



Protection Mainstreaming Key Elements and Safe Distributions Reducing Protection Risks in In-Kind Distributions

The Humanitarian Community's approach to protection mainstreaming focuses on four key elements:

Prioritizing the safety and dignity of individuals and avoid causing harm: Concern for the safety and dignity of individuals and avoiding causing further harm is central to mainstreaming protection. The safety of individuals should be the primary consideration in humanitarian action. But being safe is not enough if people do not have their dignity: people need to feel valued, have a sense of self-respect and feel they have some control over their lives. Prioritizing safety and dignity can also help to prevent or minimize the possible unintended negative effects that our interventions can cause for individuals.

Ensuring meaningful access to assistance and services: Recognized as a crucial component of all humanitarian interventions, we all must seek to ensure that people have a meaningful opportunity to attain their rights by accessing available services and assistance. Conflict and divisions within society often emerge from discrimination resulting in individuals or groups being unable to access services. Barriers to access can exist in different forms, including logistical and social/cultural factors, insecurity and a lack of information on available assistance and services.

Accountability: Setting-up appropriate accessible and responsive mechanisms through which affected populations can measure the adequacy of interventions, and address concerns and complaints is central to ensuring effective response. Mechanisms for collecting timely, relevant and actionable feedback should use a combination of channels and be diversified in consideration of the needs of women, men, girls and boys of diverse backgrounds and various specific needs groups (including but not limited to older persons, individuals with disabilities, persons with diverse SOGIESC, etc.) Further, sensitive aspects of accountability such as protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), fraud, corruption, and discrimination should always be ensured through monitoring and confidential feedback mechanisms. Channels include *active channels*, where individuals' perspectives are deliberately and systematically solicited (such as focus groups); *reactive channels*, where individuals have more control over when and how they share perspectives (such as complaint lines); and finally, '*open channels*' where feedback is solicited in an ad hoc manner, through ongoing interaction during implementation.

Participation and empowerment: The humanitarian community should strive to put affected populations at the center of decision-making processes that affect their lives so that services are choice-driven and people-focused. Engagement of women, men, girls and boys of diverse backgrounds and specific needs groups, community-based and women-led organizations at all stages of the intervention is key to build the resilience and ownership of the affected populations. Special attention should also be paid to ensuring the participation of, and consultation with, the most at-risk and/or marginalized members of society whose voices may not otherwise be heard. Humanitarian programming should also seek to support the development of self-



protection capacities and assist people to claim their rights, including (not exclusively) the rights to protection, shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and education.

Safe Distributions

Distributing humanitarian assistance is one of the most important elements during humanitarian response and can significantly improve the safety and wellbeing of individuals. Shelter, Non-Food Items, Food Security, WASH, Health, Education, Nutrition, and Protection actors can help reduce and mitigate protection risks to individuals and communities when conducting distributions of assistance (food and nonfood items). All distributions must ensure that individuals can safely access distributions with dignity and without harm or discrimination. Moreover, humanitarian actors must act to support the most vulnerable groups and maintain accountability by involving and empowering individuals in planning, implementation and monitoring. This document provides guidance on how partners can mainstream protection into distributions of assistance including during the earthquake emergency response.

Protection Related Risks in Distributions

Safety

- Safety of distribution including tension among affected community members, refugees and all other affected populations.
- Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), including harassment against affected people, by distributors and male individuals while queuing and before/after distributions; for example, requiring affected people to exchange allotted or additional assistance for sexual favors or other acts, with women and girls, as well as other at-risk groups being particularly vulnerable to abuse.
- Women and girls and other particularly vulnerable groups of children may also face protection risks, including the risk of exploitation, harassment and abuse, as well as risk of trafficking when travelling to/from distribution points or/and when registering themselves for accessing assistance.
- Vulnerable or most at-risk groups, such as persons with diverse SOGIESC, persons with disabilities, persons living with or at risk of HIV and persons who sell or exchange sex) may be at risk of verbal, physical and sexual violence, exploitation, abuse and other safety & security risks when travelling to/from distribution points and/or when registering themselves for accessing assistance.

