security. This is essential for inclusive humanitarian responses but also recognises each individual and their rights.
	b. Undertake participatory assessments to identify the needs of women, girls, boys and men. • Involve men and women of different ages in conducting assessments . • Consider affected communities as potential capacity rather than victims.	Participatory assessments help identify those groups with specific vulnerabilities so shelter programmes can address their particular needs.
	c. Establish focal groups. • Meet with men and women separately, in different age groups, from diverse backgrounds and in a setting that makes both men and women feel comfortable enough to express their concerns. • Choose convenient times and provide childcare so men and women can participate. • Ensure that community feedback and information is fed into assessments and programming. • Consider special needs of marginalised groups such as poor illiterate women, single or pregnant women, unaccompanied minors, older persons, persons with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people • Raise sensitively with communities and humanitarian workers issues of LGBTI.	Gender- and diversity- sensitive recruitment for staff and volunteers must be part of the overall response strategy.
	d. Link with Housing, Land & Property issues with the Protection Cluster. • Ensure awareness of the differences in statutory and customary laws. • Consider both formal and informal types of tenure. **Key Questions?** • What are the roles played by women and men in the community social and economic structures? • Who has existing control over resources including land and , as well as, housing and tenure rights. • What inequalities and exclusions, related to shelter, housing land and tenure, are evident within the target communities? • Is there any existing opportunity to enhance women's economic growth and efficiency? • Have women of different socio economic status in the community been consulted? • Do women and men express their need and desire for assistance/the project? • Are there groups of marginalised groups that are excluded from assessments due to for example their ethnicity, tribe, religion or sexual orientation? • Are assessment staff both male and female and from diverse backgrounds?	

Site and settlement planning	a. Adapt layout to the needs and priorities of groups at heightened risk and with specific needs.	A well planned site can reduce the risk of further evictions and displacement , reduce women's workload and facilitate improved access to services.
Planning staff should have an understanding of gender, diversity and cultural issues.	• Enable easy access to services and support, such as areas with increased surveillance and close to distribution points and facilities (water, food, fuel, firewood, health care, etc.). • Avoid locating certain groups in areas where they may be put at greater risk (e.g. camp perimeter).	
	b. Ensure proper site planning with services for effectiveness, privacy and safety • adequate spacing between shelters, drainage • access to cooking , sanitation facilities, water and fuel • adequate lighting in access routes, around communal areas and sanitation facilities.	Site planning can reduce the risk of violence against and abuse of women, girls, boys and men through layout, lighting, provision of secured public spaces and alert systems (alarms, call devices, etc.).
	c. Design public spaces around the needs of all women, girls, boys and men. • Ensure public spaces can be used impartially and with respect for the social, cultural and informational needs of women, girls, boys and men. • Avoid creating isolated areas where women, girls and boys are most at risk. **Key questions** • Who owns the site? Is it pastoral land? Is it used by seasonal migrants? • What kind of tenure security does the site offer? For how long? Are people likely to be moved or evicted from the site? • Who collects firewood, water? From where? How long does it take? According to those responsible for collections, is the route safe? • What is the relation of the displaced population to the host communities (religious, ethnic, tribal, etc.)? • What can be done to mitigate possible problems with host or surrounding communities? • How far is the site from livelihood activities (considering that women and men may have different livelihood activities), schools, medical services? • Is the site hazardous or too close to conflict areas? • Have communities been consulted about the appropriateness of the site and who they can or cannot live next to?	For safety and security, ensure settlements are well-lit, latrines or toilets are accessible, sex-separated and at a reasonable distance from shelters, communal spaces are located in central and potentially guarded locations
Shelter design *Basic knowledge on how a shelter is to be used, kitchen and hygiene needs are more likely to be understood by women given their domestic role and role as*	a. Incorporate cultural norms and community practices for basic daily chores (e.g. cooking) and privacy in shelter design. • Consider that women have the main responsibility for household chores in most communities. • Consider the division of labour for domestic chores and childcare between men and women • Identify the needs of women and consult them during appropriate hours of the day in convenient locations with safe access. b. Discuss with the community potential risks and threats (fire, inundation, SGBV) and reflect them in shelter design (area, partitions, separate spaces for women and children (i.e. women- and	Shelter design can help limit risks faced by women, men, girls and boys by taking into account the different needs of women and men, and persons with specific needs. Ensure shelter design is appropriate for the social and cultural context. Some people (single or pregnant women,

