



Responsibilities and potential initiatives for OCHA field offices relating to gender equality

6

This tool on the responsibility for gender mainstreaming in the Humanitarian Coordinator's terms of reference provides a starting point for OCHA offices.

At the field level, the OCHA's gender policy can be supported through the following types of initiatives.

1. Incorporating gender dimensions in information and analysis: OCHA will support the humanitarian community's analysis of the gender dimensions of capacities and vulnerabilities thus contributing to an improved understanding of emergencies. Specific actions at the field level include:

- Encourage agencies to use sex-disaggregated data;
- Encourage the use of multiple sources of information and identify good sources of information on gender-related and/or women's issues;
- Promote awareness of possible biases in information collected (for example, if women were not consulted, do these priorities really reflect the needs and priorities of this community);
- Promote the greater use of women and women's organisations as sources of information (during missions, for example);
- Ensure that situation reports include relevant information and analysis;
- Ensure that missions have the mandate to both talk to women and to investigate women's specific protection needs;
- Ensure that major information 'products' (such as contingency reports, affected population reports, etc.) include sex-disaggregated data, look at women's rights, and highlight any important issues that come to light through a gender analysis;
- Distribute and use sector-specific tools that assist in understanding gender dimensions in each sector (i.e. water, education, etc.).

2. Gender mainstreaming in humanitarian coordination: OCHA will work to ensuring that humanitarian assistance recognizes and responds to the protection and assistance needs of women and girls, as well as men and boys. Specific actions at the field level include:

- Ensure that the CAP includes a gender analysis and that the proposed initiatives respond to this analysis;
- As part of the CAP:
 - encourage agencies to come to the table with sex-disaggregated statistics and a complete analysis of gender dimensions (in the country and within their specific programming proposals),
 - ensure that there is sufficient time in the training and writing process to incorporate gender dimensions, and
 - provide supporting expertise to assist with this aspect of the analysis/CAP;
- Encourage the formation of an inter-agency theme group on gender issues.
- Identify gaps in the response of the humanitarian community (relating to access to women and girls, understanding of intra-household dynamics, protection needs and priorities for women and girls, etc.), and point them out to partners;
- Request support from New York and Geneva (including tools, guidelines, checklists, etc.) and ensure their distribution in-country;
- Ensure that contingency planning exercises incorporate gender dimensions;



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- Encourage accountability between beneficiaries and international actors;
- Promote standards of conduct of UN humanitarian personnel (consistent with the Secretary-General's Bulletin);
- In coordination forums – encourage participation of agencies and NGOs with expertise on gender issues and provide an item on the agenda for discussion of these issues.

3. Gender mainstreaming in humanitarian policy and evaluation. Although policy tends to be developed centrally, there is a role for OCHA field representatives:

- Ensure gender perspectives are part of terms of reference for local evaluations and studies;
- Highlight the gender dimensions of protection within Protection of Civilian initiatives (this could include the specific protection needs of women or the vulnerabilities of young men);

4. Gender mainstreaming in humanitarian advocacy. OCHA representatives can advocate for the rights of women and girls, including their equitable participation in emergency and reconstruction initiatives. Potential initiatives at the field level include:

- With humanitarian actors: remind them of international commitments to work on gender issues and promote women's rights;
- With governments: remind them of international commitments (that they are often party to) on women's rights (such as CEDAW) and on the importance of recognizing how humanitarian assistance can affect women/girls differently than men/boys. Specific issues can include the education of girls and women's participation in decision-making;
- With all: Promote the Road Map and Aide Memoire on Protection of Civilians (with specific emphasis on the steps promoting women's rights);
- With donors: Urge donors to be consistent and provide adequate support (financial and political) to ensure the implementation of international commitments (including SC Resolution 1325, CEDAW, IASC Policy on Gender Mainstreaming in Humanitarian Assistance, etc.);
- With donors: Urge donors to fully fund agencies and initiatives which consistently use a gender analysis in the design of their initiatives, support women as actors in humanitarian crises, and promote women's rights;
- With all: Urge respect for international law regarding sexual and gender-based violence;
- With women's organisations: Undertake ongoing dialogue with women's organisations to learn from their experiences, understand their priorities and lend political support to their initiatives;
- Promote an inter-agency approach to mark specific events, such as International Women's Day (March 8th), the anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325, international days to end violence against women.

5. Field Office Action Plan. Each field office should develop a short, manageable action plan to support gender mainstreaming.

These action plans should:

- Be short and concise.
- Contain concrete and realizable actions. (Rather than develop an 'ideal' plan which will remain in a drawer, the idea is to focus on several concrete actions that can realistically be achieved).
- Recognize the CAP as a principle OCHA tool and support efforts to ensure a gender perspective in the analysis and in the recommended initiatives of partners.
- Be shared among country offices in order to generate positive examples of what can be done
- Be supported by PDSB and the new gender mainstreaming adviser (field offices should not be expected to develop these plans without support).
- Involve consultation with local women's organisations, government institutions responsible for women's rights/gender equality and humanitarian partners. (There will be other actors interested in strengthening the work of the humanitarian community on this theme.)
- Aim to see how attention to gender issues in humanitarian assistance can be part of the ongoing work of the field office that has clear value added (rather than 'one more isolated tasks that is only required for bureaucratic reasons).
- Be incorporated into the Office's regular work plan and strategic planning process.