WHAT

For 2017-2021, WFP’s “ultimate goal... is to support countries to end hunger”.1 This goal is underpinned by the first objective of the WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020): “women, men, girls and boys benefit from food assistance programmes and activities that are adapted to their different needs and capacities”. Gender is relevant to all types of food assistance – in-kind, vouchers and cash-based transfers.

Across the different contexts in which WFP works – from emergency responses and protection relief and recover operations to development settings – gender is key factor in determining:
- what and how much food assistance is needed
- the preferred, safest and most empowering food assistance modality (transfer type) and delivery mechanism
- how (and if) the assistance can be accessed
- how women and men (and girls and boys) benefit from the assistance received

For vouchers and cash-based transfers, gender is present in relation to (for example):
- the ability of an individual to register for assistance, which depends on awareness of available assistance, legal status (citizen, refugee, IDP, undocumented), literacy, mobility and confidence in accessing and managing the assistance
- financial autonomy and literacy, such as the ability to open and control a bank account, manage funds and avoid being exploited
- access to and control of modern technology, such as mobile phones
- time available to redeem the voucher or obtain and spend the cash
- retailers who profit from the purchases made with the vouchers and cash
- use of the vouchers and cash, relating to
  - the ability to make decisions for oneself and one’s family (or not)
  - prioritisation of purchases
  - intra-household distribution

Where the transfer is food, gender is relevant to (for example):
- the type and quantities of food provided
- distribution locations
- how the distribution locations are organised
- distributions times and schedules
- the facilities available at distribution sites
- the persons who distribute food
- the knowledge, skills and sensitivities of the persons who distribute the food
- the risks of being subjected to harm or violence

WHY

Every woman, man, girl and boy has the right to adequate, safe and nutritious food, at all times. For this right to be fulfilled, the influence and role of gender must be understood and gender equality achieved. Considering gender and addressing issues of gender equality are key to delivering “first-rate food assistance interventions” that are adapted to local contexts, capacities and partnerships.

As well as meeting the immediate need for food, choices about what food assistance to provide, to whom and how can (a) advance gender equality, (b) empower women, and (c) achieve social justice

1 WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021), WFP/EB.2/2016/4-A/1, paragraph 27.
outcomes. Voucher and cash-based transfers can be empowering for women and men by, for example, (a) promoting autonomy; (b) strengthening the dignity that comes with choice; (c) fostering financial literacy and inclusion, and (d) providing capital to start a business.

BUT, voucher and cash-based transfers are not automatically empowering nor do they inherently advance gender equality. For example, transfers can reinforce discriminatory gender roles; such as women being primarily responsible for the health and wellbeing of household members and doing the vast majority of unpaid care and domestic work.

Ignoring gender – whether consciously or unconsciously – in the provision of food assistance can cause harm. Discriminatory policies, legislation, institutions and social norms – such as relating to land ownership, representation in government bodies and division of (paid and unpaid) labour – mean that women are less likely, than men, to (for example):

- own and manage land
- control other assets, like equipment, houses, shops and bank accounts
- access the knowledge, innovations, and technologies to maximise agricultural productivity
- be involved in initiatives to strengthen resilience to climate change and natural disasters
- be able to safely move around communities, particularly during times of violent conflict and displacement
- escape situations of violence (including in their homes)

**WHEN & WHERE**

Wherever and whenever WFP provides in-kind, voucher and cash-based transfers, gender and gender equality must be considered and addressed.

**WHO**

All WFP employees, partners and contractors involved in the provision of food assistance should be aware of, understand and address gender and gender equality in their particular roles.

The functional areas with responsibilities relating to provision of in-kind, voucher and cash-based transfers include:

- management, particularly the management of L3 emergencies
- food security analysis / VAM
- cash and vouchers working group
- supply chain
- finance
- ICT
- security
- emergency preparedness and response

**HOW**

Assess Needs → Select Transfer Modalities → Transfer Food Assistance → Monitor → Learn, Adapt, Improve, Exit
# 1. Assess Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obtain Data</th>
<th>Obtain the sex and age-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data from existing, relevant needs assessments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If existing needs assessments are inadequate or out-dated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Conduct Assessment | **Conduct a participatory needs assessment that:**  
  - involves collecting sex and age-disaggregated data  
  - incorporates a gender analysis  
  - incorporates a protection analysis |
| Document | Document the gender and protection-informed needs assessment. |
| Use the Assessment | **Use the gender and protection-informed needs assessment/s to:**  
  - determine direct beneficiaries  
  - inform selection of optimal transfer modality / modalities  
  - inform selection of delivery mechanism/s |

