

PROTECTING & PRIORITISING PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS IN THE UKRAINIAN HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE

●●●● BACKGROUND

WHO IS THIS DOCUMENT FOR?

This document provides guidance for humanitarian and development actors on how to address protection risks and socio-economic vulnerabilities in their work, and highlights aspects to consider in operations to ensure a protection focused response in Ukraine both government-controlled areas (GCA) and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).

MANY CONFLICT AFFECTED PEOPLE ARE IN NEED – WHY A PROTECTION AND VULNERABILITY FOCUS?

THOSE MOST IN NEED Millions of people in Ukraine, in GCA and NGCA have been affected by the conflict. Within populations, certain individuals and groups may be more vulnerable than others. It is necessary, and a priority, to identify such individuals or groups, and to take measures, which address their specific vulnerability.

NEED FOR PRIORITISATION Funding and resource constraints mean that humanitarian and development assistance needs to be targeted based on certain criteria. Prioritization should be done bearing in mind protection risks and socio-economic vulnerability concerns.

ENSURING THAT YOU HAVE THE FULL PICTURE Including disaggregated data [details of sex, age, marital status, disability, economic situation etc.] in assessments and when deciding on who-where-what-when to support will result in a fuller picture related to needs.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION must be ensured at all stages of targeting in an inclusive, timely, systematic and transparent manner. Ensure that it is broad-based (men, women, persons with disabilities, older people, children) in all phases of the program: (i) assessment phase of whom to support; (ii) in deciding what type of assistance; (iii) when and how information is shared with beneficiaries; and (iv) during implementation.

AVOID UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES AND FUTURE PROTECTION ISSUES How assistance is provided and to whom can create tension among IDPs and conflict - affected communities. It is essential that the community understands how and why prioritization was done, so it is important to establish transparent and regular communication. It is also important to include **accountability mechanisms in all programs**. Ensure that you have set up a way for those receiving support to give feedback and identify gaps.

PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA SHOULD BE EVIDENCE-BASED, RELEVANT AND ACCURATE

Assessments and surveys – ensure that data and details on vulnerable groups (disaggregated by sex and age) are included so you can identify them and address their needs. Partners are encouraged to use the [IASC Gender with Age Marker \(GAM\)](#) as a tool to assess to which extent programs address gender- and age-related differences in the design and implementation of humanitarian programs.

CAN YOU PROVIDE A LIST OF THOSE MOST VULNERABLE THAT SHOULD BE PRIORITISED? There is no generic prioritization list. Each organization should assess vulnerability for each project at the planning stage before humanitarian response or development project is initiated.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF VULNERABILITY?

A person is not vulnerable from birth but due to life circumstances (e.g. poverty, education) and/or discrimination based on other characteristics (gender, disability, age etc.) and therefore is not able to enjoy equal access to human rights and may be more exposed to threats/risks and/or marginalized.

People are, or become, more vulnerable due to a combination of physical, social, environmental and political factors, and vulnerability is not a fixed category.

Not everyone with the same characteristics will experience the same level of vulnerability, i.e. being a woman does not make the person vulnerable per se but a pregnant woman whose husband was killed and whose house has been damaged will have protection concerns.

Responding to 'specific needs' of the elderly, chronically ill, persons with disabilities, lactating or pregnant women means safeguarding their human rights to shelter, food, health and education and this sometimes requires the humanitarian or development actor to have a stronger focus on certain groups or individuals for support.

CONDUCT VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS WHEN PLANNING ASSISTANCE

PEOPLE FROM CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS: consider who is most vulnerable, including areas where access is difficult and areas where the limited number of humanitarian actors are present. **Within NGCA, consider different groups in relation to their displacement experience:** non-displaced conflict-affected population, people displaced within NGCA and from GCA, as well as returnees from GCA and other countries.

EQUALITY OF RESPONSE: avoid creating a divide between groups, for instance, by including host communities in your response. In small communities affected by the ongoing hostilities, it may be necessary to provide assistance to all residents to avoid tensions.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN GCA

WHY? While not all IDPs are necessarily vulnerable, displacement can place them into situations of increased vulnerability, especially for persons at risk based on their profile, life circumstances and lack of support networks.

