

Gender Aware Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Programming Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



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(This FAQ is prepared for the CVA Professional to build their basic concept on gender as well as to provide simple techniques on mainstreaming gender into CVA interventions. Please contact Aftab Alam (Aftab.Alam@plan-international.org) for further information and assistance).

Table of Contents

1. What is the Vision of Plan International DRM (Disaster Risk Management) Programming on Gender?	3
2. Tell me more about Plan International’s commitment on gender programming?	3
3. What are the gender equality program criteria at Plan International?	4
4. What are gender aware program/projects?	4
5. What are the interventions that are broadly focused on gender aware programming?	5
6. Could you give me specific examples of gender aware programming related to the CVA?.....	5
7. What is gender transformative program/projects?	6
8. What kind of interventions are focused on gender transformative programming?	6
9. Could you give me specific examples of gender aware programming related to the CVA?.....	6
10. Is there any relationship between gender aware and gender transformative programming?.....	7
11. I do not know the difference between practical needs and strategic needs. Could you please explain?	7
12. Do CVA programming focus on addressing practical needs or strategic interests? Why is it so?..	7
13. How does cash modality support our strategy on adolescent girls?	7
14. What are short- and long-term projects?	7
15. What is gender mainstreaming?	8
16. How can I integrate gender in CVA programming?.....	8
17. What is Gender and Age Marker (GAM)?.....	9
18. How should I maintain SADDD and where can I find a tool?	9
19. What is the impact of COVID-19 on gender?	10
20. How to mainstream gender in COVID-19 CVA programming?	10

1. What is the Vision of Plan International DRM (Disaster Risk Management) Programming on Gender?

“Plan International is a global leader and the NGO partner of choice for promoting gender equality and protecting girls’ rights in disaster and conflict settings, working at the nexus of development and humanitarian efforts”.

- Our DRM programmes are designed and implemented to contribute to gender equality, and for children, especially girls, to become leaders.
- Each overall plan for response or protracted crises has an ambition to further gender equality, to which all projects contribute. Even in the most acute emergencies, all our projects are at least gender aware.
- We set the example for the DRM sector in gender transformative humanitarian programming involving girls and boys.
- All our long-term programming and influencing is designed to build resilience and address the root causes of vulnerability and gender inequality.

