



Gender-Based Violence AoR
Global Protection Cluster

DIGNITY KIT GUIDANCE NOTE



Gender-Based Violence Sub Working Group Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan

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1. Background Information

Dignity kits contain hygiene and sanitary items, as well as other items explicitly tailored towards the local needs of women and girls in all their diversity. The inter-agency Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies programming, standard 11, outlines the requirement for Dignity Kits to be part of the package of life-saving interventions for humanitarian response.

Whilst dignity kits are similar to basic hygiene kits often distributed at the onset of emergencies, dignity kits serve a broader purpose and so contain a wider range of items and are tied to GBV programming to address and reduce the risks of GBV occurring. Dignity kits help women and girls maintain their dignity during humanitarian crises. Preserving dignity is essential to maintaining self-esteem and confidence, which is important to cope in stressful and potentially overwhelming humanitarian situations. Supporting women's self-esteem and confidence also assists them in providing care and protection to their children.

GBV Sub working Group Objective:

To provide overall leadership, coordination, technical support and oversight to ensure effective and timely multi-sectoral prevention, mitigation and response protection services to women/girls and other vulnerable groups in collaboration with national and international organizations and UN agencies.

In the humanitarian situation caused by floods in Pakistan in 2022, women and girls need basic items to interact comfortably and safely in public and private spaces. They also need access to personal hygiene, particularly menstrual hygiene. Without availability and access to culturally appropriate clothing and hygiene items, the mobility of women and girls is restricted. Their health and safety can also be compromised. As a result, they might be unable to seek life-saving services including humanitarian aid.

2. Purpose

Dignity kits help women and girls by:

- Providing information about hygiene, reproductive health, GBV related issues including PSEA, and services through the inclusion of health and protection information;
- Improving mobility of women and girls by providing specific sanitary and other culturally-relevant items of use. In some contexts, mobility of women and girls can also be enhanced by including items such as clothes or a covering, which are cultural pre-requisites for without which women cannot be seen in public;
- Contributing to the psychosocial and physical wellbeing of women and girls, by including items such as intimate wash and pads which help women and girls maintain appropriate hygiene and feel comfortable;
- Allowing budget substitution for families to purchase important items, such as food;
- Contributing to the physical protection of women and girls, by including items such as flashlights and whistles, so that women and girls do not have to walk in the dark and feel that they can call for assistance, if needed.

3. DIGNITY KIT PROGRAMME PLANNING AND COORDINATION

Dignity Kits in GBV Programming:

Dignity kits can be used in the context of GBV programming in a number of ways, including:

- As an entry point to begin working with women and girls to identify the GBV risks in the community, and to advance GBV prevention and response programs;
- To raise awareness during distribution, encouraging communities to engage in discussions on important topics such as preventing and responding to GBV;
- To share information on where women can access GBV services. In particular, distribution of dignity kits can be focused on reaching women and girls at risk; GBV survivors, pregnant and lactating women, women head of household, women and girls with disabilities, women and girls living in remote areas;
- To provide additional support to GBV survivors, if distribution is carried out in collaboration with GBV service providers;
- Assembly of dignity kits can be set up as an income-generating activity for women affected by crisis. In addition to the important economic support, bringing affected women together for kit assembly also presents opportunities to organize awareness raising sessions, educational chats, or group counselling sessions.

3.1 Coordination

To avoid duplication of services, ensure the most vulnerable are prioritized, set and uphold quality standards, and mitigate negative impacts on the supply chain and markets, it is essential that organizations liaise with the GBV Sub-Working Group (GBV-SWG), led by the government and supported by UNFPA, as the lead technical agency on GBV and dignity kits. All organizations should coordinate the location and identification of target population and share precise (planned and completed) distribution data. With the support of the GBV SWG, put in place monitoring and information management protocols to compile dignity kits data, ensure best practices and to share lessons learned with the members of the sub-sector (See Annex 1 and for the preparedness assessment and Annex 2 for Post - distribution monitoring tool).

The GBV-SWG should share available needs assessment data with all partners, to avoid duplicative assessments. The GBV SWG is also responsible for using this data and feedback from partners to plan for and advocate for dignity kit resource mobilisation as part of humanitarian funding processes.

