



**GLOBAL
FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER**
Strengthening Humanitarian Response

People-centred Approach and Cross-Cutting Dimensions: Best Practices from Food Security Clusters/Sectors



Introduction

Mainstreaming of cross-cutting dimensions are crucial in humanitarian response, in operations as well as in coordination. In line with the IASC frameworks¹, including the cluster core functions, in-country Food Security Clusters have to ensure a people-centred approach in their activities. It is also reflected by the Cluster Lead Agencies' commitments to the World Humanitarian Summit / Grand Bargain (2016) and the Strategy 2017-2019 of the global Food Security Cluster.

The promotion of leadership and participation of affected populations in programming, planning, monitoring and evaluating is essential to shape humanitarian response. Mainstreaming gender, age, or protection dimensions into cluster activities is key to ensure a qualitative response for the food from strengthening local capacities to involving national and local governments, civil society and the affected population;

- From ensuring that men, women, boys and girls affected by crisis receive a timely, coordinated and complementary assistance to providing them a platform that holds humanitarian partners accountable by participating and being able to address complaints;
- From ensuring information-sharing to providing information for decision-making.

Different efforts to common standards and frameworks have been developed in several clusters resulting in checklists, guidelines and specific trainings. Awareness-raising or discussions on any related topic are a common practice in many Food Security Clusters (FSC). Some Clusters have also appointed focal points for specific cross-cutting dimensions. As a result, there is no specific recommendation or guidance to follow for mainstreaming cross-cutting dimensions in FSC activities, because each cluster has taken a different approach depending on the specific context they work in.

This document is an effort to capture selected best practices and lessons learnt across the Food Security Sector (FSS) that could serve as an example for others. The document is meant to initiate a discussion on potential harmonization of methodologies and approaches for increased global advocacy and awareness on mainstreaming cross-cutting dimensions. The examples are grouped along the Humanitarian Programme Cycle and were collected during face-to-face and phone interviews with FSC/FSS Coordinators, Cluster Lead Agencies (WFP/FAO) and FSC/FSS partners.

¹ This includes the Statement on Zero Tolerance on Sexual Harassment and Abuse within the Humanitarian Sector (2017), Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action (new version to be launched in 2019), Gender Marker (2012) – to be replaced by the Gender and Age Marker in 2018, Gender Policy (2008) – to be revised in 2017, Gender-based Violence Guidelines (2015), Policy on Protection Humanitarian Action (2016), Statement on the Centrality of Protection (2013), Accountability to Affected Population / CHS Guidelines. You can find all rele-vant documents [here](#).

Overall: Throughout the Humanitarian Programme Cycle

Somalia

In 2015, an **Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) self-assessment tool** was developed by a FSC AAP Advisor to facilitate baseline information - gathering process that subsequently created a clear picture of the current status of accountability oversight structures among FSC partners. The assessment aimed to identify: Existing policies and frameworks on the integration of AAP in key agency documents, policies and practice on information-sharing to promote transparency, feedback and complaints handling, participation and design, monitoring and evaluation. According to the survey results, some agencies lacked key policies and frameworks, and where they existed, they were weak and needed review. In some cases, there was a designated staff to champion or spearhead accountability and where they existed, it was not included in their job descriptions. This made it difficult to appraise a staff on AAP matters. On feedback mechanisms, most agencies lacked a database for recording feedback.

Following the results of the baseline, FSC embarked on **training activities on AAP**. The training covered an Introduction to Accountability and Quality Standards, AAP Commitments and Planning for Integration and AAP Mainstreaming. The trainings were conducted in Nairobi, Mogadishu, Hargeisa, Garowe, Gakayo, Bosaso and Dollow. A total of 157 head office and field based staff participated in the training. A pre-training survey indicated very low levels of awareness and understanding of accountability, and information-sharing with affected populations was erratic and casual. Most agencies did not have a feedback and complaints database. Each agency participating in the training developed an accountability work plan. The training activities aimed at equipping participants with practical skills and competencies for mainstreaming accountability, conducting effective community engagement processes and documenting each process for learning purposes.

As a result, an **AAP strategy** for the FSC Somalia has been developed including benefits of AAP mainstreaming and recommendations for both, the cluster team, the Cluster Lead Agencies and partners.

