UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Inclusive, Local and Accountable Engagement

Age, Gender and Diversity
Accountability Report
2022

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The UN Refugee Agency

Cover photo: Indigenous women participate in a forum to discuss on challenges of the digital gap in Nahuizalco, El Salvador.
Photo credit: © UNHCR/Enrique Pocasangre

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Info boxes and spotlights

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AAP	Accountability to Affected People
AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity
ARRs	Annual Results Reports
CBI	Cash-Based Intervention
CBP	Community-Based Protection
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CO	Country Office
DAFI	Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (Deutsche Akademische Flüchtlingsinitiative Albert Einstein)
DEI	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
DHR	Division of Human Resources
DIP	Division of International Protection
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDS	Global Data Service
GLDC	Global Development and Learning Centre
GPC	Global Protection Cluster
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
GYAC	Global Youth Advisory Council
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDA	International Disability Alliance
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
iRHIS	Integrated Refugee Health Information System
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and other diverse identities
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MENA	Middle East and North Africa

Acronym	Meaning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRIMES	Population Registration and Identity Management EcoSystem
proGres	Profile Global Registration System
PSEA/SH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment
RBM	Results-Based Management
RLO	Refugee-Led Organization
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UN SWAP	United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VCA Policy	UNHCR Policy on a Victim-Centred Approach in Response to Sexual Misconduct
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WLO/WRLO	Women-Led Organization/Women Refugee-Led Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
Youth2030	United Nations 2030 Youth Strategy

Executive Summary

Children's workshops aboard the Solidarity Train at Gare de Lyon in Paris.
© UNHCR/Markel Redondo

Introduction

The Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Accountability Report 2022 presents the work that UNHCR (the United Nations Refugee Agency) is undertaking to ensure that age, gender and diversity considerations are applied across the various activities of the organization. As an annual corporate initiative, this report shows the efforts to operationalize the 2018 UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity (hereafter the 2018 AGD Policy) at global, regional and country operation level, in responding to new[1] and existing emergencies and protracted crises worldwide, as well as the challenges that arise when trying to ensure that no one is left behind.

The 2022 edition of the AGD accountability report includes reference to the agency and central role played by grass-roots and community-based organizations in the promotion of AGD-inclusive programming, accountability to affected people (AAP) and gender equality. The report also summarizes and spotlights how UNHCR strengthened its organizational accountability and efforts in working with and for groups of different age, gender and diverse characteristics among forcibly displaced and stateless persons. The AGD report mainly draws on quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the Annual Results Reports (ARRs) of UNHCR field operations and from consultations with UNHCR personnel at headquarters and regional bureaux.

Age-, gender- and diversity-inclusive programming

In 2022, UNHCR adopted COMPASS, a results-based management (RBM) approach for programming. COMPASS introduces a new way of planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting, centred on 4 impact and 16 outcome areas, in line with the UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022–2026. COMPASS defines core corporate indicators, some of which speak to AGD-related concepts and contribute to the capacity of UNHCR operations to mainstream AGD-inclusive policy in areas of work. Core indicators at impact and outcome levels can be disaggregated, where applicable, by age group, gender and disability to evaluate levels of access to rights and services. Further, COMPASS has two specific global markers for disability and gender that indicate, at output level, operational and budgetary contributions[2] favouring the inclusion of groups at risk of marginalisation in the activities of UNHCR Country Operations.

At operational level, UNHCR also continued to use analyses of qualitative and quantitative data disaggregated by AGD to plan, implement and report on programmes addressing the diversity of needs of displaced and stateless people. For example, over 40 per cent of country operations (CO) and multi-country offices (MCO) (44 out of 104) reported implementing activities addressing the needs of LGBTIQ+ persons and nearly 40 per cent (39 out of 104) had collected and used data on persons with disabilities.

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[1] In 2022, 35 new emergency declarations were made in 25 countries, of which Ukraine was the largest. 2022 Global Emergency Risk and Preparedness Overview.
[2] UNHCR Global markers are a planning tool. They do not provide information on the achievement of results. Likewise, markers cannot be considered a financial or expenditure tracking tool.

UNHCR improved how it collects and uses data disaggregated by AGD dimensions.[3] In this regard, over 30 per cent more numerical figures were made available for the 2022 UNHCR Global Trends report compared to 2021, an improvement that stems from the better availability of data disaggregated by age and sex in several countries worldwide. Also, the prevalence of persons with disabilities newly recorded in UNHCR Profile Global Registration System (proGres 4[4]), the corporate, centralized, web-based case management software application, has increased from 2.2 per cent to 4.3 per cent by 2022[5] thanks to the use of the Washington Group questions on disability statistics in the registration system.

Participation and inclusion

UNHCR worked with forcibly displaced and stateless persons to enhance their participation and inclusion at all levels, from influencing programmes in field operations to global policies. The relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions allowed UNHCR to resume some of its standard practices to consult and jointly plan with people forced to flee and stateless people. In this regard, 72 operations (69%) reported having conducted participatory assessments. As part of a corporate initiative, UNHCR also started an initiative to improve the systematization of the qualitative results of participatory assessments and facilitate the inclusion of the findings in the strategic discussion on planning, with pilot exercises at regional levels.

UNHCR also continued to enhance the participation of all forcibly displaced and stateless persons in community structures. In this regard, at least 25 UNHCR operations supported or created community volunteer programmes that helped with timely outreach, enhanced two-way communication, and supported the referral of persons at heightened protection risk to the appropriate services. Initiatives such as community volunteer programmes and community centres were instrumental in enhancing UNHCR community outreach. For example, it is estimated that 1.5 million community members were reached through these practices across operations in the MENA region[6]. Community-based approaches were also used to address specific protection issues, including 39 operations that supported community-based child protection mechanisms, such as child friendly spaces and child protection committees.

The work of UNHCR with community and grass-roots organizations also supported the empowerment of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the identification of priorities and solutions. The Grant Agreements for community-based organizations, primarily targeting those led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, continued to be promoted across operations as an agile way to ensure small-scale financial support for grass-roots initiatives, with ongoing discussions on how to increase the current grant threshold. Other efforts in this area included the launch of a pilot round of a Refugee-led Innovation Fund open to participants from 18 countries, which saw the allocation of 17 grants to a diversified group of grass-roots organizations, including organizations led by women, persons with disabilities, youth and LGBTIQ+ persons. The Fund, which can directly transfer up to $45,000 to each refugee-led organization (RLOs) through a Special Partnership Agreement, provides RLOs with administrative, technical, capacity-building and other support to design and implement their innovative ideas.

In 2022, a UNHCR inter-divisional Task Team on Engagement and Partnership with Organizations led by Displaced and Stateless Persons worked closely with an Interim Advisory Group (IAG) of organizations led by displaced and stateless persons, which provided advice and co-developed some of the Task Team's deliverables. During the year, the IAG members co-designed the selection process and terms of reference of a more formal Advisory Board with similar functions, which was officially inaugurated by UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection in December 2022.

Communication and transparency

Building on lessons learned from COVID-19, and in line with its AAP Five-year plan, UNHCR integrated new technologies to diversify two-way communication channels with internally displaced and refugee communities in addition to non-digital communication channels. To inform this process, UNHCR conducted a global mapping of digital information and communication channels across 121 countries. According to findings of this exercise, the use of instant messaging applications is increasing, with 34 per cent of the consulted operations stating that these are among the preferred communication channels for forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

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[3] Age and gender are mandatory across all operations.
[4] Registration tools – UNHCR – Guidance on Registration and Identity Management
[5] Global Report 2022 UNHCR
[6] Global Report 2022 UNHCR

The mapping exercise also showed the results of UNHCR investment in the expanded use of contact centres. It identified the existence of 55 UNHCR-led, 12 partner-led and 9 inter-agency contact centres worldwide dedicated to offering timely and reliable information to forcibly displaced and stateless persons. For example, the Regional Bureau for Europe established a Regional Contact Centre for the Ukraine response, operational in Poland and Hungary, providing free and reliable information to refugees fleeing from Ukraine. Towards the end of 2022, the Centre received up to 1,000 calls per day.

15 new UNHCR HELP sites[7] were launched in 2022 – including in response to the Ukraine crisis – bringing the total of active websites to 104 countries and 30 in the pipeline by the end of 2022. In 2022, over 14 million people had access to updated life-saving information and other communication opportunities through UNHCR HELP sites.

Moving forward, UNHCR will continue to focus on expanding two-way communication by making use of digital technology (e.g. chatbots, instant messaging applications, websites, etc.), while at the same time investing in strengthening data protection, in improving accessibility features (text-to-speech, visual, child-friendly), in expanding other digital services (chatbots and instant messaging applications) and in engaging in quality assurance based on community feedback.

Feedback and response

In 2022, 69 per cent of 144 reporting countries[8] had a multichannel feedback and response mechanism[9] that was designed based on consultations with forcibly displaced and stateless persons. This represents an increase compared to 2021 (65 per cent).

To strengthen the effectiveness of feedback and response mechanisms and to facilitate collective AAP action, UNHCR has invested in AAP information management at organizational and inter-agency level. At inter-agency level, UNHCR is co-leading a workstream under the IASC Task Force 2 (AAP) to develop common principles for feedback mechanisms and a common taxonomy for recording, referring and analysing individual feedback data. This common taxonomy builds on tools tested across a range of UNHCR contexts including Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia and Rwanda.

Safe online feedback mechanisms were also established within six of the UNHCR Help sites, which enabled tracking and appropriate referrals. Looking ahead, UNHCR will work on strengthening and integrating these online modalities with offline feedback and response mechanisms ensuring safeguarding against fraud and misconduct

Organizational learning and adaptation

In 2022, UNHCR made efforts to assess how the organization uses information and feedback generated through engagement and consultation with displaced and stateless communities across programming phases.

A review of 17 independent evaluations (conducted between 2018 and 2022) to consolidate learning in AAP approaches highlighted that UNHCR still had to address gaps in relation to "closing the feedback loop" and programme adaptation. Along the same lines, the initial findings of the AGD longitudinal evaluation suggest that UNHCR has yet to fully leverage information and feedback from communities when designing and adapting plans and implementing programmes.

To start overcoming these limitations, UNHCR has updated its programming guidance and policies to incorporate the requirement to systematically consult with communities and use their feedback to inform programming. These include the Programme Handbook, set for release in 2023, and the new UNHCR Cash Policy (2022–2026) encouraging operations to prioritize cash assistance to the greater extent possible based on the views expressed by more than 28,000 individuals consulted through Post-Distribution Monitoring exercises.

As a standard practice, qualitative discussions and more systematic surveys with forcibly displaced and stateless people also inform and shape all evaluations managed by UNHCR Evaluation Services.

