



Gender and Food Security Analysis

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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**World Food
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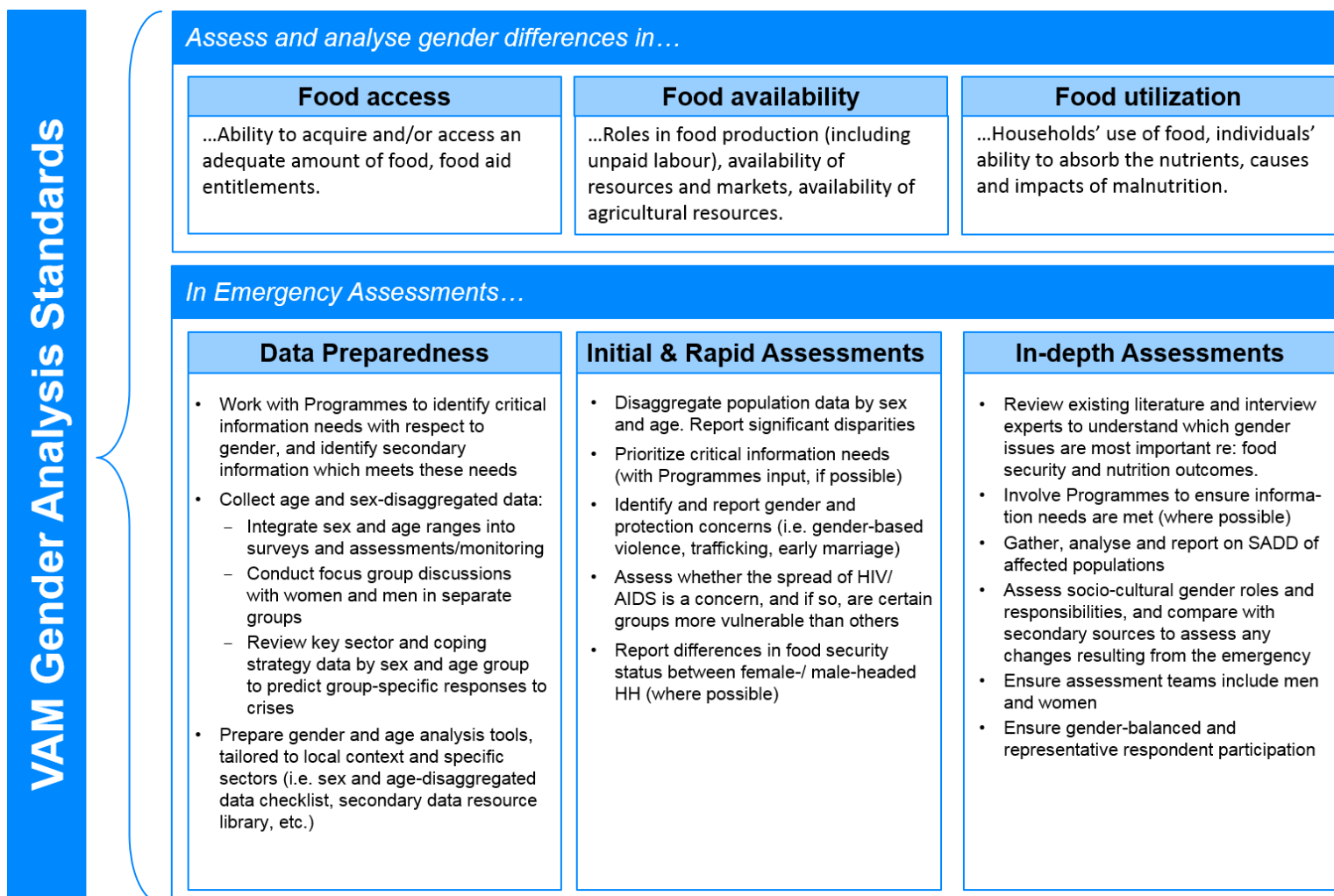
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GENDER STANDARDS FOR FOOD SECURITY ANALYSIS

The following standards should be followed in all WFP food security assessments to ensure WFP is collecting, analysing and reporting on food security and nutrition needs and capacities of different groups to inform programming and interventions targeting the most vulnerable in a population. The standards support the WFP mission to end world hunger, and are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize the importance of collecting, analysing and making use of sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD) and gender statistics to design,

implement and report on food security and nutrition targets and indicator.¹ The standards contribute to WFP Gender Policy 2015-2020 objectives to: adapt food assistance to different needs of women, men, girls and boys; ensure equal participation of men and women in the programme cycle; promote decision-making by women and girls; and stay attentive to gender and protection concerns.

