

Emergency Shelter: Gender Mainstreaming Tip Sheet

Gender Equality in Emergency Project Design

There are three key entry points for Shelter clusters to address gender equality in project design. These are in (1) the project background / needs assessment' (2) in the activities, and (3) in the outcomes. A project will offer clear benefits to both men and women when differences between them are documented and addressed in these three sections, with a view to increasing equality. This chart gives examples of how to bring gender in at each stage, resulting in fully mainstreamed projects.¹

(1) Needs Assessment	<p>A needs assessment is the essential first step in providing shelter that is safe and acceptable in the eyes of men/boys and women/girls. It is critical to understand the social and gender dynamics that could help or hinder getting shelter as 'right' as possible. . This is why we need to consider the different roles and perceptions of both men and women ("gender analysis") in understanding shelter needs.</p> <p>Here are examples of questions that can enrich the design of shelter projects. They also demonstrate to donors that you have fully considered gender differences in designing the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the demographics of the target group? (# of women, girls, boys and men, # single family households disaggregated by sex, number of M/F unaccompanied children, elderly, disabled, people living with HIV/AIDS) • What do women, girls, boys and men <i>do</i> in their home/shelter? (e.g. domestic chores, personal hygiene, income generation, care-giving) What space, privacy and design features do they need to allow them to do these tasks with dignity and as much comfort as possible? • If women, girls, boys and men could suggest three design features of their shelter, what would they be? • What knowledge do women, girls, boys and men bring to shelter material selection, collection and construction? (e.g. making bricks, weaving bush-material partitions) • How can there be equitable sharing of the paid and unpaid tasks in shelter construction or repair? • What concerns do women, girls, men and boys have about their personal safety related to housing? What needs to be done so they feel safe? • Do cultural norms enable women and men to participate equally in decision-making on shelter issues, or is affirmative action needed so women can participate in a meaningful way? • Are there discriminatory practices or laws that disadvantage either men/boys or women/girls, or vulnerable subgroups of either sex, related to the allocation of shelter sites, rooms in collective accommodation or access to land for housing? • Are there measures in place to ensure, (1) there is no sexual violence due to poor shelter conditions, and (2) women, girls, men and boys with special shelter needs or vulnerabilities are prioritized and supported?
(2) Activities	<p>The analysis of differences between men/women/boys/girls in your needs assessment will identify problems or gaps that need to be addressed. These should be dealt with in the activities. Examples:</p> <p>Problem: In the previous emergency shelter response, shelter teams assumed that women prefer to cook outside. Emergency shelters and some early-constructed</p>

¹ See the *IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action: Women, Girls, Boys and Men – Different Needs/Equal Opportunities*, pp.97-104

houses were built with no kitchen. Soon, women and their families were scrambling to find any possible material to cobble together an extension to shade their cooking areas. If women had been asked, they would have explained that they do not cook in the open in monsoon rains or oppressive heat. The assessment team heard about this and other design problems from women reflecting on previous emergency and transitional shelter.

Response Activities: Ensure women and girls have equal voice with beneficiary men and boys in all shelter and housing design.

Problem: The needs assessment team found many men and women skeptical about the housing response. They related stories from an earlier cyclone response, where implementers built elaborate houses for some and basic, sometimes shoddy, houses for others. This caused jealousy and problems with community harmony. Women, who spend most time in and around their homes, were the most distressed.

Response Activities: Ensure gender and social dynamics are assessed and that all shelter cluster partners agree on shelter standards and an equitable response.

Problem: The needs assessment shows that pre-crisis about 20% of the earthquake-affected women operated home-based micro businesses. These businesses made important contributions to their families' incomes. Before the crisis, most men migrated for seasonal work, but rushed home after the earthquake to look after their families.

Response Activities: (1) In the emergency response phase, work with women to identify and allocate appropriate space for their income-earning activities. Ensure the design of transition and permanent housing accommodates, and does not restrict, women's home-based business. (2) Ensure that men's seasonal and migrant opportunities, and any disaster-related disruption of this income, are appropriately factored into shelter cluster jobs and training.

Problem: The first dormitories and tents have been erected, and more IDPs are streaming in; more shelter will be needed. Elections have been held for shelter leaders at each of the already constructed shelters; at one shelter these were held just before meal time, while women were preparing food in the communal kitchen. Within a week of the election, one of the male leaders was publicly boasting to army patrols that, for a fee, they could have a 'feast' of the women in the women's shelter he was responsible for. There was rape and harassment for three nights before the women identified who they could complain to, and had the courage to defy the 'shelter leader'. The pimping leader was removed, but doing so caused tension and fighting among beneficiaries.

Response Activities: (1) Ensure gender-responsive shelter management. This includes, for example, (a) facilitating beneficiary men and women to identify the characteristics of good leaders before they elect their shelter leaders, including equal numbers of men and women; (b) holding meetings and elections at appropriate times and places so both women and men can participate, and (c) facilitating female and male shelter residents to create a code of conduct for their shelter.

This case study also points out the critical need for links between the shelter and protection clusters. Collaboration is needed to ensure there are mechanisms in place to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, hold perpetrators accountable, and provide education on human rights.

Initial needs assessments are key to getting the response right. However, the best way to get insightful monitoring as situations change is to train both female and male beneficiaries as monitors, and facilitate their equal voice and compensation.

