



LEARNING PAPER

**Leave no one behind in humanitarian programming:  
An approach to understanding intersectional programming**

**Age, Gender and Diversity Analysis**

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**Cover:** *Young girls in a field in Pakistan, July 2011. Pakistan is one of the eight countries where IRW is piloting its new Intersectionality Framework approach to better understand and address social and cultural factors in humanitarian programming.*

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# Introduction

Responding appropriately during humanitarian crises means understanding the social and cultural factors that make some groups and individuals vulnerable, such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability or religion. The overlapping or intersection of multiple factors can dramatically increase a person's risk or vulnerability during a humanitarian crisis, resulting in inequitable access to resources.

This paper outlines a new approach to intersectionality being piloted by Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) over a two-year period. The aim of the pilot is to better understand the intersection of different dimensions of social disadvantage and its implications for the organisation's humanitarian work.

IRW's new approach is based on an Intersectionality Framework it has developed that uses six criteria, referred to as the 6 A's: Analysis, Adapted Assistance, Attention to Negative Effects, Adequate Participation, and Accountability. The Framework is based on various sources, including: The Minimum Standards of Age and Disability Inclusion; Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action; sector guidance on conflict sensitivity; IASC Gender Based Violence (GBV) Guidelines; and both the ECHO Gender Age Marker and IASC Gender with Age Marker.

This paper focuses on the first 'A' of the Framework, Analysis, and accompanying IRW Age, Gender and Diversity Analysis Tools, based on the Moser Gender Planning Framework (with adaptations by IRW). The application of the Analysis approach and supporting tools is being trialled by IRW in eight countries in 2018 - 2019 and following this, case studies on the resulting learnings will be produced.

The 'Analysis' approach examines the distinct roles, access to, and control over resources by different population groups: females and males of all ages, people with disabilities, older people, and marginalised or excluded groups. It assesses how various aspects of people's identity and any corresponding discrimination intersected before a crisis and are exacerbated after a crisis; and how these impact people's access to resources. An understanding of social and cultural identity and how they are informed by structural inequities is crucial to performing an accurate assessment of people's vulnerability.

Examples of change brought about during initial field tests of the IRW Age, Gender and Diversity<sup>1</sup> Analysis Tools in Palestine and Pakistan are also included in this paper. These examples highlight some of the benefits that can result from having a deeper understanding of intersectionality, in order to adequately support all populations during humanitarian crises.

# The need for an intersectional approach to humanitarian programming

Upholding humanitarian principles during emergency responses has become increasingly challenging in recent years with a rising number of emergencies, limited access to affected populations, and funding shortages.

Part of the challenge can be attributed to definitions of vulnerability that tend to portray communities affected by disasters as a homogenous group, in which pre-crisis social vulnerability is irrelevant. For example, vulnerable groups are neatly categorised as children, women, people with disabilities, older people, ethnic minorities and so on; but there is no typical vulnerable group. People have multiple identities constituted by structures of power that influence how they are vulnerable, and in what context their vulnerability arises.

The problem of using a one-size-fits-all vulnerable group approach in humanitarian programming is three-fold.

Firstly, it means that humanitarian actors often overlook the complex needs and vulnerabilities that arise from the intersection of an individual's multiple identities, such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability or religion, and how these affect access to power and resources. Interventions based on a one-size-fits-all approach can frequently be ineffective and sometimes omit important considerations about social dynamics. This can lead to unnecessary exclusion and conflict in humanitarian situations.

**"To be young or old, a woman or girl, a person with a disability or of a minority ethnicity does not in itself make an individual universally vulnerable. Rather, it is the interplay of factors in a given context that can strengthen capacities, build resilience or undermine access to assistance for any individual or group."**<sup>2</sup>

**The SPHERE Project**

Secondly, using the vulnerable group generic definition often fails to recognise the capacities and resources that these groups do possess. It can therefore be a form of othering, defining groups as different in a negative way. As a result, vulnerable groups are often perceived as passive recipients of humanitarian aid.

Thirdly, vulnerability is ultimately determined by a social context. Identities such as gender and disability, and the privileges or disadvantages that they bestow, are generally dependent on a given society's values, beliefs and behaviours rather than biologically-determined. For example, in some contexts and situations certain groups of men may be

more vulnerable than women, so it would be erroneous to stereotype only women and girls as vulnerable.

IRW recognises that consideration must be given to how social identities such as age, gender, and disability intersect with each other to produce qualitatively distinct experiences in relation to power and access to resources. This is very important in the context of humanitarian crises where rapid upheavals result in greater adverse consequences for those with pre-existing vulnerabilities.

