

Food security and livelihoods interventions for older people in emergencies



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Jeff Williams/HelpAge International

HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.

Food security and livelihoods interventions for older people in emergencies

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The background

Older people constitute a significant and growing number of those affected by humanitarian crises. About 12.5 per cent of the world's population is aged 60 or over. The United Nations defines older people as those who are above 60 years. However, the definition should be adapted to local contexts. For example, in many developing countries, people aged 50 are considered old, owing to cultural and social factors that contribute to the perception of someone as being “old”. Using this cut-off point, the global population of older people stands at 22 per cent. The unprecedented growth in the number of older people worldwide has significantly changed the demographic and epidemiological profile of disaster-affected populations.¹

At the heart of humanitarian action are the principles of humanity and impartiality. All people have equal value and dignity, and the exclusion of an individual or a group on grounds of nationality, religion or politics is contrary to the humanitarian ethos. Humanitarian principles affirm that everyone has the right to humanitarian assistance: “no one should be discriminated against on any grounds of status, including age, gender”.² “If invisibility, exclusion and powerlessness are common themes emerging from the experience of older people, then consultation, inclusion and empowerment through partnership have emerged as the primary indicators for best practice.”³ The core theme of this document is the inclusion and empowerment of older people and other vulnerable groups through consultation and consideration during the design and implementation of food security and livelihoods programmes.

1. Furtade C and Teklu M, (2012) *The Sphere Project handbook: Standards for humanitarian response address growing problem of chronic diseases*, presentation to the Geneva Health Forum

2. *The Sphere Project, Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*, The Sphere Project 2011

3. HelpAge (1999), *Older people in disasters and humanitarian crises: Guidelines for best practice*, HelpAge International, p.2

This document aims to provide general guidance on implementing food security and livelihoods programmes for older people and other vulnerable groups in emergency situations. Its primary target is humanitarian workers in the field, specifically in the design and implementation of food security and livelihoods programmes. At both global and field level, it can also be used in advocacy to highlight the livelihood needs of older people in humanitarian crises.

Hein du Plessis/HelpAge International



Why older people must be included in livelihoods assistance

HelpAge research shows that at least half of those over 60 in developing countries are economically active, and a significant proportion (a fifth or more) are still working later into their 70s.⁴ In Zimbabwe HelpAge further found that a significant and rising proportion of smallholder farmers are older people, and the majority older women.⁵

Furthermore, research into the impact of social pensions provides concrete evidence that supporting older people's incomes has a positive impact on the wider family and community. A survey of pensions in Namibia and South Africa found that only 28 per cent of social pension income was spent directly on pensioners themselves. The bulk went towards the entire household (43 per cent) or to individual relatives (29 per cent). Of these secondary beneficiaries, grandchildren were by far the most important, getting more than half of this spending (55 per cent).⁶ Evidence from Asia further demonstrates that pensions are frequently shared with other family members and often invested in the next generation.⁷ These findings should be considered in light of the growing role older people play in caring for children in contexts where the middle generation is missing as a result of conflict, migration or HIV/AIDS.

Yet the active role that older people play in household income is not well acknowledged by aid agencies and misconceptions that they do not need assistance because they are supported by their families often results in their exclusion from livelihood and food security interventions. For example, in the Haiti earthquake response HelpAge observed that older people were not considered eligible for cash-for-work programmes which targeted only those of "working age" ie under 45.

Ensuring older people's inclusion in food security and livelihoods assistance must therefore be seen within a framework of both inclusive programming which allows older people to meet their basic needs and live dignified lives, as well as a mechanism for supporting families and communities.

The commitments

Human rights are inherent rights of a person and belong equally to all people, irrespective of their race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political, origin, property, birth or other status. Rights address freedom from fear and want, and call for respect, protection, promotion and fulfilment from duty bearers.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirm the universal right to adequate food and to pursue economic development.

The UDHR states in Article 25 that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family". Furthermore, the UDHR⁸ lists at least five rights that specifically address older people's inclusion in emergency food security and livelihoods programmes. Older people have:

- The right to employment with just and favourable working conditions (Article 23)
- The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (Article 25)
- The right to adequate food, housing and social security (Article 25)
- The right to education (Article 26)
- The right to freely pursue economic, social and cultural development (Article 27).

4. Wells J, (2005), *Protecting and assisting older people in emergencies*. Humanitarian Practice Network

5. HelpAge (2012), *Scoping the policy and institutional arena in support of older farmers in Zimbabwe*, p.3

6. Devereux S, (2001), *Social Pensions in Namibia and South Africa*, IDS: Sussex, p.44

7. Samson and Kaniki (2008), ADB, *Social Protection for Older Persons: social pensions in Asia*, 2012, p.12

8. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml

Furthermore, we find that this message of inclusion is reinforced in a number of other conventions. The UN Principles for Older Persons (UN General Assembly Resolution 46/91) calls for ensuring the independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity of older people. It states that older people should have access to basic services, including the right to adequate food and the right to pursue economic development.

Older people do not forfeit their basic human rights when they turn 55, 60 or 65. Consequently any exclusion of older people from livelihoods programmes (irrespective of whether these are implemented by the state, by (I)NGOs or by the private sector) is an infringement of their basic human rights and the principles of humanitarian action.

The Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response calls for participation and targeting of the most vulnerable groups, including older people. The Humanitarian Charter states that humanitarian agencies offer their services based on “the principle of humanity and the humanitarian imperative, recognising the rights of all people affected by disaster or conflict”. The charter summarises these rights as:

- The right to life with dignity
- The right to receive humanitarian assistance (includes food, water, clothing, shelter and the requirements for good health)
- The right to protection and security.

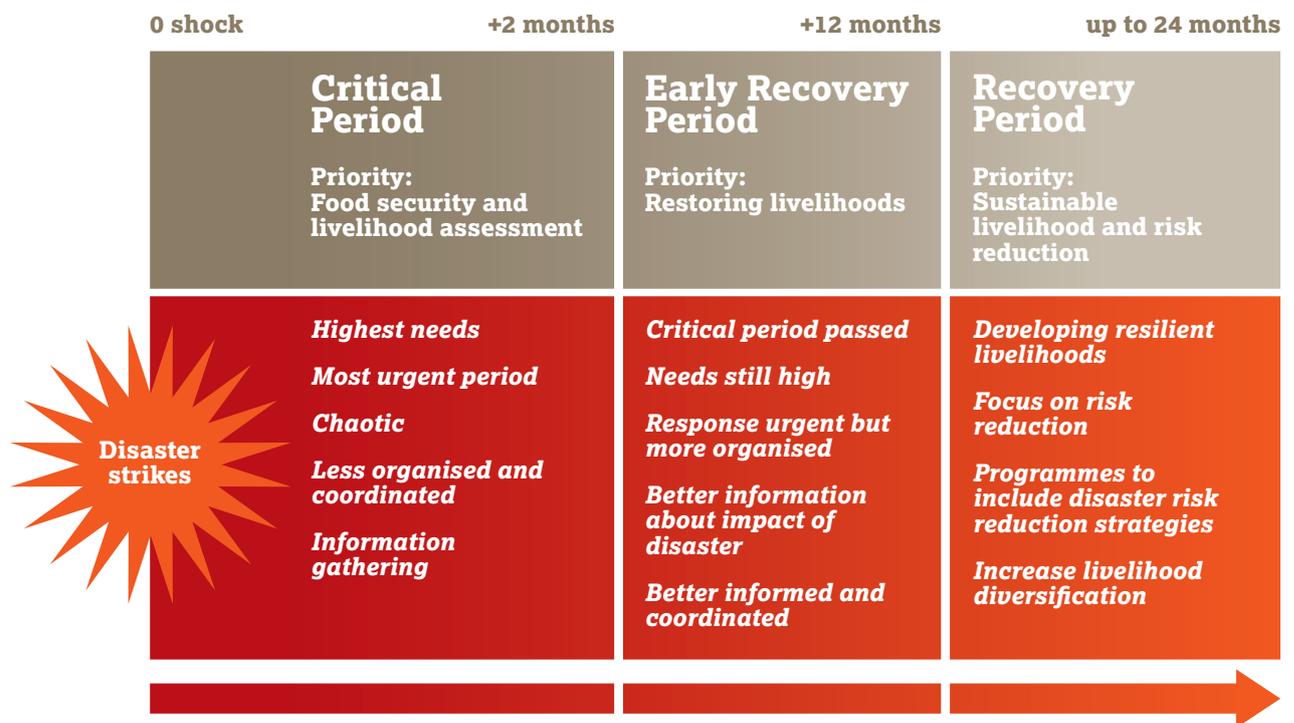
When cash- or food-for-work programmes have age limitations or older people are refused admittance to these programmes, humanitarians inadvertently infringe the rights of older people.

