



# TIPSHEET

## PROTECTION AND FOOD SECURITY<sup>1</sup>



Updated January 2018<sup>2</sup>

Humanitarian protection is about improving safety, well-being and dignity for crisis-affected populations. Protection refers not only to what we do, but also the way we do it. These principles include:



Humanitarian protection also includes being aware of specific protection issues that arise in disasters and emergencies, but do not fall within a particular sectoral or organisational mandate or capacity. These issues require information-sharing, advocacy or referral to specialized actors for appropriate response. Such issues include:

- Child protection concerns (e.g. identifying and assisting separated and unaccompanied children);
- Gender-based violence;
- Sexual exploitation and abuse; and
- Protection of people with disabilities (e.g. physical, neurological or mental); people displaced by disaster; and other vulnerable groups.

Protection problems may include discrimination, violence, abuse, exploitation, deliberate deprivation or neglect of vulnerable individuals or groups (e.g. religious and ethnic minorities; people with disabilities; women; children; youth; older people; and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics - SOGIESC) within the affected population. Some of these issues may have existed in the community before the disaster, and may increase with the shock and stress of the disaster. Others may arise due to humanitarian assistance and the way in which emergency relief activities are designed and delivered (e.g. inappropriate, inaccessible or unfair distributions).

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*Assistance or services provided must be (i) appropriate and accessible to all those in need within a population and (ii) provided in a manner that does not expose vulnerable people to further risk of harm.*

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Disasters affect people differently based on their age, gender, disability and many other factors. Vulnerable individuals or groups face different risks and barriers to accessing assistance and services before, during and after a disaster. These diverse needs should be reflected in assessments and response actions across all sectors. Below is a non-exhaustive list providing initial guidance in supporting protection-oriented relief and recovery activities.

### **General Protection Considerations for Food Security**

- Identify which government agencies and other national actors are responsible for the provision of assistance and take steps to work together with the responsible government authority or authorities.
- Identify the most vulnerable individuals or groups within the community and be aware of specific needs of all groups according to age and gender. Use this information to guide the design and delivery of assistance to ensure the most vulnerable can access assistance in safety and dignity.
- Disaggregate beneficiary data by sex and age.
- Communicate information on relief and recovery activities to the affected population in a range of formats (e.g. radio, TV, newspaper), and in the local language, to ensure accurate and timely information reaches the most vulnerable.
- Ensure all employees and contractors are inducted in your organization's child safeguarding policy (i.e. rules and a clear set of behaviours when dealing with children which is binding on all staff) and a Humanitarian Code of Conduct (e.g. Fiji Government Post-Tropical Cyclone Winston Code of Conduct) that addresses sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Arrange for supplementary food supplies for older people or people suffering from severe/chronic illness, as needed.
- Include the following questions in on-going monitoring of food security programs:
  - Does the affected population face any barriers/obstacles in accessing food assistance?
  - Are women, girls, boys and men of different ages and backgrounds able to access food assistance safely?

<sup>1</sup> A Protection Mainstreaming Tool for Emergency Response in the Pacific Region drawing on Global Protection Cluster Essential Protection Guidance and Tools. For more information contact [pacificprotectioncluster@gmail.com](mailto:pacificprotectioncluster@gmail.com) or +679 3301 178 (UN Women, PHPC lead agency).

<sup>2</sup> Updated from the PHPC Think Protection! A Quick Guide to Integrating Protection into Disaster Response in the Pacific Region 2012.

- Is there any group in need of food assistance who is not able to access it?
- Does the food distribution system create or increase any protection risks?

### **Registration and Distributions**

- In registering families/households for assistance, avoid registering only the male head of the household. Do not exclude the registration of other adult family members or unaccompanied minors.
- Restrict recipient lists to concerned actors to maintain the privacy of personal data and avoid any inappropriate use.
- Establish measures to prevent, monitor and respond to safety concerns, including intimidation, coercion, violence or exploitation associated with distributions. Ensure staff/community representatives are aware of these processes.
- Provide clear information to the affected population explaining that they do not have to pay or provide services or favours to anyone in exchange for receiving assistance. Ensure the information is communicated and understood - especially by women and girls and people of diverse SOGIESC in the affected population, who may be at increased risk of exploitation.
- Consider the gender balance of distribution teams to ensure that there are enough women available as contact points.
- Consider the quantities of distributed items and the distance from the distribution site to the place where beneficiaries are staying, e.g. are beneficiaries able to carry it home safely?
- Check the distribution time is safe for beneficiaries to travel to the distribution point and return home without further risk of harm, and that the distribution site is safe and accessible for all groups within the affected population.
- Explore options for home delivery of assistance where necessary (e.g. for people with disabilities who cannot access the distribution point - elderly, child-headed households, etc.).
- Engage community representatives (including women; men; youth; ethnic minorities; older people; people with disabilities and people with diverse SOGIESC) in design and implementation of distribution processes (e.g. committees) to ensure assistance is culturally and community appropriate with suitable distribution times, locations and processes.
- Ensure that any differences in the amount or content of assistance on the basis of need, are clearly communicated to, and understood by, recipients.
- Provide information on distributions through a range of communication methods and, where possible, translated to local language (e.g. poster, radio, loudspeaker, TV, newspaper) to ensure information reaches all beneficiaries in the affected population including people who are illiterate, people with disabilities and minority language groups.
- Set up a confidential complaints mechanism for people to report concerns, including incidents of intimidation, violence and sexual exploitation committed by community members and/or humanitarian personnel.
- Ensure that programmes sharing information about reports of GBV within the food security sector or with partners in the larger humanitarian community abide by safety and ethical standards (e.g. shared information does not reveal the identity of or pose a security risk to individual survivors, their families or the broader community)
- Incorporate GBV messages (including where to report risk and how to access care) into community outreach and awareness-raising activities, using multiple formats to ensure accessibility.<sup>3</sup>
- Link and support staff trainings on the existing referral pathways for survivors of GBV.

### **Protection Considerations for Emergency Assessments**

- Analyze the composition of the affected population in detail, ensuring the population and household composition is disaggregated by sex and age. Include the number of single-headed households disaggregated by woman/girl/boy/man head of household; pregnant or lactating women; unaccompanied girls and boys; elderly women and men; people of diverse SOGIESC; women, children and men with disabilities (disaggregated by type of impairment); and women, children and men with serious or chronic illness.
- Assess the situation of all displaced people (including those in temporary settlements, those dispersed in smaller groups and those living with host families).
- Identify existing coping strategies adopted by the affected population to respond to the disaster and prevent further harm (i.e. positive and negative coping strategies).
- Based on the above information, sectoral staff should consider what arrangements are needed for females and for males with specific needs (such as those in the population groups listed above) to ensure they are able to access humanitarian assistance or services in safety with dignity, including consideration of privacy or mobility issues.
- Ensure host communities are included in assessments to avoid tensions arising between displaced people and host communities in terms of assistance provided (or not

provided).



**I'M NOT A  
PROTECTION  
SPECIALIST –  
WHAT CAN I DO?**

Listen to adults' and children's concerns about their safety and include these in your activities.

<sup>3</sup> [https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines\\_lo-res.pdf](https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines_lo-res.pdf)