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[7] UNHCR webpages providing direct contact details for your local country or context, as well as information on asylum procedures, legal assistance, education and other services.
[8] Multisectoral Monitoring 2022 End-year Figures – UNHCR Global Report 2022
[9] Multiple channels for sharing information with forcibly displaced and stateless people commonly include contact centres/hotlines, protection desks, complaints boxes, outreach sessions, etc.

UNHCR is also increasingly integrating the preferences of forcibly displaced or stateless people into its use of communication channels; for example, when it diversified the use of the most used messaging apps to expand its outreach to people fleeing Ukraine.

At global level, displaced and stateless individuals co-designed the Refugee-Led Innovation Fund with UNHCR. Similarly, UNHCR actively sought input from the Advisory Board during formulation of the forthcoming Child Protection Policy and other guidance relating to meaningful participation and localization.

Advancing gender equality

In line with the core actions of the 2018 AGD Policy, UNHCR operations continued to systematically engage women and girls in all decision-making processes in forced displacement contexts, particularly through networks of women- and girl-led organizations.

UNHCR worked with women-led and women refugee-led organizations (WLO/WRLO) to improve opportunities for partnership and access to funding. For instance, the 2022 NGO Innovation Award rewarded seven women and/or girl-led organizations who presented their work during the 2022 UNHCR Global NGO Consultations.

The inclusion and participation of women were also enhanced through sports: a global sport survey showed that 120 of 190 sport-related partnerships in 45 countries promote the inclusion of women and girls.

UNHCR also reported about 62 per cent female participation in livelihood and economic interventions (an increase of 8 percentage points on 2021).

In education, girls represented 48 per cent (up from 46 per cent in 2021) of the formerly out-of-school children newly enrolled in primary school under the UNHCR-Educate A Child Programme[10]. At tertiary level, an average of 43 per cent of Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) scholarship recipients supported were female (up from 41 per cent in 2021).

Participation and inclusion, particularly of women and girls, are also central to the new UNHCR Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) Policy 2022–2026 and delivery of CBI. In 2022, 51 per cent of the overall 10 million recipients of cash assistance were women. Furthermore, approximately 832,800 families received food and other relief items such as shelter kits and cash through the Global Distribution Tool: women were the primary recipients of the assistance in 55 per cent of these families. Data from 21 countries using the UNHCR Integrated Refugee Health Information System (iRHIS) showed that 57 per cent of the more than 8.2 million health consultations in 2022 were for women and girls.

Overall, 62 per cent of UNHCR operations included the GBV Outcome Area (4) as part of their 2022 interim and multi-year strategies, while 73 per cent of reporting operations (131 reporting countries)[11] had GBV services available for survivors and those at risk. Under the Safe from the Start initiative, GBV specialists were deployed to 14 emergencies enhancing access to quality GBV response services from the onset for over a million forcibly displaced persons in 2022. The Regional Bureau for Europe rolled out safety audits in Poland and Hungary to assess GBV risks including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) risks, particularly in relation to private and collective accommodation and safe access to livelihoods.

Organizational accountability

In 2022, UNHCR continued to fulfil its system-wide responsibility and to contribute with its annual inputs to key United Nations accountability frameworks, notably the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality (UN SWAP), the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and the United Nations Youth Strategy (Youth2030).

In 2022, over 80 per cent of UNHCR-funded partners had their PSEA capacity assessed using the Common United Nations Assessment Tool. Partners with low and medium capacity (84 per cent) had Capacity Strengthening Implementation Plans in place on prevention and response to SEA.

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[10] The Educate a Child Programme seeks to expand access to primary education for out-of-school children and contributes to expanding access to primary education for some of the most vulnerable refugee children, including girls.
[11] Multisectoral Monitoring 2022 End-year Figures – UNHCR Global Report 2022

In 2022, UNHCR also continued to promote gender parity within the organization and contribute to improving gender-sensitive approaches in management. In this regard, UNHCR, in partnership with INSEAD business school, launched a Women in Leadership Programme aimed at bolstering leadership skills and supporting women leaders. Similarly, as an enhancement to the leadership programme, UNHCR rolled out the Women's Leadership Allyship Circles, a space in which senior women leaders act as mentors, combat gender bias and build leadership skills across the organization.

The year 2022 also marked the end of the three-year longitudinal evaluation of the 2018 AGD Policy. The exercise helped UNHCR identify lessons learned, innovative practices and recommendations on improving the implementation of the Policy. The final report on the evaluation will be available towards the end of 2023.

In line with the recommendations of the United Nations Secretary-General's Report on Our Common Agenda (Action 52), UNHCR started to coordinate a dialogue with OHCHR and UNWOMEN on the development of a system-wide United Nations Policy that puts people at the centre of all of its actions, enhances participatory approaches and considers the impact of AGD characteristics. The discussion, which continues in 2023, focused on the scope of the Policy and on the linkages with existing – or new and evolving – strategies and frameworks for measuring the accountability of United Nations Agencies, Programmes and Missions towards different elements of AGD mainstreaming.

Ways forward

This AGD accountability report provides a rich overview of the efforts that UNHCR made throughout 2022 to comply with its 2018 AGD Policy. Building on the analyses of this report, the following considerations can guide future actions:

I.   Ensure that participatory methodologies engage groups across the AGD spectrum and are used in all programming phases, beyond the initial assessment phase.

II.   Continue the institutional work of UNHCR to integrate AGD dimensions into various aspects of programme policies, tools and procedures, including COMPASS, to develop and assess partner proposals and agreements, to monitor operations and partners' deliverables and to ensure coherent and systematic reporting on AGD across the organization.

III. Provide support to operations and enhance capacity strengthening on AGD and intersectional approaches in programming, while emphasizing the importance of engaging with forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

IV.   Continue to invest in capacity development and technical tools to improve the disaggregation of data of forcibly displaced and stateless persons, beyond age and sex, in registration as well as in monitoring, reporting and evaluation. This includes continuing socializing operations with the Washington Questions on disability, as well as agree on ways to harmonize and better capture data on SOGIESC in case management, while respecting the principles of proportionality, confidentiality and safety in all data collection and processing.

V.   Promote the engagement of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the selection, design and implementation of digital solutions and technologies to enhance two-way communication, including feedback and response systems, towards an inclusive AAP approach.

VI.   Foster community-based approaches, in protection and beyond, that consider the capacity and agency of community structures, community-based and community-led organizations representative of diverse AGD groups, to mitigate protection risks, as well as to facilitate protection responses and the delivery of other services, particularly in situations of restricted access.

VII. Continue to invest in tools to fully utilize information collected from consultations with forcibly displaced and stateless persons, particularly qualitative data. This will require continuous investment in innovative data collection and analysis solutions, including exploring the possible use of artificial intelligence, to facilitate the systematization and summary of qualitative data collected through participatory assessments and other types of feedback to ensure its timely and effective integration into the programming.

VIII. Build on successful initiatives and good practices and increasingly invest in the area of women and girls' participation, management and leadership, to overcome attitudes and gender norms that limit their engagement or that perpetuate gender inequality, while continuing to engage with men and boys to address such issues.

IX.   Reinforce engagement with development partners and governments to work towards the inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless people in national systems or non-discriminatory access to these systems, particularly in the context of preventing and responding to violence based on age, gender and other diverse characteristics.

X.   In line with the recommendations of the UNHCR longitudinal evaluation, consider AGD as a concept and approach beyond the protection domain of UNHCR work and reaffirm it as a corporate commitment across the whole of the organization.

AGD INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING

8.4 million children accessed protection services provided by UNHCR and its funded partners, out of a total of 21.2 million forcibly displaced and stateless people.

Prevalence rate of persons with disabilities newly recorded in proGres nearly **doubled** from 2.2 per cent in 2021 **to 4.3 per cent** in 2022 (still below the 16 per cent global estimates[12]).

40 per cent of operations reported having **implemented activities addressing the needs of LGBTIQ+ persons**.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

72 operations conducted participatory assessments with groups of diverse age, gender and characteristics to inform programming and interventions.

HELP websites were active in **104 countries, with over 14 million individual visits** made to them. 30 more Help Sites in the pipeline by the end of 2022.

69 per cent of operations have multi-channel feedback and response systems designed based on consultations with communities (65 per cent in 2021).

More than **28,000 individuals addressed through post-distribution monitoring** to assess the impact of Cash-based interventions on their household situation.

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[12] Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities (who.int)

GENDER EQUALITY

Women and girls represented 58 per cent of the three million new individuals **registered** in proGres who were issued with **individual documents**.

57 per cent of more than 8.2 million health consultations benefitted women and girls (UNHCR iRHIS).

51 per cent of the 10 million recipients of cash assistance were women (in line with 2021).

43 per cent of DAFI scholarship recipients to attend tertiary education were **young females** (41 per cent in 2021).

62 per cent female participation in livelihood and economic interventions (54 per cent in 2021).

73 per cent of UNHCR operations (131 countries reporting) had **GBV services available** for survivors and those at risk (in line with 2021).

Sudan. UNHCR conducts an assessment of flood damages together with the women leadership committee in Al Redis 1 refugee camp.
© UNHCR/Isadora Zoni

Introduction

▶ Scope and structure of the report

With the adoption of the 2018 AGD Policy, UNHCR renewed its corporate efforts to mainstream AGD across the organization and its operations. The introduction of a new results framework in 2022 (COMPASS), which reflects the goals and priorities of the UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022–2026, has shown the potential to better enable UNHCR to operationalize this commitment and better capture progress and achievements in mainstreaming AGD across UNHCR interventions.

As in previous years[13], the 2022 AGD Accountability Report analyses and reports on the main results of implementing the 2018 AGD Policy at global, regional and country levels. Building on recommendations from the 2021 report, the edition includes more reference to the work undertaken by UNHCR with community structures and organizations led by displaced and stateless people to ensure that no one is left behind in responses to emergencies and protracted crises.

The first part looks at how UNHCR has been progressing in the six areas of engagement of the 2018 AGD Policy and its 10 core actions, which are articulated in three thematic areas:

1. AGD-inclusive Programming;
2. Accountability to Affected People;
3. Gender Equality.

These three sections provide examples from UNHCR operations, and in includes six dedicated information boxes highlighting interventions for selected AGD groups among the populations that UNHCR works with and for.

The following section of the report concentrates on how organizational practices promoted the uptake of the AGD Policy, focusing on: diversity, equity and inclusion in the UNHCR workforce; protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA); and a summary of preliminary findings from the longitudinal evaluation of the 2018 AGD Policy.

In the same section, the report also makes reference to the implementation status of some of the United Nations system-wide strategies and accountability frameworks to which UNHCR regularly reports, namely UN SWAP, UNDIS and Youth2030.

The report then concludes by highlighting some suggested ways forward for UNHCR to scale up promising practices and approaches to mainstream AGD across UNHCR operations.

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[13] Respectively, the 2020 AGD report and the 2021 AGD Report.