<p>(3) Outcomes</p>	<p>Avoid outcome statements that focus on ‘IDPs,’ ‘households,’ ‘camp populations,’ – terms that hide whether male and females benefit equally. Outcomes should capture the changes experienced by the men and women who are the identified beneficiaries, as well as any change in relations between them. Outcome statements should, wherever possible, be worded so any difference in outcomes for males and females or in male-female relations is visible. This will ensure monitoring and accountability for project impacts on women as well as men.</p> <p>Examples of gender outcomes: (the importance of the words in italics is explained)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism and damage to collective shelters is low, compared to earlier in-country emergencies, due to <i>women and men having input into shelter design and shelter monitoring.</i> <p><i>Signals that male-female partnership matters: people will take more pride of ownership and care, even in a collective shelter, if males and females have a meaningful role in design and operation.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making and responsibilities related to shelter are being <i>shared more equally by beneficiary women and men.</i> <p><i>May reflect (1) more communication or more respectful, harmonious relations between men and women, and (2) reduced gender imbalance in decision-making or work-sharing related to shelter.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of shelter facilities has been enhanced after camp management responded to <i>M/F protection requests</i> (e.g. partitions, lighting and closer water distribution sites). <p><i>Recognizes that women/girls and men/boys know what is needed to make their shelter safe.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a decrease in <i>gender-based violence (# incidents against women, girls, boys and men)</i> in tent communities due to hourly <i>male-female</i> night patrols. <p><i>Recognizes that respected men and respected women both have authority and influence on reducing bad behaviour. Although women and girls are often the primary targets of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, boys and men are also victims. Separate data by sex and age allows focused response.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDP satisfaction with shelter programming has increased since <i>a women-managed fund</i> was created for shelter improvements. <p><i>Respects women’s leadership and knowledge of household management and maintenance that is relevant to women’s or communal family shelters.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys document increase <i>female</i> participation in camp activities (e.g. <i>women in committees and public meetings / girls in school and youth clubs</i>) due, in part, to (1) regular distribution of <i>hygiene kits to females</i> of reproductive age and, (2) schools, meetings, and activity venues being considered <i>safe and accessible.</i> <p><i>Recognizes that without sanitary protection women and girls are embarrassed to participate in activities out of the home. Meeting places (open-air, tents or buildings) must create a secure and comfortable environment for all beneficiaries: poor representation of a particular group is often linked to fears they will not be safe at, or on the way to and from the activity venue.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO capacity for shelter response and preparedness has been enhanced by having both women and men on their implementing teams (%M/F). <p><i>Indicates whether or not NGOs are succeeding in building this competency in both women and men, as well as their progress toward a gender balance in trainees.</i></p>
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Shelter Projects – Gender Mainstreaming & Targeted Actions

Most projects in the Shelter sector should fully mainstream gender. In summary, this requires:

- A robust needs assessment that explores relevant gender issues;
- A number of the project’s activities that address the different needs and realities of male and female project beneficiaries;
- A number of outcomes that capture the different changes for men compared to women or boys compared to girls (gender changes) generated by the project AND/OR changes in male-female relations.

Targeted Actions to Address Inequality

At times there may also be a need to develop a program that targets and benefits only ONE group of beneficiaries. This type of project does not try to address the different needs of women, girls, boys and men (“mainstreaming” gender issues). Rather it tries to address and resolve gender inequalities by focusing on a particular group that is experiencing discrimination, or for other reasons requires targeted action.

Example – Bringing women into the shelter sector

The needs analysis identified that evacuation centers had high populations of women and low numbers of men; poverty levels were high but few income opportunities existed for women; there was a shortage of skilled and unskilled shelter construction workers; and some women were interested in being trained and working in construction. Activities included construction skills training for 60 women; formation, mentoring and site supervision of all-female shelter construction crews; providing tools, equipment and supplies evacuation centers.

Outcomes of these activities all respond to the practical and strategic² needs of these disadvantaged women. The project advances gender equality by helping members of the disadvantaged sex, which in this case are women. Potential outcomes are that,

- The local construction sector is better able to respond to shelter demands due to the creation of trained, motivated female construction crews;
- The shelter needs of X IDPs (% M/F) are being addressed with construction of 10 standard-quality emergency shelters built by female beneficiaries;
- Surveys show that the female crews are regarded as positive role models in local communities.

Addressing Gender-based Violence

All sectors need to consider violence, particularly violence against women, and identify ways their activities can mitigate and prevent it.

Example – Development of a gender-responsive shelter model

The project will develop a model of affordable, user-friendly emergency shelter appropriate for women, men, girls and boys, frequently and repeatedly displaced by seasonal cyclones. The needs assessment leading to this project showed a long history of different types emergency shelter and evacuation responses to a regular and predictable danger. Evaluations showed that previous shelter responses and/or evacuation centre experiences that did not address the different needs and expectations of males and females, contributed to high levels of tension, violence, wife beating and child abuse. The core of the project is people friendly shelter which meets the needs of women, girls, boys and men. Activities include research, consultation, development and piloting. Each activity is designed to have equal numbers of male and female participants involved (both as beneficiaries and technical experts), and each activity starts by examining the different roles and perceptions of women/girls/boys/men (“gender analysis”). Sex-disaggregated data and gender issues will be documented throughout the development and piloting of the shelter model. All activities and outcomes are designed to create emergency shelter that is equally satisfactory for males and females. The project will reduce the gender-based violence that is worsened by poorly designed shelter. All activities and outcomes will contribute to gender equality.

² See section on “practical and strategic needs”, in *IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action: Women, Girls, Boys and Men – Different Needs/Equal Opportunities*, p.3.