Finally, the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing states that “in emergency situations, older persons are especially vulnerable and should be identified as such because they may be isolated from family and friends and less able to find food and shelter”.

The above section on rights and commitments to equitable humanitarian support is the foundation of a humanitarian intervention. When designing a food security and livelihood intervention, it is crucial that your response should be inclusive and correctly target the most vulnerable and invisible groups of people. This guide is intended to support humanitarian workers achieve this objective.

Phases of a humanitarian response

When a disaster occurs, the humanitarian response can be rationalised in three phases: the Critical Period, which focuses on life-saving humanitarian assistance; the Early Recovery Period; and the Recovery Period.⁹



Critical Period

The initial Critical Period follows immediately after a disaster and may last for roughly eight weeks. In this phase, the priority is to meet the immediate needs of the affected population. This is the most critical and, often, chaotic period, characterised by an urgent need to assess the impact of the disaster and the needs of the affected population in order to identify life-saving interventions. They will include immediate food security interventions: provision of food aid or cash to buy food and other necessities to ensure people are able to maintain adequate nutritional status.¹⁰ The livelihoods work carried out during this period focuses on a detailed assessment of the impact of the disaster on livelihoods and, where appropriate, interventions to support livelihood recovery.¹¹

Older people can be particularly adversely affected by disasters. Risk factors that reduce older people's access to food include isolation (living alone or having a reduced role in family decision making), chronic disease or pain, communicable diseases, disability, poverty, cold and psychological stress. Older people must be able to access food sources easily (including food or cash distributions in an emergency). Food provided to older people should be easy to prepare and eat and should meet their protein and micronutrient requirements.

9. The division of the emergency into a continuum is generic, and the time periods are only indicators of phases. The actual time periods will depend on the severity of the disaster, and its context and nature. Therefore the numbers of weeks and months referred to in this document should be considered an indication of the proportions, rather than strict periods of time

10. *The Sphere Project, Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*, The Sphere Project 2011, p.144

11. Remember never to implement a food security intervention without a market assessment. Be sure that you understand how your intervention will affect the local economy. We must always strive to "do no harm"

The objective of an emergency food security and livelihood intervention is therefore to assist the population and vulnerable groups who are affected by a disaster:

- To prevent acute malnutrition by supporting people to meet their immediate minimum food needs (as defined in the Sphere standards)
- To protect, diversify and recover their livelihoods.

The Sphere Handbook says food security exists “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.¹² This definition involves three elements that are of particular relevance to older people: availability, access and utilisation.

Availability: the quantity, quality and seasonality of the food supply in the affected area. Availability includes production of food (fisheries, agriculture, livestock, and wild fruit), food imported into the disaster area by traders, and food brought into the disaster area by government and aid agencies. Local markets deliver food to the people. A disaster adversely affects the availability of food by disrupting production, trade and local markets.

For older people and other vulnerable groups, the availability of food depends on:

- The availability of food products that suit their nutritional needs and eating habits. Some older people may have difficulty in eating hard foods and may require a different food type that is not available at the market or at food distributing centres.
- A disrupted local (village) market, that is, a market to which traders no longer bring food and goods from larger markets, may adversely affect the availability of food to older people and other vulnerable groups.
- The disaster may affect the production or processing of certain key food products that are particular to the dietary needs of older people.

Access: the capacity of an individual or household to safely procure sufficient food to satisfy the nutritional needs of all its members.

For older people and other vulnerable groups, access to food depends on:

- The distance to their nearest market. Older people often tend to use local markets rather than travel to towns. Their ability to get to market to buy food and transport it home may be affected by reduced mobility, even if they have money to buy food.
- Food distribution points run by the state or humanitarian agencies may be too far away or too difficult for older people and other vulnerable groups to reach.
- Older people may not be able to access any existing safety net or social protection programmes.
- Cultural norms within the household dictate who has priority access to food. Older people may be the last to receive food (or they may be the first).
- Older people may choose to forgo food so that younger members of the family can eat.
- Families may or may not prioritise older family members’ needs in decisions about family spending. Older people may or may not participate in family decision-making.

12. *The Sphere Project, Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*, The Sphere Project 2011, p.145

Utilisation: the household's ability to use the food it is able to access, including storage, processing, preparation and distribution within the household. It also includes the ability of the individual to absorb and metabolise nutrients, which can be affected by chronic disease or malnutrition (see HelpAge International's Health and Nutrition Guidelines for more information).

- Older people, particularly those with limited mobility, vision and hearing, may require a carer or support with food preparation, collection of such essentials as water and fuel, and the storage of food commodities.
- Older people may have specific nutritional requirements because of chronic disease or malnutrition.
- Older people may be unable to utilise the kinds of food provided in food distributions. For example, those who have lost teeth may find it hard to chew hard foods, or they may find some foods difficult to digest. Access to fuel and cooking utensils may be essential to make food edible for older people.

Early Recovery Period

The Early Recovery Period begins roughly eight weeks after the disaster. By this point, responses are generally better organised, with more effective mechanisms for coordination and information flow. Although needs still remain high the food security situation should be stabilised through emergency interventions. The focus of attention therefore begins to turn towards restoring people to a normal pre-disaster state, that is, the restoration of livelihoods and a reduction of dependence on humanitarian aid.

During this period, food or cash for food programmes may continue, but increasingly the intervention must focus on the restoration of livelihoods. Livelihood recovery is an urgent priority as it restores both independence and dignity to the recipients.

Careful, detailed assessment of the markets and trade is critical during this period. When developing a livelihoods assessment, it is important to coordinate and engage with other agencies who may already be planning a market assessment (see, for example, the Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) toolkit)¹³ to ensure that older people and other vulnerable groups are recognised.

Recovery Period

During the Recovery Period, attention turns to reducing people's vulnerability to future disasters and supporting them to develop sustainable livelihoods, that is, building risk reduction and resilience into their livelihoods. Livelihood support should develop a diversified portfolio of livelihood activities, and support families to develop a livelihoods strategy that increases their income and is based on activities that are sustainable and contribute to their wellbeing. The Recovery Period is not covered in this emergency guide.

