



Food security

This section considers the needs of, and roles for, young people across the four pillars of food security: physical availability of food; economic and physical access to food; food utilization; and stability of the other three dimensions over time.¹⁴² Adolescents and youth have specific, gendered food security needs and potential for meaningful engagement in food security initiatives. They also play a central role in agriculture, because the global food system is the largest employer of youth.¹⁴³ A critical issue related to malnutrition is the feeding and care practices of food-insecure young mothers, who may have limited education and experience as well as the burden of additional responsibility in a crisis. In many contexts, unpaid care and domestic work which underpins food security is largely done by women and girls. Female young people, especially, have protection needs around the distribution of food, cash and agricultural inputs by humanitarian actors, but all sub-groups of young people need input on the design of effective food assistance programmes. Although food distribution is still the dominant food assistance modality, cash and voucher assistance (CVA) is increasingly used to address a range of needs (see **BOX 18 ►**).

As agricultural markets are transforming with higher demand, increased prices, more integrated supply chains, and greater rural–urban connectivity, new opportunities are emerging for young people in agribusiness. However, young people, and especially young women, often lack the necessary access to: land; finance and markets; education and training; livestock, fishing and agricultural technologies; or modern farming techniques. Furthermore, agricultural policies are rarely youth friendly. Rural young people often, therefore, do not see agriculture as a viable career path that will enable them to maintain household food security.¹⁴⁴

Skilled young women and men have shown that when they are given opportunities across inclusive value chains – from input supply to production, processing, storage and marketing – not only can they find solutions to feeding themselves and their families, but they can also contribute to helping their countries achieve food security and better nutritional status.¹⁴⁵



Tip sheet

Key actions for Food Security programming at each stage of the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC)

HPC phases	What to do	Tips for young people's participation
<p>Needs assessment and analysis</p> <p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Collect information, data and assessments on food security needs of young people, disaggregated by sex, age and disability. → Analyse data to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → how food insecurity is affecting protection (child labour, child marriage),¹⁴⁶ nutrition care practices of young mothers (including those living with HIV), and education of young people; → any barriers in accessing distributions for households headed by adolescents and youth; → policy barriers that impede young people's participation in agriculture and food systems; → how these barriers can be overcome.¹⁴⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Hold consultations – grouped by age and sex of participants – with a diverse cross-section of young people to identify needs, how young people are involved in distributions, and barriers to food security, including for in-school and out-of-school young people.
<p>Strategic planning</p> <p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ensure that the Food Security response plan addresses the needs of young people identified during the needs assessment, and from any other relevant data on young people. → Map/gather information on who is doing what, where, with regard to young people in food assistance (e.g., cash or voucher initiatives for young people, female-headed households, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, people with disabilities). → Ensure that the chosen transfer modality is substantial enough to meet food and nutrition requirements to keep young people from negative coping. Consider specific needs related to age, sex and vulnerability, e.g., adolescent mothers.¹⁴⁸ → Ensure young people in school in need of food support have access to school feeding and/or cash or voucher assistance. Reach out-of-school young people through the use of youth-friendly spaces, as needed. → Advocate and plan for food distributions to be age- and gender-responsive (e.g., provision for adolescent mothers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Involve a diverse cross-section of young people in the design of food assistance and agricultural support programming, including the selection of commodities for distribution.

HPC phases	What to do	Tips for young people's participation
Resource mobilization	<p data-bbox="92 439 185 533">3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Include information and key linkages to engage young people in Food Security programming, and budget for those interventions (i.e., assessments, building capacity in supply chain). → Report regularly to donors and humanitarian stakeholders on resource gaps, especially those affecting the most vulnerable (e.g., female-headed households, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, young people with disabilities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Seek young people's views and feedback, especially on how their needs are being addressed and how they are being engaged in Food Security programming, when developing proposals and reports for donors and partners.
Implementation and monitoring	<p data-bbox="92 853 185 947">4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ensure all young people are aware of distribution sites and timings (consider the needs of remote populations, female- and adolescent-headed households, literacy barriers, etc.). → Ensure that young people receive the necessary tools, inputs and training to carry out locally viable and sustainable agricultural activities.¹⁴⁹ → Provide referral to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for young mothers as part of Food Security and Nutrition programming. → Develop and maintain feedback mechanisms for young people as part of Food Security projects, including outreach to vulnerable groups. → Train a diverse cross-section of young women and young men to manage distributions. → Ensure that vulnerable groups, such as female heads of households, young people with disabilities, pregnant and breastfeeding women, are able to raise their concerns during reviews and evaluations, while guaranteeing confidentiality and without exposing them to further harm or trauma. Some mechanisms – such as confidential hotlines run outside the community – are more effective than others. → Monitor the coverage for school feeding programmes and how out-of-school young people are reached. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Engage young people to disseminate information, mobilize communities, and help with distribution activities. → Ensure that meeting spaces are safe and accessible for all. Where the voices of adolescent girls and young women cannot be heard, look for other ways to get their opinions and feedback.
Operational peer review and evaluation	<p data-bbox="92 1966 185 2060">5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Review projects within the Food Security response plan and programming. → Assess which young people were effectively reached and those who were not and why. → Share good practices around usage of gender-responsive Food Security interventions, and address gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Facilitate the participation of young people in project reviews.