

# SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

## WHY DOES GENDER EQUALITY MATTER IN EMERGENCY SHELTER AND NFI INTERVENTIONS?

In an emergency where populations have been displaced or where houses have been destroyed, shelter is especially important for safety, protection and dignity and to sustain family and community life. The provision of shelter meets one of the basic survival needs of women, girls, boys and men and can strengthen protection in a physical sense. In situations of displacement, there is always loss of personal property; very often people flee with little more than the clothes they are wearing. In addition to food, people affected by crises need basic life-saving NFIs for their survival, including blankets, sleeping mats, plastic sheeting, clothes and shoes, kitchen and hygiene kits. However, providing shelter or shelter materials and NFIs will not automatically guarantee the optimal protection or a positive impact on individuals or on the affected population. A gender and age sensitive, participatory approach at all stages of the project cycle can help ensure that an adequate and efficient response is provided. In order for a shelter and/or NFI project to have a positive impact, women, girls, boys and men of all ages must be involved equally in the process.

Projects that analyse and take into consideration the needs, priorities and capacities of both the female and male population are far more likely to improve the lives of affected populations. The IASC Gender Marker is a tool that codes, on a 2-0 scale, whether or not a humanitarian project is designed to ensure that women/girls and men/boys will benefit equally from it, and that it will contribute to increasing gender equality. A full description of the IASC Gender Marker and its application can be found in the Gender Marker Overview Tip Sheet.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENTS → ACTIVITIES → OUTCOMES

A **NEEDS ASSESSMENT** is the essential first step in providing emergency shelter and NFI programming that is effective, safe and restores dignity. A gender analysis is critical to understanding the social and gender dynamics that could help or hinder aid effectiveness. The gender analysis in the needs assessment will identify gender gaps, such as unequal access to shelter and NFIs for women/girls and men/boys that need to be addressed. These should be integrated into **ACTIVITIES**. The project's **OUTCOMES** should capture the change that is expected for female and male beneficiaries. Avoid outcome statements that hide whether or not males and females benefit equally.

### GENDER IN SHELTER AND NFI PROJECT NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

- ✓ What are the demographics of the target group? (# of households and household composition disaggregated by sex and age; # of single heads of household who are women, girls, boys and men; # of M/F unaccompanied children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, the chronically ill; # of pregnant and lactating women by age)
- ✓ What do women, girls, boys and men *do* in their home/shelter? (e.g. domestic chores, personal hygiene, income generation, care-giving) What space, privacy, design features and kitchen and hygiene items do they need to allow them to do these tasks with dignity and comfort?
- ✓ How are the shelter materials being distributed and allocated? What system is in place for this and is it accessible to all?
- ✓ Are there measures in place to ensure there is no sexual violence due to poor, inappropriate or cramped shelter conditions or that women, girls, boys and men with special shelter needs or vulnerabilities are prioritised and supported?
- ✓ What are the different NFI needs of women and men by age (and, if appropriate, by ethnic background)?
- ✓ Are there any specific clothing items essential to women/girls and men/boys for their daily needs?

### GENDER IN SHELTER AND NFI PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Monitor women's participation in decision-making on site layout and shelter design and be sure that their needs are discussed and met.
- ✓ Assist the community to identify women, girls, boys and men with specific needs by sex and age with shelter construction needs and ensure these needs are prioritised and met.
- ✓ Develop a participatory system to monitor the safety and accessibility of distribution sites, taking into account the needs of women, men, unaccompanied girls and boys, the elderly, sick, and disabled.
- ✓ Develop public information systems, including notice and information boards ensuring that women and men know the quantity/variety of items they should receive, as well as the distribution methods, days, and times.

### GENDER IN SHELTER AND NFI PROJECT OUTCOMES

- ✓ Decision-making and responsibilities related to shelter are being shared more equally by beneficiary women and men.
- ✓ The safety of shelter facilities has been enhanced in response to protection concerns from male and female beneficiaries (e.g. lockable doors, partitions, lighting and water distribution points closer to site).
- ✓ There has been a decrease in sexual violence against women and girls due to wood/fuel distribution programmes.
- ✓ Surveys document that female participation in community activities has increased (e.g. women in committees and public meetings, girls attending school and youth clubs) due to the provision of a safe and accessible venue for meetings, counselling and skills training; and the regular distribution of hygiene kits to women and girls of reproductive age.