Access

- Difficulty in accessing distributions for girls, boys women, unaccompanied/separated children, survivors of GBV, older persons, people with disabilities, (including individuals with mental health disorders/intellectual disabilities) and their caregivers, SOGIESC, refugees and other vulnerable groups
- Restricted movement of groups (including but not limited to female headed households, persons with disabilities and older persons), far distances to



distribution point, long wait times, and free/safe transportation to reach distribution points, especially for heavy goods.

- Movement and mobility of persons may be impacted due to damage to infrastructure, lack of documents, limited information on procedures (particularly for refugees), restricted movement of persons who do not have legal documents (civil documentation and IDs for refugees) and fear detention/arrest/being turned down at checkpoints.

Equality and Non-Discrimination

- Unclear criteria for individual selection/vulnerability criteria amongst humanitarian partners (and possible duplication).
- Needs of specific groups (including but not limited to persons with disabilities, LGBTI/Other Vulnerable Groups, refugees, particularly vulnerable categories of women and children, etc.) may not be identified via assessments in a systematic and detailed manner. This may result in their exclusion from criteria for individual selection and thus preventing equal access to assistance.
- Humanitarian items delivered in a way that cannot be easily carried by recipients in terms of weight and dimensions, or distributed in a format not easily accessible for cultural reasons (e.g. sanitary pads for girls and women distributed in open spaces).
- Risk of unequal treatment and appropriate distribution to individuals within a site and in urban settings.
- No consideration for gender roles and responsibilities in accordance to cultural context (such as no female staff in distributions).
- I/NGO staff and local authorities involved in distributions denying assistance to certain groups of individuals due to discrimination.
- Information on services, including on distribution, only provided in certain format, languages, etc. which is not accessible by vulnerable groups within society.

Actions Recommended by the Protection Sector

Safety, security health and crowd control

- Prior to a distribution, make sure that distribution sites and routes to/from distribution sites are safe and secure by consulting security experts, local authorities, local committees, community-based organizations and women-led organizations.
- Security personnel should not be involved in distribution or individual selection.
- Communicate before and during distribution with local officials/leaders and the community about your role, procedures, criteria and shortages to avoid causing conflict and tension between the community and other partners working in the areas after providing assistance.



- **If possible**, establish multiple distribution sites to avoid creating crowds and individuals travelling long distances; choose locations with shading, sex/disability- segregated toilets, drinking water and functional health facilities nearby.
- Locate distribution points away from crowded areas such as markets, hospitals. Do not use a women's center or child-friendly space as distribution points; however, they can be useful sources of information to monitor if distributions are reaching the most vulnerable groups.
- If possible, establish multiple storage sites to enable quick distribution.
- Map routes to/from distribution sites and consult with the community/CSOs and WLOs representatives to see if safe for women and children and easily traveled by persons with disabilities (e.g., pathways/roads that are firm, if community has available transportation to the distribution sites, etc.).
- Consider **house-to-house or tent-to-tent** distributions with female staff present or transportation support for people who are unable to leave their homes or have movement limitations (e.g., persons with disabilities, older persons, pregnant/lactating women, female-headed households).
- Have separate queues for vulnerable groups for both registration & distribution, using guide ropes & signage; have separate Priority Line that helps at-risk groups first: persons with disabilities, sick, older persons, pregnant women, parents with infants, female-headed households.
- Provide seats for pregnant/lactating women, persons with disabilities, older persons etc. who cannot stand queuing for long periods.
- Use clear signs and directions in a proper language with large font, contrasting colors and symbols/drawings.
- It is mandatory that all staff regularly use hand sanitation and follow general hygiene practices against COVID-19 and other transmittable diseases.
- Prioritize that a hand washing point is supplied with appropriate quantities and qualities of water and soap (i.e., to include a poster on recommended hand washing steps).
- For precaution purposes, individuals responsible for distributions are advised to wear a mask and maintain a safe distance at all points during distributions.