**"We plan our programmes based on a blanket approach to vulnerability and overlook intersecting factors such as geography, culture, etc. that many families face. Orphaned children are not always in need, as children with disabilities left alone in besieged areas in Syria are..."**

**Humanitarian aid worker, Syria, 2018<sup>3</sup>**

In recent years, humanitarian agencies have used gender analysis frameworks to integrate a gender perspective into their programming. There has also been a recent push by donors and aid agencies to use age and gender together as a (single) universal determinant to assess people's vulnerability during a humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, disability inclusion and the practice of collecting sex, age and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) has also become an integral part of international development cooperation for many bilateral and multilateral agencies.

However, such a narrow approach limits humanitarian actors to viewing affected populations simply as groups of men, women, girls and boys from different age groups and abilities. While this is a huge and a much-needed shift in the way that humanitarian programming is framed, it can overlook the complex needs arising from the intersection of various social and cultural factors. In cases where these factors work together to limit access in humanitarian situations, it is essential that humanitarian interventions are grounded in an understanding of intersectionality.

IRW is committed to the principle of leaving no one behind. Therefore, it is vital that the organisation analyses and understands the experiences of vulnerable groups facing intersectional structures of marginalisation in society, during crises.

## Definitions of social and cultural factors

**Disability:** There is no single definition of disability due to its complicated and multifaceted nature. It is defined by the UN as having 'long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various physical, institutional and attitudinal barriers, may hinder an individual's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis'.<sup>4</sup> Having a disability does not necessarily lead to problems such as exclusion and poverty but there is a strong body of evidence that suggests various attitudinal, physical and institutional barriers, as well as intersecting inequalities, can increase the vulnerability of a person with impairments. This can result in multi-dimensional poverty, exclusion, stigma and limited access to basic services.

**Age:** Age refers to the different states in a person's life cycle. It is important to be aware of where people are in their life cycle as their needs may change over time. Age influences and can enhance or diminish capacity to exercise rights. Research by HelpAge International<sup>5</sup> suggests that older people, particularly women, are disproportionately affected by disasters, as they are at an increased risk of abuse. Older people may also have specific health and nutritional needs which are seldom considered in humanitarian interventions. Equally, children and young people may have different needs and capacities across contexts and may face unique protection risks, such as early-forced marriage and female genital cutting. Their status as a child or young person is intersected by factors such as gender and disability and informs their experiences of discrimination.

**Gender:** Gender is socially and culturally constructed and determines the values, norms, and practices associated with a certain sex, including who makes decisions and controls resources. This can shape the wellbeing and fulfilment of personal potential by both males and females. As a result, gender and inequality are closely interwoven. Across the world, women have limited access to political and economic resources. Women and girls are also disproportionately

affected by gender-based violence. However, it is important that gender analysis also considers the ways that men and boys are affected by power structures and systems, especially when intersected with other social or cultural factors. For example, a man from an ethnic minority group who has a disability is more likely to be discriminated against than a middle-class woman with no disabilities from an ethnic majority group.