13. EMMA (2011), *Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Tool kit (EMMA)* – <http://emma-toolkit.org/>

Key action points to address food security and livelihoods interventions for older people in emergencies

This guidance document suggests four key actions points to ensure the better inclusion of older people and other vulnerable groups in food security and livelihoods programming. These action points are not exhaustive: they provide guidance for essential minimum food security and livelihoods interventions. Below you will find a summary of the points, with more detail provided in the main sections of the guidance.

Action point 1: Needs assessment

- Assess the needs of the affected population including older people and other vulnerable groups. Your analysis should include the impact of the disaster on: different livelihood groups and zones; on the availability of food; the functioning of markets and trade; changes in the food security situation; and the nutritional status of the affected population.
- Your assessment should use baseline data for comparison. This data should be sourced from partners if you do not have it yourself.
- Undertake gender analysis and collect sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD).
- Involve older people in the needs assessment through focus group discussions and individual meetings, and interpret the findings based on an understanding of older people's vulnerabilities, roles and capacities.

Action point 2: Designing a livelihoods programme

- Your programme design must ensure that all elements of your intervention are accessible to the entire working population including older people and other vulnerable groups.
- Take account of the skills, capacities and abilities of different age groups in your design.
- Decide on your intervention strategy: how assets will be replaced (cash or in-kind); what conditions if any you will place on cash distributions; and the size of the grants/assistance you will provide.

Action point 3: Integrating older people in emergency cash transfers

- Understand the challenges older people face in accessing cash programmes eg distance to distribution points, understanding of cash programming, lack of identification and security.
- Understand the programmatic modifications you can apply to overcome these challenges eg use of proxy collection, modifications to distribution design, and sensitisation and training.

Action point 4: Food security and livelihoods advocacy

- Present evidence and messages at coordination forums. Be an active member of the Food Security Cluster. Hold one-to-one meetings and build relationships with key decision-makers. Participate in the Consolidated Appeal Process.
- Share reliable SADD and make evidence-based recommendations to cluster partners and the relevant levels of the Ministry.
- Coordinate with international and local partners who are working to address the food security and livelihoods needs of older people and other vulnerable groups.

Action point 1:

Needs assessment

Before deciding on an intervention strategy, the needs of the affected population and the specific needs of older people and other vulnerable groups must be assessed. The principle underpinning all humanitarian needs assessments is to **consult** with the people affected by the disaster. During the rapid assessment period, information collection should include older people and other vulnerable groups through methods such as focus group discussions and inclusion of older people as key informants.

Components of a rapid food security and livelihoods assessment (conducted during the critical period)

The checklist below identifies the eight key components of a food security assessment:¹⁴

- Develop an overview of the emergency context including estimations of the affected population disaggregated by age and gender, including older age groups. (See Annex 1 for details of how to develop accurate estimations from secondary sources)
- Assess the impact of the emergency on the availability of food and on markets and trade (more details are provided below)
- Determine the livelihood groups¹⁵ and zones, including those most relevant to older people and other vulnerable groups
- Determine the changes in food security (for the various livelihood groups) and understand whether older people and other vulnerable groups within these livelihoods groups have been acutely affected. Compare the food security situation with the food security situation before the disaster (baseline)¹⁶
- Determine the ability of each livelihood group to cope with the disaster
- Establish the current nutritional status of the affected population including older people and other vulnerable groups¹⁷
- Determine the external response so far and the degree of inclusion of older people and other vulnerable groups
- Determine your capacity to respond.

If the rapid needs assessment is well executed, you should be in a position to ascertain:

- The geographical areas most in need of assistance
- The people most in need of assistance (categorised by livelihood group) taking into account the specific vulnerabilities of particular groups such as older people
- The number of people who need assistance (disaggregated by sex and age where possible)
- The type of assistance the various groups require, including appropriate assistance for vulnerable groups such as older people
- The level of assistance needed and for how long.¹⁸

14. The checklist below is sourced from the emergency guidelines of Oxfam (GB) and CARE International

15. Livelihood groups are characterised by their main source of income and food for example pastoralists, farmers, traders

16. It is important that your country office should have good and up-to-date food security and livelihoods baseline information. You cannot assess the post-disaster situation without a baseline

17. Guidance on assessing older people's nutrition can be found in HelpAge's *Nutrition interventions for older people in emergencies*

18. Do not forget to consider the seasonal calendar and activities of the various livelihood groups

Food security and livelihoods needs assessment

When conducting a rapid needs assessment, a livelihoods approach is recommended. The rapid needs assessment determines the severity of food insecurity on two levels:

- Its impact on nutrition in the short term, that is, risk to lives
- Its impact on livelihoods in the longer term.

Once the impact of the disaster has been established, it is important to address the following points, paying particular attention to the needs of older people and other vulnerable groups.

- Are people's lives at risk because they are unable to meet their food needs?
- What coping strategies are people using to cope with the disaster, and what risks are associated with these strategies in terms of their immediate livelihoods, wellbeing, health, dignity and longer term livelihood prospects?
- How did people acquire food or income before the disaster (you should not assume that older people are supported by their family and children or that they have a pension).
- How do these sources of food and income vary between seasons in a normal year?¹⁹ (Seasonal, agriculture, fishing and livestock calendars are useful sources of information).
- What assets, savings and reserves do people own? For example, food stocks, savings, remittances, livestock, investments, credit, claims,²⁰ or unclaimed debts.
- How has the disaster affected various sources of food and income?
- Which livelihood group,²¹ gender or age group²² is the most vulnerable to food insecurity as a result of the disaster?

19. A normal year is defined as one that has occurred most often in the last ten years

20. "Claims" refer to demands that people can make on others, for example parents on children, or claims on relatives or the community

21. Livelihood groups are characterised by their main source of income, for example farmers, pastoralists, traders

22. Population group refers to people who are displaced, ethnic groups, etc

Remember

In a rapid assessment, many of these questions can be answered from secondary data and key informants.

Kate Holt/HelpAge International



Impact of the disaster on food, trade and markets

Measuring the impact of a disaster on people's lives, food security and livelihoods is only the first step in a response. Before implementing a food security or livelihood intervention that is inclusive of older people and other vulnerable groups, it is important to understand how the assistance will affect the local economy, either positively or negatively. You need to know how the availability of food has changed and how the disaster has affected markets.

Remember

Interventions such as cash transfers or food aid will have an impact on the local economy. It is wise, therefore, to assess the possible impact of the intervention on markets and trade, and take steps to mitigate negative impacts.

Baseline data

A **baseline** is an essential component in a rapid market assessment. It allows you to compare the post-disaster situation with the “normal” pre-disaster situation and will improve the quality of your analysis of the impact of the disaster. The minimum baseline information in any existing development programmes may provide answers to the following questions:

- How did the various livelihood groups acquire food and income before the disaster?²³
- What were their sources of food and income?
- How did these sources of food and income vary between seasons?
- What assets, savings or other reserves do the livelihood groups own, for example food stocks, cash savings, livestock, credit, claims or unclaimed debts?

If you have no baseline data on markets, other agencies may be able to provide information. Agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and NGOs working on food security and livelihoods programming will be able to share baseline data with you.

23. Ascertain this information for a “normal” year in the recent past where a normal year is defined as one that has occurred most often in the last ten years

Remember

Constructing a seasonal calendar with livelihood information will be useful for this analysis.

