Humanitarian reports worth reading – a gender lens checklist

Here are Women Deliver’s top tips to ensure reports have the gender lens they need to drive progress.

1. **Acknowledge that humanitarian crises affect women, men, girls and boys differently**

Gender shapes how a person experiences a humanitarian emergency, so it doesn't work to describe the impacts of crises in gender-neutral generalizations. Decades of research show that emergencies exacerbate deep-rooted gender inequalities, so that women and girls often have less access to the services, information, and protection they need to respond and recover as quickly as men and boys.

Neglecting to include separate discussion on women, men, girls and boys in humanitarian reports perpetuates the false notion that crises effect everyone the same way. Change begins by acknowledging that the gendered impacts exist in the first place – and then calling them out by name. When we do so, we encourage decision-makers to see needs that might otherwise be invisible to them.

*Resources to help understand the urgent challenges facing women and girls in today’s emergencies*

- **Everything on Her Shoulders (International Rescue Committee)**
  This report outlines the gendered impacts of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with information on how women and girls can be more vulnerable to violence during public health emergencies, than men and boys.

- **One Year On: Time to Put Women and Girls at the Heart of the Rohingya Response (Oxfam)**
  Published one year after the recent mass displacement of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, this report outlines challenges and opportunities for meeting the needs of women and girls affected by the crisis.

- **Protection, Participation, and Potential: Women and Girls in Yemen’s War (International Rescue Committee)**
  This report outlines the unprecedented and disproportionate impact of Yemen’s war on women and girls, and shares why grassroots women’s organizations must be included in response efforts.
2. Spotlight the power and leadership of women and girls, not just their vulnerabilities

Women and girls are powerful, and women and girls in humanitarian settings are no exception. Yet they remain frequently characterized only as victims or passive recipients of aid – a missed opportunity to support their capacities.

In every region of the world, grassroots women-focused civil society organizations (CSOs) are on the frontlines of crises. These organizations are community leaders, service providers, unwavering advocates, and so much more. They have unique insights into the context, challenges, and approaches for effective and gender-equitable humanitarian interventions, yet their contributions are often overlooked.

In fact, less than two percent of all international humanitarian aid was provided directly to local and national responders in 2017 – and even less to those focused on women and girls. At the same time, grassroots women-focused CSOs are not yet meaningfully engaged in the global humanitarian decision-making spaces that could learn so much from their expertise and perspectives. Acknowledging the leadership of women and girls is the first step to making sure they have the funding and support they need to sustain their critical activities in the new year.

Resources to help inform reporting on grassroots women-focused CSOs

- **Advancing Gender-Transformative Localization (Women Deliver)**
  This action brief outlines the challenges and opportunities for shifting more funding and power to women-focused CSOs, and why this is key for building a gender-equitable humanitarian system.

- **A Feminist Approach to Localization (Oxfam)**
  This brief outlines challenges faced by women's rights actors and entry points for supporting them.

- **Partnerships Supporting National and Local Women's Organizations Undertaking GBV Prevention and Response Programming (GBV Area of Responsibility)**
  This report shares best practices for collaborative partnerships with women-focused CSOs to address GBV in emergencies.
3. **Highlight solutions that can help deliver results for women and girls**

The challenges facing the humanitarian community are grave, but good solutions, lessons, and guidance exist. Highlighting these solutions not only inspires hope – they help decision-makers know where to dedicate their investments to maximize impact.

For example, humanitarian agencies are providing high-quality, dignified, and respectful access to sexual and reproductive health services in challenging settings, including the Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh, Uganda, Nigeria, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Success stories exist at the grassroots level as well. For example, in Lebanon, local organizations fill crucial gaps in government health provision of sexual and reproductive health services by providing free and low-cost services and information inclusive of LGBTQIA+ persons, sex workers, undocumented migrants, and refugees. This proves that progress is possible, even in volatile contexts.

**Resources to inspire action**

- **The Inter-Agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings**
  Updated in 2018, the revised IAFM includes stronger guidance on how to fill service gaps for women and girls, such as skilled attendance at birth, clinical care for survivors of sexual assault, safe abortion care, HIV/STI testing and treatment, and voluntary modern contraceptives.

- **Guidelines for Integrating GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Action**
  This guidance endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee was created to help humanitarian actors coordinate, plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate effective GBV programs across all sectors.

- **Humanitarian Exchange Magazine: Making humanitarian action work for girls and women**
  Co-edited by Women Deliver and the Overseas Development Institute, this edition of the *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine* includes learnings from multiple international humanitarian organizations and grassroots women-focused CSOs on what works – and what doesn’t – to improve the health and rights of women and girls in emergencies.