**Remember:**  
- Gender considerations should be included in all analyses – risk analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, response analysis etc.  
- Conduct the assessment at the individual, household and community levels, ensuring equal representation of women and men (and their organisations and leaders).  
- When food assistance is targeted (rather than ‘blanket’), ensure that the targeting:  
  - is equitable  
  - prioritises the most food insecure and malnourished women, men, girls and boys  
  - is transparent

## Key Questions for Food Assistance Recipients

*Make sure to ask women and men, of different ages, separately.*

### General

- If you had to choose, would you prefer to receive cash, vouchers, food or a combination? Why?  
  Asking this question helps to avoid assuming that all women, or all men, share a preference for cash, vouchers or food. By obtaining answers to these questions it is possible to select the transfer modality that best matches the needs and interests of the diverse women and men. Having a choice is empowering and addresses potential safety risks for the women and men receiving the assistance.  
- What are your priority expenditures, including for food purchases?  
  Understanding the different expenditure priorities of women and men helps to determine the most appropriate transfer modality.

### Food Consumption

- When food is scarce in the household, in what sequence do family members eat?  
- Men, women, women and men at the same time?  
- Boys, girls, both boys and girls?  
- Boys/men and then girls/women?  
- Who eats the biggest quantities?  
- Who eats the smallest quantities?  

Food consumption and nutrition levels vary within households. Improving food and nutrition security for all women, men, girls and boys requires obtaining (and using) qualitative and quantitative data at the level of the individual.
### Decision-Making
- Are you a member of a food management committee? 
  If yes, what is your role in the committee? 
  If no, why not? 
- Do you feel that your concerns are heard? 
- Do you feel that you can influence the committee’s decision-making? If no, why not? 
  What needs to change for you to be heard?

### Technology
- In the last 30 days, did your household purchase a mobile phone, telephone credit, internet access? 
- Who made the purchase? 
- Who has access to the mobile phone? 
- Who does not have independent access to the mobile phone? 

These questions are asked to understand who in a household has access to the technology needed to receive credit or e-vouchers via mobile phones. This information is important for determining if vouchers and cash will be empowering for the recipients, or not.

### 2. Select the Transfer Modality (or Modalities)

#### Identify if Food, Vouchers, Cash or Combination is the Optimal Transfer

Make sure to consider for women and men (and girls and boys), separately:
- food habits and preferences 
- the stated preferences of the women and men, and their organisations (which may be the same or different) 
- health status – chronically ill, malnourished, pregnant, disability 
- mobility – the ability of women and men to move around their community freely and without financial cost 
- civil status (IDP, refugee, stateless, undocumented, irregular), including ability to register for, and receive, assistance (which typically requires possessing an official identification card) 
- safety and security risks and concerns 
- personal dignity and risks of stigmatization 
- intra-household dynamics 
- community structure and relations 
  - implications for the food security and nutrition of dependents (children, elderly persons, persons with chronic illnesses) 
  - power and empowerment – choice and autonomy for individuals and groups 
  - contribution to gender equality outcomes 

#### Identify Optimal Delivery Mechanisms

Identify the optimal delivery mechanisms – physical delivery at community level, cash collection points, paying cash into bank accounts, mobile phone, electronic cards.

Make sure to consider, for women and men separately:
- the findings of the gender analysis (roles, responsibilities, participation, decision-making power, access to and control of resources, vulnerabilities and capacities) 
- existing workloads – inside and outside of the house, including care work (children, elderly persons, persons who are chronically ill) 
- health status – chronically ill, malnourished, pregnant, disability 
- mobility
existing and potential literacy, functional knowledge and capacity to use the different delivery mechanisms
- safety and security risks and concerns
- implications for the food security and nutrition of dependents (children, elderly persons, persons with chronic illnesses)
- contribution to gender equality outcomes
- contribution to enhanced protection outcomes

**Defaulting to Women**

Do not assume that transferring to women is automatically empowering and advances gender equality. Decisions should be informed by participatory gender and protection analyses. Ensure that the transfer type and delivery mechanism do not reinforce discriminatory and restrictive gender roles; such as women being primarily responsible for the health and well-being of household members.

**In determining whether direct recipients of the food assistance are women, men or women and men, ask:**
- Does the active targeting of women improve their decision-making power within the household? In the community?
- Does the active targeting of women strengthen or worsen relations between women and men?
- Does the active targeting of women increase their risk of experiencing violence – within and outside of the household?
- Does the active targeting of women reinforce discriminatory gender roles and responsibilities, where women are primarily responsible for the health and well-being of household members? Is an opportunity to strengthen gender equality at the household level lost?
- Does the active targeting of women increase their unpaid care and domestic work?