Please consider the following factors if prioritizing the displaced:

- Duration of displacement: have they depleted their resources (savings)?
- Access to assistance: Are they already receiving any kind of assistance (Government, NGOs, etc.)?
- Access to documentation: Are there individuals without documents and therefore cannot register as IDPs?
- Psychosocial assistance: Are there persons who have experienced trauma and are in need of PSS?
- Displaced persons at risk of eviction from collective centers.

PERSONS LIVING WITHIN 20 KM ON BOTH SIDES OF THE CONTACT LINE

WHY? They have different needs living in areas under continuous shelling and presenting threat to life (including Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)). They are likely to have less access to employment opportunities and services (disruption of services) as well as to assistance. It is more difficult to ensure their rights (ex: how to ensure compensation if the house is destroyed?) Persons living along the contact line are going through traumatic events and may have faced human rights violations. Please consider the following factors if prioritizing persons living along the contact line:

- Have family members been killed/injured during the conflict?
- Are the persons suffering from additional economic hardship, lost their job or cannot use their farmland due to mine contamination or proximity to the contact line?
- Is there an access issue? Can humanitarian workers access their village or can people leave their village to access assistance? Is freedom of movement restricted? If not, how to address this in order to reach people in need?
- Are they receiving humanitarian assistance from other actors?
- Will your actions expose the people targeted to harm? Are we putting them at risk vis-à-vis their environment?
- What is the situation of people (children, older persons, persons with disabilities etc.) living in institutions?

PEOPLE LIVING IN NGCA

WHY? Persons in NGCA and near the contact line may be among the most vulnerable. They face human rights violations including major protection concerns such as right to life (shelling, mines, ERW and UXOs); economic isolation with suspension of pensions and social benefits and restricted movement across the contact line; absence of local authorities in some villages.

Access to fundamental economic and social rights, including those related to an adequate standard of living, and the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is curtailed in the current circumstances. Access to medication is an acute issue: shortage of medical supplies for TB, HIV, Opioid Substitute Therapy, for chronic illnesses such as diabetes, kidney and heart conditions. Please consider these factors if prioritizing people living in NGCA:

- Are the persons suffering under additional economic hardship, lost their job or cannot use their farmland due to mine contamination?
- Is the area or target group covered by assistance? Rural or isolated villages may be receiving less attention.
- Have family members been killed/injured during the conflict?
- Have members of the families been detained or are missing?
- Persons living in institutions which have been cut off from services and staff payments may need additional attention
- Do people have particular issues when it comes to housing, land and property (HLP) rights?

KEY VULNERABLE GROUPS AND PROTECTION FACTORS TO CONSIDER

This will help to identify those persons for whom it will be harder to recover without support or who may face particular protection risks if assistance is delayed. Ensure disaggregation by sex and age for better analysis of issues and risks.

LOCATION OF HOUSEHOLD: e.g. NGCA, along the contact line, in an area with no presence of humanitarian actors.

PERSONAL FACTORS: Household composition, older people, children. Specific needs of family members.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS: Level of poverty, loss of livelihoods, assets, seasonality, vulnerability, etc.

DOCUMENTATION: Do people have the documents they need to register as IDPs and access services?

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OR INJURY¹

WHY? They have specific needs in regards to shelter; access to services; health; NFIs, wash facilities, may not have the required documents to prove their disability/injury/sickness etc. and are likely to face more difficulties in accessing services. Please consider the following factors if prioritizing persons with disabilities or injured:

- Does a person with disability encounter any discrimination?
- Is the disability linked to an injury that was caused by the conflict?
- Does the disability/injury impacts daily life and restrict independent movement e.g. access to toilets, collective centres or employment?
- Does the person with disability/injured person receive support to assist with daily life?
- Does the person with disability /injured person have access to specific services (medical, rehabilitation, etc.)?
- Is the person with disability/injured the main breadwinner and how does that impact the household?
- If untreated (for lack of access to medical care), would the injury lead to disability?