2. Tell me more about Plan International’s commitment on gender programming?

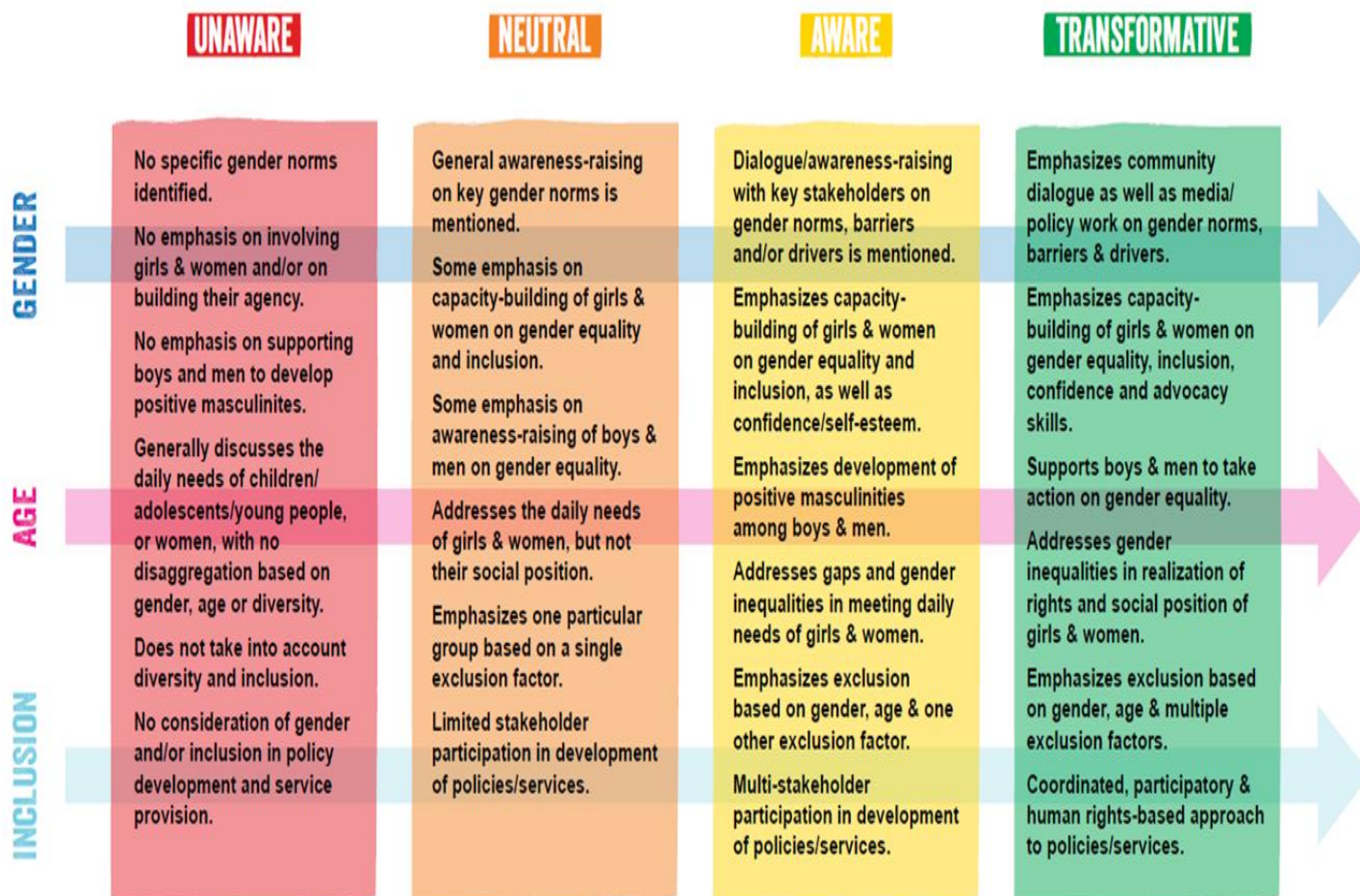
- Plan International will work to ensure that its humanitarian projects will either be gender aware or gender transformative. There will be no gender unaware or gender-neutral projects.
- Plan International will ensure that all humanitarian programs observe following criteria:

Types of crisis	Nature of the gender programming
rapid on-set emergencies	all programs are gender aware at least
protracted & slow onset	all programs over one year duration are gender transformative

- All humanitarian projects are informed by Rapid Gender Analysis on the gendered impacts and opportunities girls and boys face in disaster or conflict settings.
- We have committed to use the IASC Gender and Age Marker to analyse all emergency projects.
- Within the programs we will always identify and address the needs of girls.

3. What are the gender equality program criteria at Plan International?

Gender equality program criteria in Plan International is a continuum from gender unaware to gender transformative. Please see below Plan’s continuum:



4. What are gender aware program/projects?

- According to Plan International gender transformative approach, gender aware programs address the six key elements (gender norms, agency, condition and position, diversity, engagement of boys and men, enabling environment), but without aiming for gender transformative change. For the requirements of a gender aware program / project check out Plan International’s Gender Transformative Marker.
- These elements are interconnected and applicable for all development and humanitarian work, although may require adaptation and flexibility, it is important to mention that single programme, project or influencing initiative need not necessarily include all elements.