The chart shown here reflects VAM gender analysis standards, and is followed by guidance for analysis teams in meeting these standards. Because of the specific challenges in conducting gender analysis in emergency reporting, a tailored set of standards and guidance are provided for emergency assessments.²



¹ UN General Assembly. *Compendium of TST Issues Briefs (Issues Briefs 3 & 28)*. Oct 2014.

² Refer to the [CFSVA Guidelines](#), chapter 7.3 for examples.

GENDER & FOOD SECURITY ANALYSIS

The VAM gender analysis standards support staff engaged in food security and nutrition analysis in their role to provide information necessary to design, implement and monitor targeted WFP programmes and interventions. Gender analysis should be mainstreamed throughout within the three pillars of food security analysis; access, utilization, and availability. By applying the standards and by utilizing gender-sensitive indicators, the extent of gender disparities will be measured and revealed thereby producing valuable information to inform policies, programmes, and responses.

1. GENDER & FOOD ACCESS

Food access refers to people's ability to acquire and/or access an adequate amount of food through own production and stocks, purchase, in-kind payment of work, bartering, gifts and formal/informal aid. **In the context of gender, this relates to differentiated access to and control over resources, power, and decision-making at the household and community levels.**³

DATA NEEDED

Disaggregated data should provide information on the following points:

- Food consumed/acquired in a HH over a certain time period, by sex of head of HH
- Frequency of consumption of specific food groups over a certain period of time using the Food Consumption Score (FCS) indicator, by sex of head of HH
- Insufficient HH food supply and intake, insufficient food quality, by sex of head of HH
- Seasonality of food supply, by sex of head of HH
- Mobility and migration trends, by sex of head of HH, and/or sex and/or age of migrant(s)
- Coping strategies, by sex of head of HH, and/or sex/age of individuals adopting specific strategies
- Education levels (primary and secondary), for girls and boys/ level achieved, for women and men (suitable for in-depth assessments but not rapid ones where the focus would be on education level of HH head only).

In addition to disaggregating data, data and information on gender-specific food access issues should be collected and assessed. Specifically, women often have limited power in household and community decision-making, as well as limited access to and control over resources relative to men, which tends to influence access to food, both for them and for members of their household.⁴

Understanding control over resources and assets, and decision-making can help to identify intra-household disparities between women, men, girls and boys where food access is often not uniform within a household. For example, in general food distribution interventions, entitlements are often issued in women's names, but women do not always retain control over the food after leaving the distribution site. This affects targeting efforts in a range of ways, as the recipient no longer is the household member making decisions on how distributions will be used. The WFP 2009 Gender Policy specifically notes that "issuing ration cards in women's names does not necessarily give them control over household rations because control is determined by the capacity to negotiate and decide the use of food".⁵ The specific data used to assess control over resources and assets, and power and decision-making will vary depending on the context and socio-cultural sensitivities, but it should always respond to the following questions:

Control over resources/assets

- What livelihood assets/opportunities do men and women have access to and control over?

³ [WFP. CFSVA Guidelines. 2009.](#)

⁴ [BRIDGE. Gender and Food Security – Towards Gender-Just Food and Nutrition Security. 2014.](#)

⁵ [WFP 2009.](#)

- What constraints do they face?
- What are their human assets (e.g. health services, education)/ natural assets (e.g. land, natural resources)/ social assets (e.g. social networks)/ physical assets (e.g. infrastructure)/ economic assets (e.g. capital/income, credit)?

Power and decision-making

- What decision-making do men/women participate in?
 - HH level (e.g. expenditure decisions, use of savings)?
 - Community/local level (e.g. decisions on the management of community water supplies)?
- What decision-making do men/women usually control?
 - HH level (e.g. expenditure decisions, use of savings)?
 - Community/local level (e.g. decisions on the management of community water supplies)?
- What constraints do they face?

