What is gender?
The term gender refers to the social differences between males and females throughout the life cycle that are learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time, and have wide variations both within and between cultures. “Gender” such as class and race determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture. Historically, attention to gender relations has been driven by the need to address women’s needs and circumstances as they are typically more disadvantaged than men. Increasingly however, the humanitarian community is recognising the need to know more about what men and boys face in crisis situations.

Confusion about gender: For many people the term ‘gender’ evokes specific issues. Some think of gender as being about women only. Others consider it to be related to reproductive health matters, or gender-based violence. Confusion about the terminology and some individual and institutional resistance has resulted in ad hoc analysis and action. Some argue that addressing gender inequality in programming is akin to ‘social engineering’ and goes against cultural norms in different societies. People conduction gender analysis point out that what is taken as the ‘cultural norm’, however, may disguise a determined assertion of male privilege, and that women themselves may have a different perspective than men on their own needs and rights.

Gender equality or equality between women and men refers to the equal enjoyment by males and females of all ages of rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that men and women are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born male or female. Protecting human rights and promoting gender equality must be seen as central of the humanitarian community’s responsibility to protect and provide assistance to those affected by emergencies.

Two main strategies are needed to reach the goal of gender equality, namely gender mainstreaming and targeted actions in response to a gender analysis as well as a number of programme which together make of a gender equality programme. (Refer to the schematic diagram for gender equality programme).
Schematic Diagram for Gender Equality Programming

The human rights of women, girls, boys and men are equally promoted and protected and gender equality achieved.

The Goal

Gender mainstreaming

Targeted actions based on gender analysis

Programmes to empower women and girls

Human rights-based approach to programming

Gender-based violence programming

Sexual exploitation and abuse

Gender balance in humanitarian agencies

A gender analysis informs programme planning, implementation and evaluation
In 1997 the strategy of gender mainstreaming was adopted by the UN system as a means of attaining gender equality. It is short hand for saying that the impact of all policies and programmes on men and women should be considered at every stage of the programme cycle – from planning to implementation and evaluation. In crisis situations, mainstreaming a gender focus from the outset:

- allows for a more accurate understanding of the situation;
- enables us to meet the needs and priorities of the population in a more targeted manner, based on how women, girls, boys and men, have been affected by the crisis;
- ensures that all people affected by a crisis are acknowledged and that all their needs and vulnerabilities are taken into account; and
- facilitates the design of more appropriate and effective responses.

A gender analysis should inform the deliverers of humanitarian protection and assistance of the specific needs of the individuals or groups within the affected population requiring targeted action. In many cases these actions will be targeted to women and girls – but there are a number of situations where boys or men will be targeted for action, for example when boys are the target of recruitment for armed conflict or when boys are unable to feed themselves due to lack of cooking skills etc.

Addressing the specific needs of women and girls may best be done in some circumstances by taking targeted action. In effect, women and girls may need different treatment in order to produce equality in outcomes – in other words, to level the playing field so that women can benefit from equal opportunities. This is the principle behind measures to provide special stipends to encourage families to send girls to school, for example, or to give special protection to women and girls from gender-based violence. Targeted actions should not stigmatise or isolate women and girls; they should compensate for the consequences of gender-based inequality such as the long-term deprivation of rights to education or health.
health care. This is important as in many situations women and girls are more disadvantaged than men, have been excluded from participating in public decision-making and have had limited access to services and support. Targeted actions should empower women and build their capacity to be equal partners with men in working towards resolving conflict, solving problems caused by displacement, helping with reconstruction and return, and building durable peace and security. Each sector should identify specific actions that could promote gender equality and support the capacity of women to enjoy their human rights.

### Programmes to empower women and girls
Whatever strategy is employed to reach the goal of the equal enjoyment of human rights by women and men, girls and boys, the approach should eventually result in women’s and girls’ empowerment. ‘Empowerment’ is another over-used word the meaning of which is remains unclear to many. In essence, ‘empowerment’ implies a shift in the power relations that cause a particular social group to suffer low social status or systematic injustice. It also implies that the subordinated party has the resources and agency to claim rights and change oppressive circumstances. ‘Empowerment’ is not something that can be given or delivered like emergency food supplies or shelter. It implies a social change strategy that involves the group in question. For example, in the case of women who have been disempowered through the uneven distribution of resources and rights between the sexes, the empowerment might involve efforts directed towards self-reliance, and control over resources. For humanitarian actors who are often involved in urgent short-term interventions, it is challenging to conceive of how to contribute to the long-term process of empowerment. However, there are many short-term interventions that can promote empowerment in the long term, and it is helpful to distinguish between the practical and strategic needs of women and girls to see how this is so.