▶ Methodology and limitations

The current report largely builds on analysis of the 2022 ARRs submitted by operations, regional bureaux, headquarters divisions and entities through COMPASS. The analysis mainly focused on the AGD dedicated section and outcome area narratives in the ARRs to identify actions and assess progress against the areas of engagement of the 2018 AGD Policy.

The compilation of the AGD report also relies on the intense work of direct information gathering with operations through a close coordination amongst all divisions, entities, regional bureaux.

Statistics on forcibly displaced and stateless people included in this report are based on data provided by UNHCR operations, extracted from the Global Trends Report and from the UNHCR Population Registration and Identity Management Ecosystem (PRIMES), particularly from tools such as proGres, as well as data provided by governments and adopted by the inter-agency coordination system in various countries.

Preliminary findings emerging from the first- and second-year[14] reports of the external longitudinal evaluation of the 2018 AGD Policy and other thematic evaluations and reports[15] complement the information and considerations highlighted in this report.

The breadth and scope of UNHCR work and the increasing number of emergencies in the context of limited resources make it difficult for the organization to report adequately and in a timely manner on all efforts made to include and protect all forcibly displaced and stateless people. This challenge is coupled with the persistent lack of access to AGD disaggregated data, especially when data comes from Governments or other partners. Furthermore, the use of COMPASS and the new way of planning and reporting for results reflected in multi-year strategies and ARRs require some learning and adaptation within the organization to ensure that monitoring of progress and achievements on key areas of the AGD approach are fully reflected in the reporting of operations, bureaux and divisions.

To circumvent limitations concerning the heterogeneity of ARR data quality, as well as to carefully validate the content, UNHCR staff at country, regional and HQ levels have been engaged in the selection and representation of examples.

The report also integrates evidence synthesized from UNHCR reporting against the selected United Nations-wide accountability frameworks, notably UNDIS, UNSWAP and Youth2030.


A young girl carries out an experiment in the laboratory of her secondary school in Tongogara Refugee Camp, Zimbabwe.
© UNHCR/Zinyange Auntony

[14] Not yet publicly available.
[15] For example, those included in the UNHCR Synthesis of Evaluative Evidence on AAP

This map represents the selected examples that are used for the purpose of this year's AGD Accountability Report.

UNHCR staff at a cash enrolment center in Poland.
© UNHCR/Maciej Moskwa
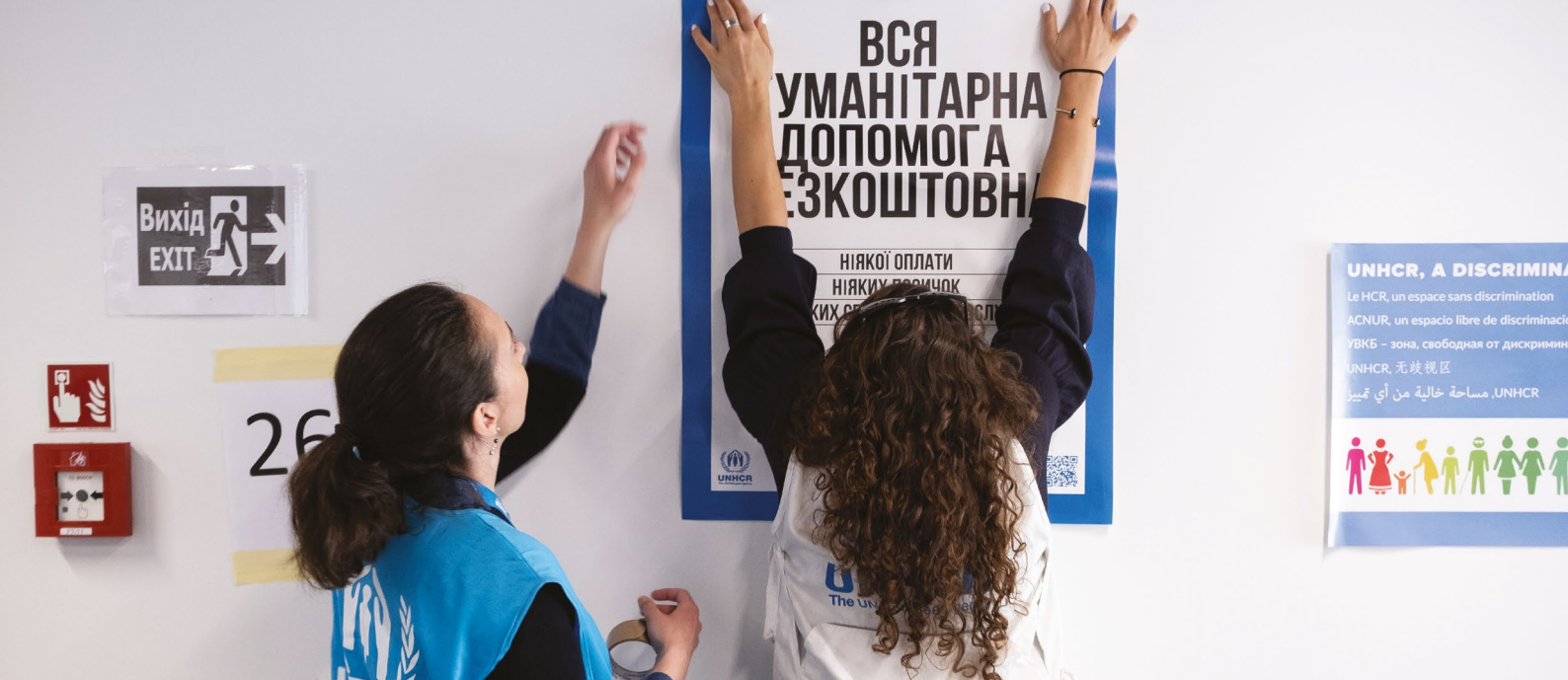
I. Progress in Implementation of the Age, Gender and Diversity Policy

▶ **I.i Age-, gender and diversity-inclusive programming (Action 1)**
▶ Data disaggregation for analysis and programming

> The different capacities, needs, and exposure to protection risks of the women, men, girls, and boys with whom we work must be incorporated into assessments, planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

Core Action 1

> At a minimum, all data collected by UNHCR will be disaggregated by age and sex and by other diversity considerations, as contextually appropriate and possible, for the purposes of analysis and programming.

Overview

UNHCR continued to commit to the AGD approach at various levels and invested in developing programmes that are informed by analysis of the diverse needs and capacities of forcibly displaced and stateless persons. AGD narratives in the ARRs highlighted the progress made, efforts and challenges on data disaggregation for analysis and programming. Particularly, reports show that operations invested in the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data disaggregated by age, gender and other diverse factors.

Nonetheless, the extent to which data was disaggregated by AGD varied from one context to another, the population type and the authority collecting this data (e.g. partners, governments, etc.)[16]. In this regard,

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[16] The Global Trends, 2022 show that sex-disaggregated data was available for 75 per cent of the 4.4 million stateless people reported worldwide, while disaggregation by both sex and age was reported for 62 per cent of the stateless population. These rates were lower among internally displaced persons: sex disaggregation was available for 64 per cent of this population, while age- and sex- disaggregation was available for 45 per cent. At the end of 2022, demographic data by age and sex was available for 76 per cent of refugees and people in refugee-like situations and 50 per cent of other people in need of international protection.

the PING (PRIMES Interoperability Gateway) Project, launched in 2022, seeks to establish a standardized, secure and cost-efficient platform enabling reliable data sharing, which will facilitate the intake of AGD data elements directly into the UNHCR case management system when processed or collected by partners, as well as the exchange of relevant AGD data.

Progress is still needed for data disaggregation of other AGD dimensions, beyond age and sex, to become systematic, but UNHCR has been working on this area to fill in existing gaps. Responding to one of the recommendations from the 2021 Global Roundtable on Protection and Solution for LGBTIQ+ Persons in Forced Displacement, DIP and the Global Data Service (GDS) organized a series of consultations with regional bureaux and selected operations. The dialogue aimed to gain a better understanding of needs, challenges and existing practices in the inclusive and safe collection and recording of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) data of asylum-seekers and refugees. The findings are informing the development of specific guidance for registration staff.

In the context of resettlement procedures, UNHCR implemented a data tool to help the process of discrete and secure data collection and storage for LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum-seekers who have shared their diverse SOGIESC with UNHCR, as well as other groups that may face heightened protection risks in the country of asylum. The tool was integrated into ProGres in mid-2022 and it provides relevant data attesting to the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons in resettlement programmes and additional indicators such as the sex, location and country of origin of individuals.

Integration of the Washington Group questions on disability statistics into the UNHCR registration system has also started to bear fruit. In 2022, the prevalence rate among persons newly recorded went up from 2.2 per cent in 2021 to 4.3 per cent and 39 out of 104 of the ARRs, or about 40 per cent, reflected data on persons with disabilities. Analysis of the 2021 Global Survey on Registration, Biometrics and Digital Identity, made available in 2022, also suggests that in 85 per cent of countries surveyed[17], the registration premises are physically accessible to persons with disabilities and older persons (at some or all registration locations).

Thus, UNHCR has taken into account the first-year findings and suggestions for action of the AGD longitudinal evaluation (report published in mid-2022), which indicated that registration of disability-related data was yet to become systematic. Likewise, the first-year report of the AGD longitudinal evaluation indicated the need to strengthen the utilization of existing AGD disaggregated data to ensure the inclusion of displaced persons from all AGD groups in programming. Nonetheless, the systematic collection and use of disaggregated data will require the implementation of initiatives aimed at raising the awareness of all staff and partners of the full potential of proGres, given the breadth and scope of the data stored in UNHCR systems. Importantly, it will be critical to work with partners to strengthen their capacity to collect disaggregated data and use it for analysis.

Age, gender and diversity in the UNHCR results-based management system

In 2022, UNHCR updated its approach and systems to plan, budget and report on its planned results. The new approach emphasizes working even more closely with partners to maximize impact and includes multi-year strategic planning, a global results framework and a software tool (COMPASS) for planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting on results. The new approach allows UNHCR to plan, budget, monitor and report on the 4 impact and 16 outcome areas of the new UNHCR Strategic Framework as per its 2022–2026 Strategic Directions. Importantly, it continues to support the mainstreaming of AGD in the programming phases.

Country operations develop three- to five-year strategies that outline AGD priorities and actions to promote people's equitable access to protection and solutions. A central part of the strategies is the context-specific results framework with impacts, outcomes and outputs as well as different sets of indicators.

Core indicators at impact and outcome levels of the results framework can be disaggregated while results statements are accompanied by data specifying the population targeted (i.e. refugees, internally displaced persons, etc.), with disaggregation by population type, gender, age and disability as relevant. UNHCR also established a set of organizational markers[18] in COMPASS, allowing operations to tag activities relating, inter alia, to gender equality or disability inclusion: of all operations submitting multi-year or interim strategies (145), 84 operations used the disability marker while 95 tagged activities related to gender equality.