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS DERIVED FROM GENDER STATISTICS ON FOOD ACCESS

- HH purchasing power as determined by HH income, by sex of head of HH;
- Average earnings of female-headed HH as a percentage of average earnings of male-headed HH;
- Differences in access to (or control over) productive assets between male and female-headed HH;
- Participation in local food-agriculture committees, by sex and age
- HH assets and savings in times of duress, by sex of head of HH;
- Mean number of meals consumed in the last 7 days, by women, men, and girls and boys
- Coping Strategies Index, by sex of head of HH
- Average education level of children/level achieved of adults, disaggregated by sex
- % share of food expenditure over total HH expenditure, by sex of the head of HH
- Access to credit/markets, by sex of head of HH
- % of HHs where both men and women are working (contributing to the HH income)
- Division of (paid and unpaid) labour among different members of the HH and time constraints, by sex and age
 - Include statistics for young girls, as this group tends to be integrally involved in productive and reproductive work, while it tends to be undercounted and undervalued, leading to inadequate interventions (BRIDGE 2014).

DATA SOURCES

Gender and food access requires data on socio-political structures influencing the household, demographic data, food and income sources, the history of shocks, their impact on food access within the household and how they cope with shocks, and land distribution and use.

Type of information/data	Source
Socio-economic and demographic data	Census population data (age and sex disaggregated) U.S. Census International Database
Price data	VAM market assessments and monitoring
Food access, food consumption/acquisition, food deprivation, coping strategies	VAM household baseline surveys
Income, livelihoods, assets and expenditures	VAM household baseline surveys

Women's land rights (legal, political and cultural factors)	FAO Gender and Land Rights Database (GLRD) has 84 country profiles and a legislation assessment tool for gender-equitable land tenure. ⁶
Women's and men's participation and influence in local decision-making bodies	World Bank GenderStats database Key informant interviews/focus group discussions with female and male local representatives
Gender disparities in agricultural resources, income, production, leadership and time-use	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WAEI) 2014 baseline report

As all surveys, and the associated data, information, and findings are influenced by survey design, sample frames, and sample sizes a variety or combination of sources; i.e. VAM surveys, LSMS surveys, and other household surveys should be utilized to make the most of available data. **VAM food security monitoring surveys (FSMS), as well as panel surveys, surveys conducted regularly at relatively short intervals** (i.e. during harvest season and in lean season), and **surveys conducted before and after major shocks**, can fill data gaps on food access over time to construct measures of households' vulnerability and stability in access to food.⁷ **Thematic agricultural surveys** covering household food security may be used when they include reference to quantity and quality of food, food shortages over a 12-month period, reasons for food shortage, changes in household eating patterns, steps to alleviate food shortage and the extent of loss of agricultural output due to natural disasters.⁸

2. GENDER & FOOD UTILIZATION

Food utilization refers to households' use of food to meet specific dietary and nutritional needs, as well as individuals' ability to absorb the nutrients. It includes a variety of issues, such as food storage/processing, intra-household food distribution, preparation practices, infant and young child feeding practices, hygiene practices and access to safe water and sanitation. **In the context of gender, this relates specifically to allocation of resources, caring practices, reproductive health, and gender-specific diseases.**⁹ Global disparities between women, men, girls and boys in terms of nutrition and food security, and the gender-specific causes and impacts of malnutrition make gender analysis of food utilization essential for informing WFP programme design and targeted interventions and achieving the SDGs.

DATA NEEDED

Health and nutrition

Analysis teams should collect the following health data (either using primary or secondary sources), and disaggregate by sex/ age, where necessary:

- Anthropometric measurements of children under 5 (wasting, stunting, underweight), disaggregated by sex and age in months;
- Mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of girls and boys under 5;
- Body mass index (BMI), particularly for women;
- MUAC for women;
- Measures of micronutrient malnutrition;
- Other measures of nutritional status.

General information on health should also be included:

- Health status;

⁶ [FAO. GLRD.](#)

⁷ [UNSD. Gender Statistics Manual. 2014.](#)

⁸ [FAO. A System of Integrated Agricultural Censuses and Surveys. 2007.](#)

⁹ [WFP 2009.](#)

- Prevalence or incidence of major diseases;
- Dietary habits and typical consumption patterns, to serve as a benchmark, in particular intra-household distribution patterns;
- Access to water and sanitation.

**Note that sex differentials in nutrition may become clearer when data on weight and height of girls and boys under 5 years are disaggregated by age. For example, under the age of 2, the biological vulnerability of boys to infections may reduce their nutritional status. See [CFSVA Guidelines](#) on standards for measuring BMI, weight etc.*

Health and nutrition data, including primary WFP data, generally cover the above aspects insofar as data is widely collected for pregnant or lactating women and children under 2 years of age, as these groups tend to be the most vulnerable in terms of nutrition and food security. Collection of detailed health data will not be feasible for the large majority of rapid and initial food security and nutrition assessments so will largely be limited to the more in-depth assessments. However, it should be collected and analysed across the entire life cycle, for both men and women, during childhood, adolescence and adulthood, and for women and girls, during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and during menopause. Relying on narrow data parameters means older women, adolescent girls, and vulnerable men and boys may not receive the nutritional inputs they require.¹⁰ It is also difficult to assess gender disparities when health data is not available for men and boys over 2 years of age.