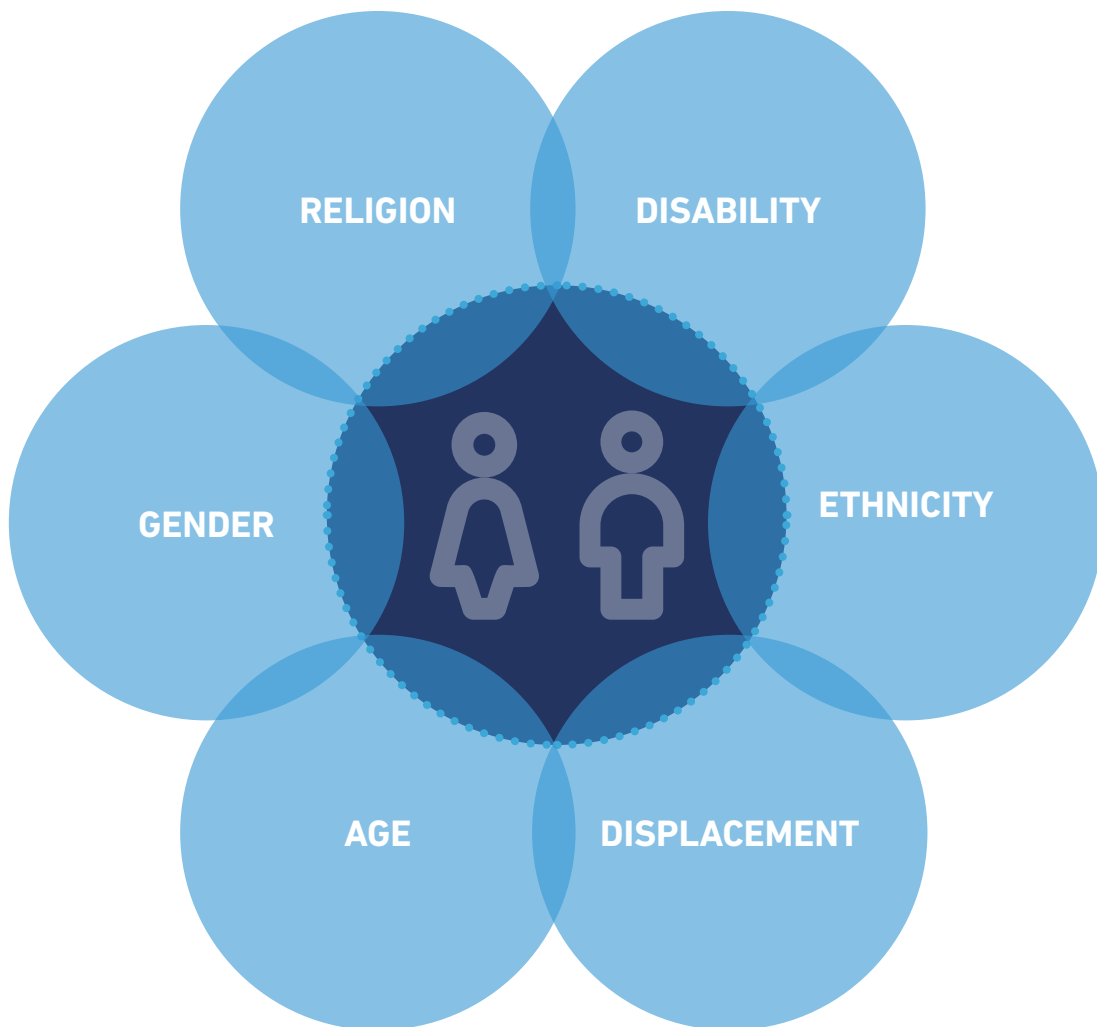
**Ethnicity:** Ethnicity typically refers to social groups who share a common and distinctive culture, religion, values and language within a geographical region. The concept of ethnicity is a major aspect of understanding inequalities between groups. In many societies, ethnic minority groups may face political and economic disadvantages and discrimination not faced by ethnic majority groups.

**Displacement:** Displacement encompasses a wide range of demographic movements across the world but is typically used to describe the departure of people from their homelands as a result of conflict, persecution and disasters. This can include people who are displaced within their own country (internally-displaced persons or IDPs) and people who are displaced outside of their homeland (refugees). Displaced people may face specific vulnerabilities, such as: a lack of state protection, risk of exploitation, bureaucratic and language barriers in host countries, multi-dimensional poverty due to loss of social networks, and lack of access to necessities such as healthcare, shelter, food and water. Displaced people are sometimes in acute need of counselling and psychosocial services as they may have witnessed violence.

**Religion:** A set of beliefs and practices commonly agreed upon by a group of people and which often contain a moral doctrine providing guidance on conduct and human affairs.

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**Diagram 1: How multiple social and cultural factors can intersect, to decrease or increase access to power and resources during a crisis**



# Intersectionality: the way forward

Although not a new concept, there is a growing interest in the theory of intersectionality to address problems arising from using blanket (and unhelpful) definitions for vulnerable groups in humanitarian crises.

The term intersectionality was originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a leading theorist in critical race theory, who arrived at the conclusion that persisting gender inequalities are profoundly influenced by an individual's social location. Therefore, gendered experiences must be analysed in relation to other aspects of an individual's identity, such as race, religion, disability, ethnicity and so forth which mediate relationship to power.

"Intersectionality is an analytic sensibility, a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. Originally articulated on behalf of black women, the term brought to light the invisibility of many constituents within groups that claim them as members, but often fail to represent them."<sup>6</sup>

Kimberlé Crenshaw

"Without understanding and applying intersectionality, activities intended to be inclusive can actually have the opposite effect – reinforcing marginalisation and exclusion, often unconsciously. For example, women with disabilities can become further marginalised if barriers to their participation in gender equity programming are not identified and removed."<sup>7</sup>

Louise Searle, Humanitarian Advisory Group

Despite the increased interest in the concept, options for translating intersectionality theory into practice have so far been limited. Perhaps the most significant challenge is that, in its purest form, intersectionality theory focuses on unique individual experiences. These experiences result from the coming together of various identities in the context of multiple systems of structural oppression, such as racism or class oppression. Understanding this requires tools that set out the full complexity and specificity of vulnerabilities and capacities associated with a certain community; but this is difficult given the highly complex contexts within which humanitarian agencies operate. To address this challenge, IRW's Intersectionality Framework has protection mainstreaming and inclusion at its core. The 6 A's of the Framework – Analysis, Adapted Assistance, Attention to Negative Effects, Adequate Participation, Accountability, and Adequate Capacity – aims to ensure that IRW responds to intersectionality of experiences in its programmes .

