Gender & Social Protection

General information and guidance about Social Protection in WFP:

- WFP Safety Nets Policy (2012)
- WFP Revised School Feeding Policy (2013)
- WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit
- WFP Safety Nets Guidelines – Basics and Concepts
- WFP Safety Nets Guidelines – Engagement with Governments and Partners
- WFP Safety Nets Guidelines – Design and Implementation
- WFP Good Practices from 45 Years of School Feeding
- WFP Home Grown School Feeding – A Framework
- WFP Global School Feeding Source Book – Lessons from 14 Countries
- Manual for SABER – School Feeding Exercise
- WFP Cash-Based Transfers Manual

WHAT

Social protection refers to a broad set of policies, programmes and services that are designed to reduce poverty, inequality and vulnerabilities, and so contribute to social justice and empower women, men, girls and boys, by providing income security and access to essential health services and education.

**Common Social Protection Measures**

Common social protection measures include:

- labour market initiatives, such as skill development, training programmes, food for work programmes (e.g., Food Assistance For Assets)
- social insurance, such as old-age pensions, health insurance, crop insurance, unemployment insurance
- social assistance, such as cash or in-kind transfers, child welfare, assistance to elderly persons, health services, disability benefits and disaster relief

As gender influences women’s, men’s, girls’ and boys’ experience of poverty and inequality, as well as vulnerabilities and capacities, their social protection needs differ.

**Civil Registration**

In order to access education, health, income or labour market services an individual needs to be legally registered with the state. Not everyone is a legal citizen and so cannot access such services, including for reasons of gender discrimination. In some countries, unmarried women cannot register the births of their children.

In other cases, regardless of the women’s marital status, the father’s signature is required. Women who lack information on the importance of civil registration, have low literacy skills, and/or live in rural and remote areas, are less likely to register the births of their children than their educated, affluent, urban counterparts. Where boys are valued more than girls, brothers may possess birth certificates but not their sisters.

**Health**

Access to essential health services is a key pillar of social protection. The particular health services that women and men, and girls and boys need, are not universally the same.

Both biological sex and gender influence a person’s physical and mental health. While a virus, bacteria or pathogen may not distinguish between females and males, how women and men (and girls and boys) acquire, experience, cope with and recover from disease and ill health is related to their roles, responsibilities and resources (or lack of) which are, in turn, defined by (discriminator) gender norms and practices.
Women disproportionately suffer from gender-based violence with significant health consequences (or death), as well as damaging their livelihood opportunities. Access (or not) to sexual and reproductive health services is another significant factor that directly impacts on the livelihoods and food security of women and men.

The consequences of poverty and discrimination are different for women, men, girls and boys in education and training. Harmful practices – such as early, forced and child marriage – prematurely terminate the education of girls, with negative consequences for their health and well-being, as well as that of their children, including food security and nutrition, along with income generation possibilities.

Poverty can mean that girls are sent (sold) to work as domestic servants or boys are forced to do hazardous jobs, such as working in mines or on fishing boats. In some places, ‘subject streaming’ means that girls are encouraged to study certain subjects and boys other subjects, limiting the educational and employment options of both girls and boys (although in different ways).

School-based gender-based violence (SBGBV) is another factor differently influencing access to and experience of education.

Gender inequalities in, for example, wages, labour force participation, vulnerable employment\(^1\) and entrepreneurship shape women’s and men’s access to and experience of formal and informal employment. Women’s and men’s access to decent work is also determined by horizontal and vertical occupational segregation – where men dominate in some sectors (e.g. mining, construction, transportation) and women in others (e.g. 5Cs - caring, cashiering, cleaning, catering and clerical work), and where women encounter the ‘sticky floor’ and the ‘glass ceiling’. To be beneficial to women and men, gender must be integrated into active labour market initiatives (like WFP’s asset creation programmes).

Globally, unpaid care and domestic work is primarily assigned to women and girls. Women and girls are providing social protection, particularly where the public system does not; when the private sector charges exorbitant fees, and when cuts are made to public services, such as to health services, childcare and disability benefits. If women and girls are compensating for the absence of social services, they are also being penalised, relative to men and boys, in relation to education, employment and community participation opportunities.

