



GENDER EQUALITY IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE: GAINING A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HUMANITARIAN PRACTITIONERS' EVENT, 2ND MAY 2019

GENDER RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE MEANS:

- Meaningful participation by all in planning, delivery and evaluation of humanitarian assistance.
- Responses shaped by socio-economic, political and environmental contexts in which affected people live.
- Deeper accountability to women and other groups which recognizes that humanitarian crises can present opportunities for women and other marginalized groups to take on new roles and challenge inequitable systems.
- Engaging women and girls in identifying opportunities for empowerment.

RECURRING THEMES

- Everyone in every sector is responsible for gender equality: we all need sensitisation and training.
- Inclusive, needs-based, context specific gender analyses must be local and include those affected.
- An increase and flexibility in funding is needed: to innovate, reach those in high risk settings and ensure a humanitarian-development nexus.
- Listen and respond to the voices of women and girls. Ensure accountability.
- Strengthen the capacity of those affected to advance equitable and sustainable systems.
- Ensure 'Do No Harm' is the first priority in every response, especially when gathering data on SGBV, involving women and girls in interventions, engaging with men and boys, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups, and when relating to host communities.
- Humanitarian actors need to strengthen coordination, share data, avoid duplication and collaborate to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus.
- Minimum standards are only minimums. We must push the boundaries on gender equality.

START NOW

- Diversify the humanitarian workforce locally and globally: recruit more humanitarian actors who are women, people of different abilities, LGBTQI2S+, of different racial, cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Break down the barriers to their recruitment and retention.
- Select a number of settings to focus on transformative work, support fully, allow for setbacks and ensure sector-wide learning.
- Strengthen dialogue with and invest in the capacity of local partners: ensure their perspectives and learning on gender and inclusion are heard and reflected in humanitarian response.
- Ensure a sustained dialogue between Government of Canada and the Humanitarian sector, follow implementation and do «course corrections» on gender responsive humanitarian action policy.
- Jointly conduct or share context analyses.
- More sharing of best practices and failures.

KEY CONCERNS

- The ambitious agenda for gender equality in humanitarian action is not matched by an increase in funding. Commitments to gender equality must be supported through to implementation.
- There is a risk that if funding is dependent on achieving unrealistic outcomes for gender equality, humanitarian actors may avoid the most challenging contexts because the potential for failure is higher.
- Gender responsive and especially transformative work requires understanding the context and addressing the power and privilege that dictate who has access to humanitarian assistance and services.
- There is a strong focus on acute emergencies, but humanitarian crises are often protracted for many years: we must consider long-term gender responsive and transformative action from the start.
- The complexities of humanitarian settings are sometimes not fully understood by funders: are they committed to learn and prepared to share risk?
- How can we reconcile a commitment to gender equality and inclusive humanitarian action when funding is decreasing, disasters are increasing?

THE FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY IN ACTION: SECTORAL EXAMPLES TO BUILD ON



Address barriers to women's participation in repairing and constructing housing: teach construction skills, ensure child care, provide cash for unpaid work.



Education is transformative for girls and women: Education in emergencies is critical and an opportunity to transform their lives.



Conduct safer, smaller, focused distributions for women and girls.



Approaches to food security and nutrition can be transformative: Engage women as leaders and use a graduated three-step model: Step 1: Food distribution, Step 2 : Cash, Step 3: livelihoods programming, savings groups.



Be creative with data collection: use pictorial tools.



Continually analyse the context to understand the root causes of protection needs: reassess, change and adapt protection responses to address the dynamic and evolving context.



Remote outreach: Where culture prohibits women's unaccompanied travel, and where only women can provide health services to female patients, train accompanying male family members to serve as community volunteers so that women health workers can serve the hardest to reach.



Ensure dignity of WASH services: privacy for bathing and bathrooms, dignity for those with disabilities when using facilities.



Sustain women-led initiatives originating during an emergency to reinforce the long-term decision making power of women.



It matters who is in charge: Ensure diverse leadership in camp management and coordination; support all affected groups to participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect their lives.