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[17] The survey covered a total of 110 countries. Multi-country operations completed the survey for each of the countries they covered.
[18] UNHCR Global markers are a planning tool. They do not provide information on the achievement of results. Likewise, markers cannot be considered a financial or expenditure tracking tool.

To support the transition toward COMPASS and to reinforce the mainstreaming of AGD throughout programming, UNHCR focused on strengthening staff capacities. In this regard, the Division of Strategic Planning and Results worked with regional bureaux and operations through global and regional training and knowledge-building events on applying an AGD lens during planning, implementing and reporting. Similarly, in August 2022, as part of its plan to strengthen coordination with regional bureaux, DIP organized a three-day workshop for CBP, GBV, Child Protection and AAP staff and focal points in all regional bureaux, which included a full day on AGD programming, including indicators and markers.

Experiences from the field of AGD-inclusive programming

In 2022, **UNHCR piloted initiatives and promoted the uptake of new data approaches and tools to disaggregate data by AGD dimensions.** In **Ecuador**, UNHCR piloted a registration initiative in the Ibarra sub-office, enabling the registration process to be more sensitive and inclusive and ensuring better disaggregation of data for planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes. Similarly, UNHCR **Morocco** enhanced its data collection processes with a focus on improving the safe self-identification of individuals with diverse SOGIESC as early as registration. In **Albania**, UNHCR used Kobo for AGD data disaggregation to help identify priority groups for enrolment in the national COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

Country operations have also made progress in how they identify, plan and respond to the needs and requirements of persons with disabilities who are stateless or have been forced to flee. UNHCR **Ethiopia** developed a Disability Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool (DISAT), providing a snapshot of current knowledge, resources and initiatives to promote disability inclusion, across camps and urban settings. The tool gives a snapshot, from UNHCR partners and staff, in various locations (urban settings, camps), of the extent to which the rights of persons with disabilities are recognized, respected and included in UNHCR and partner responses. In **Niger**, the inter-agency Gender with Age Marker was compiled for all UNHCR projects helping the organization assess how gender, age and, most recently, disability are factored into humanitarian responses. In **Somalia**, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster introduced the New Arrival Tracker for internally displaced persons, revamped the site prioritization matrix with new sectoral indicators by adding data on minority groups, access and site duration, and developed a CCCM Cluster Inclusion Workplan. In **Uganda**, UNHCR worked with UNICEF and the Governance Lab at New York University on data management, to improve the responsible handling of mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS) data for and about refugee children in order to improve their access to, and the effectiveness of, the available services.

Finally, **UNHCR made strides to integrate AGD in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of programmes in line with the ongoing commitment to have operations and partners reporting according to disaggregation by population, sex, age and other characteristics.** In **Afghanistan**, the Shelter Cluster has been developing minimum standards for quality programming and a checklist for gender, AAP, PSEA and disability inclusion considerations. In **Kenya**, UNHCR and the World Bank, funded by the Dutch PROSPECT fund, launched a survey as part of the Kenya Analytical Program on Forced Displacement covering approximately 6,000 refugee households living in camps and settlements (Kalobeyei, Kakuma and Dadaab) and in urban areas, as well as 3,500 Kenyan households living in major refugee-hosting areas. The survey measures women's empowerment and social norms over time. It was also designed to evaluate factors contributing to children continuing from primary into secondary education and the impact of providing mental health services with livelihood interventions as part of a pilot project targeting youth entrepreneurs (ages 18–35) in refugee and host communities.

Spotlight. Working with persons with disabilities

Overview

UNHCR continued to engage persons with disabilities in its work. Jointly with the International Disability Alliance (IDA), UNHCR disseminated resources and organized capacity-building initiatives based on the disability inclusion training package on Strengthening Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement. The full package was piloted with two training courses, one in the MENA region for UNHCR staff and partners representing 14 country operations, as well as one in the UNHCR operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. UNHCR also organized specific webinars for registration and protection personnel focusing on the use of the disability categories of the Specific Needs Codes at Registration[19] and in other data collection efforts (e.g. surveying).

At regional level, the Regional Bureau for Europe invested in capacity-building around the roll-out of the Washington Group Questions for asylum authorities and in advocating their benefits to governments. Similarly, the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific benefited from the secondment of a statistical expert from the Norwegian government to strengthen statistical design and analysis capacities in the region, including on the Washington Group Questions.

Working with IDA, UNHCR launched a webinar series to provide organizations of persons with disabilities and forcibly displaced and stateless persons with disabilities a platform on which to enhance their understanding and engagement in areas of work under the UNHCR mandate. The Regional Bureau for Southern Africa organized a session on the status of persons with disabilities in the region who are migrants, refugees or internally displaced.

The growing importance of programming and engagement of persons with disabilities was also highlighted in the main findings of the Year 2 report of the AGD longitudinal evaluation, which suggested increased awareness among UNHCR personnel and partners. These efforts enabled UNHCR to reach at least 127,000 persons with disabilities with targeted support in 2022, including access to education for at least 3,475 children with disabilities.

Furthermore, UNHCR annual programme monitoring data on the UNHCR self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods programmes shows that, in 2022, displaced and stateless persons self-reporting disabilities accounted for 8 per cent of the population targeted by UNHCR activities in these programming areas. The employment rate among participants with disabilities in UNHCR-supported livelihood programmes improved by 19-percentage points, from 58 per cent at baseline to 77 per cent at the endline.[20] Capitalizing on these improvements in inclusive programming and results for persons with disabilities will require continuous investment in strengthening technical expertise among UNHCR staff in operations and in the establishment of partnerships with organizations working with or led by persons with disabilities, such as the ongoing collaboration between UNHCR and IDA.

A girl from Ukraine reads a book in her room at a hotel, where she lives with her mother. The hotel serves as a shelter for refugees in Poland.
© UNHCR/Anna Liminowicz

[19] For further information: UNHCR Specific Needs Codes – Disability Guidance and UNHCR Specific Needs Codes – Disability Interview Guide.
[20] The baseline survey was conducted between May 2022 and June 2023 and the endline survey was conducted from October 2022 to June 2023 (still ongoing).

UNHCR **Jordan** continues to incorporate the Washington Group Questions into the inter-agency Vulnerability Assessment Framework and it co-chairs the Disability Age Sub-Working Group (DASWG), including 20 members jointly working on disability inclusion and protection of older persons. UNHCR **Iran** developed an operation-wide Disability Inclusion Workplan with key activities already implemented in 2022 such as providing cash to persons with disabilities, improving physical accessibility to a reception centre and to the Country Office and constructing and rehabilitating 20 schools and 3 health posts. In **Bangladesh**, UNHCR improved data collection and programming for persons with disabilities, utilizing an in-house disability inclusion expert to provide comprehensive training to UNHCR staff, build strategic relationships with specialized organizations and advance these efforts at intersectoral level via a dedicated national Age and Disability Working Group.

UNHCR partnered with communities and organizations of persons with disabilities to make operations more inclusive. In **Iraq**, UNHCR worked with Gashbun, a community-based organization supporting refugee children with disabilities under the framework of the 2022 MENA AAP Grant. The grant was used to rehabilitate the Gashbun centre to operate as a reference point for children with disabilities and their families in Dohuk, as well as to equip the centre with specialized physiotherapy tools and equipment for the provision of free services. Engagement activities included awareness-raising and information campaigns as well as over 960 specialized physiotherapy group and individual sessions for more than 300 children with disabilities In Gambella (**Ethiopia**) local associations of persons with disabilities and community structures were actively engaged in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of partner (RaDO and HelpAge) projects.

In **South Africa**, the UNHCR pilot Refugee-led Innovation Fund supported Redeeming Hope for Disabled, an organization of refugees with disabilities, in implementing a project to boost the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees with disabilities. By training participants in mobile phone and computer repair, the project works to ensure refugees with disabilities become trusted service providers and are

recognized as valued members of the community. In the Dadaab camp in **Kenya**, UNHCR also invested in partnering with community and religious leaders to tackle stigma against persons with disabilities. Finally, in **Spain**, 65 asylum-seekers and refugees formed football and basketball teams with 65 other Special Olympics athletes with intellectual disabilities, gathering more than 300 people to advocate for the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

Operations have also worked to strengthen the capacities of UNHCR personnel, partners and communities to include and empower persons with disabilities. For example, in **Ukraine**, a Disability Inclusion Expert co-sponsored by UNHCR and the Inter-Agency Age and Disability Task Force supported training sessions for UNHCR and partner staff on disability inclusion and conducted a mapping of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities to improve outreach and engagement. Adapted tip sheets were also developed on disability-inclusive programming for cash, shelter and CCCM. In **Türkiye**, UNHCR provided training and workshops to 2,500 staff from the Ministry of Family and Social Services and other relevant staff on social protection, persons with disabilities and women with specific protection needs. In **Afghanistan**, UNHCR provided skills training, targeting people with disabilities in partnership with an association of persons with visual impairments.

Improving accessibility of infrastructures also remained a key strategic line of action across UNHCR operations. For example, in **Burkina Faso**, **Burundi**, **Kenya**, **Malawi** and **Zimbabwe**, UNHCR constructed accessible latrines and enhanced access to water for persons with disabilities. In **Rwanda**, UNHCR and its partners supported the inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities in Child-Friendly Spaces and Youth Friendly Spaces by rehabilitating the spaces and making them accessible to children and adolescents with disabilities. Finally, the Regional Bureau for Europe worked with the European Disability Forum to further advance the integration of refugees into existing programming for persons with disabilities in Europe and, jointly with UNICEF, supported the establishment of 39 Blue Dots in **Moldova**, **Romania**, **Bulgaria**, **Poland**, **Slovakia** and **Hungary** and set standards for the accessibility and inclusivity of these structures.

UNHCR staff plays with children at information point. Refugees and migrants arriving or transiting through Huaquillas receive assistance and key information from UNHCR, partners and other UN agencies at this information point.
© UNHCR/Diana Diaz

▶ I.ii Accountability to Affected People (Actions 2, 3 and 4)

The commitment of UNHCR to be accountable to affected people is embedded in the UNHCR AGD Policy and it is also one of eight focus areas outlined in UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022–2026. In the following sub-sections, the report presents experiences from UNHCR operations on the operationalization of the core actions of the 2018 AGD Policy relating to AAP, namely:

1. Participation and inclusion
2. Communication and transparency
3. Feedback and response
4. Organizational Learning and Adaptation

▶ Participation and inclusion (Action 2)

> Women, men, girls, and boys of diverse backgrounds are able to engage meaningfully and are consulted on protection, assistance, and solutions.

Core Action 2

> At a minimum, country operations will employ participatory methodologies at each stage of the operations management cycle, to incorporate the capacities and priorities of women, men, girls, and boys of diverse backgrounds into protection, assistance, and solutions programmes.