### Human rights-based approach to programming
A rights-based approach guides and underpins all phases (assessment, analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting) and sectors (education, food, health, livelihoods, etc.) of humanitarian programming. A rights-based approach uses international human rights law to analyse inequalities and injustices, and to develop policies, programmes and activities in all areas of work to redress obstacles to the enjoyment of human rights. It identifies rights-holders and their entitlements, and corresponding duty-bearers and their obligations, and seeks to strengthen the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims and of duty-bearers to satisfy these claims. A rights-based approach also emphasises principles of participation and empowerment of women, and accountability for violations of their human rights.

### Gender-based violence programming
Gender-based violence is a serious and life-threatening human rights, protection and gender issue which poses unique challenges in the humanitarian context. Gender-based violence is perpetuated against women, girls, boys and men in conflict situations. These violations undermine and place barriers to the enjoyment of rights and the attainment of gender equality. The IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings: Focusing on Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies provides guidance to field actors to plan, establish, and coordinate a set of minimum multisectoral interventions to prevent and respond to sexual violence during the early phase of an emergency. Therefore this Gender Handbook does not repeat these instructions but rather reinforces
that all gender equality programmes include efforts to address gender-based violence. Refer to the Annex 2 on Related Guidelines on Gender Equality.

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are forms of gender-based violence which have been widely reported in humanitarian situations. While SEA can be perpetuated by anyone, the term SEA has been used in reference to sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by personnel of our organizations, including both civilian staff and uniformed peacekeeping personnel. The IASC adopted the six core principles relating to sexual exploitation and abuse in 2002 followed by the UN Secretary-General’s Bulletin Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13). These principles are binding on our personnel, Actions to address SEA are underway in UN and non-UN organisations and therefore not the subject of this IASC Gender Handbook.

Gender balance is a term widely used yet often misunderstood. Gender balance is a human resource issue – referring to the number of women versus men employed by agencies (international and national staff) and in programmes that such agencies initiate or support such as food distribution programmes.

Achieving balance in the numbers of women and men does not mean that people (men or women) are necessarily aware of the gender implications of their programmes and policies. In other words, simply having more women present in the room does not necessarily lead to more gender-sensitive programming nor does it imply that all men are insensitive to gender issues.

However, there is no doubt that a balance of women and men at all levels in the workplace creates more possibilities for discussing and addressing the different impacts of policies and programming on men and women.

In the field, having both internationally and locally recruited women and men on the team is essential. They may add increased value through their different beliefs, values and ways of thinking and other socially and culturally defined attributes to their jobs. They may also have access to and dialogue with men and women in different ways, whether they are displaced populations, local leaders or national authorities. For example, in some situations a well-

### Practical ways to have a balanced team of men and women

- Widely distribute vacancy announcements to attract a diverse pool of applicants.
- Check that experience and education requirements are not too narrowly defined.
- Where women or men are underrepresented, the vacancy announcement could say "Qualified women/men are encouraged to apply".
- Include both women and men on interview panels.
- Evaluate all candidates against the same criteria.
- Do not assume that some jobs are too difficult or dangerous for women.
- Consider alternative working arrangements to overcome cultural limitations to women’s employment, such as the employment of brother/sister teams.
- Provide training on gender and cultural diversity to all staff.
- Offer separate facilities (toilets, sleeping quarters) for women and men; provide child care to staff, where possible.
- Keep all staffing data disaggregated by sex for easy monitoring.
prepared man may be better placed to speak with a warlord while a trained woman may be better suited to speak with a female survivor of sexual violence.

Moreover, a balanced team is often more effective at reaching out to a wider cross-section of the beneficiary population. For example, in Afghanistan where foreign males or non-blood relatives could not interact with local women, women working with humanitarian agencies were able interact with both Afghan women and male leaders.

Gender balance is not only a step towards attaining equality; it is a critical strategy to build effective and efficient programming.