Food utilization may also be affected by endemic disease, unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, or lack of appropriate nutritional knowledge. The influences of these factors should be considered from a gender perspective to understand disparities in vulnerability and resilience levels between women, men, girls and boys, as well as female versus male-headed households.

Bio-cultural information that takes into account gendered cultural and social norms should also be assessed. Causes, impacts and implications of malnutrition can be gender-specific, and are often compounded by norms and factors influencing food use (e.g. gender-specific restrictions or taboos on food consumption, preparation or usage), which restrict equitable distribution of nutritious food (BRIDGE 2014). Women's empowerment and gender equality are critical to food security and nutrition, specifically, the empowerment of women who are the main childcare providers in their families and are responsible for the food preparation and infant and young child feeding.¹¹ Women's status has been found to be a key determinant in child nutritional status, where women who enjoy better nutritional status, provide better care to their child/children.¹² For these reasons, women's empowerment should be assessed in analysis of food utilization.

Resource allocation

Women and men often allocate resources differently, women frequently allocating more resources to meet a household's basic needs than do men, which has a differential impact on household welfare.¹³ Data on nutrition knowledge and awareness among men and boys at household and community levels should also be collected where possible. Collecting data on resource allocation at the household and intra-household level should be done with sensitivity to the socio-cultural context and assessment team capacity.

¹⁰ [BRIDGE 2014](#).

¹¹ [UN General Assembly, Oct 2014](#).

¹² [BRIDGE 2014](#).

¹³ [WFP 2009](#).

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS DERIVED FROM GENDER STATISTICS ON FOOD UTILIZATION

- Prevalence of stunted/wasted/underweight children under 5 years of age, by sex
- Prevalence of non-pregnant adult/reproductive-aged women who are mildly/moderately/severely undernourished or overweight
- Prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia in reproductive-aged women and children under 5 years of age, by sex
- Disease prevalence, by mean number of episodes, by sex and age group
- Mortality rate, by age and sex
- MUAC, disaggregated by sex of children 12-59 months and/or BMI of reproductive-age women

DATA SOURCES

Some **VAM CFSVA household surveys** and some **EFSA household surveys** collect data on anthropometry of women and children under 5 years of age, and other generic health and nutrition data listed above as well as data on child feeding practices for infants and young children. Data on access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation, and hygienic behaviours are also frequently collected in these surveys.

Larger scale household surveys can also be drawn from to obtain more representative data on feeding practices, hygiene behaviour and nutritional status of women and children, such as **DHS** and **MICS** surveys. **LSMS**, though not often used to collect weight and height data, can be used in countries where this data is available. In addition, **health administrative records** can provide data on nutritional status of children at birth, in country where data quality is good and there are not substantial gaps in access to medical facilities among the population.

3. GENDER & FOOD AVAILABILITY

Food availability refers to the physical presence of food in the geographic area of concern supplied through domestic production, national stocks, commercial imports and food aid. Surplus food production and identification of net food sellers can also be included here insofar as it informs programmes aimed at developing local agriculture through local purchases. **From a gender perspective, food availability relates to productive, reproductive and community roles of women, men, girls and boys. Much of women's work globally is unpaid and/or taken for granted, and as a result, it is often not counted. Much of this concerns food processing and preparation, thus contributing to food availability and household livelihood security.**¹⁴ Gender analysis of food availability may also include: land and property rights, markets and credit, education and information for food production, and access to technology, as well as gendered risks and benefits of farmers' organisations.¹⁵

Where data is available, women spend more than twice as much time as men on unpaid domestic labour, including family care, and rural women spend more time than urban women and men, including time spent obtaining fuel and water, caring for children and the sick, and processing food. In food security crises, this work, and the time require to do it, is intensified.¹⁶ Despite their vital contributions, women often do not take credit for much of this unpaid domestic labour, including laborious work such as weeding and post-harvest processing, food preparation, and fuel and water collection, all of which directly contribute to food availability. By not counting such contributions, increased time constraints on women's labour are not identified as a constraint to food available. Specifically, without harvesting and processing foods post-harvest, food produced is not in fact