## Questions to consider for each of the six A's

**Analysis:** Does the proposal contain an adequate age, gender and diversity analysis, and has sex, age and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) been collected throughout the project lifecycle?

**Adapted Assistance:** Is the assistance adapted to the specific needs and capacities of different gender, age, disability and ethnic groups?

**Attention to Negative Effects:** Does the action prevent or mitigate potential negative effects on different groups in the community?

**Adequate Participation:** Does the project adopt a participatory approach by ensuring men, women, girls and boys of all ages and abilities enjoy adequate and equal participation?

**Accountability:** Does the programme consider safe and accessible complaints mechanisms, accessible information, and systems to consider the differentiated needs of women, men, girls and boys of all ages, abilities and diversities? Does the organisation reflect on its own practices, policies, and code of conduct to ensure enhanced accountability?

**Adequate Capacity:** Does the organisation have staff trained on inclusive, protective and accountable approaches to programming?



Diagram 2: IRW's Intersectionality Framework – the 6 A's approach



# Understanding intersectionality through analysis tools

In order to develop a robust intersectional programming approach, IRW considered integrating gender analysis within its programming. However, realising that gender is only one of many risk factors that contribute to inequality, the organisation developed the Intersectionality Framework (see Annex A) to ensure a more comprehensive approach to addressing inequalities of all kinds. Applying an intersectional lens to IRW's programming approach means internal operations and structures are examined to ensure that they reflect the diverse needs and experiences of all groups in an affected population. It is essentially about establishing an institutional structure that delivers greater inclusivity in IRW's programmes.

IRW has since combined the use of intersectional theory with an adapted version of Moser's Gender Planning Framework<sup>8</sup> to create Age, Gender and Diversity Analysis Tools (see Annexes B, C, D and E).

## What is the age, gender and diversity approach?

IRW's Age, Gender and Diversity Analysis Tools examine the distinct roles of different population groups (females and males of all age groups, people with disabilities, and marginalised and excluded groups); their access to, and control over, resources; and the constraints they face, relative to each other. It helps to determine their distinct experiences, opportunities, restrictions, barriers, levels of participation, differences and decision-making capacity at a disaggregate-level to accurately depict vulnerabilities.

Analysis (the first of the 6 A's) not only promotes the importance of gathering SADDD, but also the need to obtain qualitative information about the affected population through an intersectional lens. The new approach is guided by the protection mainstreaming principles endorsed by the Global Protection Cluster (Prioritising Safety and Dignity, Meaningful Access, Accountability, Participation and Empowerment)<sup>9</sup> and has a set of overarching questions to inform analysis throughout the project cycle. In practice, it means encouraging an understanding of how women, girls, men and boys of all ages and abilities live their lives; their access to resources and control over them; and how this differs according to ethnicity, religion or disability.

The IRW Age, Gender and Diversity Analysis Tools can be used throughout the project life cycle, particularly when designing needs assessments. It enables IRW staff to gain important insights into a community, and the many layers of social identities and associated forms of discrimination that increase the risk of exclusion and marginalisation.

## Learning points

Successful use of the intersectionality approach requires careful unpacking of the social and cultural factors that can act as potential enablers or barriers to accessing humanitarian aid.

Operationalising this new approach has been an intense yet rewarding experience for IRW, requiring a shift in how the organisation defines identity in relation to power dynamics and equitable access. Key to this is changing the mindset of frontline staff, to go beyond numbers to understand the construct of social categories, their intersectionality, and their subsequent impact on humanitarian programming.

# Views from the field: Islamic Relief Palestine and Islamic Relief Pakistan

IRW's new approach to intersectional programming and supporting tools is still being consolidated and refined by the organisation. It has invested in a training programme to support its roll-out globally. Two of the countries the approach is being piloted in are Islamic Relief Palestine (in Gaza) and Islamic Relief Pakistan, with positive early results.

## Initial results from Palestine

The Islamic Relief Palestine team in Gaza used age, gender and diversity analysis to separately consult with people with disabilities, older people, abandoned women, and internally displaced groups.

“Previously we used to focus more on collecting disaggregated data and community consultations. By using the new approach, we have been able to uncover information that has enabled us to integrate excluded groups. If we had not used the new approach, we would never have known about the existence of women who have been abandoned by the community due to their family's association with Israeli military forces.”

