

Mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals

Background

A gender perspective in humanitarian assistance: what does it mean?

A concern for gender issues involves looking at relations, divisions, differences and inequalities between and among women, girls, boys and men. These relationships, responsibilities and identities take different forms in each situation and are often thrown into flux in times of conflict or emergencies. The focus is often on women and girls as their needs, priorities and interests tend to be overlooked in assessments and assistance programmes. It is important to understand

- ▶ *The differences in women's and men's ability to respond in an emergency situation.* Women and men's experience of the conflict or emergency is often different. Education levels, mobility, access to resources, responsibilities, social stereotypes, work experiences all tend to vary along gender lines. For example, in at least one situation men's control over household decision-making meant that women felt unable to leave their homes without their husbands' permission. These differences and inequalities influence what resources people can draw on and mobilize in a post-crisis situation. They can also influence whether or not people benefit from humanitarian assistance initiatives.
- ▶ *The differences (as well as commonalities) in women's and men's (boy's and girl's) priorities.* Given different responsibilities (primarily the division of labour within the family) women may place greater urgency on meeting different needs. For example in one community in Nicaragua following Hurricane Mitch, men ranked the worst impact of the disaster as 'decreased coffee production', while most women put 'fear' at the top of their list. Women also listed 'higher food prices' and 'less basic grains' as important impacts while men listed 'less income' and 'more work' as important.¹
- ▶ *The differences in men's and women's security needs.* Given gender differences, women and

girls tend to define 'security' differently than men. They are more at risk for sexual and gender-based violence, for example.

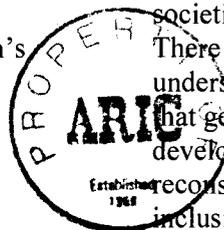
- ▶ *Who holds what responsibilities.* The gender division of labour often changes in crisis and post-crisis situations. Women's role as family caregiver generally translates into an increased workload during disaster situations. It is important not make assumptions about who does what work and has which responsibilities.
- ▶ *The capacities of women, men, girl and boy to support peace or reconstruction.* Women (and youth) tend to be excluded from formal peace processes and decision-making around reconstruction. Yet, they make up at least half the population. This is a significant group to leave out of building peace and reconstructing societies, economies and political structures. There is growing evidence that women with an understanding of social justice and of the ways that gender inequality hinders human development can make peace negotiations and reconstruction efforts more constructive, more inclusive and more sustainable.²
- ▶ *The differences among women (as well as among men).* Not all women are the same. There are divisions along class, ethnic, rural/urban and other lines, just as there are among men. It should not be assumed that all women will share the same interest or priorities.
- ▶ *The opportunities to narrow gender gaps and support women's equitable participation in decision-making.* A gender perspective involves more than just planning around the differences between women and men. It also involves identifying opportunities to narrow gender inequalities.

Why is it important to bring a gender perspective to the CAPs?

The commitment of the international community to bring a gender perspective to the CAPs derives, in part, from a commitment to gender equality. Yet it is also based on the recognition that using this

¹ Delaney, P. and E. Shrader. *Gender and Post-Disaster Reconstruction: The Case of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras and Nicaragua*. The World Bank. January 2000.

² See for example, Anderlini, S.N. *Women at the Peace Table: Making a Difference*. New York: UNIFEM, 2000.



perspective will contribute to more effective humanitarian assistance. In particular it can support:

- ▶ *A more accurate understanding of the situation.*
Understanding that ‘people’ or ‘IDPs’ have different needs or priorities based on gender differences and inequalities is part of good analysis. It can ensure that groups are not neglected and that all needs and vulnerabilities are taken into account (and met).
- ▶ *The design of more appropriate responses.*
Understanding that potential participants or beneficiaries face different obstacles when participating in programmes (can mobilize different resources, have different responsibilities) can facilitate the development of more effective programming. In other words, it can ensure that needs are met.

- ▶ *The highlighting of opportunities and resources.*
Women are more than a vulnerable group. They are an important resource in establishing peace and rebuilding societies. They cannot play these roles if their basic security needs are unmet, if decision-makers ignore them and if they fail to receive support.

The bottom line is that when implemented in an effective fashion, a gender perspective can help save lives: it can assist in the profiling and understanding of vulnerable groups, it assist agencies provide (and channel) resources to those most in need, and it can assist in the mobilization of a significant proportion of the population which is often under-estimated.

Myths about gender mainstreaming in humanitarian assistance

Despite years of discussion there are still misconceptions about exactly what ‘gender mainstreaming’ entails. Here are some of the most common ‘myths’ and the reality.