Discrimination in customary and/or common law means that not all women in all countries can inherit or own land or other property. There are also gender inequalities in access to financial services (such as women not being able to open bank accounts in their own names) and to technology, with women having less access to, for instance, mobile telephones and the internet. Inequalities in assets and resources is linked to poverty and vulnerability (or not) and particular social protection measures that are needed.

As a member of the Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPF-I), WFP assists governments in establishing and strengthening national social protection systems that ensure that food security and nutrition of all women, men, girls and boys.

\(^1\) The ILO defines workers in vulnerable employment as “the sum of own account workers and contributing family workers (also known as unpaid family workers), are less likely to have formal work arrangements, and are therefore more likely to lack elements associated with decent employment such as adequate social security and recourse to effective social dialogue mechanisms. Vulnerable employment is often characterized by inadequate earnings, low productivity and difficult conditions of work that undermine workers’ fundamental rights.” ILO, 2010, Global Employment Trends.
WFP Food Security & Nutrition Programmes & Social Protection

In addition, WFP implements food security and nutrition programmes that support social protection.

**School Feeding Programmes:** Provision of school meals, snacks, and/or take home rations on the condition that the recipient girls and/or boys attend school.

_**Relevance of gender** – who receives the food and whose school attendance is supported._

**Unconditional transfers:** Provision of cash, vouchers and/or food to specific population groups, such as women, men, girls and boys living in a refugee or IDP camp.

_**Relevance of gender** – who receives the transfer, who benefits and the risks of receiving the transfer._

**Asset Creation - (Food for Training & Food for Assets Programmes):** Provision of transfers (cash, vouchers, food) in exchange for women and/or men (a) participating in a learning programme, or (b) for their labour in creating or repairing a community asset, such as a water point, fish pond, irrigation system, granary or market place.

_**Relevance of gender** – who participates and how, who benefits from the transfer, who benefits from the learning, who benefits from the assets, the risks involved._

**Risk Financing & Transfer:** Programmes designed to reduce the livelihood risks (including climate risks) of particular regions, countries, communities and/or individuals, such as FoodSECuRe, LEAP, ARC, R4 Rural Resilience.

_**Relevance of gender** – whose risks are reduced, who benefits and how._

**Local Supply Chains and Rural Livelihoods:** Programmes designed to increase the income security of rural communities, particularly smallholder farmers, such as P4P and Home-Grown School Feeding programmes.

_**Relevance of gender** – whose livelihoods are supported, how and to what extent._

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**WHY**

Fundamentally, access to social protection is a human right and so applies to all persons. Key international agreements that refer to social protection include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

We integrate gender into social protection because social protection measures of a means of reducing poverty, inequalities and exclusion. Accordingly, when social protection measures are based on comprehensive and participatory gender analyses they can both:

- meet the particular livelihood, social assistance and social insurance needs of women and men (and girls and boys); and
- contribute to advancing gender equality.

If we ignore gender, we reduce the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of our programmes which means we:

- risk reinforcing gender inequalities
- do not achieve the objectives of the WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020), most significantly Objective 1 of providing food assistance to the particular needs of women, men, girls and boys
- miss opportunities for creating sustained and empowering changes for particular groups of women, men, girls and/or boys

**School Feeding Programmes**

As well as the immediate food security and nutritional benefits for girls and boys, school feeding programmes can reduce the risks of (a) early, forced or child marriage, and (b) being pulled out of school to help with household chores, care of siblings, farm work or other labour. Being able to complete basic
education increases the livelihood opportunities for girls (as it does for boys), which directly links to food security and nutrition for themselves and their children. Completing basic education also means that girls have the opportunity to acquire basic life skills including literacy, knowledge of their rights, information about health (including sexual and reproductive health), and learn positive coping strategies.