Pakistan

In 2016, before the HNO/HRP process started, FSC Pakistan organised a [joint capacity building training on mainstreaming cross-cutting dimensions in humanitarian programming](#). The two days' training was conducted to **build capacity of INGOs and NGOs on proposal writing**, focus-ing on gender-mainstreaming, protection, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and AAP. The participants were usually involved in humanitarian proposal writing, and as a good practice, the methodology was based on adult learning principals. There were powerpoint presentations followed by a detailed deliberation on questions, group work, plenary discussion and a quiz.

Participants were asked to share information on their knowledge background to allow the preparation of the sessions. The participants included Proposal Writers, Programme Managers, Project Coordinators, Executive Directors, Emergency Coordinators, Technical Advisor others. While analysing the participant's profile, about 85% were working at senior level managers and having experience between 5-15 years in community restoration, Food Security or other sectors.

The training sessions referred to power relations, how to conduct a **gender analysis** or to collect Sex-and-Age-disaggregated-Data (**SADD**) as well as the application of the **Gender Marker** based on OPS projects of the previous year. Other topics referred to **protection-mainstreaming** and **GBV**. The respective sessions were facilitated by experts for each topic.

Colombia

In 2015, the Cluster Coordinator took part in a **Training of Trainers in Protection Mainstreaming** that was organized in Panama by the Protection Mainstreaming Task Team of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC). As a result of this participation, the cluster coordinator conducted similar trainings to cluster partners, both international and national ones.

In July 2017, the Food Security & Nutrition Cluster organized a Workshop on Protection & Gender Mainstreaming for cluster partners with the technical support of UN Women, ProCap and the Protection Cluster. The objective of the Workshop was to ensure a common understating of principles, standards and related actions as well as to document best practices in protection and gender mainstreaming in programming. A set of recommendations and a **monitoring/self-evaluation system** were developed to ensure quality programming on the basis of common systems and methodologies.

Additionally, between June and August 2017, the Cluster Coordination participated on the elaboration of the protection strategy for the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), where, on the basis of the main findings of the Protection Analysis, one (1) overall strategic objective and four (4) main strategic objectives were identified. Overall HCT's strategic objective for protection: ensure the centrality of protection and human rights in all peacebuilding, humanitarian, early recovery, durable solutions and development programme design, planning, implementation and monitoring/reporting by the member agencies of the HCT. Moreover, all planning frameworks and response interventions will incorporate an age, gender and diversity analysis/perspective.

Central African Republic

With the support of a GenCap Adviser, FSC organised a training on mainstreaming gender in food security activities, referring to gender-mainstreaming in data collection and targeting, with international and national partners. In addition, FSC drafted a **guideline on gender-mainstreaming from food security lenses** and requested partners for their inputs. This guideline provides an overview of the specific context in-country and provides practical examples from partners.

Iraq (Mosul Response)

The FSC closely works with other clusters and inter-agency networks to mainstream cross-cutting dimensions, this includes the Protection Cluster or the **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network** (led by UNFPA and co chaired by WFP). There are clear referral pathways between inter-agency call centres, PSEA and GBV sub-clusters, for survivor assistance, as well as standardised intake forms to recording complaints, as well as standard protocols for receiving, logging, processing and referring cases of PSEA.

Two-way communications with beneficiaries were established for beneficiaries who were also sensitised with regard to rights-based assistance. AAP is integrated in all existing information provision, this includes Communication with Communities (CwC) and Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs) that are reflected in partnership agreements and reporting. A portion of funding is designated for the establishment of CFMs. Beneficiaries are informed about crucial programme information periodically for cash and in kind assistance. Through Rapid Response Mechanism Consortium WFP is also mainstreaming protection guidelines for first line responders in hard to reach areas.

Comprehensive trainings are regularly organised along with continued advocacy for UN, INGOs and other humanitarian partners during FSC meetings. Furthermore, AAP and other cross-cutting dimensions are reflected as scoring criteria during the HRP vetting process.

Whole of Syria (Turkey Hub)

In 2016, during the roll-out phase of the IASC GBV Guidelines (2015), the FSC team and partners participated in trainings which were organised with support of other UN agencies.

