



## **United Nations Gender Theme Group**

### **Guidance Note for Mainstreaming of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment into the UN Analysis and Research in Myanmar**

#### **Background**

While a lot of evidence, extrapolations and forecasts are predicting a dwindling economy, socioeconomic inequalities (widened impacts in conflict affected areas), public health crisis and failing of governance structures as a result of the political crisis in tandem with COVID-19 crisis, there has been a lack of gender disaggregation at both qualitative and quantitative levels of analyses and the consequences they will yield on women and girls of Myanmar.

Currently, UN Agencies in Myanmar are in the process of measuring the impacts of this compounded crisis through various vantage points be it economic and human development (and illicit economy), nutrition and food insecurity, access to basic services, employment, or democratic space. These aspects of a country's health impact women and girls differently altogether and women and girls who suffer from multidimensional inequalities in business-as-usual settings tend to suffer even more in a crisis situation. It is of paramount importance that any research or study that is being conducted or is in the pipeline should study the gendered impact of in the thematic focus of the research study itself thereby mainstreaming gender in any, and all, research work being carried out.

#### **Purpose of the Guidance Note**

The guidance note is based on the global socio-economic response to the COVID-19 framework and provides practical and relatable recommendations for research undertaken by the United Nations in Myanmar to support partners in mainstreaming gender into the design and implementation of UN Research Studies. The guidance note has been informed by the comprehensive and elaborate work done by the Issues-Based Coalition on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Human Rights Asia-Pacific (UNFPA, OHCHR and UN Women) titled "Guidance on including gender equality and human rights in rapid assessments and socio-economic surveys on the impact of COVID-19".

The advocacy tool is developed to support the UN Gender Theme Group and the members of the Socio-Economic Resilience Response pillars with the overview of available data and gender impacts of the current compounded crisis. To ensure that the UN agencies are equipped to promote and embed gender equality and women's empowerment issues in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the response and research studies associated with them.

The application of a gender lens in designing research studies to inform the Socio-Economic Resilience and Response Plan is especially important, given the role that women play as frontline healthcare workers, as well as caregivers, community leaders and in the informal economy therefore measuring the impact that this compounded crisis has on them makes logical sense. The findings of these gender responsive studies will not only allow UN Agencies to ascertain the engendered specifics of the crisis and the compounding effects thereof but will also position them to plan by using these results to design (or redesign) programmatic strategy, and programme components to provide maximum benefits to women and girls of Myanmar by adhering to principles of SDGs, GEWE and LNOB.

