

# CHILD PROTECTION

## WHY DOES GENDER EQUALITY MATTER IN CHILD PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS?

Child protection refers to the prevention of and response to violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and boys, including commercial sexual exploitation, exploitative child labour—including recruitment to armed groups—and harmful traditional practices including child marriage. Child protection is focused on all children under 18 and therefore addresses the varying and evolving needs and capacities of girls and boys of various age groups, from infancy and early childhood to early, middle and late adolescence. Building a protective environment for children involves understanding the distinct nature and the extent of violence, exploitation and abuse that girls and boys experience. It also involves ensuring that all response activities take into account the different needs, concerns, and evolving capacities of girls and boys. This includes activities to; strengthen government commitment and capacity; promote the establishment and enforcement of adequate legislation; address harmful attitudes, customs and practices; encourage open discussion on child protection issues in the community and broader society; develop children’s life skills, knowledge and participation; building capacity of families and communities; provide essential services prevention, recovery and reintegration, including basic health, education and protection; and implement on-going and effective monitoring, reporting and oversight.

Children and adolescents in emergencies may be at particular risk of violence, exploitation and abuse given their level of dependence, their limited ability to protect themselves and their limited and relative power and participation in decision-making processes. The violence and exploitation that children experience is often gendered and has different impact according to sex and age. Because they have had relatively little experience of life, children are more easily exploited, tricked or coerced than adults.

Projects that analyse and take into consideration the needs, priorities and capacities of girls and boys of different ages are far more likely to improve the lives and dignity of those affected by conflict or disaster. 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 child protection 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 child protection services 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 CHILD PROTECTION PROJECTS NEEDS ASSESSMENTS	
✓	Demographic information on the affected population, including estimates on separated and unaccompanied children and adolescents, children previously in institutional care. All data to be disaggregated by sex and age insofar as is possible.
✓	Existing traditional community systems for response to child protection issues.
✓	Mapping of the organisations present and the types of child protection services and activities already underway.
✓	Overview of child protection issues in the affected area/within the affected population, including populations at higher risk, any available data about incidents of violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and boys.
✓	Existing multi-sectoral prevention and response action (coordination, referral mechanisms, etc.).
GENDER IN CHILD PROTECTION PROJECT ACTIVITIES	
✓	Organise single-sex, age-segmented focus group discussions to illicit perceptions of violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and boys from women/girls and men/boys, as well as the kinds of services that they require and that would be culturally appropriate.
✓	Support all child protection partners to ensure that they collect information by sex and age.
✓	Support all partners in registration, health and education in receiving, interviewing and responding to separated and unaccompanied girls and boys and child-headed households.
GENDER IN CHILD PROTECTION PROJECT OUTCOMES	
✓	Girls, boys of all ages are involved equally in developing culturally-appropriate, age-targeted, gender-responsive child protection messages for radio, poster campaigns, etc.
✓	Safety in the camp has been enhanced: peer monitors report a decrease in sexual violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and boys in the camp than was reported at project launch.
✓	NGOs who implement child protection activities have participated in child interview skills training (% of M/F trainees).
✓	[NGO], who implement the registration function at [camp], is routinely collecting registration data by sex and age

## DESIGNING MINIMUM GENDER COMMITMENTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION:

In order to translate the cluster and organisational commitments to gender-responsive Child Protection 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 incorporate the FOUR Ds (Disaggregate, Define, Distinguish, and describe) and draw on elements of the ADAPT and ACT-C Gender Equality Framework, and are provided as samples only:*

- 1. Disaggregate – there can be no assumptions without analysis of the sex and age of child victims or children at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse. Use evidence-based analysis to specify who in the crisis-affected community – girls or boys, female or male adolescents - is most at-risk of the form(s) of violence, exploitation and/or abuse to be addressed.**

Sample Activities	Sample Indicators
<i>Organise single-sex, age-segmented focus group discussions with girls and boys, women and men to illicit an understanding about violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and boys in [camp/area] and the kinds of services that girls and boys of different ages require and that would be culturally appropriate.</i>	<i>Single-sex, age-segmented focus group discussions on the nature, extent, risk factors and response to violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and boys have been conducted with girls, boys, women and men in [name] camps; Analysis for risks and vulnerabilities by sex and age group has been undertaken</i>

- 2. Define the forms of violence, exploitation and abuse that are to be addressed by the project, e.g. sexual violence and exploitation, child marriage, abduction and recruitment of boys and girls into armed groups, DDR activities for former boy- and/or girl-combatants.**

Sample Activities	Sample Indicators
<i>Conduct a coordinated rapid situational analysis</i>	<i>A coordinated rapid situational analysis involving female and male assessors and affected persons is conducted by [date] and defines the nature and extent of violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and boys of different ages in [camp/region].</i>

- 3. Distinguish the risk factors of the form(s) of violence, exploitation and abuse to be addressed. Be specific about the factors that increase girls' and boys' risk of exposure to the violence, exploitation and abuse to be addressed.**

Sample Activities	Sample Indicators
<i>Through a series of meetings, liaise with other Clusters such as WASH, CCCM, Shelter &amp; NFIs, Protection, Health, etc., to discuss the possible risk factors that may increase girls' and boys' exposure to violence, exploitation and abuse</i>	<i>Meetings have been conducted with each of the Clusters to discuss possible factors that could contribute to an unsafe environment for girls and for boys of different ages in [name of camp/area] and recommendations made to address these.</i>

- 4. Describe the type of action(s) proposed – preventative, responsive, environment building and the actors involved**

Sample Activity	Sample Indicator
<i>Consolidate and analysis data from coordinated rapid situational analysis, single-sex focus discussions, secondary data and reports on violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and boys in [area], mapping exercises, meetings with other Clusters, etc., and confirm specific focus – prevention, response and/or environment building of the project.</i>	<i>All available data has been consolidated and analysed and a clear strategy confirmed for the focus of the project.</i>

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

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)