Market assessment

As part of the food security and livelihoods assessment, it is important to develop an understanding of the following criteria on how markets and trade have changed as a result of the disaster:²⁴

- How much food and how many essential non-food products (for example fuel, animal fodder, and transport) are available in the area, taking account of older people's specific food and non-food requirements?²⁵
- How much food and how many essential non-food products are likely to be imported into or exported out of the area?
- What food reserves does the government have in storage for the affected population?
- Does the government have a food safety net programme and are subsidised cereals available? If so, how are they accessed and who are they targeted at? Are older people included?
- How accessible is the nearest market selling basic commodities?

Remember

Older people and other vulnerable groups may use smaller local markets, so bear this in mind this when conducting a market assessment. Assess access in terms of distance, security, transport, gender, age and cultural considerations.

- How has the disaster affected access to essential markets, for example food, non-food essential commodities (soap, fuel, etc) and labour?
- How has the disaster affected the availability of basic food commodities and essential non-food products in local markets? How has the disaster affected the price and sources of these products?
- What impact has the disaster had on the ability of various livelihood groups, including older people, to access essential food commodities and other essential non-food products?
- What were the pre-disaster terms of trade between key commodities (for example, how many bags of cereal can be bought from the sale of a goat)? Remember that the terms of trade will change with the seasonal calendar.
- What impact has the disaster had on essential services such as access to credit, animal health services, information etc?
- How have the productive activities of different livelihood groups, including older people, changed as a result of the disaster?

24. This checklist is sourced from the Sphere Handbook food security guidance and the emergency guidelines of Oxfam (GB) and CARE International

25. For more information on older people's food and dietary needs please refer to HelpAge's *Nutrition interventions for older people in emergencies*

A number of tools available for market assessment, the most common being the Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Tool kit (EMMA). However the implementation of detailed market analysis is a complex and time consuming process. Not all agencies may be able to do them – some may instead work with UN agencies or NGOs working in the livelihoods sector to implement a joint assessment or to share their findings.

Interpreting data on the specific needs of older people

Together with gender, age is a “universal determinant”. *Universal* as it is possessed by every person, *determinant* as it largely defines both the position and role of a person in the family and society. Critically for humanitarian operations, gender and age also largely determine how a person is going to be affected by a crisis. It is crucial therefore that you consider the data and evidence collected in your needs assessment within the context of the many elements of local culture, traditions and religion that have an impact on how an older person may be affected by a crisis.²⁶

The points below are designed to support your analysis:

- What roles do older men and women play in families and communities? Are they included in decision making? Are they respected members of the community? Do they play active roles in dispute and conflict resolution? Do they care for children?
- If they are not actively involved in household decision making are their basic and specific needs being met by household spending? You should be particularly aware of older people's food, health and dietary needs.
- What contribution do older men and women make to individual and household income? How is their contribution to household income distributed amongst family members? Is their role in income generation recognised by agencies providing livelihoods assistance?
- How have the roles and responsibilities of older men and women changed since the disaster. For example, have older people taken on greater childcare duties? Are they able to continue their livelihoods activities? Are they still consulted in household decision making?

Ultimately you must ensure that the objective of your relief intervention relates to the roles of older people. For example, if your objective is to support livelihoods, you should develop an understanding of the numbers of older people who work and the types of activities they do, so that their needs can be factored into your assistance. You should then discuss the objectives of your programme activity with older people and the wider affected community, adapting it based on their feedback where appropriate.

26. More guidance on analysing the position of older people within families and communities, and its impact on their vulnerability and needs can be found in HelpAge's guidance *Ensuring inclusion of older people in initial emergency needs assessments*

Recommendation

You will need to consult with older men and women (separately where appropriate) to understand their needs, the degree to which they are able to access resources and assistance, and whether their access has been affected by the emergency.

Kate Holt/HelpAge International



Misconceptions about older people

To further support the analysis of your assessment data it is important to dispel some misconceptions about older people.

Older people are always supported by their families in emergencies

The assumption that assistance delivered to a household will benefit all the family members does not hold in situations of scarce resources. Furthermore, in emergencies older men and women have specific needs related to their health, nutrition, and mobility, which may not be prioritised by family spending. The flexibility in spending decisions offered by cash transfers allows older people to choose to address their basic and where appropriate, specific needs. It is crucial therefore that your assessment identifies older people's needs and, where appropriate, these are addressed independently of the household.

Older men and women play limited roles in income generation

As outlined in the introduction to this guidance evidence shows that older people in developing countries continue to work, often into their 70s. Therefore ensuring they are supported to recover their livelihoods following an emergency is critical to enable them to meet their basic and specific needs. For those caring for children such assistance is vital for the wellbeing of both older people and those in their care.

Older men and women play a limited role in family and community support

In contexts of economic migration, conflict and HIV/AIDS where the middle generation is missing older people are often play the primary care role for children. In Eastern and Southern Africa 40-60 per cent of AIDS orphans are cared for by older people.²⁷ Older people also often play roles as traditional community leaders, decision makers and actors in dispute and conflict resolution. While these roles may be disrupted by a disaster, understanding and supporting them can contribute to ensuring the acceptance and appropriateness of your response.

Understanding these issues of age relations will help you identify older people's vulnerabilities, roles; and support you to ensure your response harnesses older people's capacities to meet their own food security and livelihood needs. Ultimately therefore your response will avoid exclusion based on age, or due to the belief that they do not play an active role in income generation at individual or family level.

Resources

EMMA (2011), *Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis Tool kit (EMMA)*
<http://emma-toolkit.org/>

HelpAge International (2012), *Older people in emergencies: identifying and reducing risks.* www.helpage.org/download/4fd728a1b410b/

HelpAge International (2013), *Nutrition intervention for older people in emergencies*

27. RIATT (Regional Interagency Task Team on Children and AIDS), Eastern and Southern Africa

Action point 2: Designing a livelihoods programme

In order to fulfil the rights of all people to adequate food and economic development through livelihoods support, careful programme design is critical. Livelihoods programmes, irrespective of type, should ensure inclusion of the entire working population including older people and other vulnerable groups. Below you will find a list of issues to consider during your livelihood programme design to support this process.

- Where possible an integrated livelihoods programme with a number of components should be developed. This will likely include some of the following: cash for work, asset replacement, access to capital (or credit), employment opportunities and help for people to find employment, skills development and capacity building. All aspects of the programme must ensure older people and other vulnerable groups are included as potential beneficiaries.
- Targeting criteria must match people with suitable activities or tasks. For example, clerical, care, supervisory and other light duties in the programme could be ring-fenced for older people and other vulnerable groups.
- Based on their experience, skills and capacities older people are well suited to training, skills transfer, teaching, and other such capacity-building activities. Adopting such a model can have the additional benefit of supporting more positive intergenerational relationships.
- In many cultures the elders are at the core of community life and hence are well suited to leadership, community mobilisation, and dispute resolution functions in a humanitarian response. These roles and capacities can be harnessed to support the implementation of your livelihoods programme.
- Programme staff must be aware of the livelihood roles older people play to ensure they are adequately supported in your programme. They should also be trained to communicate with older people taking account of the aural and visual challenges associated with old age.
- Your livelihoods programme must meet the livelihood needs of older men and women equally. Gender imbalances are often reinforced with age so if women (or men) are marginalised and powerless, older women (or men) will likely be even more marginalised and powerless. You must also be aware of the gender imbalance inherent in ageing and consider the needs of older women who often outlive men. Older women and widows living alone without family support are particularly vulnerable to disruptions in their incomes and will need specific consideration in your programme design.