**Why does gender matter in crisis situations?**

Wars, natural disasters and related crisis situations have profoundly different impacts on women, girls, boys and men. They face different risks and are thus victimized in different ways. For example, in the 2005 Tsunami, in parts of Indonesia and Sri Lanka up to 80% of those who died were women. In contrast, in situations of armed combat, young men are more often the primary victims.

Here are some other ways of understanding why gender issues matter in crisis situations:

1. **Men and women respond differently:** In efforts to resist violence, survive and support their dependents, women and men act differently. This may be stating the obvious, but experience to date shows that these gender aspects of crises are often overlooked and invisible when interventions are planned.

2. **Gender roles change across age and over time:** Often assumptions are made based on stereotypical perceptions of women’s and men’s roles. Men are often seen as perpetrators of violence and women as passive victims. Yet many young men are victimized as they face involuntary recruitment into armed forces. And in some contexts women may be among the principal instigators of conflict and may themselves engage as combatants. In crisis situations men often have great difficulty in dealing with their changed identities, the loss of their breadwinner role. As a result they may act out in terms of heightened engagement in gender-based violence. Women, on the other hand are often deliberately victimized and physically and sexually attacked but they struggle to regain their sense of dignity by sustaining their roles as care-givers or taking on new responsibilities. These changes in ‘gender roles’ can create significant tensions between men and women when the crisis subsides or settles into a camp routine.

3. **Power dynamics change:** Effective humanitarian interventions must not only consider the different needs and capacities of women and men. Equally important are the power relations that affect their respective abilities to access support. Often women take on new roles or step into the vacuum left by men. Men may not be able to play their traditional role as wage-earner or provider. They may be humiliated by their inability to meet the needs of their families as women have taken over their roles.

## Changing Gender Roles

Women heading households are often unable to access services because there is no help with child care or support to collect water or firewood. Single male-headed households often have specific needs as they may not have the skills to cook, to care for young children or do household chores.

## Differences within Groups

Not all women and men are the same. There are differences by age and socio-economic status. Marriage, caste, race and education level can influence needs and opportunities and should be taken into account in programming.
not being able to protect their family from harm. Humanitarian actors must take these issues into account to tailor interventions so that they do not harm men or women or exacerbate the situation. It is essential to adopt a community participatory approach involving women and men to equally address these difficulties and formulate and implement interventions to address the change required in power dynamics in a culturally acceptable way. While cultural norms and religious beliefs must be treated with respect, it should also be kept in mind that some norms and beliefs could be harmful and that cultural sensitivity does not outweigh the mandate and legal obligation that humanitarian workers have to all members of an affected population.

4. Men and women bring different issues to the table: When analyzing a situation, who you consult with has implications not only for what you hear and understand but also for what you response options are likely to be. Women and men often highlight different concerns, and bring different perspectives, experiences and solutions to the issues. They also have differing perceptions and concerns regarding culturally acceptable practices. A clear and accurate picture of a situation cannot be attained if 50% or more of the population has not been consulted. It can mean that 50% of the information needed is missing.

Brings Different Issues

In Afghanistan, NGOs implementing a national landmine survey were unable to recruit mixed-sex survey teams as cultural restrictions prevented women from travelling with men. As a result all-male teams were employed and thus access to women, who had information about different tracts of land, was severely limited. Follow-up surveys are now attempting to gain greater access to women.

Does Consideration of Gender Equality Matter in Humanitarian Response?

In life and death situations isn’t the question of gender equality a luxury? That’s what many people think. But in reality, equality is neither a luxury nor about privileging women over men, or vice versa. Gender equality is about ensuring that the protection and assistance provided in emergencies is planned and implemented in a way that benefits men and women equally, taking into account an analysis of their needs as well as their capacities.

In many instances, attempting to integrate principles of equality into programmes requires the active involvement and support of men. Otherwise the risks can have negative consequences. For example:

- women may be faced with the added burden of responsibility and perhaps risk of backlash from men;
- critical issues relating to survival and health are marginalised and relegated to ‘women’s issues’ (for example, HIV/AIDS awareness and condom use should be promoted among men as well as women);
- men may not take women’s participation seriously and this can place women in a more difficult situation;
- threats or risks facing men may not be adequately understood or addressed.