Islamic Relief Palestine

Age, gender and diversity analysis has enabled IRW's country teams to refine their targeting criteria and provide adapted assistance. It has also changed staff's outlook on the design and delivery of humanitarian programmes. The new approach empowered staff to critically reflect on gaps in IRW's procedures, and to identify solutions so that services on the ground can become more inclusive. For example, insights gained from the new programming approach has prompted Islamic Relief Palestine to work alongside local partners to overcome barriers related to social acceptance of men and women with disabilities in livelihood projects. They have also sought technical advice and support from disability organisations to better integrate the needs of men and women with disabilities into their projects.

“We used focus group discussions before, but it was just two separate groups, one for men and one for women. When we consulted with men and women with disabilities separately, we were able to appreciate the difference, as often the ones who are discriminating against us are the ones living alongside us. The groups were more open and forthcoming in sharing not only their challenges, but also advice with possible solutions. That helped us to better integrate their needs into our project, along with gender concerns. Next time we would also like to consult the caregivers as they have a different understanding of the barriers faced by people with disabilities.”

Islamic Relief Palestine

## Key considerations from Islamic Relief Palestine's project

**Collect SADD:** There is an urgent need to improve the quality and availability of disaggregated data, which can make needs assessments more inclusive and enable practitioners to examine intersectional experiences.

**Support access for men and women with disabilities:** Hosting institutions may not adapt the work environment to the needs of men and women with disabilities, which could discourage participation. The challenges service providers may face must be considered (such as a lack of expertise or resources). Local staff must also be trained to raise awareness of the importance of providing safe and dignified access to humanitarian interventions, to men and women with disabilities.

**Build local capacity to use gender, age and diversity analysis:** Gaps in training, time and resources that hamper use of the analysis tools must be addressed in local teams.

**Acknowledge the structural underpinnings of gendered relations:** For example, including women in cash-for-work programmes may not eliminate socially and culturally sanctioned ideas about gender. Programming must be wary of potentially overburdening vulnerable women.

**Improve dialogue on how the community receives minority groups:** Targeting certain groups, such as families of those working with Israel, was extremely challenging due to the stigma attached to supporting these families. The programme team must facilitate dialogue and attitudinal change towards stigmatised groups.

## Initial results from Pakistan

In Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the patriarchal society results in all women and girls being affected by ascribed gender roles and unequal power relationships. This intensifies the disadvantages inherent in socially constructed gender norms, especially when intersected with another marginalising factor such as disability. Generally engaged in unpaid care work, women lack secure rights to land and have extremely limited decision-making power, especially in the household. Women are therefore typically left behind in the region's overall development. They have poorer access to power, resources, and health and education services than males, and have a high level of vulnerability to protection risks. Fragile legal and informal judiciary systems in the FATA, which are highly discriminatory towards women, and the prevalence of powerful warlords, further perpetuate protection risks against women, children, and women and men with disabilities.

“Understanding the context in which we operate leads to better outcomes. Cultural reasons may prevent women from leaving the house to access a complaints box, and profound barriers exist where female illiteracy is high. To ensure everyone is heard, we established inclusive community groups in the FATA.”

Islamic Relief Pakistan

Islamic Relief Pakistan trained staff and community volunteers on protection and inclusion, and established inclusive community organisations so that women, men, and children of all ages and abilities could safely have their voices heard. The project provided skills training and livestock to the most vulnerable community members, including widowed women. In addition, people with disabilities and female-led households took part in cash-for-work activities and, alongside older people, received enterprise grants. Schoolgirls learned to manage menstruation with dignity, and people with disabilities received assistive devices to enhance their protection and mobility in the event of a disaster. There was also a focus on community engagement through social mobilisation. Building the capacity of diverse groups within these communities to address their own development needs embeds sustainability, and potentially drives behavioural change to reduce protection risks.

### Learning point: missing identity documents and intersectionality

People returning to the FATA region of Pakistan with missing identity documents are in a precarious situation, and are further marginalised as UN agencies are not able to assist them.

Women, people with disabilities, the elderly, children, and other vulnerable groups, who are already deprived and excluded from accessing essential services, may experience additional protection risks if they lack identity documents. With scant access to support and information, these individuals have an increased risk of exploitation by relatives. Women with disabilities are especially vulnerable.

An inclusive approach must therefore characterise protection risks in terms of the multiple jeopardies faced by diverse vulnerable groups, including a lack of identity documents.