Recommendation

Before you begin your livelihood programme design, you should ensure that your team are aware of and have discussed the risks that older people face in all phases of livelihood and food security programming, and the specific risks highlighted by your own assessment. You can use the points highlighted in this section, as well as HelpAge's *Older people in emergencies: identifying and reducing risks* which can be found in the resources section of these guidelines.



Market assessment and programme design in Ethiopia

In response to the 2011 East Africa food crisis HelpAge and a number of humanitarian partners began responding with the delivery of cash based assistance; an approach which had been successfully applied to meet needs prior to the peak of the food crisis. However, following a multi-agency needs assessment and discussion with the affected population, including older people, it became clear that the markets were unable to provide adequate food supplies to meet demand. The situation was particularly acute for older people and other vulnerable groups with mobility challenges who relied on smaller markets closer to their homes and were unable to travel to larger markets where the limited food was available.

As a result of the assessment changes were made to both the method of delivery and size of the assistance grants provided. Firstly, to bridge the gap in market responsiveness cash and food were provided together with the agreement that based on-going market monitoring food assistance would be ended when markets had recovered. Secondly, the findings were used to lobby the government to remove a cap on the size of food baskets that could be distributed to allow agencies to deliver assistance commensurate with the needs of the population. As such the overall distribution of cash and food increased in value from 300 Birr (approximately \$16) to 700 Birr (approximately \$38) per person.

Decide on the livelihoods intervention strategy

As outlined in the previous sections of this guidance your livelihoods interventions must be based on a robust contextual analysis which provides evidence on:

- People's livelihoods activities including older people and other vulnerable groups
- The functioning of markets and trade
- The ability of the market to cope with an injection of aid (cash or in-kind commodities)
- Gender/age analysis
- The food security and livelihoods needs of the affected population including older people and other vulnerable groups.

Once you have gathered adequate information you can begin to design your intervention strategy including:

- How many people will be assisted
- Your targeting criteria
- How you will coordinate your response with other agencies and government
- How assets will be replaced
- If you are using cash, what conditions (if any) are involved
- The distribution method
- The size of the grant per recipient.

Regardless of whether you are providing goods in-kind or cash, choosing the size of assistance grants to replace lost assets and stock is always challenging. In some contexts, you may be faced with the dilemma that you have too many recipients and not enough resources. In such a situation, you must decide whether it is better to provide a larger grant to fewer people or a small grant to a larger number of beneficiaries. The resolution to this problem lies in the careful analysis of your needs assessments, sound livelihood baseline information, consultation with recipients and coordination with other stakeholders.

In-kind asset replacement

The first decision to make is whether your intervention will involve distribution of physical assets or providing recipients with cash or vouchers to buy the assets themselves from the local market. This is where the market and trade assessment is very important since it helps you determine the most appropriate intervention and the likely impact on local markets and trade. If you decide to implement in-kind asset replacement you need to keep the following issues in mind.

- Food aid and in-kind assistance can devalue goods on local markets resulting in a negative impact on the income of traders and their willingness to bring commodities to local markets. It is important to recognise that when your food aid stops people will return to a reliance on markets which following your intervention may no longer be able to meet their needs. Therefore, in some circumstances (as outlined in the Ethiopia example above), you may find that a combination of physical asset distribution and cash transfers is the most appropriate response.
- Standard food aid baskets do not always meet the specific food needs of older people and other vulnerable groups. For example, older people with dental or digestive problems may have trouble eating certain foods, hence risking deterioration in their nutritional status if food baskets are not adapted.
- Older people and other vulnerable groups face specific challenges during distributions of food and NFIs. Long waits at distributions points can be a hardship, and for those with reduced strength large, heavy food baskets or NFIs can be difficult to and carry. Whether distributions involve food, goods in-kind, cash or vouchers, older people face many of the same challenges. More details on accessible distributions are therefore provided in the section below on cash programming.

Remember

The most important criteria of a good intervention are, first, to meet the needs of the recipients; second, to “do no harm” to recipients, markets or trade; and, third, to support people to return to self-sufficiency as quickly as possible.

Cash transfers and livelihoods assistance

Cash transfers are a growing alternative to in-kind humanitarian assistance. Increasingly cash and vouchers are playing a role in meeting the needs of those affected by emergencies and supporting recovery across a broad range of sectors, including food assistance, livelihood support, shelter, non-food items, and provision for the return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs. HelpAge experience shows that older people are often excluded from cash programming owing to a range of factors including age itself, and misunderstanding of the role older people play in families and communities.

If you decide to provide cash and/or vouchers you must first choose the type of grant that will be provided, in consultation with the main stakeholders and based on an analysis of the context. For example in situations of insecurity providing cash directly may put beneficiaries at risk and as a result you may decide to deliver vouchers instead.

There are three forms of grants you need to consider:

Unconditional grants: The recipient receives cash in order to purchase his or her own food or livelihood assets, for example seed, animals, tools, or labour. This form of grant is unrestricted, and the recipient has sole responsibility for using the money as he or she sees fit.

Conditional grants: These usually take the form of commodity or cash vouchers that the recipient can exchange for goods from specific vendors or traders taking part in the voucher programme. Some livelihoods interventions require potential recipients to submit a business plan which must be approved before the cash is provided. (Note: if this model is chosen, you must make sure those assessing the plans have the knowledge and experience to determine the feasibility of the venture. You must also ensure those needing support to write the plan due to lower levels of literacy receive assistance.)

Microcredit and loans: This system offers many advantages, including the continued rotation of income within a given group of recipients when combined with a revolving fund approach. If this method is chosen it is imperative that the rules of the system are clear and well understood by all recipients, taking account of levels of literacy within the community and their previous experience of such approaches. Sound governance structures are also key. Failure to ensure these basic principles and structures are in place may result in a mechanism that does more harm than good.

When you have decided on your cash intervention model you must determine the most appropriate way to deliver the resources to the recipients. The key decisions you must make include:

- The frequency of the distribution
- The method of delivering the resources to the recipients (discussed in detail in Action Point 3)
- The size of the grant (as discussed in the previous section).

Resources

The Department for International Development (DfID) (1999), *Sustainable Livelihood Guidance Sheets*. www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0901/section2.pdf

HelpAge International (2012), *Older people in emergencies: identifying and reducing risks*. www.helpage.org/download/4fd728a1b410b/

Remember

The “do no harm” principle.

Action point 3: Integrating older people in emergency cash transfers

Given the growth in cash assistance and the large numbers of older people affected by emergencies, this section of the guidance will firstly outline some of the common challenges older people and other vulnerable groups may face in accessing cash assistance, and secondly explain the small programmatic modifications needed to deliver inclusive cash interventions.



Frederic Dupoux/HelpAge International

Cash transfers for older people in Haiti

The Rapid Initial Needs Assessment for Haiti (RINAH) carried out following the January 2010 earthquake identified older people as the most at-risk vulnerable population. An assessment of existing disaggregated data showed that approximately 200,000 older people were affected by the disaster. Given the presence of functioning markets, the logistical complexities of getting supplies into the country and consultation with beneficiaries on their preferred forms of assistance, HelpAge decided to undertake an unconditional cash transfer programme for populations over 65 in spontaneous camps. Through an agreement with UNITRANSFER, a remittance company, a one-off \$50 payment was made to a target population of 5,500 older people.