Men may lose some of their status and authority as emergencies destroys traditional family and clan structures. Men who have been the traditional leaders and wielders of power may resent the interference of women in the male domains of providing security to the family, bringing food to the household, or engaging in economic activity.

The Basics
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nuances of masculinity in the contexts of each situation and gaining the support of men for involvement by women and youth in traditionally older male activities will be crucial to the success and sustainability of the humanitarian response.

Finally, gender equality is a critical step towards achieving sustainable development. Crisis situations radically affect social and cultural structures, changing women and men’s status. They often provide a window of opportunity for addressing gender-based discrimination and rights violations. If humanitarian interventions are not planned with gender equality in mind, not only do the chances of doing greater harm increase, but the opportunity to support and promote equality in livelihoods between men and women can be lost.

What is gender analysis?

Gender analysis examines the relationships between males and females. It examines their roles, their access to and control of resources, and the constraints they face relative to each other. A gender analysis should be integrated in the humanitarian needs assessment and in all sector assessments or situational analyses.

Ask the questions: When conducting your assessment always ask questions with a view to understanding the possible differences in experience for women and men, boys and girls.

Put women, girls, boys and men at the centre of your assessment: Gender analysis starts with the smallest units – the households – to understand how each family member participates, what role they play and what they need in order to improve their well-being, security and dignity. For example, what factors affect access to services? Is there a difference between male/female consumption of food within families? Who obtains resources? Who decides on the use of resources? Insight into these dynamics can help ensure that assistance is channelled through the most effective means.

Understand the cultural context: Gender analysis also provides insight into cultural understandings of roles. For example, notions of ‘head of household’ can vary. Often being a widow or a single mother has serious implications in terms of access to goods and services. In some instances male family members may want to assert control. The analysis of relations and roles can help identify vulnerabilities, potentials for backlash and also solutions to critical issues.

Coordinate & cooperate: Effective gender analysis in the context of a crisis requires field workers in every sector or area of activity ask whether and how the situation affects women and men differently. Additionally, it is necessary for field workers to ascertain how their programmes will address the immediate practical and longer-term strategic needs of women and men. It
is also essential that different humanitarian actors communicate and share information with each other about gender differences, in order to ensure that programmes are well coordinated.

**Don’t make assumptions:** Gender analysis helps explain the different ways women, men, girls and boys are affected by or participate in the political, economic, social and cultural decisions made in a society. Being aware of who is making the decisions helps to ensure a more accurate understanding of the situation and the varying needs of different groups of people affected by the crisis.

**Don’t reinvent the wheel:** There are plenty of resources inside and outside the humanitarian community to help you understand the gender dimensions of any situation. Read up! Make sure you have the right documents. Contact the experts. Make sure that you do not plan your programme on an incorrect or incomplete gender analysis.

**Consult with the entire affected population:** Systematic dialogue with women, girls, boys and men – both separately and in mixed groups – is fundamental to good humanitarian programming. In some cultures men will not speak about certain issues in front of women and visa versa. Women may defer to men in terms of defining priorities. In women only groups, women may be more willing to address how best to approach men so that there is no backlash against women’s increased activism. Adolescent boys and girls may have different ideas as well as needs that will not be captured if only adults are consulted.

**Analysis to action:** Use the information you gather to inform your programmes. This may at times mean significant changes or reallocation of resources – that’s ok, so long as it makes your programme more targeted to the needs of the population affected by the crisis. Too often we resolve the difficulties by adding a single, ‘feel good’ project. Typically though, you will need to integrate gender into your major programmes and have specific initiatives targeting particular populations - e.g. widows or young men.

**Assess and adjust:** The situation on the ground changes constantly, as do people’s protection risks and needs. Through regular consultations using participatory approaches with the people affected by the crisis, you will find out if your programming is working. Adjust your programming to meet the needs of the people.

**Why is sex-disaggregated data important in crisis situations?**

Unless we know who is affected, men or women, girls or boys, and who among them is the most at risk, the services we provide may be off target. Data on the population affected by the crisis should always be broken down by age and sex and other
relevant factors such as ethnicity or religion.

Data showing the distribution of the affected population by age and sex including single headed households by age and sex should be routinely collected. In addition, sex disaggregated data on at-risk populations such as the disabled, orphans and victims of violence should be collected to ensure that their gender-specific needs are being addressed.