Overview

Participatory assessments[21] continue to be one of the core activities through which UNHCR consults displaced and stateless people on priorities and suggested solutions. Findings from participatory assessments influence annual planning and/or course corrections during the implementation phase. Globally, 72 operations reported having conducted participatory assessments. The value of participatory assessments is that they engage

[21] In the UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations, a participatory assessment is defined as a process of building partnerships with refugee women and men of all ages and backgrounds by promoting meaningful participation through structured dialogue.

diverse AGD population groups, particularly those at risk of marginalization, to ensure that programmes are effective and meet the diversity of needs. For example, 14 operations reported having included LGBTIQ+ persons in these exercises.

The relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions in several sites allowed UNHCR to carry out these exercises in person and resume face-to-face work with communities. In addition, following a regional pilot project in the MENA region, UNHCR started to invest in improving the technical capacity to systematize, store and retrieve qualitative data generated by participatory assessments by recording them through digital means, such as Kobo, to improve the systematization of AGD-specific data and facilitate inclusive programming.

ARRs highlight that UNHCR continued its traditional approach of investing in working with self-managed community structures to improve outreach to communities and the identification of persons at heightened protection risk needing referral to services. For example, at least 25 UNHCR operations supported or created community volunteer programmes that helped with timely outreach and supported the referral of persons at heightened protection risk to the appropriate services. In the MENA region, it is estimated that 1.5 million community members were reached through similar practices. UNHCR also invested in the capacity and agency of the communities and worked with community leaders; it supported the work of women's committees, youth groups and peaceful co-existence structures to advance in affirming gender inequality, counter harmful traditional practices and mitigate inter-community tension.

New tools and processes were also instrumental in supporting efforts to engage with grass-roots and community-based organizations. For instance, in 2022, UNHCR rolled out a new and simplified grant agreement that facilitated the channelling of small funds to community-based organizations regardless of their registration status: 70 small-scale grants were disbursed across 22 countries in Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, totalling $233,000. A new Refugee-led innovation fund was also launched in 2022 to support organizations led by displaced and stateless people to design and implement creative solutions to complex challenges through funding and optional mentoring and technical support. Over 1,800 applications were received from 18 countries and a selection process resulted in 17 organizations receiving the funds for implementation of their projects in 2023. Finally, the Evaluation Office has included the feedback of forcibly displaced and stateless people on evaluation results, for example through surveys and interviews.

UNHCR field practices for participation and inclusion

UNHCR worked and partnered with communities to enhance their leadership and strengthen their representation and decision-making. In **Angola**, UNHCR assisted community efforts to conduct the Refugee Coordination election and trained the refugee electoral committee on the AGD approach. In **India**, UNHCR and its partners strengthened their engagement with 269 community-based structures representing various AGD groups who were consulted to incorporate their suggestions in the multi-year planning exercise and 10 Community Social Projects were implemented by community structures. In **Iraq**, UNHCR invested in community-based outreach structures, including women's, youth and refugee welfare committees, which are elected/appointed to consult and represent voices within the community. These structures supported the engagement of over 2,700 refugees (mostly women and girls) in community assessments and over 113,000 refugees and 125,000 internally displaced persons (the majority women and girls) in community awareness sessions.

In **Brazil**, monthly meetings were organized in safe spaces with displaced LGBTIQ+ Venezuelans to better understand their primary issues and proposed solutions. UNHCR Brazil also put in place a system of refugee volunteers, including LGBTIQ+ persons, to better reach out and maintain dialogue with displaced LGBTIQ+ populations. In **Belgium**, ten refugee-run committees of diverse backgrounds are represented by an Umbrella Refugee Committee to represent refugees in discussions with the local authorities. In **Peru**, UNHCR spearheaded a network of 32 community-based organizations in 7 regions and signed 9 Grant Agreements with local organizations to strengthen the quality and outreach of protection services. In the East and Horn of Africa (**Ethiopia**, **Kenya**, **Sudan** and **Uganda**), UNHCR launched a leadership training programme for youth, which saw the participation of 65 young people[22] (20 female and 45 male) in the context of the PROSPECTS Partnership. A follow-up assessment showed that three out of four participants lauded the programme as having had a strong impact on their subsequent choices regarding extracurricular activities, community initiatives and their educational and job trajectory.

The participation and inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless persons were enhanced throughout the programming phases – Plan, Get and Show. In **Chad**, over 5,415 refugees, asylum-seekers and host community members participated in various phases of programming, including needs analysis, implementation,

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[22] The target age of participants was 15 to 30; however, those who took part were aged 18 to 30.

monitoring and evaluation. Forcibly displaced persons also directly influenced operations in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, where UNHCR supported a pilot project on the humanitarian, development and peace nexus in North Kivu. Through diagnostic workshops with 641 host community members and internally displaced persons (255 women and 386 men) in Beni, North Kivu, internally displaced persons became key stakeholders in local planning and local authorities took ownership of their protection and increased collaboration with a multiplicity of actors. In **Pakistan**, UNHCR and its partners supported 58 child-led initiatives ensuring the meaningful participation of 5,384 children in community-based child protection programmes, while enhancing their capacity and resilience. In **Nepal**, UNHCR underwent an external evaluation of its programme, to which all of its partners contributed, including refugees.

UNHCR worked with communities and grass-roots organizations to overcome institutional, attitudinal and physical barriers to participation and inclusion. For example, in **Spain**, UNHCR consulted asylum-seekers and refugees on preventing and responding to GBV in the reception system and refugees provided feedback on awareness-raising materials and recommendations for the Ministry of inclusion, Social Security and Migration. In **Mauritania**, the WLO Femmes ressources (FR) worked with UNHCR to identify and refer 250 individuals with heightened protection needs in hard-to-reach locations in the Mbera camp. Further, with the support of the MENA AAP Grant, the women's association assisted with needs assessments, door-to-door visits, feedback and suggestions and community gatherings to reach those with the most acute protection needs and their families throughout Mbera.[23] In **Kenya**, UNHCR and its partner organization, the Haki Centre Organization, supported the Pemba minority group in creating a community self-register to map their family trees to prove their claim to Kenyan nationality, benefiting from a recent decision from the government of Kenya to recognize the stateless Pemba people as citizens of Kenya. UNHCR provided training on the Citizen-generated Data Framework to staff from the Haki Centre, community paralegals from the Pemba community and community representatives, in support of this initiative.

Spotlight. Working with youth[24]

Overview

Since 2017, the seven Core Actions for Refugee Youth guide UNHCR engagement with and for youth (14–25 years of age). The focus on Youth is also mainstreamed across UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022–2026 and the inclusion approach has been embraced by at least 36 Country Offices.

UNHCR recognizes that youth often face specific challenges, sometimes they can be marginalized, discriminated against within their communities or challenged by gender inequality, but that they have talent and potential and look for opportunities to meaningfully participate and become agents of change in their communities. UNHCR considers that there is a need for greater opportunities for them to engage, develop and obtain support for their aspirations, including in education and livelihood. Youth is also central to the UNHCR Sport Strategy 2022–2026 – More than a Game given that it aims to strengthen their life skills and support them, and where young people demonstrate excellence, to help them access quality training and competition while nurturing their aspirations.

At global level, with funding from some donors, UNHCR continued supporting selected field operations in maintaining their engagement with youth, through a series of small-scale community-based projects with and for youth. Through its education programmes, such as the DAFI scholarship programme, UNHCR collaborated with youth to amplify the importance of education as a mean for protection and a priority towards sustainable solutions. UNHCR also tried to promote livelihoods, entrepreneurship and technical and vocational education and training opportunities for youth through livelihoods and economic interventions. Furthermore, in 2022, 21 new young delegates were selected to become GYAC members to ensure greater diversity and regional representation. GYAC members continue to consult with their communities and to coordinate and support community-based initiatives; they are periodically called to share a youth perspective in discussions on refugee policy, using their voices to represent and amplify the concerns and suggestions of young people.

At regional level, UNHCR invested in youth engagement to strengthen their inclusion and participation in operations and decision-making. The newly funded Youth Engagement Opportunity Fund (Uganda & Ethiopia) under the PROSPECTS initiative was a competitive grant scheme supporting refugee youth-led organizations with funding, capacity-building and direct technical assistance for youth entrepreneurship projects creating decent jobs for youth.

The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe also maintained its direct support to the European Youth Parliament partnership through small grant agreements to ensure the inclusion of displaced and stateless individuals in their activities across Europe. The Americas Bureau instead progressed on the development of a set of strategic guidelines for youth engagement in the region. Similarly, a regional Youth Strategy was initiated in EHAGL to strengthen youth programming based on consultations with youth and key informant interviews with staff.

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[23] As per the Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (C169)
[24] More information available in the UNHCR 2020–2022 Youth Report

In 2022, **UNHCR continued to prioritize skills development and the creation of learning and employment opportunities for young people.** For example, 396 scholarships were granted to young refugees, including 167 girls and 229 boys, throughout operations under the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa. In **Bangladesh**, under the joint ILO, UNHCR and BRAC Project on Vocational Skills Development, targeting young people in the 18–24 age bracket, a baseline needs assessment was carried out covering the 33 camps in Cox's Bazar and those on Bhasan Char island, to better understand the education and skill levels of their youth populations and to identify refugee demand for vocational skills training and productive engagement, as well as potential future employment/self-employment. As a result, 550 refugee young people began participating in accredited vocational training. Similarly, in **Mali**, within the framework of improving self-sufficiency and livelihoods, UNHCR and its partners (Stop Sahel and the Association Malienne pour la Solidarite et le Developpement) engaged youth groups, women and girls (two groups) and village associations (Segou, Koro/Mopti) to enhance economic empowerment and youth entrepreneurship by providing both training in financial management and cash transfers to 25 young entrepreneurs.

In **Pakistan**, UNHCR tapped into the National Authority of Vocational Training & Technical Training Commission's programme to provide 1,811 refugee and host-community young people with skills development and distribute 1,377 toolkits. Upon successful completion of these workshops, 207 refugee youth were placed on two-month internships. A further three government institutes were upgraded. In **Ecuador**, UNHCR worked with the Telefonica Movistar Foundation, which helped to improve the digital competencies of 500 young people. The initiative "Girls in Tech, with the backing of the Digital Innovation Fund, also supported 33 small businesses run by young women by providing them with digital marketing tools.

UNHCR devoted effort to enhancing youth engagement in community affairs and decision-making. In **Iraq**, the UNHCR commitment to youth empowerment and mobilization has been reinforced with the promotion of youth-run projects in urban areas focusing on disability inclusion, conflict resolution and social cohesion. In **Yemen**, UNHCR supported five refugee youth initiatives that conducted 22 campaigns and activities and some youth-led initiatives received technical and material assistance for projects selected by the communities.