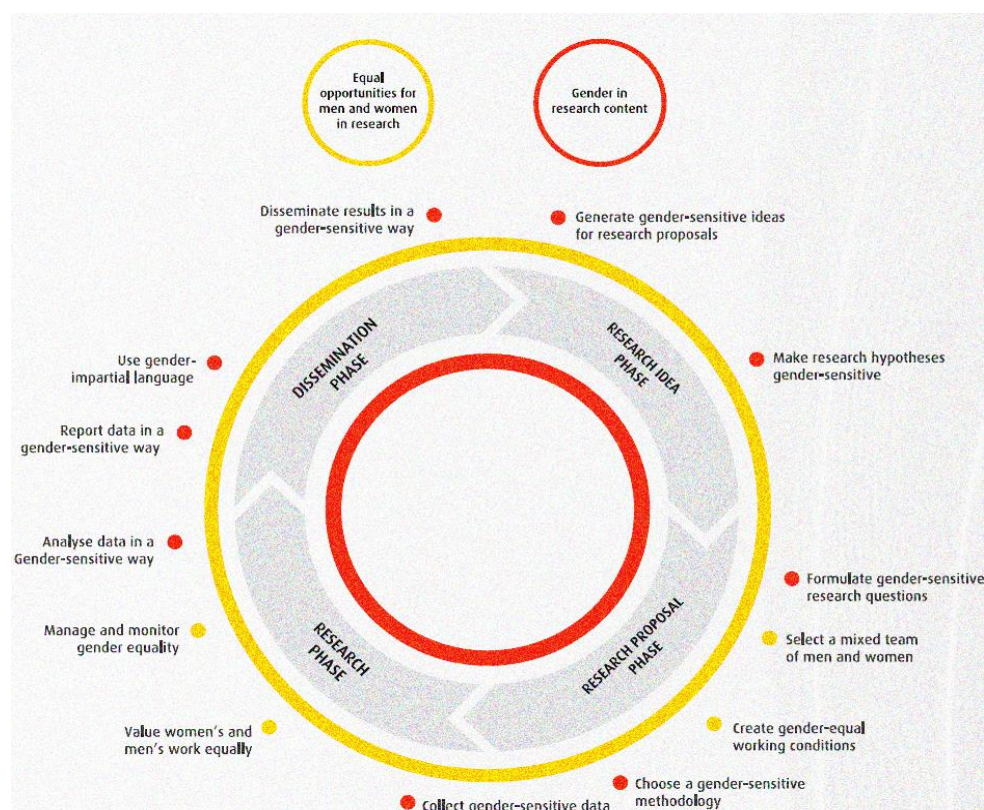


### Gender Responsive Research makes for an Excellent Research:

Gender responsive research is qualitatively better and has higher levels of validity: if research considers the differences between men and women in the research population, the results will be more representative. General categories such as ‘people’, ‘beneficiaries’ or ‘victims’ do not distinguish between men and women. Research based on such categories may well draw partial conclusions based on partial data. For example, research on a nutrition and food insecurity should include a gendered perspective by including specific nutritional needs of women and girls, to draw a complete picture. Research on economic migrants cannot limit itself to male points of view if it wants to understand the whole migrant population<sup>1</sup>.

Gender-sensitive research will reach a broader group of end-users in a more relevant way. Research that does not concern a human research population might still have human end-users. Again, this population consists of men and women, with their different needs and aspirations. And these gender differences might very well influence the use of the research outcome. Taking gender into account and asking from the start who will use the results, when and how, can avoid an unintentional gender bias in the outcome. The UN Secretary-General’s issue-specific briefs call for assessments at the country level targeting women and other vulnerable populations to understand the disproportionate burdens and consequences they face due to COVID-19, and to represent their voices in response planning<sup>2</sup>. To ensure this, it is imperative that the research and analysis currently being undertaken is rights-based and gender sensitive.

### Gender Sensitive Research Cycle:



Source: Toolkit Gender in EU-Funded Research <https://op.europa.eu/s/pejT>



## Engendering the Research Cycle:

### Ideation Phase:

Research ideas and hypotheses: The relevance of gender for and within the subject matter needs to be analyzed and an assessment made of the state of knowledge in this respect. The formulation of hypotheses can draw upon previous research and existing literature.

### Design Phase:

Project design and research methodology: While research methodologies may vary, they all strive to represent aspects of reality. Whenever this reality concerns humans, any scientifically robust methodology should differentiate between the genders and consider men's and women's situations equally. Groups such as 'citizens', 'beneficiaries', 'workers', 'victims' or 'children' are therefore too general as categories.

#### Important Considerations for Research Design:

- Ensure surveys are targeted not only at the household but also at the individual level given gender and power dynamics within households<sup>3</sup>. Socio-economic impact surveys that focus on the household and usually involve interviewing the head of household (traditionally men). Such surveys do not capture intra-household gender dynamics, such as access to and control over resources which varies by gender, age and household composition<sup>4</sup>.
- Questions should be designed and asked in a manner that doesn't put respondents at risk<sup>5</sup>. For example, questions about the experience of gender-based violence using remote methods under conditions of confinement or lockdown can put the respondent at risk<sup>6</sup>.

### Implementation Phase:

*Data collection* tools, such as questionnaires and interview checklists, need to be gender-sensitive, use gender-neutral language, and should make it possible to detect the different realities of men and women. This will help to avoid gender bias. For example, answers to be provided by the 'head of household' are not necessarily valid for all household members.

#### Important Consideration for Survey Design:

- Population-based household surveys should be preferred over interviewing the head of household given intra-household gender and power dynamics. This can be effectively done by asking survey questions to at least two adults—at a minimum, one male and one female—in each household<sup>7</sup>.

*Data analysis:* In most research, data are routinely disaggregated by gender, which would logically lead to analyses according to gender. However, the extent to which analyses consider gender equality and human rights has, to-date, been uneven. Systematically taking gender as a central variable, and analyzing other variables with respect to it (e.g. gender and age, gender and income, gender and mobility, gender and labor) will provide significant and useful insights. Involving gender-balanced end-user groups during the research is also a optimal way of guaranteeing the highest impact.



### Dissemination Phase:

*Reporting of data:* Collecting and analyzing gender-specific data is not enough if they are omitted from the published results. Gender should be included in ‘mainstream’ publications as it is as much part of daily reality as any other variable studied.

To facilitate the colleagues in engendering their research studies – a simple checklist is provided. This checklist can help ascertain the gender responsiveness of research at various stages and irrespective of the completion status of the research study this checklist can help ponder on how gender responsive a study is to take a corrective pathway.

