

# GENDER EQUALITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION

## GUIDELINE FOR IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITISING VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED POPULATIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE, RECOVERY, PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

In the aftermath of the devastating floods in Nepal, affected populations across diversities are in need of shelter, food, water, sanitation, health, nutrition, and livelihoods restoration. In addition, they may be at further exposed to discrimination, violence and other risks to their safety, protection, dignity, empowerment, resilience and recovery. Supporting those most in need does not always mean providing support to those most easy to reach, easy to identify, or accessible. **In any society, some people are more vulnerable and marginalised than others.** The flood affected districts are home to some of the most marginalized population groups including over 50% female populations, who already face multiple forms of prevailing discrimination, exclusion and inequalities based on gender, age, caste, ethnicity, marital status, mental and physical abilities, sexual orientation and gender identity.

After a disaster the environment they live in can become more insecure, safety and protection mechanisms may be disrupted, pre-existing inequalities and risks may be increased. Globally and in Nepal, evidence has shown that gender based discrimination and violence are often reinforced, perpetuated and exacerbated by disasters leading to lower survival, resilience, recovery for the most marginalized and vulnerable. People who were socially marginalised before a disaster will often be at greater risk during and after a disaster as they have fewer resources, are isolated from support networks and have fewer safe coping mechanisms to draw on. Integrating gender equality, social inclusion approach is critical to ensure the women and girls, particularly the most marginalised and vulnerable groups— single women, female headed households, persons living with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI)), senior citizens, children, caste and ethnicity-based minorities – are particularly impacted and in need of targeted support to ensure equitable access to and benefit from relief, services, information and programmes. **To ensure that the most vulnerable populations across diversities do not fall through the cracks, but are prioritized, as well as engaged in decision making processes for humanitarian response, recovery, preparedness and risk reduction, the below considerations should be taken into account.**

### Persons living with disabilities

- **Reach out** to persons with disabilities to learn about their needs and risks, including particular needs and risks for women, children, LGBTI or ethnic/caste-based minorities living with disabilities.
- Ensure programs are **designed and delivered** in a way that allows persons living with disabilities to access them equitably, including in relation to their possible limited mobility and transportation needs.
- Ensure persons with disabilities have **full access to information and services/assistance. Ensure their leadership is promoted and representation ensured.**
- **Liaise with the national, local and community level organisations working with persons with disabilities and/or disability support services** (including National Federation of the Disabled and Nepal Disabled Women's Association) to identify and prioritise vulnerable individuals for assistance.
- Rehabilitate as well as construct **shelters and facilities that are accessible** for persons living with disabilities and ensure they are identified and prioritised for shelter reconstruction/recovery support.

### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI)

- The recovery needs and risks of LGBTI persons should be identified by **working with advocates and civil society/community groups/networks for LGBTI communities** (including the Federation for Sexual and Gender Minorities) to ensure that needful assistance is provided for.
- Ensure LGBTI persons have **full access to information and services/assistance.** This should include their full access to registration systems, identification and other documents that are essential

for their legal and social protection.

- Ensure LGBTI persons' **leadership is promoted and representation ensured.**
- Be aware that transgender persons have **particular hormonal medical care requirements** that they may not be able to get to, which severely impacts their health and wellbeing.
- Avoid relief distribution only on a family basis, but also on individual basis, as LGBTI persons may not belong to families.



### Women and adolescent girls

- Make sure to **consult equally** with all women and girls about their needs, risks and capacities, and include them in **leadership and decision making** as equal actors in all stages of the humanitarian response, recovery, preparedness and risk reduction process.
- **Identify humanitarian needs and protection risks** for women, in particular **female headed households, single women, women with disabilities, older women, women of ethnic/caste minorities, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls**, including gender based violence and trafficking.
- Food, shelter, cash for work, Camp Coordination and Camp Management and all livelihood interventions must **prioritise women and girls.**
- Ensure women and adolescent girls have **full access to information and services/assistance.**
- **Liaise with Women and Children Offices and local women's groups/networks** to identify particular risks and needs for women and adolescent girls and work through these networks to respond to the needs and prevent the risks

## Children

- Be aware that psychosocial distress, overcrowding and lack of privacy at host families, as well as family separation create a situation where children are **vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and violence**.
- Children of all ages and genders are at risk to violence at home, in host communities and in schools. Take into account that children are **one of the most at-risk groups** when it comes to sexual violence, abuse and exploitation. This is due to their physical development, age and relative vulnerability.
- See **child protection risks** not as separate, but rather as **interconnected and compounding**. Evidence shows that deprioritizing psychosocial support, for example, may reduce the effectiveness of other humanitarian programme interventions, such as education, health and livelihoods.
- Make a distinction between children as beneficiaries and children as active actors in project activities and decision making.
- **Identify and respond to protection risks of children** during emergency as they may be separated from their families and caregivers which will make them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation including trafficking.

## Ethnic or Caste-based Minorities

- The recovery needs and risks of ethnic or caste-based minorities (Dalits, Janjatis/Adivasis, Indigenous people, Madhesis, Muslims etc) should be identified by **working with advocates and civil society/community groups/networks** (including the Nepal Dalit Commission, Nepal Dalit Commission, Nepal Inclusion Commission, Indigenous Nationalities Commission, Madhesi Commission,

Tharu Commission and Muslim Commission, The Feminist Dalit Organisation, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, National Indigenous Women Federation, organizations working with Madhesi groups and more) for these communities to ensure needful assistance and support is provided for.

- Ensure ethnic or caste-based minorities persons have **full access to information and services/assistance**. This should include their full access to registration systems, identification and other documents that are essential for their legal and social protection.

## Senior Citizens

- Be aware that senior citizens have **particular health and medical care requirements** including special medication that they may not be able to get to, which severely impacts their health.
- Provide **appropriate food supplies** that take into account their nutritional requirements.
- Make sure interventions take the **specific needs** of older men, women and transgender persons across diversities into account, including specific hygiene items, physical ability to access assistance;
- Ensure older persons have **full access to information and services/assistance**.
- For those without younger adult carers, consider whether they may need **special assistance to repair or reconstruct their homes**.
- The recovery needs and risks of persons with disabilities should be identified by **working with advocates and civil society/community groups/networks** (including the National Senior Citizens Federation and organizations working on Senior citizens, and more).



Flood relief distribution in Saptari district by CREASION volunteers on behalf of the UN Staff Association. ©UN Staff Association Nepal/CREASION

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