



Considerations for Dignity Kit Distribution during the COVID – 19 Pandemic

The following “snapshot” was developed by members of the Regional GBV Working Group for East and Southern Africa based on a request from GBV Sub-cluster Coordinators and Working Group leads at country level. It is highly recommended that organizations distributing dignity kits for the first time review the much more comprehensive Dignity Kit: Guidance Note that was produced by the GBV Sub-cluster in Turkey¹. It is important that organizations consult with women’s groups, community leaders and frontline GBV service providers to help identify who is the most vulnerable, what items should be included in the kits and the best place and mode of distribution given WHO’s safety guidelines. The considerations below are specific to the COVID – 19 pandemic.



Who is most in need?

All distributions of basic supplies to targeted communities should systematically include dignity kits for women/girls. It is important to assess if there are distinct groups of women and girls who are more vulnerable during these difficult times, and how we can safely reach them. The following are some examples that partners might want to consider while assessing who is most in need:

- Survivors and/or women and girls at risks of GBV, particularly intimate partner violence (IPV)
- Vulnerable adolescent girls who do not have access to free sanitary supplies
- Unemployed informal wage earners – women make up the large majority of the informal workforce and are often paid well below national standards. Many are no longer able to earn money due to distancing/lockdown measures.
- Groups that have limited or no access to technology such as mobile phones² – most remote services, including GBV services, are implemented via mobile phones or through internet platforms
- Vulnerable refugee, IDP and stateless women and girls, especially in urban settings
- Women heads of household who have less resources to be dedicated to non-food items³
- Unaccompanied minors and child-led households
- Women and girls in quarantine facilities
- Community health workers
- Older women, and women and girls with disabilities



What should be included?

Once we have established the “who” we can then begin to understand what items would contribute to the safety and dignity of the targeted population during the COVID – 19 pandemic. It is important to ensure that each item has proper labelling and messaging around use to avoid misuse of Items. The following are some items to consider.

1 Dignity Kits: Guidance Note, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/dignity_kits_guidance_note_en.pdf

2 COVID-19: How to include marginalized and vulnerable people in risk communication and community engagement, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/COVID-19_CommunityEngagement_130320.pdf

3 Guidelines for: Adaptation of dignity kits & revision of distribution standards for risk mitigation during COVID-19 pandemic, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/guidelines-adaptation-dignity-kits-revision-distribution-standards-risk-mitigation>

	Mobile phones, sim cards (enables a survivor to have an unknown phone number), phone credit, and data bundles so that women and girls can access remote services – it is important to assess prior to distribution whether women and girls will be exposed to additional protection risks by having these items		GBV and COVID - 19 prevention and risk mitigation messages, preferably translated into local languages and using pictures
			Chamber pots and privacy shield – so those living in urban and camp based setting have an alternative to shared latrines
	Personal protection equipment such as masks and gloves		Sanitary products tailored to the context, including reusable cloth sanitary pads, where possible
	Soap and alcohol-based hand sanitizers		Baby-safe antibacterial wipes
	Contact information for GBV service providers in the referral pathway – ensure that providers can be reached by <i>calling</i> and <i>texting</i> to better accommodate the hearing and visually impaired		Laundry soap

Assembling dignity kits can be an income generating opportunity for vulnerable women and girls. Local women’s organizations in countries across the region are making masks that meet basic standards, regularly make soap for local consumption, and can easily make privacy shields. Buying their products promotes resiliency, but production should not be at the expense of their safety. It is important to ensure these local manufacturers have access to personal protection equipment (PPE).



Where should they be distributed?

Dignity kits need to be designated as an essential component of the COVID 19 response and should be part of the overall relief package. This will help facilitate distribution during various lockdown scenarios. It is recommended that organizations explore the possibility of distributing dignity kits in coordination with other sectors such as food security, health and WASH, which could potentially reduce exposure and streamline the response. For example, partners have negotiated with WFP to have dignity kits included as cargo on UNHAS flights, and WFP staff and their implementing partners have helped social workers identify the most vulnerable women and girls at food distribution points. In other contexts, GBV social workers facilitated distribution during house to house awareness campaigns for COVID – 19 with community WASH and health workers.

The following are some examples of potential distribution points.

- COVID 19 treatment centers
- Quarantine facilities
- GBV service provision points such as one-stop centers and women and girls safe spaces (WGSS)
- Pharmacies
- Health facilities
- Supermarkets/local markets
- Reception centers
- House to house distributions

It is important that social distancing standards be maintained at all times during distribution regardless of the modality, and that individuals who facilitate distribution are trained on the referral pathway, confidentiality and given clear guidelines stating who should be targeted.