3.2 Programming

A. Organizational Preparedness Assessment

An organization considering procurement of dignity kits to support GBV programming should first assess its capacities to store the kits in an effective way, distribute the kits in a safe and appropriate manner, and provide post-monitoring feedback. The following aspects should be taken into consideration before procuring the kits, in line with the common standards set by the GBV Working Group:

- Availability of basic GBV services and referral pathways in organization’s operational area to ensure linkages between kits and services
- Availability of adequate and proper storage place. Proper storage conditions are vital to preserve the quality of some contents of the dignity kits e.g. shaving creams and disinfectants.
- Capacity to ensure transportation of the kits from the storage site to the distribution site.
- Capacity to ensure distribution respecting distribution principles (including availability of female staff able to explain how to use the kits and provide information on services available)
- Capacity to ensure post distribution focus group discussion and provide feedback
- Capacity to provide GBV safe referral and referral pathways training or information to distribution staff

See Annex 1 for Preparedness and Planning Checklist.

B. Needs Assessment

If the organization has the potential preparedness to integrate dignity kits into GBV programming approaches, it should determine if there are unmet needs that it may be able to fill with a specific dignity kit intervention. An indispensable step of determining the appropriate modality for dignity kit distribution is to assess the needs of women and adolescent girls affected by the crisis. Wherever possible, information from multi-sector needs assessments and other data sources (e.g. safety audits, WASH assessments, family counting, and registration data, and previous post-distribution monitoring reports and consultations etc.) should be compiled and used to evaluate needs and plan. Partners should also consult any Pakistan disaster management agency protocols and proposals, as well as inter-agency appeals through the GBV-SWG to find out if there are areas or volumes that are specifically needed to implement the sub-sector’s planned response.

If broader needs assessment and appropriate demographic data are not available, pre-distribution focus group discussions (FGD) should help assess the needs of women and girls in specific areas and help understand how to organize the distribution and select beneficiaries.

C. Dignity Kits Content

Assessments should be the main source of information to define the contents of the dignity kits. While there are no standard contents for the dignity kits, the following five items are the most common items included in the kits

BEST PRACTICE APPROACH

The GBV SWG approach prioritizes the development of country-specific dignity kit plans that include the implementation of common standards for development and distribution. The GBV SWG advocates for a coordinated response among members involved in distributing dignity kits and the WASH cluster involved in distributing hygiene kits. It considers the following;

- Respond to the specific needs of women and girls,
- Procured and assembled locally (if possible),
- Content selected in consultation with local communities and specifically women and girls,
- Customized to meet the hygiene needs of affected populations, i.e. including culturally appropriate and context specific items
- Distribution coordinated with other humanitarian organizations
- Distribute dignity kits at regular intervals throughout an emergency. Always consider including newly displaced people on the beneficiaries list.
- It is also important to maintain contingency stocks in case of new displacement and emergency if secure storage can be assured.

- ✓ Reusable Menstrual Cloth/sanitary pads
- ✓ Underwear
- ✓ Bathing soaps
- ✓ Toothbrushes
- ✓ Toothpaste/tooth powder

A number of other hygiene items are also included in the kits. The items should be identified in consultation with the affected women and girls. Specific items should be identified in cultural context and protection needs. Useful items may include

✓ Chaddar/shawl	✓ Plastic Bucket with handle & lid
✓ Sandals or flip-flops	✓ Plastic Mug
✓ Hairbrush/comb	✓ Mosquito Repellent
✓ Nail clipper	✓ LED Torch
✓ Shampoo (lice)	✓ Towel, fleece blanket
✓ Washing powder/laundry soap	✓ GBV and PSEA service information/ IEC materials
✓ Whistle	✓ Hair removing cream, female shaving razor, tweezers

In addition, as part of continued COVID-19 prevention measures or to address other public health concerns, the following items may be considered to be included in kits for some emergencies:

- ✓ Gloves, masks or other personal protection equipment
- ✓ Alcohol-based hand sanitizer

For each emergency, the GBV WG should communicate at the earliest stages of the crisis or as part of the contingency planning the standard contents for kits.

Partners who had procured kits before the sub-sector's decision on the standard contents will need a grace period to harmonize their kits with the standard, which should expire by December 2022 for the case of the 2022 flood response. To allow this grace period to be effective, partners must carefully map their distribution sites at the district level prior to initiation of programming to ensure there is not overlap or conflict between different types of kits in close proximity to one another. No new kits should be ordered without prior consultation with the sub-sector on current assessment feedback and the standard contents.

This content may vary over time according to the needs and feedback of the affected population. The GBV subsector will review the contents of the kits based on post-distribution monitoring conducted by organizations every 3 months (the estimated life of the standard kit in an emergency phase), with the first review of contents beginning in January 2023.

