



# COORDINATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN EMERGENCIES

**C**oordination is essential to effective programming and response. When it comes to addressing the gender dimension of humanitarian responses, joint planning — the exchange of information and collaboration across the UN system and with international actors, including NGOs and local civil society — is crucial.

Establishing a **Gender Support Network (GenNet)** is one means of improving coordination (see Box 1 on page 29), particularly where there are designated gender advisers and organizations that have specific expertise. The main purpose of the network is to facilitate dialogue, making sure that people are informed of key issues and developments in terms of the changing roles, needs and conditions of women, girls, boys and men in the affected community. It is a means of encouraging more integration of gender perspectives into all programmes.

## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE

Gender equality is not a sector on its own. It is integral to every issue and area of work. It is not a stand-alone matter.

A GenNet comprises representatives from the government, civil society, NGOs and UN agencies both at the national and local levels. However, a network is only as effective as its members and if the participants are not at a senior enough level or do not have experience in gender-related issues they cannot be fully effective.

In complex or large-scale emergencies, an inter-agency **gender expert or adviser to the Humanitarian Coordinator** is also necessary to provide technical support and guidance to practitioners, and to help adjust program-

ming to ensure better coordination and integration of gender perspectives. (See Box 2, page 30, for Terms of Reference for Gender Experts.)

**So why do we have gender advisers?** Gender advisers can provide advice and guidance to other technical experts. They can help to think, plan and design assessments and interventions so that gender dimensions are not lost. They can point to gaps in information and data. Often they are knowledgeable about existing local women's organizations that can provide additional information and ideas for addressing difficult problems. Through the GenNet they can ensure that there is communication across sectors.

**Isn't the gender adviser responsible for gender issues?** No. Often we assume that the gender adviser on the team is responsible for all things related to gender. But that's a recipe for failure. Gender advisers are facilitators of a process — they are there to help technical staff to see things with a gender lens, to question how things are being implemented so that the needs of women, girls, boys and men are being met. They are not there to do all of the work related to gender — that would defeat the purpose of mainstreaming.

In addition to the GenNet and the gender adviser, it is important that all actors, as they coordinate, assess, prioritize and implement programmes, continually ask the basic questions — are they addressing the differential needs of women, girls, boys and men; are they including women and men in decision-making, drawing and building on their capacities? Whether it is among health workers, food delivery services, human rights observers, water and sanitation experts or mine action staff, these questions are pertinent to ensuring an effective response.

### A ROSTER OF GENDER ADVISERS

The IASC has established in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) a gender roster (GenCap) which has two full-time Senior Gender Advisers as well as a stand-by roster to ensure that gender equality programming is fully mainstreamed in all humanitarian action. The advisers will be deployed to support the Humanitarian Coordinator, the humanitarian country teams and gender networks.

The gender advisers can be deployed to the Humanitarian Coordinator's office or to a United Nations agency. For more information, please visit [www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/gender](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/gender)

## WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE COORDINATION ON GENDER ISSUES?

No single intervention, individual actor or organization can effectively address the diverse needs of women and men alone, particularly if other entities in the field are not sensitive to these gender differences. To be effective it is important to:

- **Assess the situation and needs together:** Because gender issues cut across all areas of work, it is useful and important to analyse the social, political, economic and military environments as they affect women, girls, boys and men differently, as well as their immediate survival needs. This provides better understanding of
- **Develop common strategies:** Assistance is most effective when all the actors and partners share goals and are able to identify common priorities. When it comes to analysing gender dimensions, the failure to establish common priorities can lead to short-term projects being developed without seeing how they can be scaled up to address needs more widely. Besides developing common strategies, actors should develop common tools for gender analysis and assessment and evaluation of the degree of gender sensitivity in programming.
- **Convene coordinating forums:** Meetings with all actors, including donors, local and government representatives and humanitarian workers, are necessary to map out response activities. The meetings can help not only to raise awareness among stakeholders about the differential needs of women, girls, boys and men, but also to ensure that these perspectives are helping to inform and shape interventions in all sectors.
- **Set aside adequate funds for coordination:** To achieve this, it is important that coordination mechanisms are taken into consideration when developing the budget for an intervention.

## CHECKLIST TO ASSESS GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMMING IN COORDINATION

The checklist below provides a useful tool to remind sector actors of key issues to ensure gender equality programming. In addition, project staff should develop context-specific indicators to measure progress in gender equality programming. Refer to the sample indicators in the Basics Chapter.