### **Additional Resources on Assessing the Impact on Human Rights and Gender Equality:**

- United Nations, 10 key indicators for monitoring human rights implications of COVID-19, Annex 1 to A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 (April 2020), available from [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un\\_framework\\_report\\_on\\_covid-19.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_framework_report_on_covid-19.pdf).
- United Nations, 10 Thematic Indicators and Complementary Indicators for Assessing and Monitoring Human Rights Implications of COVID-19: Implementation Table (May 2020).
- United Nations, Initial Guidance for Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams on Implementation of Human Rights Indicators on COVID-19 (May 2020).
- United Nations, Checklist for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19 (July 2020), available from [https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/human\\_rights/checklist-for-a-human-rights-based-approach-to-socio-economic-co.html](https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/human_rights/checklist-for-a-human-rights-based-approach-to-socio-economic-co.html).
- United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), Minimum Requirements Checklist for Integrating Gender Equality in the Implementation of the UN Framework for the Socio-economic Response to COVID-19 (IANWGE, 2020), available from <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/ianwge-minimum-requirements-checklist-for-integrating-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2913>.
- United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Disability Inclusive COVID-19 Response and Recovery, Checklist for Planning a Disability Inclusive COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response and Recovery (July 2020), available from [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/disability-inclusion\\_checklist\\_socio-economic\\_response\\_july\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/disability-inclusion_checklist_socio-economic_response_july_2020.pdf).
- “COVID-19 and gender monitor”, (UN Women 2020), <https://data.unwomen.org/resources/covid-19-and-gender-monitor>.



## Engendering Research for Gender-Sensitive Results: A Checklist for Reflections

### *Phase 1: Ideating the Research:*

- ☐ Has the relevance of gender to the research topic been analyzed?
- ☐ If the research does not directly involve humans, are the possibly differentiated relations of men and women to the research subject sufficiently clear?
- ☐ Have you reviewed literature and other sources relating to gender differences in the research field?

### *Phase 2: Proposal Formulation:*

- ☐ Does the methodology ensure that (possible) gender differences will be investigated: that gender differentiated data will be collected and analyzed throughout the research cycle and will be part of the final publication?
- ☐ Does the proposal explicitly and comprehensively explain how gender issues will be handled?
- ☐ Have possibly differentiated outcomes and impacts of the research on women and men been considered?

### *Phase 3: Conducting Research:*

- ☐ Are questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc. designed to unravel potentially relevant gender differences in your data?
- ☐ Are the groups involved in the project (e.g. samples, testing groups) gender-balanced?
- ☐ Is data analyzed according to the gender variable? Are other relevant variables analyzed with respect to gender?
- ☐ Do analyses present statistics, tables, figures and descriptions that focus on the relevant gender differences that came up in the course of the project?



## End Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> Toolkit Gender in EU-Funded Research, available from <https://op.europa.eu/s/pejT>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Policy Brief: The World of Work and COVID-19 (United Nations: 2020), available from [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg\\_policy\\_brief\\_covid\\_world\\_of\\_work\\_and\\_covid-19\\_june\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_covid_world_of_work_and_covid-19_june_2020.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Guidance on including gender equality and human rights in rapid assessments and socio-economic surveys on the impact of COVID-19 published by Issues-Based Coalition on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Human Rights Asia-Pacific, August 2020

<sup>4</sup> Agnes R. Quisumbing and John A. Maluccio, Intrahousehold Allocation and Gender Relations: New Empirical Evidence from Four Developing Countries (Washington, D.C., International Food Policy Research Institute, 2000), available from [http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/\\_new/research/Intra-household](http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/Intra-household).

<sup>5</sup> Guidance on including gender equality and human rights in rapid assessments and socio-economic surveys on the impact of COVID-19 published by Issues-Based Coalition on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Human Rights Asia-Pacific, August 2020

<sup>6</sup> UN Women and World Health Organization, Violence against Women and Girls Data Collection during COVID-19, (United Nations, 2020), available from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/issue-brief-violence-against-women-and-girls-data-collection-during-covid-19>; Amber Peterman, Amiya Bhatia and Alessandra Guedes, Remote data collection on violence against women during COVID-19: A conversation with experts on ethics, measurement & research priorities (Part 1), (UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti, 2020), available from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/1997-remote-data-collection-on-violence-against-women-during-covid-19-a-conversation-with.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Guidance on including gender equality and human rights in rapid assessments and socio-economic surveys on the impact of COVID-19 published by Issues-Based Coalition on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Human Rights Asia-Pacific, August 2020