- Gender aware programs/projects e.g. generally meet the practical needs (see Q11) of girls, boys, women, and men, i. e. aspects addressing access to basic resources. Access to the resources include i) skill: education, training, digital literacy; ii) wellbeing: health service, nutrition; iii) natural: land, forests, water; iv) physical: equipment, shelter; v) information: media, communication; vi) financial: income, credit; vii) social: friendship, contacts; viii) personal: self-esteem, confidence; ix) other resources: time.
- Gender aware programs/ projects build the agency of girls by increasing their awareness on gender issues and girls' rights, building their confidence, self-esteem and critical thinking and supporting them to speak out on issues while mitigating potential risks.
- Gender aware programs/projects tend to improve the daily condition of girls, boys, women and men (or their practical needs). They don't change the social position of the most oppressed in relation to the most privileged.

5. What are the interventions that are broadly focused on gender aware programming?

There are no specific interventions which make a programme gender aware, as all your interventions should be designed to promote gender equality and inclusion. If you distribute for example MHM (Menstrual hygiene kits e.g., you need to be aware of the special needs of adolescent girls and women and include hygiene pads. If you do a gender aware CVA programme, you need to consider gender norms around decision making at household level and build your intervention accordingly. Gender is not an add-on but an integrated part of all our work. Projects that are Gender Aware will typically focus on interventions (and measurements) in the areas of:

- Access to resources (safe and equal access)
- Public/community level participation and decision making
- Knowledge and recognition of women's and girls' rights
- Organization and delivery of key services by duty-bearers

6. Could you give me specific examples of gender aware programming related to the CVA?

- Provide unconditional / multi-purpose cash grants to vulnerable families, lactating mothers, pregnant girls and women, people with disability, adolescent girls and young women.
- Cash for work activities are safe and culturally acceptable for everyone – (this includes a zero tolerance policy of gender based violence or sexual harassment).
- Build awareness on the rights of girls and boys, young women and men, adult, gender-based violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse survivors through conditional cash grants.
- By analyzing the power dynamics and decision making power in a household, conditional cash can be used so for the families to send their daughters equally as their sons back to school.
- Provide context appropriate menstrual hygiene products to women and girls through cash/vouchers
- Ensure complaint mechanisms have female focal points for reporting protection concerns.
- Train staff on gender equality and in the referral mechanisms on gender-based and sexual violence
- Work with different stakeholders to promote women's right to access cash for work activities (e.g. labour based public works offered by the government under its social programme) on the same basis as men, ensure at least 50 percent women participants in cash for work
- Leadership and assertiveness training for women and adolescent girls (through conditional cash)

7. What is gender transformative program/projects?

- Gender transformative program/project build on gender aware programs and in addition to meeting practical needs also meet the strategic interests (Q11) of girls, boys, women and men.
- Gender transformative programs seek to improve the position and value of girls and women, and any other vulnerable groups in the society. These programs explicitly tackle the root causes of gender inequality¹. Here too, a sound gender analysis is needed to identify the root causes of gender inequalities.

8. What kind of interventions are focused on gender transformative programming?

Programs that aim to be gender transformative should include at least one outcome that explicitly aims to confront gender inequality. The gender transformative projects will typically focus on interventions (and measurements) in the areas of:

- Attitudes, perceptions, and practices regarding gender roles and responsibilities
- Control over resources. Most of the time girls and women have less access and control over resources than boys and men because of their perceived gender roles and value in society.
- Household decision making. Girls and women are often excluded from decision making processes because they exercise less power than boys and men
- Public/community level participation and decision making. Generally girls and women have a low level of participation than boys and men, in activities and processes that value their public contribution and status in society.
- A gender transformative program will remove the barriers to the recognition and enjoyment of equal rights and value to girls, boys, women and men, including in the legal and legislative frameworks.