Youth empowerment and engagement across UNHCR operations were also pursued through arts and sports. In **Cameroon**, the Raising UNHCR Capacities for Youth programme supported groups of young people to produce a silent film entitled Nobody Knows to raise awareness about GBV in the community. In **Honduras**, UNHCR implemented a sport strategy to improve a protective environment for children and youth in the Central District, in coordination with partners and local authorities. Similarly, in **Egypt**, under the Sports for Protection programme, a total of 14 youth-led community and sports initiatives were supported with training and materials engaging 703 Egyptian refugee youth through football, basketball and other recreational activities. UNHCR Egypt also facilitated access to eight newly established digital technological hubs under the Ministry of Youth and Sport and seven community learning centres run by partners where 1,091 refugee youth from nine nationalities were enrolled in digital skills training courses and 361 earned specialization certificates preparing them for future employment.

UNHCR enhanced the capacities of youth, personnel and partners to advance youth empowerment and engagement. In **El Salvador,** seven youth committees in the capital municipality of Soyapango received training to enhance their capacities to plan and implement youth-led initiatives. UNHCR also supported displaced youth to contribute to the national consultations on the reform of the National Law on Youth, organized by the National Youth Institute (INJUVE), while a joint initiative by the Ministry of Labour and UNHCR on the employability of forcibly displaced and at-risk youth supported 208 young people to sign a five-month apprenticeship contract and enrol in the Salvadoran Social Security Institute. Finally, in **Thailand**, UNHCR trained over 30 authorities from the Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons and the Department of Children and Youth to sensitize officials on the Rohingya situation and to improve their ability to identify marginalized groups, including youth-at-risk, and provide appropriate assistance.

DAFI Undergraduate Scholarship recipient now works with Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR), a local community-based organization, which helps young women and youth in Kakuma Refugee camp (Kenya), acquiring digital education and online opportunities. © UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

▶ Communication and transparency (Action 3)

Women, men, girls, and boys of diverse backgrounds in all operations have access to timely, accurate, and relevant information on (i) their rights and entitlements, and (ii) UNHCR and its partners' programmes.

Core Action 3

At a minimum, all country-level protection and solution strategies will detail the operation's approach to communicating with women, men, girls and boys of diverse backgrounds, through means that are appropriate and accessible to all groups in a community.

Overview

In 2022, the increasing relaxation of restrictions that has impeded direct access to forcibly displaced and stateless people allowed UNHCR to resume the use of face-to-face channels of communication and participation. The necessary adaptation during COVID-19 led to the development and use of new and improved digital communication tools. As such, in 2022 UNHCR conducted global mapping of digital information and communication channels in 121 countries and the results revealed that:

- 40 per cent of operations have AAP focal points;
- More than 75 per cent of operations offer messaging app options;
- Less than 10 per cent offer self-services[25] ;
- 56 per cent have an information site available;
- 41 per cent operations have an in-house UNHCR-led hotline with 42 per cent of this subgroup being toll-free for users.

In 2022, UNHCR launched 15 new HELP sites while another 30 were in the pipeline, adding to 104 countries with a live HELP website by the end of the year. HELP websites are multi-thematic web pages where refugees and asylum seekers can find useful information on asylum procedures, on various specialized services offered by UNHCR and partners, as well as education and livelihood opportunities.

The analysis of HELP sites undertaken in the year 2022 indicated that these portals remain an important point of contact and information for refugees. There were over 14 million visits in 2022, with most visits made in three countries, namely Poland (5.7 million), Ukraine (1.7 million) and Turkiye (1.6 million)[26] .

UNHCR also dedicated substantive efforts to improving the content and accessibility of existing sites, while recognizing that accessibility and data protection represent areas for further investment. The efforts and role of UNHCR in this area were widely recognized by partners and counterparts, including at inter-agency level in the context of the IASC Working Group on AAP, while investment needs to continue and be supported.

The following section provides examples of UNHCR efforts to improve information provision and communication with affected people in several operations worldwide.

UNHCR practices for communication and transparency

In 2022, **UNHCR continued to enhance information sharing tailoring information to support AGD groups.** Operations provided a dedicated space on their country's UNHCR Help website to publicize safe services and organizations supporting LGBTIQ+ individuals in **Brazil**, **Ecuador** [27], **Greece**, **Guatemala**, **Italy**, **Kenya**, **Poland**, **Switzerland** and **Lichtenstein**, and **Tunisia**. In **Poland**, inspired by **Iran**, a child-friendly page has been created on their Help site dedicated to providing information to children and youth displaced from Ukraine.

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[25] Services that enable refugees to access services remotely (i.e. update records, register, etc.).
[26] Information provided by Google Analytics and available at the Global Help websites Dashboard.
[27] In Ecuador, nearly 12,000 people used the platform in the first three months, with 17 messages exchanged on average with each person.

UNHCR also rolled out and/or scaled up the use of digital tools. For example, UNHCR expanded the use of the WhatsApp/turn.io service, which supported conversations with over 60,000 unique users in total. By the end of 2022 there were 15 active lines, including in **Brazil**, **Chile**, **Ecuador**, **Mexico**, **Indonesia**, **Uganda**, **Sudan** and **Hungary** and preparations are underway in several countries in MENA and Europe. Since its establishment, the line in **Sudan** supported conversations with 517 unique users, 571 in **Indonesia** and the new line in **Hungary** reached 113 users. The lines in the Americas – which have been running for longer – supported conversations with 1,800 individuals in **Brazil**, 33,250 in **Ecuador** and 3,600 in **Chile**. Chatbots were also launched in **Costa Rica**, **El Salvador**, **Guatemala**, **Panama** and **Peru**.

In **Egypt**, UNHCR established WhatsApp communication channels with 143 refugee leaders and representatives, including women and youth, to strengthen two-way communication and identify and discuss community concerns. In **Angola**, UNHCR has also implemented a bulk-SMS project to expedite and make information accessible to refugees and to run quick surveys, reaching around 5,000 refugees of multiple nationalities

in Luanda and in other settlements. In **Mali**, the One household, one phone project trained 56 forcibly displaced and stateless persons, including women and youth group leaders, in digital literacy to strengthen communication and transparency with communities. At the end of the training, the participants received solar communication kits that enabled them to support UNHCR in sharing protection and assistance information and raising community concerns.

Importantly, **UNHCR is increasingly integrating forcibly displaced and stateless persons' preferences in the development and choice of communication channels.** For example, based on assessment and consultations with refugees, UNHCR launched its first official Telegram channel in **Hungary**, as well as in **Ukraine**, **Italy** and **Slovakia** with the four channels being already used by 14,428 subscribers. UNHCR **Tunisia** and the partner Conseil Tunisien pour les Réfugiés developed the Info-Access mobile application (App) and based on community consultations and expressed preferences. The app features multisectoral services mapping, an online feedback box, answers to frequently asked questions, updates on UNHCR activities, and informative videos.

Spotlight. Working with children

Overview

UNHCR estimated that children represented 40 per cent of all forcibly displaced people in 2022, putting them at the centre of UNHCR responses. In 2022, 78 per cent of country operations had child protection services available to forcibly displaced and stateless children. Households with children were also prioritized in livelihoods programmes as 71 per cent[28] of participants were members of households with at least one child aged 14 years or younger.

To ensure that children could play a role in and benefit fully from UNHCR programmes, methodologies for meaningful child participation were operationalized in emergency responses through deployments to **Chad**, **Ethiopia**, **Somalia**, and in the **Ukraine** response to **Poland**, **Moldova**, **Romania**, **Slovakia** and **Hungary**. Furthermore, results from the 2021 Global Survey on Registration, Biometrics, and Digital Identity, released in 2022, show that 72 per cent implemented procedures or training on interview techniques for registering children, among other AGD groups.

UNHCR also worked closely with communities and partners to design and deliver child protection services. The two-year UNHCR and UNICEF Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children running until the end of 2022 helped fostering the inclusion of refugee children in national plans, budgets and service delivery systems. The blueprint framework focussed on reinforced synergies and cooperation Child Protection,

Education, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) across 10 refugee-hosting countries where both UNHCR and UNICEF were active (**Bangladesh**, **Cameroon**, **Ecuador**, **Ethiopi**a, **Honduras**, **Indonesia**, **Iraq**, **Lebanon**, **Libya** and **Rwanda**). The results of this initiative and the lessons learned contributed to informing a new Partnership Framework between UNHCR and UNICEF, which entered into force in mid-2023.

A group of 10 children gather around a table at a local children's library, eagerly awaiting instructions for the 'Quest'. Sticks of colorful plasticine are handed out by the facilitators, as the rules of the game are explained.
© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

[28] The percentage refers to the 110 reporting countries. Both country and multi-country operations completed the survey. Multi-country operations completed the survey for each of the countries they covered.

In 2022, **joint work with national and local authorities has allowed UNHCR to strengthen child protection outcomes.** UNHCR supported the Government of **Burkina Faso** to roll out the digital civil registration tool (Icivil) to the Gourcy municipality in the Nord region, which facilitates birth registration and favour the prevention of statelessness, for example by allowing midwives to quickly create a notification of birth using a phone. Likewise, in refugee-hosting states of **Nigeria**, UNHCR, through its protection partners (Caritas, the Jesuit Refugee Service and the Foundation for Justice Development and Peace) facilitated the registration and issuance of 2,700 birth certificates in collaboration with the National Population Commission to reduce the risk of statelessness for young Cameroonian refugee children.

In **Thailand**, UNHCR worked closely with the Department of Children and Youth, International Organization for Migration and UNICEF to deliver a workshop on Alternatives to Detention Standard Operating Procedures and Child Protection in the context of Irregular Migration to 71 Thai officials, aimed at encouraging a more consistent application of these measures for mothers and children. UNHCR also took part in the technical working group of the National Health Commission Office to develop policy recommendations on the right to health for stateless children and youth. In **Moldova**, UNHCR supported the Government in developing special legislation to offer more protection to children. For example, in April 2022, the Commission for Exceptional Situations approved Order No. 34/169 to establish procedures for border crossings of unaccompanied children and children accompanied by "unauthorized companions". Also, on 5 May 2022, the Government approved Order No. 36 to establish a rapid assessment form to determine the best interests of at-risk children arriving from Ukraine.

Community-based mechanisms were leveraged across several UNHCR operations representing an effective approach to enhancing child protection and child engagement. In this regard, 39 operations applied community-based child protection mechanisms. In **India**, strengthened community-based child protection mechanisms, including 35 youth clubs, 17 adolescent boys and girls' groups, 81 children's groups and child protection committees, enabling children and youth to play an integral role in their protection through sharing information on child rights, child protection risks such as child marriage, child labour, harmful social and gender norms. In **Syria**, UNHCR implemented prevention activities through 280 child protection community-based structures in all 14 governorates, including child-friendly spaces, children's clubs and child marriage welfare committees, which were essential to spread information and awareness messages within the displaced and host communities. Enrolled members received training to identify children at risk and refer them to appropriate services. UNHCR in **Tanzania** had functioning Child Clubs and a Child parliament in two camps and foster parents' committees, while in **Malawi**, UNHCR trained 310 volunteers, caregivers and child-friendly space workers on children's rights, positive parenting and identification of children at risk.