¹⁴ [WFP 2009.](#)

¹⁵ [BRIDGE 2014.](#)

¹⁶ [United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(2010\). The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics, New York.](#)

available. If women’s time which they would have spent performing these tasks is constrained due to intensified work responsibilities in an emergency, food availability can be affected.¹⁷

**In certain cases, where food availability is measured through aggregated macro-level statistics, it may not be meaningful to consider from a gender perspective. Exceptions to this would be in cases such as macro-information on share of occupation (% of women/men employed by different sectors).¹⁸*

DATA NEEDED

Gender-sensitive data on food availability should reflect the roles of different sex and age groups in productive, reproductive and community sectors. Taking into consideration local context and socio-cultural factors, relevant data should be identified and collected which allows for gender analysis to answer the following questions:

- What do men and women do?
- Where (location/patterns of mobility)?
- When (daily and seasonal patterns)?
- What are their productive roles (paid work, self-employment, and subsistence production)?
- What are their reproductive roles (domestic work, child care, and care of the sick and elderly)?
- What is their community participation/self-help (voluntary work for the benefit of the community as a whole)?
- What are their community politics (decision-making/representation on behalf of the community as a whole)?

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS DERIVED FROM GENDER STATISTICS ON FOOD AVAILABILITY

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HH production; storage; purchase, by sex of head of HH • Women’s and men’s ability to own, inherit and practice ownership over land • Share of women participating in political meetings as the community level • Differences in access to credit between male and female-headed HH • % of women or men employed in different sectors |
|---|

DATA SOURCES

Generally, measures of food availability may be derived from production statistics, seasonality information, market and food supply infrastructure data, import and export statistics, and national policy information. Information on productive, reproductive and community gender roles can be obtained from a range of sources.

Type of information/data	Source
Household production, storage, and purchase	VAM baseline household surveys
Proportion of total earned income contributed by different household members.	VAM baseline household surveys
Gender-sensitive food availability	National Ministries of Agriculture National Ministries of Finance and Commerce National Statistics Agencies
Gender-sensitive market information	USAIDS/FEWS The World Bank Food Security Unit

¹⁷ For a concise analysis and example of the relationship between food security, care work and gender, see chapter 2.5.1 in “[Gender and Food Security – Towards Gender-Just Food and Nutrition Security](#)” (BRIDGE, 2014).

	European Union Food Security Unit
Gender-sensitive market and food availability data Participation in leadership structures, ability to own and inherit land, and access to credit.	The World Bank GenderStats
Women's land ownership and influential factors	FAO GLRD

Collecting, analysing and reporting on time use and leisure time data of men and women can be particularly challenging. For guidance on collecting such information, as well as limited data available for select countries and years, see the [UN Statistics Division Allocation of Time & Time Use Statistics](#).

Finally, in contexts where certain products are produced predominantly by men or women, or male vs female-headed households, it may be relevant to analyse a **seasonal map** for those products to assess gender-specific periodic vulnerabilities.

4. GENDER & EMERGENCIES

The influence of gender and age on food security, as described in the above sections, becomes even more important in emergencies. Differences in livelihood activities and sectors, access to resources, and distribution of resources **are key to informing provision of humanitarian assistance, and best explained by gender and age differences**.¹⁹

At the same time that this information is critical, **challenges to data collection, analysis and reporting are more exaggerated in emergency settings, where time and resources are limited and getting quality information out rapidly is the key priority**. A set of minimum gender-sensitive information are prioritized in emergency reporting. This is critical because failing to do so compromises WFP ability as a whole, to respond effectively and appropriately to meet beneficiary needs in the immediate period following a crisis.

Depending on the emergency assessment type (initial, rapid or in-depth), different data and analysis standards should be observed. Below are VAM minimum gender analysis standards for each stage in emergency reporting, from data preparedness to initial, rapid and in-depth assessments.

DATA PREPAREDNESS

In order for sex and age disaggregation to be integrated in emergency assessments in the first days following an emergency, preparatory work and certain standards need to be reflected across all VAM products. Specifically, as part of data preparedness and food security analysis:

- Work with Programmes to identify critical information needs with respect to gender, and identify secondary information which meets these needs
- Disaggregate data by sex and age group:
 - Integrate sex and age ranges into surveys and assessments/monitoring;
 - Conduct separate focus group discussions and key informant interviews with women and men in different groups;
 - Review key sectoral data and coping strategy data divided according to age group and sex to predict group-specific responses to crisis.