Using a network of “vulnerability focal points” selected from the affected population, the beneficiary population was identified and registered. During registration older people were given an information leaflet explaining when and where they could collect their money. Due to the levels of illiteracy amongst older people the leaflets were complemented by information sessions to explain the process. People unable to reach a UNITRANSFER branch were identified during registration and arrangements were made for an authorised family member to collect the money on their behalf. A monitoring process using a random sample of 1,500 beneficiaries showed an overwhelmingly positive response to the cash transfer, with respondents reporting that they used the funds mainly to buy food and pay off debts.

Since cash is simply a method of relief distribution, we need to consider certain basic considerations that relate to older people's access to assistance in emergencies, in order to ensure that cash programmes are inclusive.

Distance to cash distributions

Irrespective of the cash delivery mechanism it is important to consider how far people have to travel to receive their money. For older people and those with mobility problems the distance to distribution point will make an enormous difference. If older people are forced to pay for transport to collect cash or if the financial or opportunity cost of collecting cash outweighs the benefits, then they may choose not to access the relief assistance, thus undermining the objective of your intervention.

Cash distributions

Whether distributions involve going to a bank or attending an NGO-managed distribution of cash or vouchers, older people face many of the same challenges as with distributions of food or goods in-kind.

- Standing in long queues in the heat or rain with no shelter, water or toilet facilities may mean older people and the mobility impaired miss the distribution completely or chose not to attend.
- If older people and other vulnerable groups must make repeat visits to receive assistance because they did not reach the front of the queue before the distribution ends, they may not be willing or able to return the next day.
- Older people who are sole carers of children may find it hard to attend distributions, or may struggle to find people who will care for their children while they do so.
- Older people living alone without family or community support may be unwilling to leave their shelter and possessions for fear of theft and hence will not attend distributions.

Understanding cash systems

In some contexts, the affected population and specifically older people may not have used or fully understand banking and cash distribution mechanisms, such as mobile phones. This can lead to confusion about where, when and how to collect cash.

Identification

Cash distributions that demand specific forms of official identification can create challenges for those who have lost their ID documents in disasters, and older people who may never have registered for an ID, creating confusion and concern as to how they will access assistance.

Security

Untested assumptions about care and respect offered to older people, combined with lack of consultation in emergencies, can contribute to an environment in which abuses such as theft go unseen and unchallenged. Older people and vulnerable groups may be at risk at cash distribution points when cash is directly distributed. The time of day at which distributions take place may also expose older men and women and other vulnerable groups to the risk of abuse, attack or violence. You should consider for example whether people are able to return home in daylight? Due diligence must be taken to ensure the security of beneficiaries (and staff) during all forms of cash distribution, and your programme monitoring must confirm that older people and other vulnerable groups have not been exposed to increased risks as a result of your intervention.

Programmatic modifications to support older people's participation in cash programming

As with the distribution of goods in kind, the issues outlined above must not exclude older people from cash assistance. Small programmatic modifications can easily overcome the potential challenges, and have been applied successfully by HelpAge and external agencies to support inclusion of older people and other vulnerable groups in cash and NFI distributions.

Recommendation

Irrespective of the cash delivery mechanism, it is important to ensure that all targeted older people can access the cash transfer programme. You must therefore design the intervention so that potential challenges faced by older people are overcome, and the programme is inclusive.

The recommendations below are applicable to various cash methodologies, including direct cash delivery, vouchers, mobile banking and use of the banking system.

Distribution design modifications

Cash distribution points must be physically accessible (and, where relevant, on level ground). Separate queues or collection times should be provided for older people, the mobility impaired and other vulnerable groups. If this is not possible these groups should be brought to the front of queues. Seating, shade, water and toilet facilities should be provided when long queues are predicted. When necessary, older people should be provided with transport to reach distribution points. It is also important that you consider how older people who are caring for children can access childcare to allow them to attend distributions. (Consider making links with agencies running child-friendly spaces).

Proxies

If an older person or any vulnerable beneficiary cannot attend a distribution for whatever reason, a “proxy” may be the solution. A proxy is usually a trusted family member or friend who is registered together with the older person, and then collects the cash on his or her behalf. Proxies can also be used to bridge the technology gap and facilitate older people's use of new technologies, such as mobile banking or bank cards and ATMs. When using proxies, it is critical to ensure that:

- Distribution lists are kept updated
- Registration procedures include an outreach component to ensure housebound older people and other vulnerable groups are included
- Programme monitoring ensures that beneficiaries are receiving the full grant.

Sensitisation and training

The need for training and sensitisation on the use of cash systems will not be limited to the older population. However, older people may require more detailed explanations, owing to a potential lack of broader awareness and understanding of banking systems, mobile phones and cash assistance, and because of the slower pace at which some older people take on and understand new information. On-going support and follow up may therefore be a necessary part of your programme. You must also consider older people's visual, aural, and literacy challenges when explaining or distributing written material remembering that literacy challenges are not limited to the older population. Consultation with older people about their knowledge of the planned distribution systems and their specific needs will be crucial in helping you to design and target your training and support activities.

Identification

If specific forms of identification are needed to access cash, it is vital to understand the degree to which this will be a challenge for the target population. HelpAge experience in Pakistan and Haiti has shown that agreements can often be reached with cash delivery agents to provide cash to certain vulnerable members of the population with only basic identification, or via proxies (as outlined above).

Recommendation

HelpAge experience shows that complaints mechanisms, suggestion phone lines, and the presence of community staff at distributions to assist older people have been effective in addressing older people's concerns and problems.

Ensuring cash distribution mechanisms are inclusive

The following section describes a number of cash distribution mechanisms and steps that can be taken to ensure they are accessible for older people and other vulnerable groups. It should be read in conjunction with existing cash transfer guidance, references to which can be found in the resource section of this document.

Direct cash delivery

Direct delivery of cash to affected populations by agencies is often the quickest, easiest and cheapest approach. For older people specifically, it is important to consider and address the issues related to distribution, identification and potential security risks outlined above.

Recommendation

Your project planning should include consultation with older people before cash is delivered to ensure they are happy with the proposed mechanism; to assess the risks they may face; and to ensure that steps are taken to avoid them.

Bank accounts and ATM cards

Before you decide to provide cash through the banking system (opening accounts for beneficiaries, having beneficiaries cash cheques in banks, using banking cash-in/-out agents in shops, or providing ATM cards), it will be important to consult the affected population to find out whether they, and the older population, currently use and understand the banking system.²⁸

Such consultation will provide you with the necessary information to develop the necessary training and sensitisation activities. Remember to think about potential challenges such the distance to the banks or ATMs, potential distribution challenges at banks (queues, waiting times etc and how these can be addressed – see the distribution section above), and identification requirements. Ideally the distribution should be through a single bank if it has a wide network of branches in project locations otherwise you may have to deliver the cash through several banks.

²⁸ HelpAge experience suggests that older people are often less familiar with the way in which banking systems work and may not know the requirements for the system. However, this does not mean they cannot be included in such assistance

Mobile banking

There is growing interest in the use of new technologies, including mobile phones, to deliver cash transfers. A common misconception is that older people cannot use or understand new technologies, owing to their lack of exposure to them, lack of dexterity, visual impairment and illiteracy.²⁹ While these issues should be considered in the design of mobile cash transfer programmes, they are not reasons for excluding older people.³⁰ A number of agencies have successfully adopted approaches to support the inclusion of older people in mobile cash transfers.³¹

When designing a mobile banking delivery mechanism, it is important to:

- Consult the affected population and older people on their degree of confidence in using mobile phones and mobile banking
- Determine the number of people (including older people) in the target population that suffer from visual impairment, which may affect their ability to use a mobile phone
- Determine the number of people (including older people) in the target population that have mobility concerns that may affect their ability to reach the cash-out agents.