9. Could you give me specific examples of gender aware programming related to the CVA?

- Empower women (and girls where appropriate) with knowledge and skills support (through cash grants).
- Advocacy with the government and stakeholders to remove the barriers and increase access of women and young girls to the cash grants (social protection entitlements) provided by the government.
- Address gender norms around decision making at household level and work at different levels (individual, community, national/global) to ensure girls and women control the CVA to them (decide what and how to use that)
- Work with different stakeholders to overcome stereotypes on women's access to cash for work activities, and promote girls and women's agency (including building their social nets and support groups)
- Engage with men and other power holders at household and community levels, to transform discriminatory attitudes and practices towards girls and women handling cash and deciding on its use-through provision of knowledge base, hold campaigns on ending harmful traditional practices;

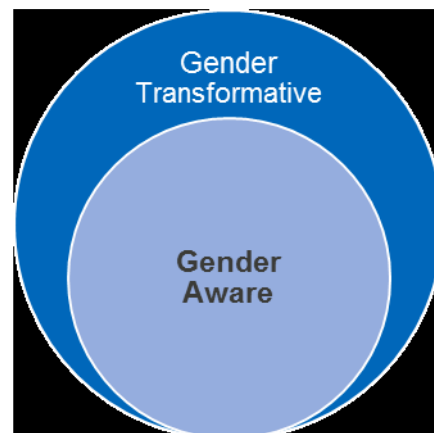
¹ (Note: not only girls and women have strategic interests. Boys and men too do have some. The strategic interest of boys and men is to maintain the way that power and resources are structured in society. These include high status in society, control over household resources, decision making privileges, etc. So you will need to take all this into consideration and design best strategies in order to "Do No Harm").

organize women and girls into solidarity groups and build their capacity (Cash plus approach-complementary programming together with cash and voucher support).

- Collaborative work with other agencies (including local organizations working for the rights of girls and women,) to improve the legislative framework for the safe access and enjoyment of women to CVA (including protection against SEA and GBV including IPV).

10. Is there any relationship between gender aware and gender transformative programming?

Yes. All Gender aware programming is a part of a milestone on the journey to gender transformative programming in the long run. Please see the overlap in the picture (right).



11. I do not know the difference between practical needs and strategic needs. Could you please explain?

- Practical needs concern daily conditions and consist of basic needs and services including food, health, protection, shelter. Gender aware projects/programs focus more strongly on practical needs
- Strategic needs and interests concern a change in social status, value and consist of equal sharing of family responsibilities & decision making, empowerment, equal access to education & training, employment opportunities, social norms, etc. It concerns gender transformative projects/programs.

12. Do CVA programming focus on addressing practical needs or strategic interests? Why is it so?

Please remember CVA is just a modality. Whether the CVA programming should focus on addressing the practical needs or strategic needs, depends on the specific objective of the thematic program or project. Both short term projects (see Q13) as well as long-term can contribute to address the practical and strategic needs.

13. How does cash modality support our strategy on adolescent girls?

- Plan International’s CVA team operationally prioritizes the adolescent girls more precisely through its targeting process together with a provision of complementary activities (cash plus approach).
- Ongoing action research project funded by SIDA on “*how cash can contribute to the education, protection and overall wellbeing of the adolescent girls in crisis (case studies from CAR and Egypt)*”. A toolkit including the training resources will be developed keeping the same target group into consideration.
- Plan Sweden is also developing a toolkit on adolescent girls in crisis.

14. What are short- and long-term projects?

- Plan International defines projects that are 12 months or less in duration as short term, and projects that are longer than 12 months as long-term.

- For a project to be gender transformative, it must be ideally longer than 12 months, as shifting gender norms, attitudes and behaviour is a long-term endeavor requiring deep and repeated engagement- which is difficult to achieve in short term projects.
- The short-term project need to take measures to be graded as gender aware and eventually grab any opportunity for gender transformative outcome.

15. What is gender mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming is integrating a gender equality perspective at all stages and levels of policies, programmes and projects. Women and men have different needs and living conditions and circumstances, including unequal access to and control over power, resources, human rights and institutions, including the justice system. The situations of women and men also differ according to country, region, age, ethnic or social origin, or other factors. The aim of gender mainstreaming is to take into account these differences when designing, implementing and evaluating policies, programmes and projects, so that they benefit both women and men and do not increase inequality but enhance gender equality. Gender mainstreaming aims to solve –sometimes hidden- gender inequalities. It is therefore a tool for achieving gender equality.