- *Myth:* Inserting one section on women fulfills the mandate to mainstream a gender perspective.
Reality: Mainstreaming a gender perspective involves changing how situations are analyzed. A brief profile of how and why women’s needs are different from those of men’s should be the starting point of the analysis, not the end. These basic insights should influence the understanding of the context and raise issues to be explored in each project component.
- *Myth:* “We have a women’s project and therefore we have mainstreamed gender.”
Reality: A gender mainstreaming strategy involves bringing a gender analysis to **all** initiatives, not just developing one minor, isolated subcomponent or project.
- *Myth:* “We’ve mainstreamed gender therefore we can’t have specific initiatives targeting women.”
Reality: A mainstreaming strategy does not preclude specific initiatives that are either targeted at women or at narrowing gender inequalities. In fact, concrete investments are generally required to protect women’s rights, provide capacity building to women’s NGOs, work with men on gender issues, etc. Many of these types of initiatives can best be funded through a separate initiative rather than as a subcomponent in a larger project.
- *Myth:* “We’re here to save lives, not ask whether or not someone is a woman or man before we provide assistance or to give priority to women over men.”
Reality: Using a gender perspective involves incorporating an understanding of how being male or female in a specific situation contributes to vulnerability and defines capacities. It is not a screening process to exclude those who need assistance from receiving support. There may be times when given their different priorities and needs, women and men will best be served through the provision of different resources. Furthermore, it may be necessary to make additional investments to ensure that women’s voices are heard (given inequalities in societies). But a gender mainstreaming strategy does not call for mechanistic ‘favouring’ of women over men.
- *Myth:* “All this talk of gender, but what they really mean is women.”
Reality: It is true that a lot of the work on gender in humanitarian assistance focuses on girls and women. That is primarily because it is women’s needs and interests that tend to be neglected by the international community. However, it is important that the analysis and discussion look at both sides of the gender equation. More research and attention is needed to understand how men’s roles, strategies, responsibilities and options are shaped by gender expectations during times of conflict and emergencies

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What to look for

Donor organizations are faced with numerous demands and issues when reviewing a CAP. This section provides some **initial** guidance on what to look for in a CAP to help determine the extent to which a gender perspective has been taken into account in both the analysis of the situation and design of initiatives. There are numerous issues, which could be explored, but this table provides a starting point for discussion.

A gender perspective goes beyond the identification of women and girls as vulnerable groups. Systematic mainstreaming calls for the attention to gender issues throughout all analysis, programming sectors

and reporting. It calls on agencies to ensure that women and men benefit equitably from initiatives, new resources and international investments. It also looks for opportunities to narrow gaps and gender inequalities.

The authors of the CAP documents make choices about what information to include. It is possible that even if an issue is not discussed in the CAP, there may be attention to these dimensions on the ground. However, the CAP document itself is the primary vehicle that donors have to assess agency performance and therefore it is appropriate to request adequate attention to these issues in the CAP itself.

Issue/Sector	What to look for (examples only)
In general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Is there disaggregation of affected populations/beneficiaries by sex and age? √ Is there any evidence that key issues outlined in a section on 'women and war' have influenced the selection of priorities or programme design? √ If 'gender' is a designated theme, is there a clear indication of what strategies will be used or what results relating to gender inequalities or differences are expected? √ Has there been any coordination of agencies on gender issues? √ Has there been any training of staff or efforts to build capacity in this area? √ Have any lessons been documented from previous years relating to specific gender issues and strategies? √ Do the gender elements in the CAP only consist of specific, targeted initiatives or has a gender perspective also been used throughout major initiatives?
Issues of specific concern from a gender equality perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Have both women and men been consulted (to the extent possible) on priorities, needs and capabilities? √ Has there been attention to the systematic reporting of and appropriate responses to gender-violence and sexual exploitation? √ What specific steps have been taken to overcome the barriers that prevent women from playing a meaningful role in decision-making? √ Has there been specific support to women's organizations and to the involvement of women's in peace negotiations, peace processes and reconstruction? √ Where there is work with national institutions (such as the Ministry of Agriculture), is there a component to strengthen the capacities of these institutions to work on gender issues?