### CHECKLIST TO ASSESS GENDER COORDINATION EFFORTS IN EMERGENCIES

1. One or more gender experts are deployed in the emergency situation.
2. Gender networks are established on both the national and local levels, with representation from all clusters/sectors. It meets regularly and systematically assesses and reports on the gender dimensions of each area of work, as well as gaps and progress in achieving its Terms of Reference.
3. Disaggregated data are collected, analysed and used in planning and implementation.
4. Gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data are a routine part of an agency's reporting mechanisms.
5. Each sector/cluster has a gender action plan and routinely reports on the status of gender indicators provided in the IASC Gender Handbook.
6. Gender dimensions are integrated into the trainings provided to field actors in all sectors/clusters and cross-cutting issues.

the dynamics and impact of an emergency or crisis, and enables field practitioners to identify practical ways in which they can work together. Ensure the participation of local actors and take measures to build the capacity of field staff as well as local actors on gender analysis and programming.

**BOX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A GENDER NETWORK IN HUMANITARIAN SITUATIONS****Purpose:**

The Gender Network (GenNet) will support and undertake activities to ensure that the gender dimensions of all clusters/sectors in emergency situations are being addressed.

**Chair:** An agency with strong gender expertise or a co-chairing arrangement is a good option.

**Composition:**

- All sector and cluster leads should send senior representatives to the GenNet.
- Membership should include local women's groups, NGOs and UN and government representatives from various ministries.

**Activities:**

- Ensure that a gender analysis of the situation has been carried out and documented for all actors to use.
- Promote networking and information sharing on the gender dimensions of all assistance and protection areas of work.
- Use the IASC Gender Handbook as a tool to provide guidance on gender mainstreaming in the various clusters/sectors.
- Increase public awareness and advocate for gender-related issues.
- Ensure the availability and use of sex-disaggregated data. Assist in the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and train actors as needed.
- Support partnerships between civil society organizations, the government and the UN/NGO community.
- Assist in preparing gender-sensitive action plans for each sector/cluster.
- Provide training as needed on the gender dimensions of emergency situations.
- Routinely meet and provide reports to the Humanitarian Coordinator.
- Routinely monitor the progress in gender mainstreaming by using the checklist in the IASC Gender Handbook.

**BOX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A GENDER ADVISER IN HUMANITARIAN SITUATIONS**

The overall goal of the Gender Adviser in a humanitarian crisis is to support the Humanitarian Coordinator's role in promoting gender equality and non-discrimination throughout the humanitarian operation. The expected output would be strengthened gender-sensitive programming and implementation in the first phases of emergency relief on the basis of improved data and analysis.

**Major tasks include:***Technical Leadership/Support on Gender Mainstreaming*

- Conducts (and/or consolidates) a rapid gender analysis of situations, with particular attention to the situation of women and girls, and uses this information to develop gender action plans of various sectors in cooperation with partners.
- Provides technical support to the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data throughout all humanitarian programmes, in partnership with the Humanitarian Information Centre and others.
- Promotes and facilitates the inclusion of gender dimensions into needs assessment frameworks and assists implementing actors to incorporate gender equality in CAP, Flash and other appeal processes and documents.
- Facilitates and supports the integration of gender perspectives in the various sectors/clusters by providing direct technical policy and programmatic support to various sector actors in order to improve service delivery.
- Promotes use of the IASC *Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action* and the IASC *Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings* in all sectors/clusters and monitors the progress in gender mainstreaming by using the framework and checklists in the gender handbook and guidelines, adapting the checklist to the specific socio-cultural context and target group.
- Routinely provides the Humanitarian Coordinator with updated assessments of the situation and briefing materials for his/her advocacy with national authorities to ensure that international and national legal and policy commitments are given priority for implementation.
- Advises and assists in the development of gender-sensitive training orientation materials, adapts existing training resources to the local context and supports their integration into internal and external training initiatives in the relevant language(s).

*Networking and Partnerships*

- Facilitates the smooth coordination of an inter-agency gender network.
- Liaises with gender advisers and gender focal points in other agencies and organizations (including governments, INGOs, local NGOs and women's groups) and in peacekeeping missions in country.
- Provides support to cluster leads to fulfil gender commitments as articulated in the Cluster Lead Terms of Reference.
- Builds strategic alliances with other key actors internally and externally to advocate for gender-sensitive programming.

*Advocacy*

- Provides information to relevant actors for related national and international awareness-raising and advocacy efforts.
- Advocates for adequate allocation of human and financial resources for effective gender mainstreaming as well as targeted gender equality and women's and girls' rights programmes in agencies' budgets.