**Optimal Transfer Modality: Gender & Protection Considerations**

**Participation & Access**

In the target population, ensure that:
- women and men (and their organizations and leaders) have equal say in selecting the transfer modality and delivery mechanisms
- women and men have equitable access to the food assistance; which requires providing information, facilitating access to technology, building knowledge and capacities, aiding civil registration (obtaining ID card)
- the transfer improves the food security of individual women, men, girls and boys (not just the household)
- the transfer does not increase workloads

**Dignity**

In the target population, ensure that:
- the transfer enables individual women and men to exercise choice
- the transfer reduces women’s and men’s experience of discrimination, exclusion and/or oppression

**Safety**

- For each transfer modality and delivery mechanism, identify threats to the safety and security of the diverse women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable) separately; noting source, location and times of the threats.

**Example threats**: physical assault, sexual violence, theft, intimidation, exploitation, domestic violence

**Example times**: between sunset and sunrise, on days of religious observance

- Implement measures to mitigate the risks of the threats happening, for the different women and men (and girls and boys). This involves:
  - regularly communicating with the women and men in the target communities, ensuring that the messages reach and are understood by the diverse women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable)
WFP Gender Office  
Gender & Food Assistance

- working with local organisations (that are aligned with WFP’s mandate; commitments to gender equality and ‘leaving no-one behind’; humanitarian principles; and international law)
- establishing and managing complaints and feedback mechanisms that are accessible to all persons within a target community
- consistent gender-responsive monitoring

Among the target population:

- Identify who has official identification documents and who does not; making sure to consider women, children who head households, elderly persons, refugees, IDPs, stateless persons. (In some countries, laws discriminate against the civil registration of women and girls.)
- Determine if not having official identification prevents a person or household from accessing food assistance (being able to register and receive food, vouchers and/or cash).
- Determine if obtaining official identification (civil registration) places particular individuals or groups of people at risk of harm.
- Where lack of identification prevents access to food assistance, and there are no or minimal protection risks, support the affected individuals in obtaining ID cards (or the like).
- Where there is risk of harm, identify means of accessing the food assistance that does not require official identification.

In the target population, for the diverse women and men (and girls and boys) separately:

- Determine if they (a) have access to the technology needed to receive vouchers and/or cash; (b) have independent use of the technology; (c) know how to use the technology.
- Use the transfer modality that maximises equitable access, is empowering for women and men, and promotes gender equality.
- Address access, power and capacity gaps, so that women and men can receive the assistance; ensuring that selection of the recipients – whether women, men or both – is based on the findings of the gender and protection analyses.

In the target population, for women and men (and girls and boys) separately:

- Use the findings of the participatory gender analysis to identify the transfer modality and delivery mechanism/s that would promote:
  - equitable sharing of household responsibilities, such as the procuring, preparing and providing of nutritious food to household members
  - equal decision-making authority between adult women and men
  - the status of women, men and/or children who are sole heads of households
- Use the findings of the participatory gender and protection analyses to identify the transfer modality and delivery mechanism/s that would minimise:
  - exposure to violence (physical, sexual, economic, psychological)
  - increased unpaid care and domestic work for women (and girls)

In the target population, for the diverse women and men (and girls and boys) separately:

- Use the gender and protection analyses to identify:
  - the nature, extent and sources of conflict and their impacts in the lives of the different women, men, girls and boys
  - discriminatory social norms and practice (such as relating to representation in committees and governing bodies, mobility, and access to justice)
  - inequalities in access to and control of resources, including land, water, equipment
  - existing structures and processes for managing and resolving conflict and disputes, including their effectiveness for different women and men (in terms of delivering just outcomes)
• Determine how provision of food, vouchers and/or cash will impact on community dynamics, paying attention to possibilities of:
  o increasing conflict and tensions (and the different consequences for the different women, men, girls and boys)
  o reducing conflict and tensions
  o improving the status of women and girls
  o promoting social justice outcomes
  o advancing gender equality
• Use the analysis to inform decisions around type of transfer and delivery mechanisms.

In the target population, for food, vouchers and cash separately:
• Identify the risk of the food assistance being misappropriated (diverted) and the consequences for the diverse women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable)
• Means of misappropriation – corruption, illegal taxation, collusion, fraud.
• Potential consequences – certain individuals or groups not receiving assistance (hunger, malnutrition); sexual exploitation; use of negative coping mechanisms, such as prostitution, child labour and early, forced and child marriage.
• Implement and monitor measures – tailored to transfer modality, at-risk group and sources of misappropriation – to minimise the diversion of assistance, so that the target women and men can access the food assistance.