This information will help you to design an appropriate intervention, including considerations of training, sensitisation and follow-up support, and the roles that community focal points and proxies can play in the process.

Vouchers

Vouchers can be used to support trade, reduce the risk of inflation, and improve the supply of commodities.³² Vouchers can be used in a variety of ways, including fairs³³ and buying goods from selected traders who are involved in the programme. Certain preconditions are needed before you establish a voucher system and the CaLP “Quick delivery guide on vouchers”³⁴ is an excellent resource.

When developing a voucher system, it is important to:

- Determine the ease of use and appropriateness of the voucher system for the beneficiary population
- Determine the sensitisation messages and training required so that the beneficiary population understand how to effectively use the voucher system
- Consult older people on the design of the voucher intervention and identify any issues that may impede their ability to use vouchers.

When developing a voucher intervention that uses fairs, it is important to ensure that:

- Older men and women and other vulnerable groups have priority access to vendors and traders at fairs
- Older men and women and other vulnerable groups are supported to reach fairs and distributions, and transport goods home where necessary
- Where necessary older carers have access to child support so they can attend fairs and distributions³⁵
- Programme staff are aware of the protection risks older people and other vulnerable groups face, and are on hand to provide support where needed.

Cheques

Cheques can be used for cash payments and offer a greater degree of security than cash. There are three types of cheques you may consider each with advantages and disadvantages. You should consult with the target population before you make your decision as to which method to use.

Cash cheques are written for a cash payment. The cheque can be cashed at a bank branch without any official identification. Because cheques are not made out to an individual, these cheques are akin to cash.

29. Note: These issues are not limited to the older population and could apply equally to younger members

30. Kibaha Local Government Authority, HelpAge International Tanzania, Good Samaritan Social Services Trust, Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) and Durham University, UK (2012), a research survey of older people in Kibaha district, Tanzania, showed that 41 per cent of older men and 15 per cent of older women owned mobile phones. Older people reported that mobile phones were widely available to them through relatives and friends. People appreciated being able to talk with family without having to travel, and order ‘bodaboda’ (motorbike) taxis

31. Cash and Learning Partnership (2011), *New technologies in cash transfer programming and humanitarian assistance*. “Mercy Corps in Haiti encouraged elderly recipients to bring a trusted family member to the mobilisations and trainings to assist them when making transactions. While HelpAge targeted older people in the early recovery phase of the earthquake and their target group experienced some difficulties with mobile money. However, it has not dissuaded the organisation from using this system in the future”, pp.15 and 16

32. For more information on the advantages and use of vouchers, consult the CaLP guidelines listed in the resources section of this guidance

33. A voucher fair is basically an organised space where sellers display their products and the buyers (beneficiaries) use vouchers to purchase the goods or services they need. More information can be found here: www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/CaLP_VoucherFairs_booklet.pdf

34. The guidance can be found here: www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/calp_vouchers_booklet.pdf

35. Consider links with child protection agencies that run child-friendly spaces

Order cheques are written for specific individuals. A name is written on the cheque usually along with the person's national identity card (NIC) details. They can be cashed at a bank branch, along with proof of identity.

Crossed cheques are written for bank accounts for specific individuals. The recipient must have a bank account to be able to cash the cheque.

An excellent resource for supporting use of cheques in cash programming is the CaLP publication "Cheques: A quick delivery guide for cash transfer programming in emergencies".³⁶

Cash for work

Older people are often excluded from cash-for-work programmes based on the assumptions that they are no longer able to work, that they are not active participants in income generation, and that they are always supported by their families. As outlined in this guidance many older people are able and eager to work and you must therefore ensure that your cash-for-work activity includes them as potential beneficiaries. To do so you should consider the following points:

- Ensure that the work you provide is accessible to the differing abilities and needs of the affected population you are working with. Those who are unable to take part in hard labour may be able to cook or provide childcare for those taking part. You should monitor the wellbeing of the groups who are working on the various activities
- Ensure childcare arrangements for carers or guardians, including older men and women³⁷
- Ensure that vulnerable groups are not channelled into lower paid or less desirable forms of work, based on their sex, age, ethnicity of other identity group
- Ensure training on how to undertake the various cash-for-work activities are adapted to those involved in the work.³⁸

Resources

CaLP (The Cash Learning Partnership), *Direct cash: A quick delivery guide for cash transfer programming in emergencies*.

www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/calp_direct_cash_booklet.pdf

CaLP, *Cheques: A quick delivery guide for cash transfer programming in emergencies*.

www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/calp_cheques_screen.pdf

CaLP, *Vouchers: A quick delivery guide for cash transfer programming in emergencies*.

www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/calp_vouchers_booklet.pdf

CaLP, *Working with banks: A quick guide to negotiating with banks in cash transfer*.

www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/calp_working_with_banks_final_a5.pdf

CaLP, *Voucher fairs: A quick guide to negotiating with banks in cash transfer*.

www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/CaLP_VoucherFairs_booklet.pdf

CaLP, *Making the case for cash: A quick guide to field advocacy in cash transfer*

www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/calp_making_the_case_for_cash.pdf

CaLP, *Communicating cash: A quick delivery guide to field communications in cash*

www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/calp_communicating_cash_to_communities.pdf

Harvey P, and Bailey S, (2011), *Cash transfer programming in emergencies*,

London, Overseas Development Institute. www.cashlearning.org/resources/library/1-good-practice-review-11-cash-transfer-programming-in-emergencies

36. The guidance can be found here: www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/tools/calp_cheques_screen.pdf

37. Consider links with child protection agencies that run child-friendly spaces

38. Consider older people's visual, aural, and literacy challenges (literacy challenges are not limited to the older population) when you are explaining or distributing written material

Action point 4: Food security and livelihoods advocacy

For the purpose of humanitarian response, advocacy can be defined as “the act or process of supporting a cause”,³⁹ in this case, the rights of older men and women to freely pursue economic development, their right to adequate and appropriate food, and their right to just and favourable working conditions. Advocacy should be part of all interventions for older people in emergencies, with the goal of ensuring that older people are acknowledged as a vulnerable group and that their needs are met as part of the response. An advocacy plan template is provided in Annex 2.

Advocacy can take the form of many activities. In humanitarian response, it often means presenting your messages and your evidence at coordination forums, holding one-on-one meetings, and building relationships with key decision makers.

In food security and livelihoods, advocacy includes:

- **Participation in the consolidated appeal process** and any subsequent appeals to ensure that the needs of older people are included in humanitarian planning and allocated financial resources. When appropriate, you should include dedicated resources for coordination.
- **Active participation in food security cluster meetings** or the national food security sector coordination to promote the inclusion of older people in the humanitarian agenda.

The Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) came into effect in December 2010 and the cluster’s terms of reference are based on strengthening humanitarian response through effective coordination mechanisms. “Therefore, the gFSC supports efficient food-security-related country-level clusters and other coordination systems in providing predictable, accountable and demand-driven services that meet the specific needs of vulnerable women, girls, boys and men.”⁴⁰ As such the cluster at country level is a key fora for raising awareness of the specific needs of older people and other vulnerable groups, and current gaps in response to these need.

