



Minimum Standards on Gender

Why gender and age matters in emergency food security interventions

Conflict and displacement affect girls, boys, women and men differently. Gender and age determine a person's role in producing, providing and preparing food as well as how a person is affected when their dietary needs are not met. For example, girls, women and older women and men may eat least and last during a food shortage; adolescent girls and women may be at greater risk of sexual exploitation and abuse in exchange for food; and men might face distress when losing their traditional status as "breadwinners". In other words, gender and age combine to create different experiences and capacities to deal with crises and distinct views of what food and livelihood assistance should be like. As humanitarian actors, it is our role to understand these differences and to deliver services and aid that assist all segments of the population.

Gender, age and diversity demographics and dynamics relative to emergency food security interventions

The conflict and resultant displacement in northeast Nigeria has created a distinct demographic profile and new gender dynamics among IDPs:

- Women and children make up approximately 80 per cent of the IDP population in northeast Nigeria. Approximately one in three IDPs are girls under 18 years; one in four boys under 18 years; and another one in four women over 18 years (IOM DTM Round X, 30 June 2016).
- Across Adamwa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe States, an average of one in 10 households supports a member with a mental or physical disability; and over one in five households include at least one member with a chronic illness.
- Traditional household and community structures are disrupted and many women are now in the unfamiliar role of head of their household; the figure is between 13 to 38 per cent across Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe States, with an average of 23 per cent.
- Some households practice the Islamic tenet of *kulle*, which prevents women leaving the home and, therefore, impeding their access to humanitarian assistance and to new livelihood opportunities.
- Food insecurity and protection risks are mutually reinforcing factors with links between gender and negative coping strategies such as transactional sex, where women and girls exchange sex for money, food or to exit/enter camps where IDP movement is restricted.
- In terms of livelihoods, women have traditionally taken on the role of collecting firewood for the household, and many continue this as a livelihood strategy. There are reports of women being attacked, raped, killed and abducted while collecting firewood particularly as they travel further and further from their communities, beyond the security provided by the Nigerian Armed Forces.
- The protection risks that women face are linked directly to the level of assistance they can reach on a regular basis, their prior vocational skills and capacity to carry them out.
- In camps and host communities, women need cash-based assistance to establish livelihoods such as tailoring, processing and selling flour or groundnut oil, selling milk, making kolwa from locally-sourced seeds, farming, rearing cows and goats.
- In 49 of 106 sites assessed for the IOM DTM (June 2016), farming is the IDPs' main occupation. However, in 54 sites, residents do not have access to land for cultivation. At 60 sites, residents have access to income-generating activities but mostly on an irregular basis.
- The Cash Working Group has developed a common definition of household that reflects the distinct demographic profile and gender dynamics of the affected population, including polygamous households.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Share information on entitlements to distributions, services and facilities and free access to all humanitarian services.
- Monitor vulnerable women, children, older people and people with disabilities continuously to ensure receipt of entitlements without exploitation and abuse.
- Pass messages on gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response and child protection during distributions.
- Disseminate the 'Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Prevention of and Response to GBV'¹ Referral Pathways—in appropriate language and format - to all affected communities and humanitarian actors
- Ensure that all humanitarian staff and volunteers sign a Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy and receive a briefing(s) on child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).
- Conduct participatory needs assessments to identify diverse perspectives, risks and capacities of groups within crisis-affected communities (men, women, girls and boys, older persons and persons with disabilities) and ensure that women and men participate in decision-making related to the humanitarian response.
- Establish a complaints and feedback mechanism in each IDP location that includes feedback on the appropriateness of programme design and impact.

MINIMUM STANDARDS - DRAFT

- Collect, analyse, use and report sex and age-disaggregated data, including vulnerabilities, to inform all food security, livelihoods and cash transfer programme design, implementation and evaluation.
- Be explicit about the type of livelihoods activities (e.g. kitchen gardens, market gardens, cash crops, (women's) collectives, etc.) and the target audience for such activities (e.g. women, GBV survivors, widows and/or youth).
- Strive for 50 per cent representation of women on all food security, livelihoods and cash programming related committees and activities or more in terms of targeted actions.
- Strengthen post-distribution monitoring and feedback mechanisms that capture the opinions of women, girls, boys and men and all groups with special needs, such as pregnant and lactating women, older women and men, people with disabilities, etc.
- Target female- and child-headed households and pregnant and lactating women directly for food security actions.
- Ensure that special nutritional food requirements are available for pregnant and lactating women, older people, persons with chronic illness and children >5 years.
- Take steps to ensure that the distribution process prioritises persons with specific needs e.g. pregnant and lactating women, older persons, etc.
- Reduce waiting time for beneficiaries and allow for multiple distributions and different times and dates to address women's reproductive labor burden Organise all distributions in a way that allows people to access, queue, wait, receive and carry goods away from the distribution points in a safe and dignified manner.
- Ensure that food security, livelihoods and cash programming assessment and distribution teams have representation from different age, gender and diversity (AGD) groups to reflect the profile of the subject community (e.g. ethnicity, language).
- Ensure that the selection criteria and common indicators for cash transfer programming are gender-, age- and diversity-sensitive.

¹ SGBV Working Group, under the leadership of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Borno State

- In consultation with women, anticipate and address any negative impacts that the distribution of food or cash to women and the issuance of food/cash entitlements in women's names may have on the community and intra-household relationships.
- Assess to which extent women and groups with specific needs have access to technology required to participate in CBT (access to phone, ID, bank account, usage of phone, network and electricity) as the most vulnerable communities often lack the means and technology to participate.
- Consider community outreach and awareness raising on women's role in ensuring food at the household level through key interlocutors such as community and religious leaders, and civil society actors to reduce risk of domestic violence and usage of cash for unintended purposes;
- Collect case studies and good practices of the assessment, analysis, implementation and impact of cash transfer programming that target women and groups with specific needs for replication and scale-up.