Boys similarly benefit from school feeding programmes that keep them in schools, such as where there is a risk of them being taken out of school to help produce or procure food. Boys too acquire basic life skills. Where a school feeding programme has been designed with gender equality in mind, boys (and girls) can be encouraged and guided in going beyond restrictive gender roles and norms. For example, such tasks as gardening and collecting water can be equally shared by boys and girls. Where the school cooks are both women and men, and both are valued and respected, the notion that cooking is a woman’s job is challenged and boys have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to ensure their own food security. The integration of gender into school feeding programmes can expand opportunities for girls and boys, beyond traditional gender roles, such as in some pastoralist societies where boys must take care of cattle.

Cash-Based Transfers
Increasing access to cash can be empowering for women. Transferring cash to women can:
- increase their ability to influence and/or make decisions within their household
- reduce (or eliminate) their economic dependency on a partner or other relative
- strengthen their sense of self-efficacy and dignity (by being able to make choices)
- improve their status within households and communities
- provide them with access to financial services

But, transferring cash (or vouchers) to women to improve the food security and nutrition of individuals and households can also:
- reinforce discriminatory and restrictive gender roles (where women are responsible for domestic chores and the care of others)
- increase pressure on women to meet the needs of household members
- increase women’s workload, with the time required to register as a ‘beneficiary’ and then decide on purchases, spend the cash and transport the food
- increase the risk of women being subjected to violence, such as where women are seen as easy targets for theft or where they are intimidated and beaten by a partner who feels emasculated

WHEN & WHERE

Gender should be mainstreamed into all of WFP’s social protection initiatives – at all times and in all locations. The objectives of any WFP social protection initiative should include:
- addressing the particular needs, interests and situations of the different women, men, girls and/or boys
- advancing gender equality

WHO

All WFP employees, partners and contractors, involved in social protection activities should:
- be aware of, understanding and addressing gender in their particular roles
- contribute to achieving the four objectives of the WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020)

Key persons who should actively address gender in WFP’s social protection programming include:
- Social Assistance Policy and Programmes Officers
- Regional Programme and Country Office Advisers
- Regional Gender Advisers
Individuals whose work relates to the following areas should also be integrating gender equality into their work:

- food distribution
- cash-based transfer
- school feeding
- asset creation
- vulnerability assessment and monitoring (VAM)
- disaster risk reduction
- climate resilience
- rural resilience and livelihoods

1. Conduct Context & Needs Analysis

Integrate gender (and age) analysis into social protection context analysis, including in:

- Integrated Context Analysis (ICA)
- community-Based Participatory Planning (CBP)
- Seasonal Livelihoods Planning (SLP)

Integrate gender into complementary WFP strategic review and programme-specific context needs analysis tools (or government tools) used in social protection context analysis, including:

- standard WFP household food and nutrition security analysis – Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA), Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA)
- school feeding programme Context and Situation Analysis

For a School Feeding Programme:

- Identify barriers to education for the different girls and boys
  
  Consider: infrastructure (safety, toilet facilities); the gender, training, experience and number of teachers (and other school staff); physical access (location, distance, transportation, safety); roles of girls and boys

- Identify organisations, individuals and practices that support the education of girls and boys
  
  Consider: community leaders, parents, teachers, youth organisations, cultural norms, policies

Key Questions to Ask

- Did all primary and secondary school-aged children regularly attend school in the past six months?
  
  If they did not, what were the reasons why?

- primary school-aged girls did not regularly attend school?

- primary school-aged boys did not regularly attend school?

- secondary school-aged girls did not regularly attend school?

- secondary school-aged boys did not regularly attend school?

Consider:

- no functioning school to attend
- the closest school is not close enough for regular attendance
- the school is located in an insecure / unsafe area
- the school lacks adequate WaSH facilities

HOW

WFP Gender Office
Gender & Social Protection

- fear of school-related violence (travelling to/from or during school)
- lack of money for school fees or school-related costs
- work being done to support the household (e.g. gardening, fetching water, taking care of siblings, cooking food)
- work being done to generate income for the household
- belief that school is not necessary or important
- lack of interested in attending school
- sickness or disability
- pregnancy
- marriage

2. Design Social Protection Programmes

Using the information from the gender-informed analysis, design a social protection programme that addresses the identified needs and situations of the particular women, men, girls and/or boys.