¹⁹ [OCHA. Sex & Age Matter. 2011.](#)

- Prepare gender and age analysis tools, tailored to local context and specific sectors (i.e. sex and age-disaggregated data checklist, resource library with secondary information on gender statistics, etc.), including inputs from local communities.

INITIAL & RAPID EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT

- **Disaggregate demographic data of affected population by sex and age** and report whether certain groups are over-represented in affected areas or are more vulnerable than others.
- **Prioritize essential/critical information needs** (with input from Programmes, if possible).
- **Identify and report protection concerns** of women, men, girls and boys, specifically reporting whether gender-based violence, trafficking, early marriage or other protection issues are a concern for affected populations, and if so, are such concerns group-specific (by age, sex, or other social dimensions).
- **Assess whether the spread of HIV/AIDS is a concern**, and if so, whether certain groups are more vulnerable than others.
- **Report on differences between female- and male-headed household food security status** (e.g. using most recent percentage of households with poor food consumption score/stunting rate/ wasting rate, by sex of head of household; most recent estimate of average food expenditure of total expenditure, by sex of head of household; etc.).

IN-DEPTH EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT

- **Review existing literature and data to identify differences across sex and age (in access to food assistance/assets, roles, livelihoods and resilience practices, etc.). Interpret and report on significant differences.**
- **Review the legal and customary frameworks to identify potential areas of gender and age discrimination.**
- **Involve Programmes** to ensure gender-sensitive information needs are met, where possible
- **Gather, analyse and report on SADD of affected populations.**
- Assess socio-cultural gender roles and responsibilities, and compare with secondary sources to determine whether they have changed as a result of the emergency. Apply gender analysis to interpret findings.
- Ensure that the **teams in charge of conducting assessments (assessors and translators) include men and women.**
 - *Where ensuring gender-balanced/diverse teams means compromising technical proficiency of teams, assess trade-offs. For example, in many societies, there are almost no women with a high level of technical, specialized education, but it may also be very difficult to obtain information from female respondents in those societies if enumerators or facilitators are male.
- **Ensure balanced and representative participation.**
 - **Include female key informants**, especially those likely to have information on immediate food security needs of women and girls, this may include teachers, community leaders, and leading market women.
 - Ensure that **at least half of focus groups are comprised of women and older girls**, or conduct separate groups for men and women.
 - When a group speaks on behalf of another and makes assumptions about its food security, **triangulate this information** with either the involved group or when this is not possible (i.e., for infants) make sure best informants are identified.
 - **Ensure SADD is recorded regarding all key informants**, individuals, and HH composition.
 - **Identify any important segments of the population which have not yet been reached**, and whose information is needed to inform responses.

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS DERIVED FROM GENDER STATISTICS IN EMERGENCIES

- Target population distribution, by sex and age group (at individual and/or head of HH level)
- Proportion of underweight children among affected children aged 24 to 59 months, by sex
- Share of girls among out-of-school affected children of primary school age
- Number and location of people (women, men, girls and boys) who have experienced S/GBV
*Use the GBVIMS database or other secondary sources
- Most recent % of affected population with poor Food Consumption Score (FCS)/undernourishment by sex of head of HH
- Most recent stunting/wasting rate among girls and boys
- Most recent estimate of average household food expenditure share in total expenditures, by sex of head of HH
- Coping Strategies Index (CSI), by sex of head of HH

DATA SOURCES

Data preparedness is critical in production of emergency food security reports. Like information on livelihoods, resilience and other key areas of food security and nutrition, the gender roles, responsibilities and vulnerabilities should be considered in data preparedness. In the last decade, sex and age-disaggregation and gender-specific data availability has expanded dramatically. The Gender Statistics sections of the **World Bank Data Bank** and **UN Statistics Division** are useful resources.

Type of information/data	Sources
Food security and nutrition by sex of head of household, coping strategies	VAM assessments
School enrolment and retention information, disaggregated by age, sex and/or school level of children.	VAM assessments
Gender in education	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
Sex and age-disaggregated population figures	National Statistics Bureaux U.S. Census International Database
GBV and other protection concerns	WFP Protection Unit UNFPA GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS - reported cases only), UN Women UNICEF

For general information covering the key challenges for women in a country, and gender dynamics of livelihoods and resilience, the [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index \(WEAI\)](#) provides important data and analysis for covered countries. In addition, depending on the focus and information needs, sources recommended in previous sections of this guidance should also be reviewed

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