In June 2017, the FS Cluster developed a **Child Protection and Food Security and Livelihoods: Tips and Recommendations Report** jointly with the Child Protection Cluster with the aim to provide guidance for the clusters partners on different actions to be taken in order to ensure that Child Protection is mainstreamed in all Food Security and Livelihoods activities. The Syrian conflict has dramatically impacted children and with regards to food security, children are considered among the most vulnerable and most affected group, especially children who head the family, are wounded, unaccompanied/orphans, or displaced with or without any family members. The food security and nutrition of girls and boys may be affected differently due to gender roles and expectations placed upon them by their families and communities. Moreover, food insecurity often leads to the adoption of negative and irreversible coping strategies that may impact girls and boys in different ways. Programs that support livelihoods and food security must consider both, the direct (i.e. increased household food consumption) and indirect impact on children (i.e. children left alone when parents are at work).

Fiji

With the support of a GenCap Advisor, the Food Security & Livelihoods Cluster has developed a paper with a set of questions to inform actions to be taken and considered in needs assessments, programming and monitoring of food security and livelihoods' sector activities.



Photo: WFP/Santosh Shahi

Situation Analysis

Inter-cluster coordination / global level

On global level, an inter-cluster training package for promoting nutrition sensitive outcomes is being developed with the support of the [Inter-cluster Nutrition Working Group](#) hosted by gFSC and the Global Nutrition Cluster. In addition to WASH and Health Clusters, the Protection Cluster (incl. Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Areas of Responsibilities) as well as colleagues from the Core Humanitarian Standards/AAP were consulted to ensure an integrated approach to food security and nutrition.

Myanmar

In May 2017, the Food Security Sector co-leads and partners at national and field levels (Rakhine and Kachin States) have participated in a Protection Mainstreaming Training and Workshop organized by the Protection Mainstreaming Task Team of the Global Protection Cluster. As a result, a **checklist for including protection mainstreaming into sectoral activities** have been produced. The checklist is structured under 4 pillars: Safety & Dignity, Meaningful Access, Participation and Accountability.

Global level

With the support of gFSC's [Programme Quality Working Group](#), a [webinar](#) on AAP was organised in April 2017, presenting different perspectives on mainstreaming AAP in humanitarian food security response. The following presenters had been invited: CHS Alliance, WFP/Italy, World Vision International, and WFP/FSC Iraq.

In addition, gFSC developed a [video](#) AAP-mainstreaming in FSC.

Yemen

In May 2017, the Food Security Cluster Coordinator and partners have participated in a Protection Mainstreaming Training and Workshop organized by the Protection Mainstreaming Task Team of the Global Protection Cluster. As a result of this a checklist for including protection mainstreaming into sectoral activities have been produced. The checklist is structured under 4 pillars: Safety & Dignity; Meaningful Access; Participation and Accountability.



Photo: WFP/Bikkil Sthapit

Needs Assessment and Analysis

Afghanistan

Affected communities are involved at the need identification level through **HEAT (Household Emergency Assessment Tool)** which asks for needs and preferences of the response. In addition, the government, local and international organizations are involved in IPC on needs identification, priorities of the areas and response options. Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) also conducts national level Seasonal Food Security Assessment (SFSA) with the support of government and NGO, INGO partners to identify the needs in food security and livelihoods sector. To support its cash transfer programmes a national level market mapping exercise is also conducted as part of SFSA every year. FSAC also support government in conducting national level pre-harvest appraisal to inform decision making of government regarding food availability.

Bangladesh

There is an in-country **Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) working group**, in which two nominated representatives from the Food Security Cluster participate. To improve FSC response to the 2017 August floods, GiHA came up with a number of **gender analysis questions** that should be incorporated into FSC needs assessment:

1. What are the (usual) distinct roles of women, girls, boys and men in food production, collection, preservation and preparation?
2. How have the 2017 August floods impacted on women's, girls', boys' and men's food security?
3. What are the cultural restrictions and power dynamics on women, girls, boys and men in relation to food? How has this impacted on their access to food assistance and food security?
4. Who receives and who decides about the use of food aid that is received on behalf of the household?
5. In what ways are women and men involved (if at all) in decisions that affect them regarding emergency food security cluster response and in the wider community governance structures?
6. Do FSC key performance indicators track cluster performance on gender?