For actors providing both hygiene and dignity kits, and who are covering areas where other actors are providing hygiene kits, coordination on contents of kits should be discussed so as to avoid duplication of materials and to ensure coverage of essential female sanitary items. The WASH, Camp Management and NFI/Shelter clusters should be provided with information about Dignity Kit distributions regularly and coordinate as needed.

D. Transportation and Storage

When selecting a warehouse for storage of dignity kits, consider the following factors:

Security, capacity, ease of access, structural solidity, and absence of any direct threats. The storage of dignity kits is not generally problematic, as most items are non-perishable or have long shelf lives. In some areas it might be challenging to keep stock, including dignity kits, for any period of time due to the security risks. Nevertheless, the expiry of items should be confirmed before distribution e.g, tooth paste etc. When selecting storage for dignity kits, attention should be given to:

- **Location:** Ensure appropriate road access for the largest vehicles that may need to come to the warehouse. Avoid warehouses situated in low-lying land.
- **Accessibility:** If possible, locate the warehouse in a place where the kits can be easily received and distributed.
- **Security:** In many situations, security guards are employed to reduce looting or theft.
- **Capacity/space:** Warehouse facilities must have sufficient capacity for both storage and handling.

DO NO HARM

Always keep in mind the principle of 'do no harm'. Dignity kits entail distributing items to a small number of people. Potential risks should be assessed and all measures taken to eliminate them. It is important to ensure that humanitarian interventions, and the environments in which these are provided, do not further expose people to physical hazards, violence or human rights abuses. It is also essential to have clear prioritization framework when selecting beneficiaries, if this can be done in a safe and transparent manner.

Humanitarian actors should NEVER seek out or identify survivors as part of a dignity kit intervention. This will cause harm for the survivor, and negatively impact on the credibility and trust in the humanitarian response as a whole.

E. Distribution

At a minimum, three basic conditions should be met in order for any intervention including dignity kits to be undertaken by an organization.

- A. Dignity kits should be distributed only as part of an integrated, coordinated response.
- B. Providing information prior to the distribution (what, when, where, how) so women and girls can plan to collect their dignity kit safely and discretely,
- C. The dignity kits can be procured and distributed in a timely manner, as determined by the extent of the emergency.
- D. Dignity kit provision must serve as an entry point for broader protection and health programming on Reproductive Health (RH), Gender Based Violence (GBV), and/or psychosocial support for women and girls. Dignity kit distribution should be understood as distinct from and not a replacement for NFI or WASH distributions. Hence coordination among relevant working group should take place on Dignity kits

Therefore, **distribution of dignity kits cannot be a standalone activity**. It must be accompanied by discussions, information sharing, and awareness raising. The distribution of kit provides an opportunity to meet and speak to women and girls, share information, and better understand their concerns.

Distribution of dignity kits may be done alongside other relief items targeting female's shelter, food, and NFIs. For instance, information on critical issues can be shared before distribution such as where/how to access humanitarian services and information on reproductive health, legal rights, child care, hygiene, Community Based Complaint Mechanism, and GBV prevention and risk mitigation including referral pathways and PSEA. Distribution also presents an opportunity for awareness rising on hygiene issues, such as how and where to wash or dispose of menstrual items and explanations of each item in the kit.

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In both camp and non-camp settings, distribution of dignity kits runs a risk of increasing the vulnerability of women. Receiving a dignity kit can be very embarrassing for some women and girls, especially in conservative communities. And so some women may be hesitant about collecting dignity kits. When organizing distribution, consider potential safety and security risks, specifically GBV related risks, and seek to devise ways to address these.

There are a number of ways in which organizations distributing dignity kits can ensure that distribution is safe and appropriate, and that the kits go to targeted women and girls:

- Include women in the process of selecting the distribution points and dates, providing information prior to the distribution (what, when, where, how) so women and girls can plan to collect their dignity kit safely and discretely
- Organize the distribution in a discreet place, by women staff to women/ girls beneficiaries is usually preferred

- If other distributions are taking place at the same time (food, shelter, etc.) designate a separate space for dignity kits
- Avoid locations a long way away from shelters as these may increase GBV risks
- Encourage women and girls to create collectives, to stay together during the kits collection journey
- Consider using female or male porters
- Sensitize any male volunteers on the need to stay out of women-only spaces, and ask them to assist in creating safe entry and exit points from the area for women and girls
- Consider if the time of distributions allows women to be back at home before dark; and avoid to compromise women's family obligations or responsibilities
- Audit dignity kit distribution as part of safety audits, if trained staffs are available
- Select a security focal point for the distribution, which may be coordinated with the local authorities.
- Coordinate with relevant government counterparts or inform them about the distribution, where necessary.
- Prepare the activity tools (distribution list, pre and post activity survey etc.) to ensure attention to gathering disaggregated age and gender data
- Ensure the distribution personnel know the GBV safe referrals, referral pathways, services available, CBCM so that they can provide information and assist GBV survivors if necessary.
- Allow for fast-track queues to prioritize those who have been individually assessed as having specific needs, or for those with identifiable risks and in need of a faster procedure (for instance, pregnant, disabled, elderly, sick etc.).