# Next steps

IRW is piloting its new Intersectionality Framework approach in 2018 - 2019 in eight countries: Niger, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Palestine (in Gaza), Syria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. It is important to highlight that this new approach will change and evolve as a result of the field testing and feedback from IRW staff in different humanitarian contexts. Learnings from the pilot are expected to inform the roll-out of the Intersectionality Framework approach in IRW's operations worldwide. IRW also hopes that these learnings will help the wider humanitarian sector to better understand the benefits and challenges of intersectional programming.

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**Annex B** - IRW's Age, Gender and Diversity Tool 1: Gender roles

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**Annex E** - Guidance on IRW's Age, Gender and Diversity Tools

# Annex A

## IRW's Intersectionality Framework

Intersectionality Framework: The 6 A's (Competency Domains)			
Analysis	1.1	Age, gender and diversity analysis	Age, gender and diversity analysis provides details of different practical and strategic gender needs, capacities and roles of different groups at risk, using direct consultations with them or their representatives.
	1.2	Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data	At a minimum, sex, age, and disability-disaggregated secondary and primary data – both qualitative and quantitative – are required.
Adapted Assistance	2.1	Adapted activities and equitable access	Activities that respond to the results of the age, gender and diversity analysis should be carried out, ensuring that affected people have unimpeded access to impartial but differentiated assistance and services that meet their needs.
Attention to Negative Effects	3.1	Do no harm	Different protection risks and intersecting needs must be analysed and incorporated into programme design, and strategies considered to prevent these risks.
	3.2	Protection analysis and response	An effective, working protocol must be in place for protection analysis and response to specific age, gender and diversity needs.
Adequate Participation	4.1	Participatory approach and recognition of communal capacity	Engagement with affected diverse groups within communities must be prioritised to identify: a) important cultural practices and traditions that could potentially be positive or harmful to programming outcomes; b) local skills, resources and structures and knowledge of different groups within the community; c) safety considerations and potential unintended consequences.
Accountability	5.1	Feedback and complaints mechanism	A safe, confidential and accessible complaints handling mechanism must be in place to allow beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries from diverse groups to make sensitive and non-sensitive complaints. Organisations must have an established and functioning investigation process for complaints received, with staff trained on how to handle complaints from diverse groups.
	5.2	Information	Information must be provided to affected communities in an accessible, safe and dignified manner, ensuring sensitivity and inclusivity according to the age, gender and diversity analysis.
	5.3	Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) systems	MEAL systems must be in place to capture and review the differentiated needs of women, men, girls and boys, women and men with disabilities and other diversities based on the outcomes of the age, gender, disability and diversity analysis.
	5.4	Organisational culture and practices	Organisational culture and practices must show commitment to intersectionality of experiences through inclusive and protective strategies, policies and programmes, codes of conduct, and HR systems.
Adequate Capacity	6.1	Organisational capacity	Organisational capacity assessment and action plans must be in place and staff trained on inclusive, protective and accountable approaches to programming.

# Annex B

## IRW's Age, Gender and Diversity Tool 1: Gender roles

### Tool 1: Gender roles

**Guidance note:** What roles do girls, boys, women, and men play in their households, in their communities, and in society at large? What specific role do older people play (before and after the crisis)? What is the role of people with disabilities? Is there any discrimination?

Gender roles	Females of all ages	Males of all ages	Females of all ages with disabilities	Males of all ages with disabilities	Females of distinctive, excluded social identities	Males of distinctive, excluded social identities
Productive (These roles are related to activities that produce goods and services for consumption or trade. Both men and women can be involved in these activities.)						
Reproductive (These roles involve childbearing and caring as well as domestic tasks that support the household's wellbeing, such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water and washing)						
Community work (These roles involve community work, such as holding social events, activities to improve or care for community resources)						
Constituency- based politics (Constituency-based politics roles are defined as political activities undertaken at community, local and national level)						



# Annex C

## IRW's Age, Gender and Diversity Tool 2: Access and control

### Tool 2: Access and control

**Guidance note:** What is the nature and extent of their access to and control over resources, such as land, income and assets, employment, nutrition, health and education services, means of and inputs to production and so forth?

Resources	Females of all ages	Males of all ages	Females of all ages with disabilities	Males of all ages with disabilities	Females of contextually distinctive, excluded or discriminated social identities	Males of contextually distinctive, excluded or discriminated social identities
Resources that males and females have access to, and control over: <input type="checkbox"/> Land <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Labour <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Education/Training <input type="checkbox"/> Basic needs (food, clothing, shelter) <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Time <input type="checkbox"/> Other						
Resources used to carry out the tasks identified in gender-roles profile						
Who controls the use of these resources and makes decisions on their use?						