16. How can I integrate gender in CVA programming?

Below are the few tips that would help you to guide the gender integration process in CVA programming:

- Coordinate your Gender Adviser/Gender Specialist/Gender Coordinator from the beginning of any disaster response.
- Participate in the Rapid Gender Assessment and MHM Assessments exercise. Analyze carefully the issues and needs of women, men, boys and girls.
- Engage in the needs assessment process.
- Coordinate with the M&E team to develop and then finalize a SADDD collection tool.
- Conduct the needs assessment with women, girls, boys and men in different age groups, with active participation & leadership of women and girls and identify their specific needs.
- Collect sex, age, disability disaggregated data (SADDD) of the proposed beneficiaries.
- Design project/program to meet the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys as identified through Rapid Gender Analysis, MHM Analysis and needs analysis. Make adequate budget allocations to support those designs.
- Get your proposals reviewed by the Gender Adviser/Gender Specialist or Gender Coordinator.
- Set beneficiary selection criteria using the vulnerabilities of the at-risk groups identified in needs and gender assessment. Do not define head of household as a criterion for selection. In most cases, this automatically means the male head of the household. For those facing specific challenges, plan for targeted action to reduce barriers to access (for example lactating girls and women, girls and women taking care of sick or old relatives). For the transformative approach, assess the risks and benefits of targeting female household members in distributions to shift traditional patterns around the control of assets and finances (consider feedback from women provided during gender assessment).
- Use needs and vulnerabilities of different groups to identify the basket of relief/ inputs to be distributed (e.g. sanitary products as part of relief kits or educational kits or seeds and inputs for crops grown by women etc.).
- Design the transfer values taking into account the capacities and needs of different groups (suitable for children, women, people with disabilities; contents of the nutrition kits to take into account the needs of pregnant and lactating women and girls, adolescent girls and boys etc.).

- Engage men and boys to foster/promote understanding of the links between gender inequalities; involve men and boys in activities promoting equality in access, distribution and consumption of food.
- Build the capacity of staff on gender. Integrate gender considerations into all training designs and facilitate with awareness and intention to equalize gender hierarchies.
- Ensure gender parity in staffing and leadership, including field staff and among implementing partners. Promote female leadership especially young women in staffing.
- Promote partnership with women's rights organizations, women pressure groups, women cooperatives. Strengthen engagement with existing women leaders and women's network.
- Ensure equal wage for equal work (between male and female) in cash for work. Establish breast feeding corners and drinking water facilities in the cash and voucher distribution sites. Ensure no / soft conditionalities for pregnant and lactating women.
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are gender and inclusion-responsive. Regularly monitor the impact of cash and voucher support in household dynamics, community conflicts, gender based violence and other protection concerns, and report and refer to the appropriate forum (e.g. protection mechanisms). Ensure these aspects are also duly incorporated into PDM (Post Distribution Monitoring) tool and project/program evaluations.
- Set up multiple channels for feedback/ complaints. Consult women and girls as well as men and boys in designing channels appropriate for them. Ensure consultations include people with disabilities and people from marginalized or minority/ethnic/religious groups and provide them with a safe space to express their views. Ensure that information about the complaint mechanism is accessible to groups with low literacy.
- Make reporting incorporating gender equality objectives. Ensure people benefitted together with the SADDD are reported.
- Coordinate and collaborate with external stakeholders and network which are working on gender equality throughout the project/program cycle. This includes SGBV Sub Cluster at national level.

17. What is Gender and Age Marker (GAM)?

The Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) GAM looks at whether project activities are in place that ensure women, girls, boys and men have equitable access to the available humanitarian resources based on assessment of distinct needs. It has 12 distinct indicators: It evaluates the project and grade them 0-4. The project must consider both gender and age issues consistently across all sections of the proposal in order to code 4. For further information, please [see GAM info Sheet](#) and GAM [website](#).