¹ Including an adult or child who is physically or mentally impaired by illness, infection or injury which impacts daily life and restricts independent movement

PERSONS WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS AND SERIOUS MEDICAL CONDITIONS (INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES)

WHY? People with chronic illness and serious medical condition are under care treatment of a medical doctor. That require regular medical attention and medication. Their life can be at risk if their treatment is interrupted and they may require targeted assistance for survival. Please consider the following factors if prioritizing persons with chronic illnesses:

- Are they able to have continuous access to their medication (especially in NGCA)?
- Are they receiving any state support (free of charge medication)? Do they require targeted assistance for survival?
- Does the condition require a specific diet?

OLDER PERSONS

WHY? They may suffer from health problems and/or have difficulty in adjusting to their new environment and knowing where to seek assistance, in particular those who have been separated from usual caregivers. Please consider the following factors if prioritizing older persons:

- Does the older person lack external support to assist with daily life?
- Does the older person have contact with family members?
- Does the older person also have a medical condition that requires additional support?
- Does the older person have dependents? Especially minor children or adult dependents with disabilities/serious medical condition.
- If the older person is in NGCA, pension entitlements are limited and irregular there.
- If the older person is an IDP, pension and other benefits may be interrupted due to verification exercises.

WOMEN AND GIRLS

WHY? Women and girls may face protection risks particular to their gender (trafficking, negative coping mechanisms such as survival sex). Please consider the following groups if prioritizing women and girls:

Single heads of families

Adolescent girls, unaccompanied girls

Women who are survivors of violence

Pregnant and lactating women

Women who have family members who were killed or injured during the conflict.

CHILDREN

WHY? Due to the conflict and the changes in their lives, children are more at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. For many access to education is occasionally disrupted and their wellbeing is affected. Children, adolescents, and young people are exposed to specific risks due to their gender, so it is important to take gender into account. Please consider the following factors if prioritizing children:

- Unaccompanied minors, orphans and children separated from parents.
- Children in state care institutions (particularly in NGCA).
- Students from NGCA having moved to GCA for study reasons (particularly aged 16-18).
- Unaccompanied or separated displaced children that may require additional support from the competent authorities to be registered as IDPs because they are not with their legal guardians.
- Children at risk of being abandoned or institutionalized (i.e. coming from large families, poor families, children with disability, newborns).
- Adolescents at risk of trafficking, recruitment or association with military or armed groups due to socio-economic hardship, family situation, etc.
- Children with disabilities.
- Children living in crowded spaces (collective centres) may be at greater risk of domestic violence.

PEOPLE WITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

WHY? Their pre-existing poverty may have worsened following the conflict / displacement and may have been triggered by these conditions. Please consider the following factors if prioritizing people with socio-economic hardship:

- Is the person eligible for state social assistance? Does the person have access to pensions and social benefits?
- Unemployed people 40-60, who are not eligible for a pension, but are discriminated against in the employment market due to their age.
- Main breadwinner killed, injured or disability.
- People who lost their jobs due to the conflict or cannot access them in the absence of transportation along the contact line.
- People who are not eligible for social assistance because they own agricultural land but cannot use it due to mine and UXO contamination. Furthermore, they are required to pay land tax.
- People who are unable to meet basic needs and to achieve minimum standard of living, including access to food, water, clothing, sanitary items, shelter, medical assistance,
- Persons living in sub-standard accommodation, which could trigger secondary displacement, involuntary return and other risks.

MEMBERS OF MINORITY GROUPS

WHY? They might be facing higher risks of isolation and discrimination (lack of documentation to access registration, social services, etc), and therefore may require support. Examples: Roma community, stateless persons, LGBTI, Crimean Tatars. Please consider the following factors if prioritizing persons from minority groups:

- Does the person have documents and access to IDP registration and relevant state assistance?
- Has the person been refused access to services due to her/his minority status?
- Has the person has been affected by untreated medical condition (TB, HIV)?

The [IASC Gender with Age Marker \(GAM\)](https://iascgenderwithagemarker.com/) was endorsed in 2018 as a tool that helps identify to which extent programming actions address gender- and age-related differences in both the design and implementation of humanitarian programs. The GAM assesses projects for 12 essential programme elements, known as [Gender Equality Measures or GEMs](#), tracking whether basic programme actions are in place. To learn more about the practical use of use of GAM for your projects, please see the link <https://iascgenderwithagemarker.com/>.