39. Webster-Merriam dictionary

40. *Global Food Security Cluster Handbook*, p.46



Kate Hol/HelpAge International

- **Active participation** means more than just attending meetings. The cluster system is meant to improve coordination between the food security and livelihoods actors, thereby identifying gaps, improving accountability to the beneficiaries, enhancing understanding of the situation through sharing information and analysis, and ensuring more powerful advocacy on behalf of the affected populations. The system is efficient only if the partners are active. You will need to take the initiative within the cluster, for example by volunteering to chair sub-working groups on specific issues that affect older people, or participating in joint assessments.
- **Attending inter-cluster meetings** and meeting communications staff to ensure that appropriate and accurate information about the services available to older people is included in humanitarian information services.
- **Gathering and sharing reliable sex- and age-disaggregated data and making evidence-based recommendations** to the cluster partners and with the various relevant levels of the government to raise awareness of the numbers and vulnerabilities of older people. Distributing edited monthly reports and case studies of successful approaches to addressing older people's food security and livelihood needs is a useful strategy.
- **Coordinating with international and local partners who share a similar goal.** Identify partners who work with older people and form strategic alliances to deliver harmonised or joint messages at key national and humanitarian coordination forums.
- **Working with the media.** Sometimes the best way to draw attention to and gain support for a cause is to organise national and international media stories about the issue. You can meet with journalists to draw their attention to the problems affecting older people in a crisis, and facilitate interviews and field visits for them, in coordination with your media and security colleagues.

Strategies for successful advocacy

Successful advocacy depends on convincing the right people (that is, decision makers) that your cause is valid and requires their action and support.

Strategies that help to make advocacy more successful include:

- **Be prepared:** Compile compelling arguments, evidence and examples that support your messages.
- **Adapt to your audience:** Different people (for example cluster leaders, national health authorities, community leaders) will be convinced in different ways. Successful advocacy therefore depends on correctly identifying your target audiences and adapting your strategies and messages to them. Identify the specific motivations and concerns of your audience ahead of time and vary your information and communication strategies accordingly.
- **Use examples:** Familiarise yourself with case studies or examples, preferably from similar contexts.
- **Work with partners:** Messages are always stronger when they are delivered jointly.
- **Identify “champions”:** Individuals in the right places can play a critical role in bringing about change. Build relationships and partnerships with people in target organisations who share your ideas.
- **Develop an advocacy plan:** If advocacy is a big component of your programme, begin by creating an advocacy plan to define your goals, objectives, and audiences. Then identify the messages, strategies, materials and media that you will use.

Advocacy messages

Your advocacy goals, targets and messages must be drawn from the local context and adapted to your key audiences. For general guidance, here is a summary of key messages drawn from the action points in this paper.

Inclusion in the humanitarian agenda

- Older people should be recognised as a vulnerable group, and their food security and livelihood needs must be prioritised in humanitarian relief and recovery plans.
- Food security and livelihoods assessment data should be gender and age disaggregated, and the specific food security and livelihood recovery needs of older people should be identified.

Availability of food (food security)

Older people and other vulnerable groups should have access to food security and livelihoods programmes, including:

- Older people should be incorporated in food (or cash transfer programmes) distributions. Older people may not be cared for by other family members
- Food distributions or cash transfer programmes should be designed to incorporate the specific needs of older people and other vulnerable groups
- Older people should be able, through proxy, if necessary, to exercise their right to access food or cash transfer programmes
- Food distributions or cash transfer programmes must ensure that the distribution points are physically accessible and that waiting times are reduced. If waiting is anticipated, the distribution should provide waiting areas with seating and protection from the elements.

The right to participate in livelihoods programmes

Older people and other vulnerable groups have the right to participate in livelihoods programmes. They have the right to:

- Participate in livelihoods programmes, irrespective of their age. Age must not be an exclusion criteria (for example food or cash-for-work programmes must not automatically exclude people over a certain age)
- Access credit or cash, and should not be excluded based on age criteria
- Be included in livelihoods programmes, which should be tailored to meet the livelihood and food security needs of all people in the target population, irrespective of age, gender and physical ability
- Rebuild their livelihoods and enjoy the same opportunities as other members in the target population.

Annex 1: HelpAge International's Sex- and Age-Disaggregated Data Methodology

The use of sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD) is essential for humanitarian programmes, advocacy and learning. The application of the following SADD methodology will enable response teams to understand the demographic composition, profile and number of the older population that may be affected by conflict or natural disaster.

How/where to collect SADD

It is unlikely that you will find accurate nationally produced SADD in many countries or regions so we must make demographic projections through estimations that will be close to real figures.

You can use data produced by the National Institute or Bureau of Statistics if the census provides detailed information by sex, age and administrative boundaries, and is no more than five-years-old. Unfortunately a lot of national statistical information is neither updated nor accurate, and in some contexts can even be influenced by political considerations. In an emergency, when time may be very limited, two alternative sources of information may be used to produce quality demographic projections.

Data provided by the UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs (UNDESA) – Population Division

How to use UNDESA data to produce national SADD estimations

Follow this link: <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Excel-Data/population.htm>

It will lead you to the UNDESA World Population Prospects where you will find updated population estimations disaggregated by country, sex, age, population density and dependency ratios. Open the relevant Excel files, search for the relevant country and find the estimates on older age groups.

How to estimate SADD

Having found the relevant country and the most recent year's data, you can calculate the percentage of older people from the total population and fill in the table below.

You will see that some countries in the UNDESA database have estimations for the 80+ and 90+ age range. In these cases, we recommend using 80+ as the cut-off.

How to estimate SADD for specific geographical/administrative areas

Once you have a nationwide estimate, you can estimate the percentage of older people in the population in specific areas of the country. All you need is an estimation of the total population for the area of interest, and apply the national percentages you have used in the table below.

Data provided by The World Gazetteer

If you cannot obtain reliable population estimates from country-based information sources, you can use *The World Gazetteer*, by following this link: www.world-gazetteer.com/

The World Gazetteer provides a breakdown of population data for countries and offers related statistics for different administrative divisions, areas, cities, towns and maps in English, French, Spanish and German. It will provide you with quality estimates that you can disaggregate later.

Always remember

You should make both a lower and higher estimation of the numbers of older people (60+) potentially affected by the crisis.

You can establish estimates based on the initial reports issued by the media, UN, INGOs etc of the numbers of people affected by the crisis. Estimations will vary depending on the crisis; for example your lower estimation may show 30-50 per cent of the older population has been affected by a crisis and 60-80 per cent affected as the higher estimation. In some cases these estimations may equal 100 per cent, for example when assessing refugee or IDP camps with defined populations.

Estimating the size of the older population affected by a crisis is not an exact science. However it can form very important messages to share with humanitarian actors and decision makers in the initial stages of an emergency response.

Age	Male	Female	Total male and female population
50-59 years	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum
60-69 years	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum
70-79 years	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum
80+ years	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum
Total	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum (% of total population)	Total sum

Annex 2: Sample advocacy plan

A good advocacy plan respects the principles of “SMART”: your goal should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and defined by an appropriate **T**ime-frame.

While your goals may be based in principles or ideals, you should be realistic about what you can achieve given the resources available to you and the external situation. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster or at the onset of a crisis, your goals will probably focus on “small victories” (eg securing funding for mobility aids for older people) and have very short timeframes. As relief moves towards recovery you will probably begin to advocate for higher-level policy changes over a longer time period (eg the provision of free health services to older people), and have multiple objectives and activities supporting your goal.

In general an advocacy strategy should include at least the following elements and could be presented as a narrative or organised like a logframe in the following way:

SMART Advocacy Goal						
Justification						
Main strategies						
Success indicators						
SMART Objective	Primary Targets	Messages	Activities	Allies & Opportunities	Resources	Materials



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