Environmental Considerations; Keep environmental considerations in mind when choosing dignity kit contents. Avoid unnecessary waste (e.g. plastic wrappers). Consider including solar powered flashlights (torches) rather than battery-powered, as batteries will run out quickly. If batteries are supplied, consider how they can be disposed of safely

Annexes

Annex 1: Preparedness and Planning Form

- What Need Assessment will be used to plan distribution?
Please note that partners are encouraged to use pre-existing needs assessments and should only do an assessment if one does not already exist
- What gender-based violence programming intervention will Dignity Kit distribution compliment and support?
- Does your organization have procurement capacity to comply with the sub-sector guidelines for kit contents?
- Does your organization have adequate and proper storage space for the kits, and for how long?
YES / NO Period available for storage:
- Do you have transportation and distribution systems for the kits? YES / NO
- What is the scheduled date of the post-distribution assessment? (please provide a copy of assessment to the GBV Sub-sector within 1 month of completion)
- After the distribution of these kits, how many kits do you have in your contingency stock and where are they stored?

Annex 2; Pre-distribution FGD assessment possible questions

Community engagement is necessary, and once agreed upon the location for distribution, eligibility criteria, distribution point, date timing, etc. they need to be communicated with the community.

- Are there places where you do NOT feel safe? What do you think could be done about this?
- Is there a place where you prefer to gather during the day?
- What are the basic hygiene products that you need to stay clean and healthy?
- Do you have what you need for washing your body? If not, what would be useful?
- What kind of items would help you to move around more freely and to spend time outside your shelter? (e.g. probe existing kit items including preferred garments for covering/modesty, safety items like portable lights/whistles, or weather-appropriate footwear etc.)
- Do you need any specific clothing items to carry-on your daily tasks?
- What items do you miss from home that, if you had them, would provide comfort?
- What types of sanitary materials do you usually use during menstruation? If the answer to the question on types of sanitary materials is reusable cloth, also ask:
- Do you have a safe access to water to wash the cloth?
- What kind of packaging would you like items to be in? What is more useful? (bag, pack, bucket)

Interviews with key informants should complement the information collected through the FGDs.

Annex 3: Post-distribution Monitoring and Feedback from beneficiaries

It is a best practice to conduct post distribution focus group discussions with women and girls 1-3 months after they received the dignity kits to assess or evaluate dignity kit effectiveness to the lives of vulnerable women and girls. It is recommended that approximately 2-5% of the women and girls receiving the kits should be involved in the post distribution FGDs.

1. Were the contents of dignity kits appropriate and culturally sensitive?
2. Who received dignity kits, and how were beneficiaries selected?

3. Were dignity kits delivered on time to serve their purpose?
4. Do you feel that the dignity kits helped meet women's hygiene needs?
5. Do you feel that the kits helped restoring women's dignity?
6. Was the distribution of the kits organized in an effective way? If not, how would suggest to re-organize the distribution in the future?
7. Do women and girls receive information on how to use the kits?
8. Do women and girls receive information or other GBV/women empowerment services during the distribution?
9. Were women able to access other services as a result of using items in the kits?
10. Do you feel safe at the distribution site when you were given the items?

Organizations distributing the kits should collect the results of the FGDs and share with the GBV Coordinator for review within one month after distributing the kits.

Annex 4: Important References

Inter-agency Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies

GBV AoR, Considerations for Dignity Kit distribution during the COVID 19 pandemic (<https://gbvguidelines.org/en/documents/considerations-for-dignity-kit-distribution-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>)

UNFPA, [Guidelines for Adaptation of dignity kits and revision of distribution standard during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (2020)

<https://www.unfpa.org/minimum-standards>

IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, 2015 <http://gbvguidelines.org/> UNFPA:

Reproductive health kits management for field offices 2012 http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/RH%20Kits%20Guidelines%20For%20Field%20Offices%20_En.pdf Sphere

Handbook 2011 <http://www.spherehandbook.org>