Remember: The interests of the identified beneficiaries – the particular women and men – should determine selection of transfer modality and delivery mechanism. Issues of technology, ease of implementation, donor interests etc. are secondary considerations.

3. Transfer the Food Assistance (Implementation)

Ensure women and men are equally represented on, and participate equally and meaningfully in, all food assistance committees and decision-making bodies, including the Intersectoral Cash and Voucher Working Group.

Design and implement sensitisation campaigns that:
• reach, inform and engage the diverse women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable) in the target community
• involve two-way communication, so that WFP can receive (as well as send) information from the diverse women and men in the target community

Registration of Beneficiaries: As necessary, support the registration of women and men beneficiaries, making sure to address the information gathered from the gender and protection analyses.

SCOPE: SCOPE is the WFP platform for the distribution of cash and vouchers. Make sure to utilise the beneficiary sex and age functions of this platform.

Where the transfer is food:
• Ensure that women points of contact are available to women food entitlement holders (and men for men), in accordance with safety concerns and cultural norms.
• Ensure that the women and men distributing the food
  (a) have been sensitised to gender and inclusion
  (b) can explain and refer people to the complaints and feedback mechanisms
  (c) understand the obligation and procedures for responding to protection, including GBV, risks and incidents of abuse
• Where food is not being distributed to every woman, man, girl and boy in the community, ensure that the community is informed, and understands, the reasons for targeting the assistance to particular women, men, girls and/or boys.
• Include women and men equally in choosing sites, dates and times for food distribution. Remember to choose sites as close to where women (and men) reside to minimise travel time and costs, protection risks, and increase in domestic workload.
• Before distributions begin, provide information about the food distributions to women and men (through their communication channels) so that they can make arrangements to collect the food (without putting themselves or others at risk and minimising additional workload).
• At distribution sites, and as culturally appropriate and preferred by the recipient women and men, establish separate queues, waiting areas and toilet facilities for women and men.
• Distribute food during daylight hours, taking into account women’s and men’s existing commitments, workloads and schedules, including domestic work and care of children, elderly persons and sick relatives. Finish distribution early enough in the day so that women and men have time to reach their homes / shelters before the sun sets.
• Package food into safe and manageable loads and weights so that women (and other recipients) are able to receive and transport it.
• Prioritise food distribution to:
  (a) pregnant and breastfeeding women
  (b) women and men with children under 5 years
  (c) elderly persons
  (d) persons who are unwell and/or malnourished
  (e) persons with disabilities

4. Monitor

Principles & Practice
Monitor provision of the food assistance, adhering to principles and practice of gender-responsive process and outcome monitoring. [Monitor]

Gender & Gender Equality Considerations
Ensure that gender and gender equality considerations are integrated into the tools, procedures and reporting of:
- on-site distribution monitoring
- post-distribution monitoring
- market monitoring

Formulate & Track Indicators
Formulate and track indicators that assess changes (or not) in the food security, nutrition, decision-making authority and empowerment of:
- individual women, men, girls and boys
- households
- community groups

Assess
For the diverse women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable) make sure to assess:
- equitable participation
- equitable access
- protection / safety threats and risk (within households, in the community and in public spaces)
- satisfaction with assistance received

Information Sharing
Regularly share the analysed and summarised qualitative and quantitative information gathered from the monitoring with the target beneficiaries, their communities and the authorities; making sure that the diverse women and men are reached, understand the information shared and have the opportunity to provide feedback.
### 5. Learn, Adapt, Improve & Exit

| **Respond** | Respond to findings of the ongoing monitoring, addressing any issues that prevent equitable, safe and empowering access to food assistance for the target women and men. |
| **Communicate** | Communicate changes to the food assistance to the stakeholders, making sure to reach, engage and be understood by the diverse women men recipients, other humanitarian actors, civil society organisations and government authorities. |
| **Develop** | Develop an exit strategy in consultation with the diverse women and men, their civil society organisations and the government bodies. Be inclusive, participatory and empowering. |
| **Link** | Link with gender-transformative social protection programmes – government, WFP and those of other humanitarian and development actors. |
Gender & Cash and Voucher Transfers


Buller, A., M. Hidrobo, A. Peterman and L. Heise, (2016). *The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach? A mixed methods study on causal mechanisms through which cash and in-kind food transfers decreased intimate partner violence*. BMC Public Health, Vol 16.

Concern Worldwide and Oxfam Great Britain, (2011). *Walking the Talk: Cash Transfers and Gender Dynamics*.


Gender & Food Assistance