Finally, **UNHCR continued to invest in the capacities of staff and partners to effectively manage the Best Interests Procedure (BIP).** In **South Sudan**, UNHCR facilitated eight training courses for staff and partners on the BIP and supported the Best Interests Determination (BID) committees, which managed the cases of 648 refugee boys and 973 girls at heightened risk in 2022. Moreover, 18,502 children participated in community-based recreational and child protection programmes and a total of 49 Child-Friendly Spaces were supported by UNHCR and its partners. In **Pakistan**, 723 children at heightened risk were supported with best interest procedures. UNHCR and partners also conducted training and sessions for 6,365 community members to increase their knowledge and awareness of child protection and child rights.

▶ Feedback and response (Action 4)

> **Formal and informal feedback from persons of concern to UNHCR is systematically received and responded to, with corrective action taken as appropriate.**

Core Action 4

> **At a minimum, all UNHCR operations will establish and promote feedback and response systems, including for confidential complaints.**

Overview

In 2022, 69 per cent of countries reported they had a multi-channel feedback and response system designed based on consultations with forcibly displaced and stateless people (compared to 65 per cent in 2021). UNHCR also developed common feedback tools to support country operations in the collection, referral and analysis of feedback, which were tested in six country operations (**Colombia**, **Uganda**, **Rwanda**, **Kenya**, **Malaysia** and **Türkiye**). Tools included feedback forms, processing SOPs and guidance on the analysis of feedback. These efforts aimed to differentiate and systemize feedback and response mechanisms and to ensure that individuals, in all their diversity, have access to modalities to provide feedback to be used to inform UNHCR programming.

In reinforcing feedback and response mechanisms, UNHCR leveraged preferred and trusted communication channels and made efforts to introduce innovative approaches. In this regard, the UNHCR synthesis of evidence on AAP, released in 2022, shows that almost half of all UNHCR Innovation Fund projects from 2016–2020 focused on testing new approaches to feedback, access to information, or inclusion of affected people. Further, in 2022, post-distribution monitoring of CBI reached almost 22,600 Households in 53 countries and contributed to shaping interventions and the formulation of the new UNHCR CBI Policy.

UNHCR practices for feedback and response

In 2022, **UNHCR scaled up operational support to establish feedback and response mechanisms in the context of new emergencies**. Five dedicated Protection officers (AAP) supported the Ukraine Refugee Situation Response to establish multiple communication channels and feedback and response mechanisms. Examples include child-friendly feedback and response mechanisms in **Poland**; the identification of the Government hotline as one of the community's preferred and trusted sources in **Moldova**; as well as the reallocation of resources to support and improve the hotline in **Hungary**[29]. In **Ukraine**, UNHCR also increased the capacity of Donbas SOS to manage the hotline that served as a feedback and response mechanism while 194,183 calls on cash assistance were received. In this context, UNHCR also increased the capacity of the NGO Donbas SOS to manage the hotline that served as a feedback and response mechanism, which received 194,183 calls on cash assistance. In **Chad**, training on AAP, PSEA and fraud prevention – with a focus on the importance of feedback and response mechanisms – was conducted for refugee leaders in three camps.

In 2022, **several UNHCR operations also focused their efforts on making feedback and response mechanism more effective**. In **Ethiopia**, UNHCR carried out a mapping of feedback and response mechanisms and conducted an analysis which helped to identify strengths and weaknesses of the data flow and reporting, data utilization, and data sharing processes. A core group of AAP focal points was then established

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[29] also covering Slovakia and the Czech Republic

to enhance expertise and knowledge of AAP, while each sub-office developed work plans to reinforce their AAP interventions. In **Syria**, UNHCR helped partners develop an action plan and review their SOPs on feedback and response mechanisms to align them with UNHCR guidelines, while building their capacities in managing such systems. UNHCR systematized feedback and response mechanisms and improved data management in **Afghanistan**, with the intent to better use feedback to inform programming. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific also carried out an in-depth analysis of the use and implementation of feedback and response mechanisms and supported the adoption of common feedback templates for more effective data collection and analysis. Action plans were then developed jointly with country operation teams in **Myanmar**, **Afghanistan** and **Iran**, including reviews of their standard operating procedures. Furthermore, the Regional Bureau supported the expansion of the hotline in **Bangladesh** (Cox's Bazar) and facilitated cross-learning on call centres for **Iran**, **Pakistan**, **India and Myanmar**.

In **Uganda**, UNHCR collaborated with the International Rescue Committee and with the School of Advanced Study of the University of London to raise awareness of the inter-agency helpline through a series of seven short podcasts, which also covered feedback. Dissemination was achieved though "boda boda talk talk" at the Bidibidi settlement as part of a six-month pilot project, which resulted in the doubling of calls to the inter-agency helpline at the end of Quarter 2 (from 558 to 1,028) compared to the start of the project. Finally, in **Mozambique**, UNHCR supported the Community Engagement-AAP Working Group to conduct and Impact Assessment Survey on the Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms in five provinces and the recommendations are to inform the strategy of the working group and to guide the working group to address the identified gaps.

UNHCR staff and partner, AIDES, get ready to distribute non-food items to 250 internally displaced families with heightened protection risks in South Kivu, DRC, to complement shelter assistance.
© UNHCR/Antonia Vadala

Spotlight. Working with minorities and indigenous peoples

Overview

Despite the presence of international instruments[30] safeguarding the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, the risk of discrimination, human rights violations, especially in situations of forced displacement, remains significant. Furthermore, minority groups and indigenous peoples are at a heightened risk of statelessness. It is estimated that 75 per cent of the world's known stateless populations belong to ethnic, religious, or linguistic minority groups.[31] Lack of documentation may stem from discrimination in countries of origin and/or lack of access to documentation services, which are unlikely to be available in remote areas, and accessibility of information.

UNHCR is committed to upholding the rights – both individual and collective – of forcibly displaced and stateless persons who are members of minorities and indigenous peoples, without discrimination. At global level, UNHCR worked to update the Need to Know Guidance on Working with Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, in collaboration with the Minority Rights Group Initiative and UNHCR staff across regional bureaux and operations.

Field practices

In 2022, **several operations worked alongside indigenous peoples and minorities to deliver assistance and enhance inclusion and non-discrimination**. In **Guatemala**, UNHCR partnered with the Mayan association and networks of indigenous women and youth in Livingston, Izabal, to strengthen their leadership in areas with high violence rates, mitigate protection risks, and identify entrepreneurship opportunities. In **Brazil**, UNHCR co-led the creation of the Warao Indigenous Leadership School[32] to expand access to information and promote greater autonomy among the Warao indigenous communities living in Belém and Ananindeu. UNHCR also contributed to establishing the Youth Sustainability Committee, 12 out of 20 of whose young members represented indigenous peoples (Warao, Enhepa and Pemon). In **Chile**, UNHCR strengthened the infrastructure space of the indigenous women-led Aymara Organization in Colchane, an organization of local women artisans and farmers who sell their products. In **Colombia**, UNHCR spearheaded collaborative projects with Afro-descendant and indigenous organizations such as the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia – ONIC, Asociación Nacional de Afrocolombianos Desplazados – AFRODES, and National Afro-Colombian Peace Council – CONPA.

In **Indonesia** the refugee leadership structure, which was elected in 2022, consisted of 9 females (34 per cent) and 17 males (66 per cent), who represented different nationalities, including those in the minority in Indonesia, while in **Yemen** UNHCR supported community-based protection networks composed of internally displaced persons and members of host communities with diverse backgrounds, including marginalized minority groups such as the Muhamasheen.

To address the heightened risk of statelessness among indigenous peoples and minorities, UNHCR also worked with national and local authorities to enhance registration and provide assistance and services. Around 500 Sama Bajao people, an indigenous ethnic group in the **Philippines** who are at heightened risk of statelessness due to their itinerant lifestyle, were provided with birth certificates by the Department of Justice, the local government, UNHCR and UNICEF. The birth registration project is part of the UNHCR-UNICEF Joint Strategy to End Childhood Statelessness, which aligns with the country's National Action Plan to End Statelessness. In **Venezuela**, UNHCR, the Civil Registry Office, the Office of the Ombudsperson and HIAS supported late birth registration and issuance of birth certificates for children of the indigenous Pemon people, members of the community of Uroy Uray in Bolivar State, who had reported obstacles to accessing birth registration in the past. Furthermore, throughout 2022, UNHCR supported the organization of mobile registration efforts in remote areas of Apure, Zulia and Bolivar States to facilitate (late) birth registration procedures, thereby ensuring access to nationality rights.

In the **Republic of the Congo**, UNHCR supported the Ministry of Justice's mobile courts in issuing 558 birth certificates to indigenous and local populations in Likouala and Sangha departments. It also provided computers to civil registry centres to support birth registration and organized a capacity-building workshop in Cuvette department for 125 civil status officials. In **Serbia**, UNHCR signed a grant agreement with the Roma-led Association of Coordinators for Roma Issues (Asocijacija koordinatora za romska pitanja) for a project using theatre to facilitate the inclusion of Roma and internally displaced persons in the country. In **El Salvador**, UNHCR worked together with the Ministry of Culture and local municipalities on the launch of five municipal ordinances on Indigenous Peoples' Rights. The initiative aimed to promote integral economic, social, and cultural development and effective participation in the exercise of civil and political rights in territories in which indigenous peoples are established.

Members of the Benet indigenous community watch Mount Elgon forest, their ancestral homeland, from their resettlement site in Kween District, Uganda. The community is stateless, leaving its members without access to National ID cards and basic rights and services. © UNHCR/Esther Ruth Mbabazi

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[30] Declaration on Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) and the subsequent Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

[31] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Background Note on Discrimination in Nationality Laws and Statelessness, 20 October 2021, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/616fda104.html.

[32] The school is a partnership between UNHCR, the International Institute of Education of Brazil (IEB), the Federal Public Defender's Office (DPU) and the State Public Defender's Office in Pará (DPE-PA). Classes are conducted at the University Center of the State of Pará (CESUPA)

▶ Organizational learning and adaptation (Action 5)

Interventions, planning, priority setting, course corrections, and evaluation are informed on an ongoing basis by the views of persons of concern.

Core Action 5

At a minimum, UNHCR operations will adapt programmes and strategies in response to input from persons of concern to UNHCR, and document this in Country Operations plans and annual reporting.

Overview

Two-way communication with displaced and stateless communities and with organizations that represent them, as well as the use of feedback and response mechanisms, generate a wealth of information that UNHCR can use to enhance organizational learning, inform and adapt programmes and activities and better respond to the needs and priorities of forcibly displaced and stateless persons of different age, gender and diversity characteristics.