Issue/Sector	What to look for (examples only)
Identification of vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Is there recognition that all vulnerable groups are usually made of men, women, boys and girls and that their vulnerabilities may be influenced by gender? √ Are women listed as a vulnerable group without attention to how women's vulnerabilities are also influenced by whether or not they are displaced, head a household, under the age of 15, etc.
Food and agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Have men and women been consulted in the design and distribution of food aid? √ Has there been a recognition of the roles of women in caring for families and dependents? √ Have women's roles in agriculture been identified and supported?
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Is there recognition of women's and men's roles and needs relating to reproductive health care? √ Are the resources allocated to meet agency guidelines on reproductive health (for example, as outlined in the inter-agency field manual)? Have staff received training in use of the manual? √ Are the health priorities of women who are not mothers taken into consideration? √ Has there been attention to the psychosocial well-being of women and men? √ Do HIV/AIDS programmes recognize and respond to women's and men's needs and situations?
Water and sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Are water and sanitation programmes based on an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and needs of women and girls in ensuring domestic water supplies? √ Women are often hold the primary responsibility for water collection and use – have they been involved in setting priorities and making decisions about water supply programmes. √ One prerequisite for successful sanitation programmes in 'ordinary circumstances is women's involvement'. Has this 'lesson learned' been applied?
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Do education programmes reach girls as well as boys? √ Has attention been paid to the different obstacles face by girls and boys in attending schools? √ Are both women and men mobilized as teachers? √ Do adult education/vocational training programmes target both women and men?
Protection of human rights and rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Is there explicit recognition of women's rights has human rights? Do human rights programmes explicitly target women's rights? √ Do human rights workers have experience in dealing with abuses of women's rights? √ Is there capacity building for both women's organizations and human rights organizations on women's rights?
Economic recovery and reconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Do mainstream economic reconstruction programmes provide opportunities for women as well as men? Are there strategies to minimize obstacles to their participation? √ Are there opportunities for women to learn skills in non-traditional fields?
Children/Child protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Is there recognition of the different needs and resources of girls and boys?

This note was prepared for the Donor Retreat on Consolidated Appeals Process and Co-ordination in Humanitarian Assistance, Montreux Switzerland by CIDA/MHA Division (March 2001)

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Mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals *Mandates, Policies and International Agreements*

□ **Security Council Resolution 1325
(Women, Peace and Security) October
2000**

Among other steps, this resolution calls for the recognition of the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction.

Available at:
http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf

□ **Outcomes Document – Beijing +5 (New
York, 2000)**

Actions to be taken at the international level... by the United Nations system and international and regional organizations:

Para 86 (a) Assist Governments, upon request, in developing gender-sensitive strategies for the delivery of assistance and, where appropriate, responses to humanitarian crises resulting from armed conflict and natural disasters.

Full text available at:
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/as2310rev1.pdf>

□ **IASC Policy *Mainstreaming gender in the humanitarian response to emergencies*. IASC Meeting April 1999**

The IASC commits itself to ensuring that its member organizations take the following actions

a) Formulate specific strategies for ensuring that gender issues are brought into the mainstream of activities within the IASC areas of responsibility. Priority areas are: assessment and strategic planning for humanitarian crisis; the consolidated appeals process; principled

approach to emergencies; and participation of women in the planning, designing and monitoring of all aspects of emergency programs.

b) Ensure data disaggregated by sex and age and include a gender perspective in analysis of information. Produce gender-sensitive operational studies, best practices, guidelines and checklists for programming, as well as the establishment of instruments and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, such as gender-impact methodologies, in order to incorporate gender analysis techniques in institutional tools and procedures;

c) Develop capacity for systematic gender mainstreaming in programmes, policies, actions, and training;

d) Ensure reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming within the UN and partners, such as incentives, performance evaluations, MOUs, budget allocation analysis and actions for redressing staff imbalance.

Full text of the Policy is available at:
<http://www.reliefweb.int/iasc/Documents/wg36>

□ **ECOSOC's 1998 Humanitarian Affairs segment**

The agreed conclusions requested the Emergency Relief Coordinator to "ensure that a gender perspective is fully integrated into humanitarian activities and policies." (E/1998/L.15 of 16 July 1998)

□ **ECOSOC Agreed Conclusion on Gender Mainstreaming**

The strategy of mainstreaming is defined in the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, 1997/2, as "...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."

□ **Beijing Platform for Action (1995):
Critical Area of Concern: Women and
Armed Conflict.**

Strategic Objectives:

E.1 - Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.

E.3 - Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.

E.4 - Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.

E.5 - Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.

Full text available at:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/armed.htm>

□ **UNHCR - Sexual Violence Against
Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention
and Response (1995)**

Drawing on UNHCR Executive
Committee Conclusion No. 73 (XLIV)

(1993), these guidelines outline issues, provide definitions, set out preventive measures and offer practical guidelines to respond to incidents.

□ **The Vienna Declaration and
Programme of Action (1993).**

Article 38: Violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law. All violations of this kind, including in particular murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery, and forced pregnancy, require a particularly effective response.

For complete text see:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu5/d/vienna.htm>

□ **UNHCR - Guidelines on the Protection
of Refugee Women (1991)**

These guidelines were prepared to "help the staff of UNHCR and its implementing partners to identify the specific protection issues, problems and risks facing refugee women."

□ **Convention on the Elimination of All
Forms of Discrimination Against
Women (CEDAW)**

This Convention was adopted in 1979 and commits signatories to eliminate discrimination against women.

The full text of the Convention is available at:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/frame.htm>

□ **Declaration on the Protection of
Women and Children in Emergency
and Armed Conflict (1974).**

Available at: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/24.htm>.