Data on who benefits from assistance during an emergency should also be reported by sex and age. For example, if reporting on who participates in training or food for work activities - always report the sex and age of the participants. Without this breakdown it is impossible to ascertain who benefits or if assistance is reaching the population proportionately. For example, if 100% of participants for food for work activities are women one would ask why men are not represented. Good data and good analysis are key to identifying which groups are being marginalised and for what reasons. Such data is not only paramount for a review of the humanitarian needs, it also sends a powerful signal: being counted shows that each individual counts is recognized, included, and can exercise his or her rights.

**Framework for Gender Equality Programming**

The framework for gender equality programming is a tool to use with project staff working at the sector level to review their projects or programmes with a gender equality lens. The order of the steps in the framework may vary from one situation to another. The point is that all nine steps of the framework should be taken into account by deliverers of humanitarian protection and assistance to validate that the services they provide and support they give in emergencies meets the needs and concerns of women, girls, men and boys in an equal manner.

Below you will find a description of the elements of the framework as well as some sample activities and indicators that could be measured to assess the degree to which gender issues have been mainstreamed into the particular sector. Actors working in specific humanitarian situations should develop an action plan based on the elements of the framework with specific and measurable indicators. Refer to the checklists at the end of each chapter to create site-specific gender indicators which should be routinely monitored and reported on.

**Analyze:** Analyze the impact of the humanitarian crisis on women, girls, men and boys. Be certain, for example, that all needs assessments include gender issues in the information gathering and analysis phases, and that women, girls, men and boys are consulted in assessment, monitoring, and evaluation processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
<th>Sample Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A gender analysis report is prepared to inform programming.</td>
<td>Gender analysis report for Ituri district prepared by February 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations are conducted with equal numbers of men and women to learn about both groups’ needs and capabilities.</td>
<td>50 % of the people consulted for the establishment of a health clinic in Bunia are women.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Design Services: Design services to meet the needs of women and men equally. Each sector should review the way they work and make sure women and men can benefit equally from the services, for example latrines are separated for men and women; hours for trainings, NFI or food distribution are set so that everyone can attend, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
<th>Sample Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 kg rice bags are re-packaged into 25 kg bags to make them easier to transport home.</td>
<td>100 % of rice bags distributed in Badghis province in January 2007 are re-packaged into 25 kg units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health centre opening hours are changed to ensure access for men working long hours.</td>
<td>100 % of health centres in Ampara district extend opening hours with 2 hours by August 2007.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ensure access: Make sure that women and men can access services equally. Sectors should continuously monitor who is using the services and consult with the community to ensure all are accessing the service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
<th>Sample Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spot checks are carried out to assess</td>
<td>6 spot checks are carried out at the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
women’s, girls’, boys’ and men’s access to services.

Discussion groups are conducted to assess women’s, girls’, boys’ and men’s access to services.

