

Food Security & Livelihoods Programs

Tips for Protection Mainstreaming

Edition 1 (June 2014)


The content for this note is taken mainly from the following sources:

- [Minimum Inter-Agency Standards for Protection Mainstreaming \(WVI\)](#)
- [Disabilities among Refugees and Conflict-Affected Populations - Resource Kit for Fieldworkers \(WRC\)](#)
- [Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action \(CPWG\)](#)
- [GBV Guidelines \(IASC\)](#)
- [Humanitarian Charter & Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response \(SPHERE\)](#)

This note is meant to be used as part of the GPC Protection Mainstreaming Training. It is divided into three sections, representing the four key elements of Protection Mainstreaming. The content is not meant to be exhaustive, but presents examples of key actions that should be taken to ensure the integration of protection principles *in the delivery of humanitarian assistance*.

Although each action described should be considered throughout implementation, there are some key actions which are especially important to consider during emergencies and during the assessment/project design stage of the project cycle. These are highlighted with the following symbol-codes:

- Emergencies 
- Assessment & Project Design Stage 

Some actions can be sensitive by their nature. In these cases, it is suggested to reach out to a Protection specialist. These are highlighted with the following symbol: 

Prioritize safety & dignity, and avoid doing harm

- ☐ Food, cash, vouchers or livestock interventions may make people more vulnerable to certain protection problems, such as attacks. The ownership or management of these types of assets, which may be particularly valuable in an emergency, may place people at greater risk of violence, abduction or abuse. Analysis of the local security environment including in relation to ownership patterns, recent history of looting or raiding, husbandry practices and the need to access livestock services or markets is necessary to identify high risk practices and activities.
- ☐ Beneficiaries may face problems at distribution sites, particularly with theft, intimidation and extortion. The environment in which assistance is provided must be safe for all the people concerned.
- ☐ Beneficiaries may face problems, particularly with sexual assault and robbery including at official or unofficial checkpoints while travelling to and from a distribution point. The environment through which beneficiaries must travel must be safe for all the people concerned. If safety is a problem FSC members will need to make a special effort to move the point of delivery close to a beneficiary's home or provide transport to ensure safety.

- ❑ Food security and related responses should aim to reduce the threats against the affected population. Responses must not inadvertently empower or strengthen the position of armed groups or other undesirable actors. The vulnerability of beneficiaries beyond food insecurity and their available coping mechanisms and other capacities all need to be taken into consideration.
- ❑ Consideration must be given to whether items like cash or vouchers can be used for anti-social purposes, for example, the purchase of small arms or alcohol, tobacco or drugs that can be abused that may result in an increase in domestic violence. Cash may increase risks of corrupt diversion or seizure by armed groups and may expose beneficiaries to security risks.
- ❑ A food assistance system that enables displaced beneficiaries to live among host families or in a dispersed manner should be prioritized, in spite of the greater logistical constraints it may entail. Avoid turning food aid into a pull factor for encampment.
- ❑ Coping strategies contributing to food security and dignity should be supported, while bearing in mind that some of them may carry costs or incur risks that increase vulnerability so these should be avoided.
- ❑ Food, cash, vouchers or livestock responses may undermine people's efforts to protect themselves and increase their vulnerabilities so need to be carefully considered.
- ❑ Comprehensive context-specific analysis including of cost efficiency, secondary market impacts, the flexibility of the transfer, targeting and risks of insecurity and corruption should inform the choice of programme.

Meaningful Access

- ❑ Assess and monitor access to food security programmes by collecting disaggregated data by age, gender, and location or specific community.
- ❑ If some individuals, for example, older persons or persons with disabilities, cannot access the services ensure that special arrangements are made to bring food or cash to them. It should not be assumed that friends and family will do it. Coordinate with specialized organizations for example, Handicap International and HelpAge International to identify individuals with limited mobility and include them in the programme assistance.
- ❑ Activities must not discriminate against any group and must be performed in such a way that they cannot be perceived as doing so. Consider whether women and men may have different capacities to access cash compared with in kind resources.
- ❑ Activities should promote and help protect the rights of people who have historically been marginalised or discriminated against, such as certain castes, tribes or women and girls in some societies.
- ❑ Interventions with displaced beneficiaries should not be at the expense of the local host population; assistance should be provided to both groups where possible.

Accountability, Participation & Empowerment

- ❑ Make sure beneficiaries know they have a right to equitable and safe assistance, and where and how to obtain it.
- ❑ Consult men, women, boys, girls, the elderly, and persons with disabilities to understand their needs and preferences for location, design, and methodology of assistance. Direct observation and discussion groups with representatives of the community to identify the adaptations that are needed for the most vulnerable.
- ❑ Partners, communities and beneficiaries need to be involved in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of programmes so they can make informed decisions. FSC members need to be transparent in their objectives with beneficiaries and non-beneficiary communities, as well as with its government and NGO partners.
- ❑ A complaints feedback mechanism should be established with a view to improving programming, assisting in understanding beneficiary and community perceptions, promoting beneficiary empowerment and assisting in the early detection of problems such as targeting, misconduct including sexual exploitation and abuse, food diversion and fraud.
- ❑ Ensure that Food or livelihood committees are representative of all groups within the community (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic group, etc.). Include targeted measures to ensure the effective and meaningful participation of representatives of the all groups in the community.
- ❑ Protecting and promoting food security of marginalised groups the impact on the relationships within and beyond communities needs to be understood as activities may exacerbate tension or build cohesion amongst groups within and between communities. Food assistance or other interventions should not have a negative impact on local labour market.
- ❑ Certain delivery mechanisms like mobile banking and mobile phones can be less accessible to vulnerable people. The choice of delivery mechanisms must be based on assessment of options and consultation with beneficiaries.
- ❑ Assess and monitor access to food security programmes by collecting disaggregated data by age, gender, and location or specific community. This data may help identify whether there is discrimination or if any food is being diverted. Ensure monitors check and follow up that assistance reached the most vulnerable.
- ❑ Identify, support the role, and strengthen the capacity of local authorities and civil society with responsibilities in the Food Security Sector. Where possible, train local Food Security committees consisting of beneficiaries can do identify problems for themselves. Make sure beneficiaries and staff know where to refer or report incidents of rights violations.
- ❑ Provide communities with accessible, effective and confidential complaint mechanisms that are well understood mechanisms and respond to complaints, regardless of whether corrective measures can immediately be put in place. Staff the mechanism with both men and women and ensure it is accessible for children.
- ❑ The natural resource base for production and livelihoods of the disaster-affected population and host population should be preserved.