



Non Food Item Distribution

As part of a humanitarian response Oxfam usually organises distribution of essential hygiene and other non-food items. While necessary in many situations devastated by disaster or in camps established far from towns, in some places where local markets are still functioning the use of cash or tokens may be more appropriate and more dignified allowing people to choose what they need and want. This will need to be coordinated with FS&L team. Some items such as underwear and sanitary material may be better distributed through 'fairs' organised specifically for women.

Role of PHP

The PHP team is usually responsible for NFI distributions though this will be in coordination with logistics and finance. In many situations Oxfam will be working through Partners who may need extra support to manage the process well. A successful distribution relies on careful planning and management. It can be time consuming and is often conducted alongside many other ongoing activities.

Apart from the actual distribution, the PHP team will be involved in the

- process of identification of items,
- possible formation of distribution committees, (either specially convened or drawn from existing groups of community representatives or leaders)
- registration of beneficiary households (by volunteers or through leaders),
- verification of registered names and numbers

- informing the beneficiaries (of the NFI package content, use of particular items such as water filters, times and dates of distribution).

It is especially important to ensure that the whole process is done in a transparent manner with a system for feedback and complaints.

If no partner is available, for large-scale distributions logistics assistants or distribution officers, who are managed and supported by the logistics officers, will be needed for the actual delivery and distribution of NFI (This should be proactively included in the programme budget). The PHP would still be required to plan, partly execute and monitor the distribution.

A crucial role of the PHP team is to actually promote the use of certain items, e.g. demonstrating the use of water purification tablets or water filters. Whether this is done at point of distribution or later will need to be decided on a case-by-case basis. People may be receptive to reinforcement of healthy practices and new ideas at the same time they are receiving new items but this needs to be balanced against considerations such as the time people may be asked to stand in line in the hot sun or security issues around large crowds of people.

Before Distribution

Registration –

- If possible, start with registration lists already compiled e.g. for food distribution. This can then be crosschecked by random HH visits.

- If no previous registration has been completed identify respected leaders or volunteers within each area to assist with the registration.
- Consider vulnerability, special needs, gender issues, and average number of household members.
- Prepare accountability lists and/or cards indicating the shelter location and number of occupants for every household. Cards or tokens to be distributed to each HH along with information on time and place of distribution.

In Oxfam's response in Malawi, people's rights were written on the back of their registration cards. Feedback from beneficiaries revealed that this was very useful.

Identification of NFI

- Participatory identification and prioritisation of appropriate items with the community to be done if possible during or soon after a rapid assessment. The emphasis is on providing items with which people are familiar, especially where this may be important for cultural or religious reasons.
- Where possible and appropriate, provide people with samples of items so that they can choose according to preference e.g. materials for women's menstrual protection
- Check budget. Items may need to be prioritised. This should be in consultation with the community.
- Ordering items through the logistics chain, give clear, detailed description of the item needed.
- Be prepared to jointly assess the quality of samples before final order. If possible invite local representatives onto the assessment committee.
- Immediately materials are received in the warehouse check a random sample with logistics to ensure items are as previously agreed with suppliers.

Planning for actual distribution

- NFI items should be packaged for ease of handling, distribution and transportation by beneficiaries. This can be organised by logisticians /distribution officers at the warehouse. Consider logo identification, the use of biodegradable materials (i.e. no plastic bags) or packaging that may be useful for storage such as sacks. Alternatively smaller items can be stacked inside larger items such as buckets.
- Identify NFI distribution teams, which may include logistics/distribution officer, beneficiaries' leaders and volunteers who can assist in offloading, crowd control etc. Whether or not to offer incentives will depend on factors such as time involved, enthusiasm etc.
 - In consultation with the community decide on a venue that is safe and convenient, e.g. under shady trees, in local hall or school etc. People should not be asked to walk long distances in the heat carrying a large amount of items.
 - Prepare distribution schedule detailing dates, times, distribution sites, targeted beneficiaries, items needed and the responsible persons for every site. Share list with logistics / warehouse to enable them to prepare transport and support.
 - Ensure that information on the time, place and nature of the distribution is communicated to the beneficiaries through leaders, notices etc.
 - Ensure all are informed of beneficiary selection criteria if the distribution is targeted.
 - Plan for distribution management, making sure all tasks are allocated to various teams, including recording and security.
 - Cross check if you will need ink for thumbprint, pen for signature,

tables and chairs for distribution etc.

- Follow up distribution generally (adapt sample monitoring form below)

At point of distribution

- Is site easily accessible, are staff allocated to deal with problems and questions, crowd controllers in place with megaphones if needed, a separate queue for vulnerable people e.g. elderly/ pregnant women?
- Recheck security –is there a vehicle on standby for evacuation if needed, functioning and reliable communications, radios, and/or mobile phones?
- If necessary and appropriate arrange for demonstration of how to assemble or use certain items such as water filters or remind re hygiene issues
- Ensure as much as possible that disruptions to the distribution e.g. people who may be making false claims, are dealt with quickly, effectively and away from the crowd. Designate the above task to a reliable person.
- Make sure beneficiaries know what to do if items are broken or faulty e.g. buckets missing lids or taps.

After Distribution

- Monitor the distribution process, including beneficiaries' satisfaction with the process and items. Take note of any emerging issues and observe the use of items provided (especially those that require maintenance such as mosquito nets and filters). This can be done by randomly selecting a percentage of households for interviews and/or through focus groups, and pocket voting to measure satisfaction.
- Distribution reports should include beneficiaries' number and items distributed, (so as to reconcile with stock,) broken or defective items, emerging issues and lessons learnt.

Hygiene kit monitoring form		
Did you receive a hygiene kit from Oxfam?	Yes	No
What did you get in the kit?		
When did you get it?		
Did you receive any of the items from other NGO's? (List)		
Was it what you needed?	Yes	No
Was there anything you would have liked to receive in addition?		
Was it timely?	Yes	No
Are you planning to share it with other people?	Yes	No
What was the most useful item you received?		
What was the least useful item you received?		
What did you do with the cash you received?		
What did you think of the way the distribution was carried out?		



NFI distribution in Darfur camp

FGD, mainly with women and children, established an initial list of needed water and sanitation or hygiene related items. Pictorial checklists were then developed which trained camp HPs (1 per 20 HH) were able to complete with families on shelter-to-shelter visits. The PHP local staff collated this initial information then further prioritized according to relevance to the overall health and hygiene of the camp, availability and cost of items.

The camp HPs assisted with community consultation, registration, distribution of registration cards to female family representatives, information and education and post distribution monitoring. All sections of the camp were fully informed about the distribution even though not all were included.

A large compound made from grass screens was built for ongoing PHP activities. It was separate from the busy compound where trucks were continually entering and latrine slabs being produced. A secure covered area suitable to store goods was built at the back and guards employed.

On the distribution days there were roped off lines outside the compound where people presented their cards and were checked against registration lists. One table was set up for the senior PHP to deal with any problems. Inside the compound was roped off from an entry and exit point and HPs handed goods to people as they progressed through the roped off walkway.

Each member of the team had a particular responsibility including one

responsible for randomly documenting women's comments and reactions.

Mosquito nets were distributed separately because of stricter targeting to pregnant women and children under 5. Children's flip-flops were distributed through children's activities. A particularly appreciated item was a tobe (outer clothing similar to a sari), as many women had only rags to wear.

One of the most successful ideas was to employ a tea lady in the compound who provided workers with tea and small snacks over the busy days.