primary caregivers in many cultures.	child-friendly spaces) covered external spaces, openings, escape).	unaccompanied minors, elderly, disabled, sexual minorities or LGB) may have difficulties in constructing shelters or excluded from distributions and land for shelters.
	c. Socio-political context may heighten vulnerabilities of persons of concern • Avoid overcrowding and ensure some degree of privacy by partitioning spaces for different family members. • Be sensitive to cultural living habits (polygamy, separated shelter for young females, unaccompanied children and their guardians).	
	d. Protect shelters against intrusion. • Construction materials should be resistant to malicious attack. • Provide secure and lockable doors and windows where possible including opaque shutters. • Construct separate bathrooms with lockable doors and toilets for men and women, avoiding dark and isolated areas. **Key questions:** • What is the general household division of labour? • What actions are needed to increase women's access and control over resources and the existing opportunities in relation to their needs ? • Is there a need to train women and men in the repair and construction of housing and shelter? • Are women's needs mainstreamed in cluster and implementing partners' project goals and objectives? • How can women's participation be increased in preparing shelter designs? • Analysis of household budgets: What money comes into the household, and who controls the allocation of resources?	
Shelter construction and material supply *When involving women in shelter activities, make sure that it is not negatively impacting their existing workload, domestic responsibilities and childcare.*	a. Ensure groups with specific vulnerabilities (unaccompanied children, female-headed households, elderly, disabled, LGBTI, etc.) receive appropriate support in accessing aid for constructing shelters. • Prioritise groups that may require specific support to build their own shelters. • Provide technical and construction assistance as well as appropriate tools.	Some women, boys and girls may be unable to construct their own shelter and be dependent on men outside of their family for help, putting them at heightened risk of SGBV. Without construction assistance, women and girls may feel pressure to engage in transactional/survival sex for help collecting materials and building a shelter. Participation in shelter construction can offer women and girls greater financial independence and additional livelihood skills
	b. Grant equitable access to shelter kits (construction materials, tools) and cash grants (cash for rent, host family contributions, cash for repair and reconstruction). • Support impartial and equitable access to housing , shelter supplies or cash for all affected individuals. • Prioritise vulnerable groups in CTP (Cash Transfer Programmes); if possible, prioritise females as recipients of grants. • Consult women on identifying appropriate locations and persons for distribution, repair and reconstruction •	

c. Offer men and women opportunities for shelter construction to be a paid/income-earning activity, where possible.

- Ensure that men and women receive equal pay for equal work.
- Promote training programmes when possible (skills-training in basic construction, brick making, etc.) also for groups in the community that have not traditionally been in charge of building.
- Ensure both men and women have access to safer construction guidance through a variety of media.
- Be aware that providing such opportunities can have potential risks and implications to traditional gender roles and dynamics that may pose a threat to women's safety. Identify such risks and undertake appropriate measures to mitigate those risks.

Key Questions?

- What are the expected roles of men and women during construction work?
- Are there training opportunities to help women's involvement and any form of compensation for additional workload and time spent in these activities?
- Are women participating in the repair of housing and the construction of shelter/housing?
- What control do women have over household finances?
- Are training opportunities being offered to women in places and times where they can access training, training may need to be segregated depending on the context?
- Will women and men receive awareness or training or legal aid on their legislative right to housing, tenure, land, education?
- Is the project staff gender sensitive and aware of the specific gender needs of women and men? Are there adequate opportunities for women to participate in project management positions?
- Will the project intend to integrate periodic training and awareness creation for project personnel and beneficiary women and men on gender issues?
- Is sex- and age-disaggregated data being collected, analysed and used to inform planning?

