

Tip Sheet on Gender Inclusion of children under 13-year-old in child protection programming

This gender¹ tip sheet is designed to guide agencies and organizations to make actionable gender-sensitive programming and response support for below 13 years old population group. The purpose of this tip sheet is to guide child protection humanitarian actors to be gender-sensitive, inclusive, and responsive in their programming for under 13-year-old children. The present document divides guidance into two groups: 0-5- and 6–13-year-old

Needs Assessment and Analysis²

To ensure gender is considered in child protection programming for younger children, it is essential that child protection actors are gender sensitive and inclusive, integrating these on assessment and analysis.

1. Collect and analyze the demographic information to identify the various **gender** diversity and/or the other factors of vulnerabilities in the affected population of under 13 years old boys and girls and ensure broad representation, paying particular attention to children with disabilities³, to create more inclusion and equity.

Example

- a) What are the child protection risks for children under 13? How do these differ for boys and girls.

Consider the following and other gendered child protection risks unique to your area of operation:

- Child labour – what are the different labour activities, push and pull factors for girls versus for boys in younger age group?
- Child marriage – are families pre-arranging marriage for girls under 13? What are the push/pull factors, cultural practices, and beliefs? How is this different for boys or similar?
- Children associated with armed groups – Is this affecting children under 13? What are the gender factors in the recruitment⁴?
- Child Headed Households – is it primary boys or girls heading households?
- Separated and unaccompanied children- what are the different factors for boys and for girls in responding to UASC, selecting, and supporting alternative care
- Violence inside the home – how is this different for boys and girls?

¹ Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to the relations among women and those among men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context, as are other important criteria for sociocultural analysis including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, sexual orientation, age, etc. (UN Women, 2022: Handbook on Gender Mainstreaming for Gender Equality Results)

² where possible have consultations in local language

³ Discrimination and exclusion manifest from the start of a child's life: children with: with disabilities are at increased risk of neglect, abuse and exclusion in programming. This can be further amplified for girls with disabilities, who experience discrimination and exclusion based on the intersection of gender, disability and other marginalized identities (UNICEF Fact Sheet 2022: Children with Disabilities)

⁴ For more information, please see: <https://alliancecpha.org/en/GAAFAG>

- Violence in the community – who is targeted primarily? Boys or girls? Does the violence differ (for example gender-based violence⁵)?
 - Emotional, psychological, or mental distress – what are the signs of this for girls? What are the signs for boys?
 - Neglect, exploitation, trafficking for children under 6 years
- b) Engage with a wide range of stakeholders including teachers, caregivers, religious leaders, community leaders, community women’s groups, community level child protection mechanisms, CSO/NGO workers and focus questions in a sex disaggregated manner.

Example:

- What are the main protection risks and protective factors for girls between 0 -5 years
 - What are the main protection risks and protective factors for girls aged 6 to13
 - What are the main protection risks and protective factors for boys between 0 to 5 years
 - What are the main protection risks and protective factors for boys aged 6 to 10 years
- c) Liaise with caregivers to understand the parenting differences for young girls versus young boys aged between 0 to 5? Differences for girls and boys aged 6- 13
- d) Child participation in need assessment and analysis must include discussions on girls’ perceptions and boys’ perceptions. When interviewing children or conducting focus group discussions (FGDs) in a child sensitive manner, which may include through play for children under 13, a variety of methods can be used. Take note of the different responses and preferred communication methods for boys separately for girls.

Do not consult with children without their caregivers or a trusted adult⁶. Informed consent is from caregivers needs to be considered on a case-by-case. Confidentiality is a must.

Consent can depend on the child’s age and circumstances. If the caregiver or another adult responsible for the child is the suspected abuser, the service provider should seek permission from another responsible and safe adult

- e) Service mapping
- Consider what services girls may need. What barriers exist?
Consider what services boys may need. What barriers exist?
Note the differences and identify recommended actions from the girls or boys to remove barriers.
- f) In assessment and analysis understand social norms⁷ applied to girls and boys under 13 years old separately through consultations with communities and their primary caregivers.

Programming and Implementation

Consider how the standard child protection activities for younger children should be adapted for girls and boys, considering the results of the needs assessment and use the analysis to develop the project.