# Annex D

## IRW's Age, Gender and Diversity Tool 3: Practical gender needs and strategic gender needs

### Tool 3: Practical gender needs (PGNs) and strategic gender needs (SGNs)

**Guidance note:** Practical gender needs often stem from inadequacies in living conditions, such as water, healthcare and economic opportunities. Addressing strategic gender needs involves changing attitudes in order to give rights to land, inheritance, and financial services, increasing participation and generating equal opportunities, to ultimately eradicate restrictions.

Gender needs	Females of all ages	Males of all ages	Females of all ages with disabilities	Males of all ages with disabilities	Females of contextually distinctive, excluded or discriminated social identities	Males of contextually distinctive, excluded, or discriminated social identities
Short-term needs of people (practical gender needs)						
Long-term needs of people (strategic gender needs)						

# Annex E

## Guidance on IRW's Age, Gender and Diversity Analysis Tools

### What is age, gender and diversity?

Age, gender and diversity analysis is an essential tool for promoting humanitarian assistance that is appropriate to the needs of the crisis-affected population, regardless of differences in gender, age, ethnicity, ability or any other factors.

- Age refers to the length of time that a person has lived.
- Gender refers to the socially constructed roles of men and women.
- Diversity refers to the values, attitudes, cultural beliefs, social statuses and other specific personal characteristics, such as disability, ethnicity or caste, which must be recognised and understood by humanitarian organisations.

### What is age, gender and diversity analysis?

Age, gender and diversity analysis considers the roles and responsibilities of community members, relations between women and men, girls and boys, access to and control over resources including human (e.g. education), financial, natural (e.g. land) and social capital (networks, time). Furthermore, it considers decision-making powers and participatory practices, as well as the constraints facing community members and how this varies by gender, age and disabilities. It also considers short term (practical) and long-term (strategic) gender and diversity needs.

### Why do we need to conduct an age, gender and diversity analysis?

The systematic application of age, gender and diversity analysis allows us to:

- Obtain a thorough understanding of an issue and/or situation, in which all groups within the affected population are considered in a non-discriminatory way.
- Internalise the fact that socially and biologically constructed differences between people can be defining characteristics that play a central role in determining an individual's capabilities, needs and vulnerabilities during a humanitarian crisis.
- Identify priority areas for intervention according to differentiated needs; and facilitate accurate and inclusive targeting of a population's needs and priorities, linked to efficient use of resources and strong, sustainable outcomes.
- Avoid causing harm through understanding the architecture of each group within the affected communities.
- Promote participation and ownership by the actors that a policy, programme, project, service or other intervention seeks (or will seek) to serve, which is integral to empowerment.
- Underpin and enable inclusion of all groups at risk in humanitarian programming.
- Ensure that the implementation of an intervention adheres to protection mainstreaming principles and respects Core Humanitarian Standard commitments.

### When should an age, gender and diversity analysis be conducted?

Age, gender and diversity analysis should be an ongoing element of programming and should be woven throughout the project life cycle – and help inform – all stages of the programme cycle including in planning, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Age, gender and diversity analysis is ongoing throughout the implementation of a policy, programme or project.

## How is an age, gender and diversity analysis conducted?

It is advisable to repeat the following six core steps throughout the duration of a programme or project, from design, through implementation, to monitoring and evaluation.

### 1. Identify the situation, issue or problem to be addressed.

### 2. Identify sources of information (seeking diversity) that include:

- Individuals from the target population
- Groups from the target population
- Institutions or organisations
- Experts.

### 3. Gather information (from identified sources, ensuring that you have obtained their informed consent) that is disaggregated by sex, age and disability if possible (and other pertinent variables such as ethnicity, religion, educational level, employment status, etc.).

### 4. Examine the data gathered from women, men, girls, and boys, of all ages and abilities. Using an intersectional lens, address the following (where applicable):

- Roles and responsibilities;
- Relations between girls and boys, women and men;
- Access to, and control of, resources;
- Productive and reproductive activities (in what ways do women and men, girls and boys, contribute to their family and community?);
- Obstacles and constraints (individual, social, economic, legal, political, cultural) to the participation of girls, boys, women and men;
- Vulnerabilities;
- Capacities;
- Practical needs and strategic interests;
- The potential (positive and negative) impacts on boys and girls, women and men, of an intervention.

### 5. During the planning stage:

- Ensure that data (where possible) is disaggregated by sex, age and disability (as well as other relevant factors);
- Establish a baseline from which outcomes, outputs and indicators can be determined;
- Determine desired results (outcomes/outputs);
- Identify the action(s) to be taken, making sure that participation is evident and planned for at all stages of implementation;
- Specify age, gender and disability-sensitive indicators;
- List possible risks to realising the stated results and devise strategies for mitigating these risks.