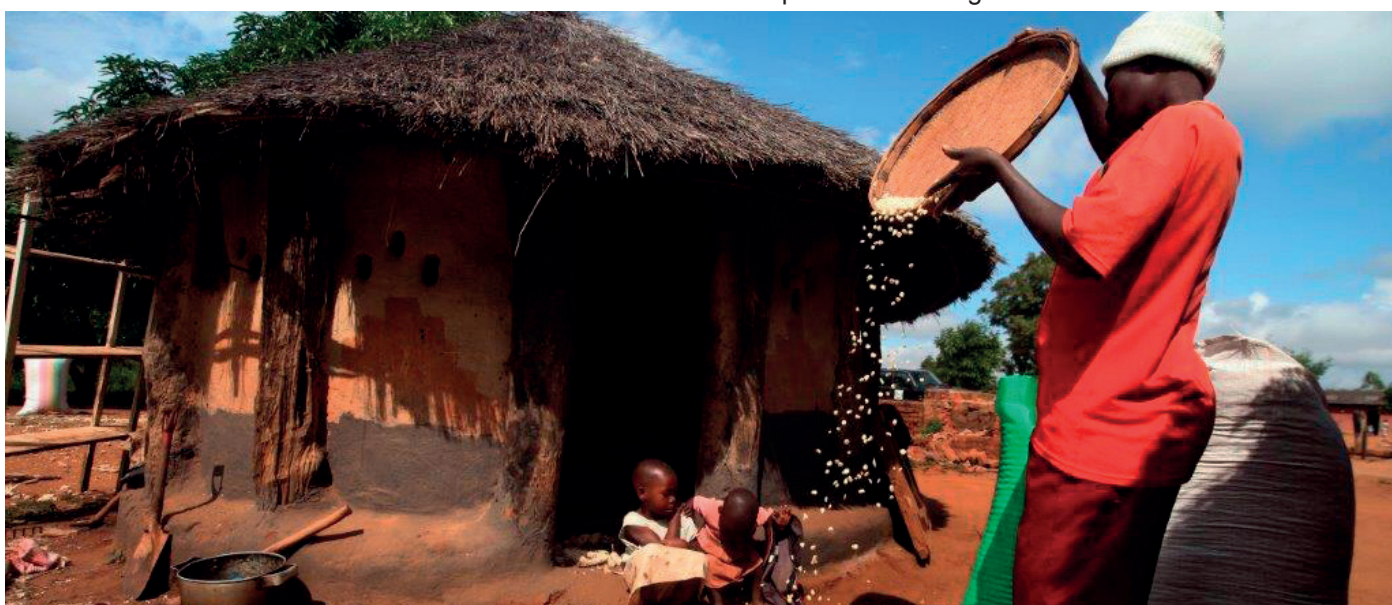


Photo: FAO/Paballo Thekiso

Initial Planning

Afghanistan

Affected communities are involved at the stage where they submit petitions to relevant line ministries on the type of disaster, number of people affected and the response requirements. OCHA receives these petitions and an inter-cluster assessment mission verifies the response needs on the ground. The response is provided if needs are verified through community participation and feedback is provided to both petitioner and government.

The Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSCA) has identified relevant **national policies and legal frameworks**, and elaborated an [overview for partners](#). Existing policies and programmes of the Government provide an opportunity to humanitarian agencies in validating and complementing their work on gender equality. The available legal and policy framework on gender provides humanitarian agencies a basis and rationale to build and sustain their work on gender equality. FSCA is active member of GiHA task force in Afghanistan. Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) task force help to integrate gender and women protection issues right from the beginning at proposal level and provide capacity support to partners as and when required.

Whole of Syria (Turkey hub)

The Food Security & Livelihood Sector and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) in South Turkey have developed a **Guidance on Food Assistance in Camps** in consultation with all cluster partners and other relevant stakeholders, i.e. members providing food assistance in IDP sites in Northern Syria. It includes recommendations on food distribution in camps providing guidance on targeting.

Ukraine

In August 2015, the Food Security & Livelihoods Cluster (FSLC) has developed, in collaboration with the Shelter Cluster, a Guidance Note on "[Winterisation in Food Security](#)". The note is intended to provide practical guidance to FSLC members planning to provide food assistance (in kind or cash/voucher based) during 2017-18 winter.

The extended food security needs of different vulnerable groups are highlighted along with the importance of supporting self-production of the food items, logistical outreach to the most vulnerable, pre-positioning/warehousing of food commodities, customization of targeting, assistance modality (inputs, products, cash, voucher, etc.) and distribution mechanisms.