⁵ Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. The term is primarily used to underscore the fact that structural, gender-based power differentials place women and girls at risk for multiple forms of violence. While women and girls suffer disproportionately from GBV, men and boys can also be targeted. The term is also sometimes used to describe targeted violence against LGBTQI+ populations, when referencing violence related to norms of masculinity/femininity and/or gender norms.

⁶ Note that the trusted adult is only in circumstances where the caregiver may be perpetrator, or the child is not comfortable with caregiver. Younger children are most likely to be abused by a family member, relative, or family friend. As children age into adolescence, the risk for abuse perpetrated by an acquaintance, peer, or stranger increases, but the risk of experiencing abuse from a trusted adult or someone known to them remains high.

⁷ Shared belief about what is typical and appropriate within a cultural or social group

The below examples are tips to consider in designing and implementing programs. Separate programming based on gender and age group. Program activities and implementation should be informed by the needs analyzed and, in the context, following the principles of “*Do No Harm*” and the “*Best Interest of the Child*”: Note: Always consider the dominant gender group in designing, planning of actions and activities.

- Child-friendly spaces – what activities in CFS are tailored to boys and girls separately based on age groups under 13 years old.
- Early Childhood Development – how do interventions differ for boys and girls
- Psychosocial support – how do boys and girls benefit from the same PSS interventions.
- Positive parenting – design programs which consider the support needed for caregivers of 0-5 and 6 - 13-year-old boys and girls
- Case Management – consider the different aspects for girls in assessment phase to boys, as well as referral needs for girls as they differ for boys based on the age groups under 13 years old.

Advocacy and Communication

- Ensure that all public advocacy specifies the different gender needs of girls and boys under 13 years old based on results of the needs assessment and analysis
- Communication with communities, parents and caregivers should highlight the different needs of boys and girls under the age of 13 and their capacities as primary caregivers.
- Child-friendly gender inclusive communication should be undertaken in a variety of formats, considering girls and boys under 13 years old and how each will access, participate, provide, and receive safe and timely information.

Monitoring and reporting

- Ensure that monitoring and reporting indicators capture the gendered results of the needs assessment.
- All reports and data on girls and boys under 13 years old should be disaggregated by age, sex, and disability.
- Ensure use and application of various child sensitive methods for child participation, receiving children’s views are in place and accessible to boys and girls under 13, understood by their primary caregivers, as part of the accountability to the affected populations.
- Child sensitive focus group discussions and interviews with girls and boys under 13, together with their caregivers, should be undertaken as part of monitoring and reporting.
- Testimonials of girls and boys under 13 should be included in reporting, anonymizing identifying information at all times.
- In case of disclosure of any sort of abuse (including SEA⁸) by the child during monitoring, ensure confidentiality is in place and a child protection officer is involved in the monitoring for immediate referral.

⁸ For more information on P/SEA please contact mmrpsea@unfpa.org

GENDER MAINSTREAMING PROGRAMME CYCLE

1. PLANNING (ASSESSMENT + ANALYSIS)

- Collect sex- and age-disaggregated data
- Situation and gender analysis/needs assessment
- Identify gender issues
- Define interventions that reflect gender inequality, gaps and needs



2. PROGRAMME DESIGN

- Design a programme/project by planning human and financial resources needed for implementation of actions and monitoring progress



4. MONITORING

- Gender-sensitive monitoring using sex- and age-disaggregated data according to mechanisms set out in programme/project design stage



3. IMPLEMENTATION

- Implement planned actions to transform gender inequality
- Participation of all groups which are gender-aware



5. EVALUATION

- Evaluate outcomes using gender and human rights indicators
- Showing differentiated gender impacts



6. REPORTING

- Knowledge sharing (results and lessons learned)
- Inform future programmes/projects



ANNEX: Reference for Children’s Age and Consent[1]

Age group	Child	Caregiver	If not caregiver or not in the child’s best interest	Means
0-5	-	Informed consent	Other trusted adult’s or caseworker’s informed consent	Written consent
6-11	Informed assent	Informed consent	Other trusted adult’s or caseworker’s informed consent	Oral assent, written consent
12-14	Informed assent	Informed consent	Other trusted adult’s or child’s informed assent. Sufficient level of maturity (of the child) can take due weight.	Written assent, Written consent

[1] Obtain informed consent from the caregiver and child for referral if those disclosing are seeking services. If disclosure is received from a child, without the presence of a caregiver, the informed consent process will be different depending on their age.