Ensure participation: Ensure women, girls, men, and boys participate equally in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian response, and that women are in decision-making positions. If it is problematic to have women in committees, mechanisms should be put in place to ensure their voices are brought to the committees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
<th>Sample Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The local shelter committee is consisting of an equal number of women and men.</td>
<td>50% of members on the local shelter committee in Akkaraiapattu IDP camp B are women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings are conducted in the IDP camp to allow women to attend without leaving their children.</td>
<td>% of shelter committee meetings conducted in Akkaraiapattu IDP camp B in 2007.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Train: Ensure that women and men benefit equally from training or other capacity building initiatives offered by the sector actors. Make certain that women and men have equal opportunities for capacity building and training, including opportunities for work or employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
<th>Sample Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First aid training is conducted for an equal number of women and men.</td>
<td>50% of invitees to the October 2008 first aid training are women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal numbers of women and men are employed in the food distribution programme.</td>
<td>50% of people employed in the food distribution programme in Thauoa in 2005 are women.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Address Gender-based Violence: Make sure that all sectors take specific actions to prevent and/or respond to gender-based violence. The IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings should be used by all as a tool for planning & coordination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
<th>Sample Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NFI distribution is conducted early in the day to allow people to reach home safely during daylight.</td>
<td>100% of NFI distributions in Kilinochchi district in January 2006 finished before 2 pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting is set up around sanitation facilities to provide safe passage.</td>
<td>100% of sanitation facilities in Kalma camp have outdoor lighting by January 2007.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disaggregate data by age and sex: Collect and analyze all data concerning the humanitarian response by age and sex breakdown, with differences analyzed and used to develop a profile of at-risk populations and how their needs are being met by the assistance sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
<th>Sample Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex-and age disaggregated data on programme coverage is collected on a regular basis.</td>
<td>100% of livelihood programme quarterly reports in 2004 are based on sex- and age-disaggregated data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Targeted Actions: Based on the gender analysis make sure that women, girls, boys and men are targeted with specific actions when appropriate. Where one group is more at-risk than others, special measures should be taken to protect that group. Examples would be safe spaces for women, and measures to protect boys from forced recruitment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Sample Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive measures are adopted to redress discrimination in allocation of food resources.</td>
<td>100% of lactating mothers in Hartisheik A camp receive supplementary feeding in August 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide appropriate clothing and sanitary supplies to girls so they can attend school and fully participate in class.</td>
<td>Sanitary supplies distributed to 100% of girls aged 6-18 in Adré in March 2007.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coordinate: Set up gender support networks to ensure coordination and gender mainstreaming in all areas of humanitarian work. Sector actors should be active in coordination mechanisms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
<th>Sample Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sector/cluster actors are participating regularly in meetings of the inter-agency gender network.</td>
<td>100 % of livelihoods cluster actors in Liberia are participating in the inter-agency gender network meetings in 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sector/cluster routinely measures project-specific indicators based on the checklist provided in the IASC Gender Handbook.</td>
<td>100% of livelihoods cluster actors in Liberia reporting on progress on gender indicators in their annual reports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Definitions

Protection encompasses all activities aimed at securing full respect for the rights of individuals – women, men, girls and boys - in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. Protection activities aim to create an environment in which human dignity is respected, specific patterns of abuse are prevented or their immediate effects alleviated, and dignified conditions of life are restored through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation.

Gender refers to the social differences between males and females throughout the life cycle that are learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time, and have wide variations both within and between cultures. “Gender” such as class and race determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture. Historically, attention to gender relations has been driven by the need to address women’s needs and circumstances as they are typically more disadvantaged than men. Increasingly however, the humanitarian community is recognising the need to know more about what men and boys face in crisis situations.

Gender equality or equality between women and men refers to the equal enjoyment by women, men, girls and boys of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born male or female.

Gender mainstreaming is a globally recognized strategy for achieving gender equality. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations defined gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation,
monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

**Gender analysis** examines the relationships between males and females and their access to and control of resources, their roles, and the constraints they face relative to each other. A gender analysis should be integrated in the humanitarian needs assessment and in all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by humanitarian interventions and that where possible greater equality and justice in gender relations is promoted.

**Gender balance** is a human resource issue. It is about the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work (international and national staff at all levels, including at senior positions) and in programmes that agencies initiate or support (e.g. food distribution programmes). Achieving a balance in staffing patterns and creating a working environment that is conducive to a diverse workforce has an impact on the overall effectiveness of our policies and programmes, and will enhance agencies’ capacity (or: is indeed an operational requirement) to better serve the entire population.

**Gender-based Violence** is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries, and regions. Examples include: Sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, honour killings, widow inheritance, and others.

### Checklist to assess gender equality programming

The checklist below provides a useful tool to remind sector actors of key issues to ensure gender equality programming. In addition, project staff should develop context-specific indicators to measure progress in gender equality programming.

**Gender analysis**

1. All needs assessments have included gender issues in the information gathering and analysis phases.

2. Women, girls, boys and men are consulted (together and separately) about their concerns, protection risks, opinions and solutions to key issues.

3. Mechanisms for routine exchange of information with the population affected by the crisis are established and are functioning.

**Gender balance**

4. Sex breakdown of local and international staff working in the humanitarian situation by sector are routinely collected and analyzed.

5. Sex breakdown of people in decision making/senior positions are monitored.

6. Needs assessment teams have equal numbers of women and men.

**Disaggregated data by sex and age**

7. Data is being consistently collected and analysed by age and sex.

8. Sex-disaggregated data is included routinely in reports and the implications for programming are addressed.

### Resources