Colombia, Iraq, Myanmar, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria, Ukraine, Turkey

Between 2016 - 2017 the Food Security Clusters/Sectors in these countries have participated in the Roll-out of the "IASC [Guidelines](#) for Integrating GBV (Gender-Based Violence) Interventions in Humanitarian Actions" through specific Workshops for the mainstreaming of practices to address GBV in the Food Security & Livelihoods. As an outcome and based on recommendations coming out of the Workshops discussions, food security clusters/sectors developed a work plan including a series of activities to be implemented throughout the HPC, linked to clear indicators and responsibilities.

Humanitarian Response Plan

Whole of Syria (Jordan Hub)

In 2015, a [Checklist on Mainstreaming Protection in the Food Security Sector](#) was developed by the Cluster. The brief and concise document provides guidance for operational partners of the FSC on how to practically mainstream protection into food security programmes. It includes a list of contextual key concerns as well as common actions and recommendation for partners when implementing their programmes.

Afghanistan

The Food Security & Agriculture Cluster supports the consultations and meetings with affected communities and regional offices during the HNO/HRP process. HNO is informed with evidence based information from various assessment conducted by food security cluster with the support of partners and government. These assessment includes information on different types of vulnerabilities in the communities and helps to identify most vulnerable groups for the response planning. In 2017 multi cluster need assessment (MCNA), Household Emergency Assessment Tool (HEAT) and Seasonal Food Security Assessment (SFSA) looked at the women needs and their food security status in comparison with other groups to inform humanitarian need overview and humanitarian response planning. Food security cluster in Afghanistan also produce a detail response plan with guidance on assessment gaps, implementation strategy, activities, indicators, targets, risks, mitigation measures and guideline of harmonised response packages for different vulnerable groups in needs.



Photo: WFP/Olivier Le Blanc

Monitoring

Whole of Syria

Due to access constraint, the Food Security & Livelihood Sector (FSLs) in the Whole of Syria (WoS) faced serious constraints to receive any information on the food security situation of the affected populations. In 2015, the FSLs conducted a household-level assessment: partners conducted the assessment in the opposition-controlled areas and WFP in the Government-held areas. Based on the outcomes of this assessment, FSLs developed a selection criteria guideline (incl. vulnerability criteria) to be able to identify the most food insecure households. This approach was used throughout the HRP 2016 process, for planning adequate food security interventions, target the affected populations, and monitor the situation of the most food insecure households or the indicators, respectively.

In 2016, an [Outcome Monitoring Initiative](#) was developed through a participatory process to report on the food security indicators that had been agreed on in the HRP 2016. This also allowed the capacity-strengthening of colleagues and partners on monitoring food security indicators. FSS partners were consulted during the design of the data collection tools, focusing on a people-centred approach and sampling of locations that were monitored in the data analysis process. All partners that participated in the data collection exercise used a standardized monitoring tool that was harmonized and integrated in their existing monitoring systems. Data collection of the first round was conducted end of 2016, with the support of 17 partners from the three WoS hubs (out of 100), including national and international organizations as well as UN agencies. The results revealed a number of gender and protection issues, e.g. differing food consumption status¹ of boys and girls, women and men, or cases of early marriages and school drop outs.

In this process, the WoS provided a coordinated approach by training partners on food security indicators and data collection, while continuously focusing on a people-centred, activity-oriented approach. This enabled partners to appreciate the need for evidence-based targeting and food security programming, i.e. cross-cutting dimensions could be strategically reflected in food security activities (e.g. targeting mothers for supplementary feeding).

This approach was only possible due to additional human resources and technical advice that were provided during the process.

Afghanistan

The Food Security and Agriculture Cluster shares its response strategy widely with all stakeholders (incl. government and partners). Partners share communication material on their response packages with the communities. The cluster coordinator organises regular field missions to identify needs and to check relevance of the response.

Peer Monitoring and Evaluation

Afghanistan

Post distribution monitoring is conducted by partners. In addition, field missions to response locations are conducted to gauge feedback on response and documentation of the learnings in back-to-office reports or a simple presentation that is shared with partners in monthly FSAC meetings. Any major changes are recorded through the system and discussed at inter-cluster level.



Photo: WFP/Abeer Etefa