## DESIGNING MINIMUM GENDER COMMITMENTS FOR EMERGENCY SHELTER and NFIs:

In order to translate the cluster and organisational commitments to gender-responsive shelter and NFI projects into reality, minimum gender commitments can be developed and applied systematically to the field response. The commitments must be articulated in a way that can be understood by all, in terms of value added to current programming and in terms of the concrete actions that need to be taken to meet these commitments. They should constitute a set of core actions and/or approaches (maximum five) to be applied by all cluster partners; they should be practical, realistic and focus on improvement of current approaches rather than on programme reorientation. Finally, they should be measurable for the follow-up and evaluation of their application.

The commitments should be the product of a dialogue with cluster members and/or within the organisation. A first list of commitments should be identified and then discussed, amended and validated by the national cluster and sub-clusters and/or organisation's staff working in the sector. It is important to note that commitments need to reflect key priorities identified in a particular setting. The **ADAPT and ACT-C Gender Equality Framework** (detailed in the Gender Marker Overview Tip Sheet) outlines basic actions that can be used when designing or vetting a gender integrated project, and can be a useful reference in designing minimum gender commitments. *The commitments, activities and indicators below draw on elements of the ADAPT and ACT-C Gender Equality Framework and are provided as samples only:*

1. Ensure women, men, boys, and girls **PARTICIPATE** equally at all steps in project design, implementation and monitoring; consult women and girls separately from men and boys; and consult particularly on the times and place of distributions.

Sample Activity	Sample Indicator
<i>Focus group discussions on shelter construction, allocation and design/NFI pack's composition and allocation conducted with women, girls, boys and men of diverse backgrounds and results fed into programming.</i>	<i>% of the affected population – disaggregated by sex and age - engaged in participatory consultations on shelter design and construction; and the composition and distribution of shelter and NFI kits.</i>

2. Work to ensure that women, men, girls, and boys of all age groups can **ACCESS** shelter and NFI assistance by registering the adult woman in all households (except single-male headed households) as the primary recipient of NFI assistance; and avoid excluding second wives and their children in polygamous families.

Sample Activity	Sample Indicator
<i>Develop and disseminate a communication campaign - targeting both women and men - about this approach to ensure that communities understand why women are registered as the primary recipients of aid</i>	<i>Extent to which a communication strategy, in verbal, written and other illustrative formats – has been developed and disseminated prior to distribution.</i>

3. Take specific **ACTION** to prevent risks of GBV, including establishing confidential complaints mechanisms to receive and investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) experienced by women, girls, boys and men in seeking or receiving assistance through shelter or NFI programmes.

Sample Activities	Sample Indicators
<i>Develop (in written, verbal and illustrative formats) and display the Code of Conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and where and how people may make reports confidentially.</i>	<i>Extent to which the Code of Conduct is displayed, accessed and understood throughout the affected community (in varying written and illustrative formats); and a confidential and appropriate complaints mechanism has been established.</i>
<i>Ahead of planned distributions, a communication on distribution entitlements (written, verbal and illustrative formats) is disseminated widely.</i>	<i>[Representative %] of all distribution recipients fully informed of their entitlements ahead of the distribution.</i>

4. **DESIGN** services to meet the needs of women, men, boys, and girls equally, ensuring that equal numbers of female and male residents are involved in distributions and receive equal pay for the same work.

Sample Activity	Sample Indicator
<i>Consult women on what arrangements – childcare, transport, lodgings, etc. - would need to be in place for them to work on distribution campaigns.</i>	<i>[Representative %] of all distribution staff are women</i>

5. Based on the gender analysis, make sure that women, girls, boys, and men are **TARGETED** with specific actions when appropriate, such as addressing the menstrual hygiene needs of women and girls of reproductive age by providing access to appropriate hygiene supplies.

Sample Activity	Sample Indicator
<i>Hold focus group discussions with women/girls to determine culturally-appropriate hygiene materials</i>	<i>Extent to which the results of the focus group discussions with the affected female beneficiaries has informed the composition and distributions of female hygiene materials.</i>

For more information on the **Gender Marker** go to [www.onereponse.info](http://www.onereponse.info)

For more information on Emergency Shelter and NFIs, see **The Sphere Handbook 2011**

For the e-learning course on "Increasing Effectiveness of Humanitarian Action for Women, Girls, Boys and Men", see [www.iasc-elearning.org](http://www.iasc-elearning.org)