Staffing, monitoring and communication with communities

- Recruit male and female [volunteers](#) who are respected in the community and have no risk of prioritizing a certain group over others. Do not employ children (under 18 years old).
- Consider hiring multilingual staff/interpreters to ensure communication is also conducted with the affected population who speak different languages.
- Have female staff talk to and be available for women and girls during the distribution and listen to their concerns. Make distribution staff visible with hats, vests and other visibility materials.
- Train staff on Do No Harm, protection from SEA (PSEA), and child



safeguarding; and sign and adhere to code of conduct that respect and uphold the rights of individuals and PSEA.

- Set up consent based communication and complaints mechanisms or desks that are clearly marked; for ex. feedback desks, face-to-face interviews with individuals, online mechanisms to collect information from the people who have access to internet including women and children/adolescents.
- Before, seek info about other service providers in the area & brief staff in case individuals express need for other assistance to which staff can refer them (health, social services, GBV, child protection, legal, PSS, child/adolescent/youth and family centers and hubs).
- Have teams on ground to monitor distributions and respond quickly and fairly to safety concerns including coercion, intimidation, cheating, violence, or exploitation, including actions perpetrated by staff.
- Have senior staff regularly review complaints and ensure immediate response and investigations to avoid further abuse, including repeated abuse, exploitation or intimidation of individuals.
- Inform the community of their entitlements (i.e., assistance is free and doesn't require material or actual favors) and encourage them to report complaints via available national and local feedback, complaints and response mechanisms. Such mechanisms should be easy to locate, visible and accessible.
- If taking photos for public information purposes or social media, please make sure to have written consent from individuals and in case of minors from children's parents. Avoid using photos of individuals and children whose informed consent you did not receive, risking further harm through media use.

Individual response, targeting and consultation

- Be sure to comply with Personal Data Protection Law (KVKK) while receiving individuals information, consult local legal experts and coordination mechanisms for your processes. Protect individuals lists and ensure they have only necessary information to avoid traceability. Take informed consent of individuals if their data need to be shared with other humanitarian partners. Passwords protect soft copies of lists and keep hard copies in locked cabinets.
- Work with local GBV, SEA, Child Protection and/or general Protection teams to help ensure equitable access to services (incl. documentation). Avoid targeting GBV, SEA survivors or blanket categories of children (e.g., separated children). Instead, use criteria based on vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and violence.
- Ensure coordination with the relevant sectors to avoid duplication and address gaps.
- Consult individuals, especially women and girls, in sex-segregated/disability focus groups using same-sex facilitators about their specific needs, sufficient quantities and appropriate materials. Ensure women and girls with different types of disabilities, and/or their caregivers, are included in these focus groups to highlight their specific needs.



- Systematically identify disability using a tool such as the [Washington Group Questions](#) and include disability in targeting criteria, looking at intersectionality for individuals identified as having a disability; factors such as age, gender, medical condition, presence/absence of a caregiver, specific needs have an impact on the level of risk/number and types of barriers a person with disability will face.
- During post-distribution follow-up/monitoring, understand how women, children and other groups accessed the distributed goods and their feedback on the process and materials/food/needs.
- Choose distribution times, durations & places by consulting with women, men & children and their daily activities (domestic duties, school times); distributions during daylight hours allow safe participation and travel home.

When a child is found alone at a distribution site: Do not immediately relocate the child. Ask the child who they are with and where this person may be. Consider that girls may prefer speaking to female staff or that the child may feel uncomfortable speaking to you if the child thinks those around her/him are risks or threats. Ask people around the child if they know anything about the child and if the child may be separated from family or unaccompanied, as the parents may return shortly. In doing so, make sure to confirm with the child that they know/recognize the adults whom you establish contact with. For babies and young children who do not know or cannot share their names and places of origin, or children with disabilities, and if the child is confirmed to be alone, immediately contact the Ministry of Family and Social Services through ALO 183 hotline or specialized [MoFSS hotlines for unaccompanied and separated children](#). At distribution sites, ensure there are signs encouraging caregivers not to leave their children alone and always in a safe place- caregivers who cannot locate their child should immediately call law enforcement agencies / ALO 183.