18. How should I maintain SADDD and where can I find a tool?

Work with your M&E team in order to collect, analyze, and use SADDD (sex, age, disability disaggregated data) throughout the project cycle. Note that SADDD is not a tool in itself, but you will need to revise existing tools to make them SADDD friendly, or include a SADDD dimension in new tools. Your local M&E team will guide you further on this.

19. What is the impact of COVID-19 on gender?

- The implications of quarantine can increase tensions in the home which may in turn increase the likelihood of intimate partner violence, child, early or forced marriage, or violence directed toward children.
- As the need for households to maintain hygiene and preventative measures against COVID-19 increases, and given the gendered distribution of labour, roles and responsibilities for example in sourcing water for hygiene and sanitation, women and girls will face greater demand and walk further distances to fetch water, thereby putting them at heightened risks related to protection, SGBV as well as exposure to COVID-19. The burden of work is expected to increase disproportionately for women and girls in households.
- Access to healthcare are likely to worsen through this crisis. Furthermore, critical SRHR services may be reduced as resources are diverted.
- Prevailing inequitable distribution of household resources such as food and nutrition, coupled with lower access to supplies, lower economic status of families, and increased workloads can further decrease women's and girls' nutritional status.
- COVID-19 pandemic will present a further barrier to learning, depriving them of a protective environment and source of life-saving information and psychosocial support. Where school feeding is disrupted, their nutrition may also be affected as preferential feeding patterns in resource- scarce contexts have shown that malnutrition rates are higher among girls. As dropout rates rise following school closures, many girls may never return to school.

20. How to mainstream gender in COVID-19 CVA programming?

Plan International Gender Equality Global Adaptation & Response Framework has suggested the following:

- Conduct a regularly updated, multi-sectoral rapid gender and inclusion analysis using primary and secondary data in order to understand the specific impact of the crisis on girls, boys, women and men and vulnerable groups. Use this to inform and integrate these considerations into response plans. Make sure you identify and understand the specific gender norms (e.g. around household responsibilities, value of girls and women) when developing your interventions to ensure they are not increasing gender inequality and exclusion.
- Collect and analyse, sex, age and disability disaggregated data.
- Include targeted gender and inclusion indicators in sectoral assessments to ensure gender aware programming and advocacy during crisis.
- Use the IASC Gender Marker to assess and improve the quality of COVID-19 preparedness and response plans during design and implementation phases.
- Analyse and respond to the specific protection related risks that COVID-19 can pose for children, especially girls and young women and other vulnerable groups (particularly on SGBV related aspects), to be able to identify and refer children as well as set up safeguarding measures to protect those at risk. Make sure you keep in touch (online, social media, phone, radio) with the children and youth to collect their voices and direct them to helplines and referral mechanisms when necessary.
- Meaningfully engage with youth groups and organisations, including local girls' groups, women's organizations, disabled people's organisations, on their specific needs, support structures and their ideas on response strategies using safe and appropriate methods. Use this data to inform needs assessments, response plans and implementation, and community engagement.

- Consider different methods of communication in order to overcome language divides and literacy levels, the gender digital divide and access to radio and internet etc.
- Ensure that the response teams are gender balanced and appoint or hire a gender adviser or gender focal point to cover this response. It is also important to consider how the needs and voices of other vulnerable or excluded groups are taken into account by the response teams.
- Track effects of this pandemic on girls and women (involve girls, women, and other vulnerable groups in M&E, and feedback mechanisms) and share lessons learned.
- Consider activities that redistribute equal unpaid care and household responsibilities which predominantly fall on women and girls by encouraging boys and men to contribute to reduce the gender divide burden.

An additional guidance is attached as annex.



How to mainstream
gender into sectoral