### 6. During implementation, constantly review the age, gender and disability dimensions of a programme or project, recalling the baseline data, desired results and indicators of achievement.

- Methods of data collection or information-gathering should be both quantitative and qualitative.
- Quantitative methods typically include surveys or questionnaires, as well as reviews of statistics.
- Qualitative methods include interviews, focus groups and observations. Where information is sought from groups it is important to consider both single-sex and mixed groups. When scheduling meetings with individuals and groups, consideration should also be given to the time, day, location etc. Men should not be consulted on women's behalf. You can also consider conducting different focus group discussions with girls, boys, older men, older women, men with disability, and women with disability. Make sure to include their care givers and ensure grouping is culturally appropriate. Make sure they are gender and culturally sensitive.

Regardless of the method(s) employed, it is essential all relevant stakeholders participate, and that as wide a range as possible of girls, boys, women and men is consulted. It may also be beneficial to be mindful of the sex of the individual gathering the information. For instance, a female facilitator may be more appropriate than a male facilitator for a discussion with a group of women. It is important to make special efforts to reach marginalised and excluded women, men, boys or girls, and involve women in identifying priority needs for the community, and the specific needs of older women, women with disability, and women and girls.

### **What types of questions should we ask?**

Age, gender and diversity analysis reveals who is doing what, who has control over resources, and who has decision-making power while providing answers to the following questions.

- 1.** What is the situation vis-à-vis the nutritional status, educational and literacy levels, mortality rates, etc. of different segments of your focus groups? What gaps exist among different population groups? This information can be gleaned from sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD).
- 2.** What roles do girls, boys, women, and men play in their households, in their communities, and in society at large? What are the specific roles played by older people (before and after the crisis)? What is the role of people with disability? Is there any discrimination? This information can be gleaned from SADDD, from qualitative surveys and studies, and from time-use surveys.
- 3.** What is the nature and extent of men's and women's access to, and control over, resources such as land, income and assets, employment, nutrition, health and education services, means of (and inputs to) production etc.?
- 4.** How do women and men of all ages and abilities participate in decision-making at household, community and national levels? How does this participation relate to larger questions of agency, autonomy, and freedom, for each group?
- 5.** What legal and institutional frameworks exist to promote, protect and defend the human rights of different societal groups, and how effective are they?
- 6.** What are the different perspectives, roles, needs and interests of girls and boys, women and men of all ages and abilities, in the intervention area (either substantive focus area or geographical area), including their practical needs and strategic interests?
- 7.** What key differences within these groups (such as class, race, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation, ability, colour and age) affect their respective circumstances, status, opportunities and resources with regards to this programme area?
- 8.** How might the programme interventions affect women and men, girls and boys of all ages and abilities, both positively and negatively? In particular, who stands to gain and who stands to lose from the initiative? How might the programme mitigate potential negative effects and lessen any potential backlash?
- 9.** What social, cultural, logistical and legal constraints, opportunities, and entry points exist for reducing gender and other structural inequalities and promoting more equal relations between girls and boys, and women and men and other discriminated groups in this programme area?
- 10.** What is the current capacity of partner institutions to the programme? What capacity development needs exist and how might they be addressed (for instance, through training, hiring expertise, and partnering with women's and older people's organisations, disabled people's organisations etc.)?

# End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Aside from age and gender, people's needs and access to power and resources may vary based on other historically and contextually situated diversities based on disability, health, ethnicity, social status, sexual orientation, religion and other specific characteristics. 'Diversity' is used to capture these differences.

<sup>2</sup> *The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, Sphere (2018), [www.spherestandards.org/handbook/](http://www.spherestandards.org/handbook/)

<sup>3</sup> Quote from an IRW frontline staff member

<sup>4</sup> *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol*, UN (2006), p.3

<sup>5</sup> P. Sheppard, S. Polack, M. McGivern, *Missing Millions: How older people with disabilities are excluded from humanitarian response*, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and HelpAge International, London, UK, (2018)

<sup>6</sup> K. Crenshaw, *Why Intersectionality Can't Wait in Gender and Women's Studies* (edited by Margaret Hobbs & Carla Rice), Women's Press, Ontario (2018)

<sup>7</sup> L. Searle, *Inclusive Humanitarian Action: A study into Humanitarian Partnership Agreement (HPA) agency practice in the Nepal earthquake response*, Humanitarian Advisory Group, Melbourne, Australia (2016), p.14.

<sup>8</sup> C. Moser, *Gender, Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*, Routledge, London & New York (1993)

<sup>9</sup> Global Protection Cluster, [www.globalprotectioncluster.org/themes/protection-mainstreaming/](http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/themes/protection-mainstreaming/)





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