

Standards for gender sensitive coordinated multi-sector and sector needs assessments

Needs assessments conducted by humanitarian actors over the course of the years constitute a main source for analysis of needs that lays the foundations for future better informed decision making related to the humanitarian response whether in emergencies or sector workplans and projects. The quality of those assessments is enhanced when they provide refined data including on gender specific needs and sex and age data disaggregation. Strengthening the collection of qualitative and quantitative sex and age disaggregated data and addressing data and information gaps in relation to gender inequalities is a key aspect of engendering the humanitarian response in oPt.

Quality of data collected is largely enhanced when close attention is paid to various types of biases that can distort the results of the assessments and the determination of needs. Biases in needs assessments can be a result of the design of the assessment methodology. Biases can also be a result of values, experiences and skills of data collectors or respondents whether intentional or unintentional¹. Gender blind assessments risk a higher margin of error normally a key concern of assessment design, data collection and analysis.

Gender related biases in needs assessment are addressed by:

- Ensuring an adequate scope of **the content** of assessments by including questions that cover all aspects of a crisis, and gather information to identify groups at risks within the affected population
- Ensuring **inclusivity** of all parts of the community by collecting data from individuals representing all groups of a community (e.g. ensuring participation of female and male representatives of Bedouin communities, refugee population, farmers, herders, community leaders..etc.) “carry out systematic dialogue with women, men, boys and girls to ensure that their needs are covered,
- Forming **gender-balanced assessment teams** that can capture every group’s perspective and access all vulnerable groups”².
- Ensuring that assessors’ have the **awareness, capacity and resources** to guarantee quality gender responsive data collection (including through sensitization training and having female assessors’ on the teams, and guidelines that ensure visibility of sex and age disaggregated data and issues).
- Identifying **secondary data sources** that facilitate a well informed gender analysis of population gender relations and dynamics
- Collecting, storing and reporting on **data in a disaggregated form** (by sex, age and diversity)
- Organizing focus groups discussions, and community level meetings with specific population groups (e.g. women, youth, elderly, female IDPs...etc.) to address data and analysis gaps

The IASC operational guidance on needs assessments requires **Cluster/sector lead agencies at the country level** to ensure that cross-cutting issues, particularly gender, HIV, age and disability, are integrated in the assessments conducted by their members as part of their overall responsibility of coordinating sectoral assessment and analysis. The above points apply to coordinated needs assessments, multi-sectoral assessments as well as sector specific assessments. While the former are intended to generate rapid assessments of needs to inform emergency responses, the latter would provide more detailed data that would inform medium term needs.

¹ IASC, Operational guidance for coordinated assessments in humanitarian crises, March 2012

² *ibid*