# What is a gender and age analysis?

A gender an age analysis is the necessary basis of making humanitarian assistance more sensitive to gender and age. It helps humanitarian organisations to deconstruct the affected population and better understand what specific needs and capacities women, girls, boys, men and older people affected by an emergency have and what specific threats they face. This understanding is a precondition for providing assistance that is well targeted to the specific needs of the different groups that is, a gender and age analysis is the basis for a more effective humanitarian response that creates less unintended negative effects.

A gender and age analysis should – even if brief – provide answer to the following key guiding questions:

* What roles do women, girls, boys, men and older people traditionally play and who controls resources in the household and the society?
* Do any gender or age groups in the society face discrimination – including their ability to access humanitarian assistance – and are particularly vulnerable?
* How does the crisis or emergency affect different gender and age groups and their roles in different was?
* What capacities do different populations groups have for a coping with, responding to, recovering from and preparing for future crises?
* What specific needs do women, girls, boys and men of different ages have for assistance and protection?
* Are there any specifically vulnerable groups or groups with particularly needs that should be targeted for certain types of assistance?
* If the action intends to target only one or a few specific gender and age groups, what other groups might need to be involved as well and what would be the consequence of not involving them? (E.g. tensions, stigmatisation, failure or objectives etc.)

# How to do a gender and age analysis

A few pragmatic steps can furnish humanitarian partners with adequate information, while ensuring that the required effort and time for conducting the gender and age analysis are reasonable.

## Integrate gender and age aspects into needs assessments

First, humanitarian organisations should integrate gender, age and other diversity dimensions into their needs assessments. This means adapting who asks, who is asked, how questions are asked and what is asked.

*Who asks?* Men often feel more at ease revealing information to men and women to women. Needs assessment teams should include male and female members and in most cases, preference should be given to same sex-interviews or discussions.

*Who is asked?* Men, women, children and older persons often have different perceptions of needs, priorities and negative effects or threats. Needs assessments should try to gather the views of members of different groups.

*How questions are asked?* Special methodologies and facilitation techniques have been developed to gather input from specific groups, to ensure otherwise marginalised voices are being heard and to gather information on sensitive issues. They include for example child friendly facilitation techniques, the use of pictorials in communication and confidential consultations.

*What is asked?* Standard needs assessment questions can be adapted to put greater emphasis on gender, age and other dimensions of diversity. The table below provides practical examples.

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| SAMPLE QUESTION FOR INTERVIEWS OR DIRECT OBSERVATION | ADAPTED QUESTION  |
| Name of interviewee | Name, **age and sex** of interviewee |
| Are there latrines at the site? | Are there **separate, lockable and well-lit** latrines at the site? |
| Is there a queue at the main water point? | Is there a queue at the main water point **and who is in the queue?** |
| Were school-aged children observed out of school? | Were school-aged children observed out of school? **Boys or girls? Of what ages?** |
| What are the main safety issues people in your community face? | What are the main safety issues that **women and men of different ages face?** |
| How many meals di people in this household eat yesterday? | How many meals and what kind of food did **infants, girls, boys, women, men and older people** in this household eat yesterday? |
| Has there been an increase in a specific disease lately in this community? | Has there been an increase in a specific disease lately in this community? **Whom does it affect?**  |
| What are the most important concerns in this community? | What are the most important concerns in this community **for children? (For women? For older people?)** |

ECHO highlights an example from an NGO conducting a needs assessment. They asked about the most acute needs but in addition asked:

“What are communities and individuals doing to address the problem and what further solutions would they suggest”