| **NFI allocation and distribution**

Programmes must be regularly reviewed to ensure that gender needs are being met and necessary changes made as required. | a. Involve women and men in the planning and implementation of NFI distribution.
• Consult women and men to determine what NFI are culturally appropriate, familiar and meet their needs .
• Ensure that items cannot be used to fuel existing conflict (e.g. machetes)

b. Develop the NFI package contents according to culture and context.
• Ensure NFI respond to specific reproductive and hygiene needs of women.
• Ensure clothing is appropriate for women, girls, men and boys (climate, culture, size).

c. Distribution and allocation of NFI must benefit women, girls, boys and men equally.
• Ensure distribution sites are easily accessible and safe. | NFI are in general the first aid distributed in an emergency where existing vulnerabilities and gender disparities are usually exacerbated.

NFI can expose vulnerable individuals to extortion and violence.

Women, girls, men and boys have different needs, capabilities and constraints which need an appropriate response. |

		Participatory consultations in the definition of NFI packages, distribution and allocation methods can have a strong impact on protection of vulnerable groups and mitigation of SGBV exposure.

- Distribution times must be convenient for women and men so that they can combine it with other duties, and ensure safe return to their living quarters.
- Take adequate precautions to ensure equitable access to NFI to all groups with particular attention to most vulnerable persons such as female headed households, older people, people with disabilities, etc.
- Provide assistance to vulnerable persons in safely transporting their NFI packages to their shelters.

d. Ensure cooking items (e.g. utensils, stoves, etc.) are safe and take into account local practices.
- Locate secure and well lit position to replenish fuel to ensure safety of women, girls, boys and men.
- Mitigate risk related to collection and depletion of firewood reserves when necessary (Fuel Efficient Stoves, rapid reforestation, etc.)

Key questions

- Have men and women of different ages and backgrounds been consulted about NFI needs and appropriateness of items and distributions places and timings?
- Do different vulnerable groups need different NFI packages?
- Can women be involved in the distribution of NFIs together with providing awareness on the appropriate use of items provided?
- Is sex- and age-disaggregated data being collected?

| **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation staff should have an understanding of gender and diversity and how shelter interventions have attempted to address these issues. | **a. The inclusion of gender concerns in assessments, site selection, shelter design, implementation and NFI distribution needs to be included in the monitoring and evaluation of cluster strategy and shelter interventions.**

Key questions:

- Does the cluster include gender concerns in its strategy and response plan?
- Did project objectives address issues identified in the cluster strategy or gender analysis?
- Does the project provide adequate sex- and age-disaggregated data to assess changes in women and men's involvement in the project and their access and control over management of resources?
- Is periodic and adequate data collected to enable changes and adjustments to project implementation?
- Are women, men and community members trained on issues related to shelter implementation, and what is the percentage of women and men?
- Which benefits are women gaining e.g. from the time saved collecting firewood, from training, from proximity to livelihoods, from NFIs? | A gender perspective of the crisis improves our ability to protect affected populations . |

- Do women staff have managerial decision-making power and position in projects?
- Are women represented in the community committees and what is the ratio of women and men committee members?
- Are there legal aid programmes or grievance mechanisms in place and are these accessed by and accessible to women?
- Is there any affirmative measure taken to enhance women's participation in project activities such formulation of project guidelines and regulations, gender awareness creation for beneficiaries particularly to community leaders, male project personnel and women?
- Are women and men community members satisfied with the project and interventions?
- Are the findings of the monitoring and evaluation exercise utilised for lessons learned and best practices? Are these findings communicated back to beneficiary communities
- Have all personnel received training on gender and SEA, and are they are aware of the code of conduct?
- Will the project enhance women's economic empowerment and increase their access and control to information and other resources?
- What will the project impacts be as to the improvement of the gender relations between women and men in the project area?
- How will the project affect women's and men's access and control over the resources and benefits as regards to the production of goods and services?
- How will the project affect women's and men's access to and control over resources and benefits in terms of the reproduction and maintenance of human resources?
- Does the project contribute to reduce women's workload?
- What measures are taken to tackle cultural and existing obstacles and enhance women's participation?
- Will the project develop means and mechanisms to mainstream gender at each level of the project? (community level, women group associations, local authorities, or at Ministry level, etc.)