Key Design Questions
1. Do the programme objectives include reducing gender inequalities? If not, revise the objectives.
2. When deciding on the type of social protection measure, was gender and gender equality considered? In what ways? If gender equality was not considered, review the programme through a gender lense and revise.
3. How, and to what extent, does the social protection programme address the particular needs, situations, constraints and capacities of the targeted women, men, girls and/or boys?
4. If the social protection programme involves conditional transfers, how have gender roles, relations and responsibilities been accounted for so that gender equality is promoted (and reinforcement of gender inequalities and discriminatory practices avoided)?
5. Are there gender equality initiatives that the social protection programme can link to in order to maximise impact for the particular women, men, girls and/or boys? What?
6. Does the programme design explicitly require equitable participation of women and men in implementation, monitoring and review? If not, revise.

Targeting
If the social protection measure is targeted, as opposed to universal, remember:
- the initial assessment should be participatory and inclusive so that the diverse women, men, girls and boys have fair opportunities to state their particular needs and interests
- needs and workloads can be different for women and men at different times of the year, such as when crops are planted and harvested
- targeting can be a source of conflict and increase a person’s risk of being subjected to violence; which means it is essential that a protection analysis has been undertaken, information is shared, complaints and feedback mechanisms are in place and functioning, and monitoring is regular and gender-responsive

For Transfers, consider:
- Benefit – who will benefit from the type of transfer that has been chosen? How? To what extent? Who doesn’t benefit? If not everyone benefits, how is that justified? Does the transfer support equity and equality of outcome?
- Access – what constraints are there for women, men, girls and/or boys in accessing the transfer? How can the constraints be addressed?
  Consider: mobility, transportation, ID card (civil registration), work commitments (including unpaid domestic), care of others (e.g. children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities), security and safety, access to technology (e.g. mobile phone), technological and/or financial literacy
- Risk – what are the risks for women, men, girls and/or boys in receiving the transfer? In not receiving the transfer? What can be done to mitigate the risks?
Consider risks (threats of harm) that exist (a) within households; (b) in relations between women and men, and (c) in the community.

For Cash-Based Transfer Programmes and Risk Financing Programmes, check that women and men, and their organisations, will:
- have access to, and independent control of, the required technology (e.g. mobile phone)
- know how to use the required technology
- have access to financial information and services, such as a bank account and insurance
- be able to equitably access the capacity-building opportunities

Where gaps are identified, revise the programme design accordingly.

For School Feeding Programmes:
- Level – Check if primary school and secondary school initiatives are needed. As gender interacts with age, the needs, restrictions and opportunities change for girls and boys from primary to secondary school. All girls and boys should be able to complete quality primary and secondary education.
- Labour – Check
  - that the procurement, preparation and provision of school meals, snacks and take-home rations will not reinforce restrictive and discriminatory gender roles (like cooking is women’s work).
  - that the training opportunities and compensation for the work that is done is fair.
- Sourcing – Check that women and men will have equitable access to any business-related or income-generation opportunities associated with the school feeding programme.
- Decision-making – Check that women and men will be equally represented on all committees.
- Participation – Check that women and men from the broader community will be involved.

3. Implement Social Protection Programmes

When implementing social protection programmes, ensure that:
- the process is inclusive and participatory
- sensitisation campaigns are designed to reach, inform and engage the diverse women, men, girls and boys and their organisations

4. Monitor Social Protection Programmes

Ensure that monitoring of social protection programmes is gender-responsive. This applies to:
- individual social protection programmes,
- the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) initiative

Set up and manage complaints and feedback mechanisms

Individuals and Households: Make sure to track indicators that assess changes (or not) at the level of the individual; disaggregated by sex and age. Inequalities between women and men, and girls and boys, cannot be detected with (or only with) household and community-level indicators.

Inequalities in access to and consumption of food, in nutrition, in violence, in decision-making, in control over income and assets can exist within a household. This has direct implications for their social protection needs and for WFP meeting its commitments to advance gender equality in order to achieve a world of zero hunger.


ILO Building Social Protection Floors and Comprehensive Social Security Systems

Institute of Development Studies, Centre for Social Protection

Overseas Development Institute, Social Protection

The World Bank, Safety Nets