WFP is a global leader in the provision of emergency telecommunication services to the different members of the humanitarian community. Under the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) 2020 Strategy, there is a shared commitment to expand the provision of emergency telecommunications services directly to government entities and the individuals in the populations affected by emergencies.

Women and men, girls and boys, experience, respond to and recover from emergencies in different ways. Socially-defined gender roles, responsibilities and relations influence who provides and who receives emergency telecommunications services.

While communication generally is a common need, discrimination on the basis of gender means that women and men, and girls and boys, do not have equal:
- access to the communication technology and spectrum of communication channels because, for example
  - their mobility of women and girls is restricted, such that they cannot move freely in their community
  - emergency telecommunications teams are comprised of men or mostly men, which discourages women from approaching the teams and/or prevents the teams from being able to speak directly with women and identify their needs and concerns
- capacity to use the technology or opportunities to learn how to use the technology
- control of the technology, and so the ability to send and receive information

All women, men, girls and boys affected by emergencies have an equal right to access assistance that meets their needs, interests and priorities. This includes emergency telecommunications services.

Equal access to emergency telecommunication services by the different humanitarian actors – women and men, national and international, traditional and non-traditional, public and private – is crucial to ensuring that all of the women, men, girls and boys affected by an emergency receive the assistance they need.

Awareness and understanding of, as well as skills in mainstreaming, gender are essential to ensuring that the telecommunications services that are provided are relevant, accessible, and responsive to the distinct needs and interests of the diverse women, men, girls and boys.

This is particularly important with the expansion of services to non-traditional humanitarian responders and directly to members of the affected population. The needs, priorities, access to and use of different telecommunication technologies and services will be different for government actors, and individual women and men affected by emergencies.

Similarly, communications resilience to disasters and response readiness – part of the ETC 2020 Strategy – can only be achieved if women and men are engaged in ways that are meaningful and in which equal weight is given to their participation and leadership.

Ignoring gender in the identification and provision of emergency telecommunication services can reinforce inequalities and do harm. The needs of particular groups of people, such as elderly women or women with disabilities, will not be identified and so go unmet. Only some individuals and groups will be able to access information and to communicate their existence and needs; which can place them at risk of death, injury and/or exploitation and abuse.
It is also important to attend to gender in emergency telecommunications because diversity in teams and organisations is directly related to results; to understanding needs and providing services that can be accessed by the diverse women and men (and girls and boys) in target populations. WFP is committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation, which includes achieving gender parity among staff at all levels and functions. Thus, for WFP, emergency telecommunication officers can and should equally be women and men, with equal opportunities for learning and career progression, in environments that meet their needs and interests.

WHEN & WHERE

Gender should be addressed in the provision of all telecommunications services; before, during and after emergencies.

WHO

All WFP employees and partners working in emergency telecommunications, whether at strategic or technical level, should be:

- aware of and understand WFP’s commitment to gender equality, as stated in the Gender Policy (2015-2020) and Strategic Plan (2017-2021)
- able to integrate gender into their work

All Emergency Telecommunication Cluster members should also be understand gender and be able to address gender into their work.

HOW

1. Integrate Gender into the Workforce & Workplace

Recruit Qualified Women

Both as local and international employees. This is needed in order to:

- achieve gender parity in staffing
- ensure that all humanitarian actors, including women and men employees of local organisations and of local governments, can safely access common services
- ensure that the diverse women and men among affected populations can be reached and their needs documented and addressed
- ensure that the diverse women and men (and girls and boys as applicable) have equitable access to the emergency telecommunication services.
- (All-male and mostly-male telecommunication teams make it harder, or make it impossible, for women to access the services, than diverse teams.)

Consider providing training opportunities, particularly at the local level and women-only opportunities, to increase the pool of qualified women.

See the ‘Human Resources’ section for:

- information as to the reasons why diverse workforces are important
- guidance on recruitment
Promote Inclusive & Respectful Workplaces

Promote inclusive and respectful workplaces that value both women and men, and where both women and men feel comfortable working.

Make sure to address:

a) the physical environment, such as ensuring separate toilets for women and for men and safe, private and hygienic space for breastfeeding
b) safety and security, such as adequate and fitting PPE and security training
c) the workplace culture, such as zero tolerance on sexist language and sexual harassment and abuse

2. Integrate Gender into the Provision of Telecommunication Services

When identifying, and providing telecommunication services for traditional and non-traditional humanitarian responders, governments, and individual women and men (and girls and boys) people affected by a natural disaster or humanitarian crisis, it is important to do the following.

Integrate Gender Analysis into all Needs / Context Assessments

Integrate Gender Analysis into all Needs / Context Assessments to determine the needs, priorities, capacities, vulnerabilities and opportunities of women and men among the humanitarian responders, government and affected groups of people.

Assess and understand the specific use of, and access to, different type of telecommunications services, solutions and technologies available to the diverse women and men, their organisations and the humanitarian actors.

Ensure all Assessments are Inclusive & Participatory

Assessment teams should be made up of women and men, so that the women and men among affected population can be accessed and have equal opportunity to state their needs and priorities.

Identify & Remove Barriers to Access to Telecommunication Services for Different Women & Men Actors

Access to & Control of Technologies: Access to, and safe and independent control of, communications technologies can vary among members of local humanitarian actors, affected communities and households. Mobile phones, for example, maybe be controlled by the adult men in a household.

Ensure that the services provided are linked to the technologies accessible to the different women and men. Enable and promote women’s and men’s equal access to the range of telecommunications technologies.

Physical Access: Related to, for example, lack of access to transportation, personal safety concerns and security risks.

Ensure that telecommunication services are at a reasonable distance from where women and men are located and can be safely accessed.

Social & Cultural Context: Discriminatory socio-cultural norms may prevent women from accessing and moving around public spaces. Use accessibility maps to determine which public spaces are safely accessible to both women and men.
Social context may prevent women from entering spaces with only or mostly men staff. Ensure that telecommunication services are available through safe and culturally appropriate spaces, which can be accessed freely and without personal security concerns by women and men.

**Education & Literacy Levels:** Education and literacy levels can determine, and exclude, access to technologies and information. Perceived lack of knowledge and lack of confidence can prevent women and girls from accessing environments perceived as intimidating, such as high-tech telecommunications hub. Set up a space which is inviting and accessible to women and girls.

**Access to Information:** Use diverse communications channels to inform different groups of women and men about the telecommunications services that are available. Check that the information is reaching and being understood by the diverse women and men, girls and boys.