This potential still needs to be fully realized. UNHCR conducted a review of 17 independent evaluations (conducted between 2018 and 2022) to synthesize findings, assess progress and consolidate learning in AAP approaches. The secondary data review highlighted that UNHCR still faces gaps in terms of "closing the feedback loop" and ensuring programme adaptation based on feedback.

Those results were confirmed by the initial findings of the AGD longitudinal evaluation, which suggested that UNHCR still needs to make progress in utilizing information and feedback from communities fully and in a timely manner when designing and adapting plans and programme implementation.

UNHCR has started to address some of these identified gaps. The necessity of consulting with communities and using their feedback to inform programming was systematically incorporated into key guidance tools such as the UNHCR Programme Handbook, set for release in 2023, as well as in other Policies addressing planning, prioritization, course correction and evaluation of UNHCR programmes.

Similarly, efforts are being invested in developing digital solutions to systematize more effectively the results of the periodic participatory assessments, as well as the analysis of individual feedback, to be able to use such findings in a timely manner in the planning, programming and reporting cycle.

At global level, UNHCR took deliberate steps to incorporate the insights and contributions of displaced and stateless individuals into shaping some of the organization's initiatives. For instance, refugees played a pivotal role in co-designing the Refugee-Led Innovation Fund, which was launched in 2022. Drawing from valuable lessons derived from UNHCR collaboration with an Interim Advisory Group (IAG) of organizations led by displaced and stateless people, a methodology was jointly developed with the IAG to select the members of a succeeding Advisory Board representing displaced and stateless individuals. UNHCR actively sought input from the Advisory Board during formulation of the forthcoming Child Protection Policy and other guidance relating to meaningful participation and localization.

As another concrete illustration of the use of feedback, the findings from the cash post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercise, which involved some 28,200 respondents across 52 countries and revealed a significant preference for cash assistance, informed the new UNHCR Cash Policy (2022–2026) encouraging operations to prioritize cash assistance to the greatest extent possible.

When designing or strengthening communication channels with forcibly displaced or stateless persons, UNHCR considers communities' preferences and diversifies or prioritizes the range of tools accordingly. For example, after noticing through assessment and consultations that WhatsApp was not the most popular

messaging application for many individuals fleeing Ukraine, UNHCR explored options to use alternative channels such as Telegram and Viber.

Similar efforts were made to ensure that learning from evaluations is informed by inputs from the people with and for whom UNHCR works. As standard practice, in all evaluations, UNHCR Evaluation Services include inputs received through interviews and surveys with forcibly displaced and stateless people. For instance, 891 interviews informed the longitudinal evaluation of the UNHCR AGD Policy, while a survey of 1,349 refugees was conducted for evaluation of the Level 3 Emergency declared for the Ukraine Refugee Response.

UNHCR practices for organizational learning and adaptation

In 2022, **adaptation and learning based on the engagement of forcibly displaced and stateless persons throughout the programming phases, allowed UNHCR to deliver activities that effectively met their needs, particularly of the most marginalized groups**. In **Greece**, the 2022 Participatory Assessment focused on people with disabilities, older persons and LGBTIQ+ individuals, as their needs had not been sufficiently reflected in the previous exercises. The

feedback received from the communities led to UNHCR engagement with Athens Municipality to extend the provision of assistive devices to persons with disabilities in camps under its urban programme. In **Italy**, UNHCR worked in partnership with Save the Children to carry out focus group discussions with children, youth and volunteer guardians, as well as a series of round tables and bilateral consultations with relevant stakeholders. As consultations revealed gaps in psychosocial support services, UNHCR designed and piloted the first psychosocial clinic in Rome and introduced psychosocial support for children in three other cities.

Integrating the views and priorities of forcibly displaced and stateless persons was also key in making UNHCR plans and strategies better fit for purpose. In **Ecuador**, participatory assessments and a mapping of 300 grass-roots organizations, including 80 RLOs and 20 WLOs, informed a localization strategy and contributed to changing CBI delivery modalities and livelihoods interventions, based on preferences and risks expressed by the people engaged. In five Provinces of **Mozambique**, the UNHCR-led inter-agency Community Engagement & Accountability Working Group carried out an impact assessment survey on complaints and feedback mechanisms. As a follow-up action, specific indicators were integrated into the UNHCR operation M&E framework to monitor the participation of affected populations throughout the project implementation cycle.

A young child plays at their home's entrance in Guatemala.
© UNHCR/Nicolo Filippo Rosso

A great-grandmother and her great-grand daughter staying in one of the collective centres in the west of Ukraine, after they were evacuated from their village due to heavy fighting and shelling. © UNHCR/Igor Karpenko

I.iii Advancing gender equality (Action 6)

Advancing gender equality is a commitment for the whole organization, as stated in the UNHCR Strategic Directions for 2022–2026 and in the AGD Policy. The Strategic Directions emphasize the importance of accountability to forcibly displaced persons, particularly women and children, and reaffirm UNHCR priorities, such as strengthening GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response. Importantly, in the context of the new UNHCR Results Framework, gender equality is one of four Global Impact Areas. Progress on gender equality is also reflected and assessed under Outcome Areas 4 and 7 of the strategic framework (Gender-based violence; Community engagement and

women's empowerment, respectively). Additionally, gender mainstreaming across outcome areas ensures that UNHCR can assess the differential impact that crises have on women and girls, as well as the gains made. The 2022 UNHCR Global Appeal identified funding requirements of $271 million to address GBV, women's empowerment and protection of women and girls, which are key to operationalizing the five core actions on gender equality in the 2018 AGD Policy. The following subsections, structured around the various components of Core Action 6 of the AGD Policy, outline UNHCR efforts to directly implement or mainstream gender equality across all operations.

Women and girls' participation and inclusion (Action 6a)

A. Women and girls participate equally and meaningfully in all decision-making, community management and leadership structures, and committees of persons of concern to UNHCR.

Core Action 6A

At a minimum, UNHCR operations will ensure 50 per cent female participants in management and leadership structures under UNHCR's authority, and will advocate the same with partners, including governments.

Overview

The enjoyment by women and girls of equal rights and opportunities for participation and inclusion, benefits the whole community. To promote and reinforce this

principle, in 2022 UNHCR became a board member of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. UNHCR participation in this initiative seeks to enhance the inclusion of forcibly displaced women in the Women Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) and to tap into funding for WLO and RLOs. Importantly, UNHCR provided advice to the Fund on

flexible funding modalities for non-legally registered RLOs, which received about 29 per cent of Fund funding. UNHCR also continued to contribute to the work of the Compact on Women, Peace and Security in Humanitarian Action by supporting development of the Compact's framework indicators and by sharing best practices on GBV and AAP. It encouraged WLOs, including those led by refugee women and girls, to become members of the various GBV sub-working groups present at national and sub-national level in major refugee operations. As a result, the presence of WLO in refugee settings increased by 57 per cent in 2022 compared to 2021[33].

Women and girls' participation and inclusion were also the central focus of the 2022 UNHCR Annual NGO Innovation Award. Seven women and/or girl-led organizations emerged as winners and presented their work during the 2022 UNHCR Global NGO Consultations. Similarly, the Regional Bureau for Europe maintained its partnership with New Women's Connectors, a regional RLO/WLO focusing on training and supporting other RLOs and refugee rights advocates in the region on enhancing their networking, leadership and advocacy skills.

UNHCR launched a global sport survey showing that 120 of 190 sport-related partnerships in 45 countries promote the inclusion of women and girls. In education, the DAFI evaluation released in 2022 highlighted that "DAFI selection committee/selection panels with at least 35 per cent representation of women are better balanced and more likely to produce gender-balanced pools of beneficiaries". Consequently, the programme guidelines instruct that all Selection Committees should comprise equal numbers of women and men.

UNHCR field practices for women and girls' participation

UNHCR continued to invest in enhancing women and girls' leadership and representation in community structures. In **India**, women's participation in leadership structures increased from about 41 per cent in 2021 to about 52 per cent in 2022, while in **Zimbabwe** and **Kenya**, 50 per cent representation of women was achieved in leadership and management structures at camp level. In **South Sudan**, community and women's centres were constructed in Mangalla, Ayakakat, Malek and Tonj, providing spaces for community exchange and peer support, as well as women's empowerment initiatives. In **Burkina Faso**, host community women and internally displaced women represented 50 per cent and 41 per cent respectively of the members of community structures and in Kaya, the proactivity of women leaders in the local community encouraged the implementation of the Digital Inclusion Project. In

Bangladesh, UNHCR promoted women's leadership, and more than 70 of the current 150 elected camp representative members are women. Relationships were also built with over 700 women religious teachers across all the camps to engage women in key protection discussions at community level. In **Indonesia**, UNHCR coordinated an awareness-raising campaign on women representatives in leadership structures by collaborating with 15 refugee-led organizations, three of which were women-led.

Several operations carried out joint work with women and girls' organizations to promote inclusion and participation. In **Ukraine**, around 50 per cent of the community-based organizations supported through UNHCR partners Tenth of April and Crimea SOS were WLOs. In **Pakistan**, UNHCR supported 66 community-led initiatives in Islamabad, Punjab and Sindh, Quetta and Peshawar, with women leading 36 per cent of these projects. In **Jordan**, UNHCR and its partners established four Women Empowerment Networks in Mafraq, Amman, Irbid and Maan. Each network comprises members from different backgrounds and age groups, including people with disabilities, refugees of all nationalities and Jordanian women. In **Zimbabwe**, UNHCR and its partners strengthened the Adolescent Girls empowerment programme, by establishing a teenage mother support group and by promoting literacy classes for young teenage mothers.

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[33] WPS report

Spotlight. Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons (LGBTIQ+)

Overview

Contextual factors, like criminalizing national legislation, conservative social environments, discrimination in access to international protection, limited specialized services, etc. continue to affect the protection and assistance available to LGBTIQ+ displaced and stateless persons. These factors often put LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum-seekers in a hosting country in an equal – or sometimes worse – situation than in the country from where they fled.

UNHCR continued to address the protection risks and needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals as part of its inclusive programming and building on several of the recommendations of the 2021 Roundtable on LGBTIQ+ in situations of forced displacement. In particular, UNHCR continued to invest in enhancing the capacity and knowledge of its workforce and partners, mainstreaming LGBTIQ+ considerations into programming and engaging with local LGBTIQ+ organizations to expand services and rely on their knowledge and expertise.

An analysis of 2022 ARRs indicated that over 40 per cent of country and multi-country operations [44/104] reported implementing various activities addressing the needs of LGBTIQ+ persons, while 38 out of 104 multi-country operations had integrated consideration of the needs of LGBTIQ+ persons into their 2023 strategies designed in the planning phase. During the second half of 2022, UNHCR also started to carry out a consultative stocktaking process, engaging more than 80 UNHCR staff, at various levels, to assess the level of progress against the recommendations addressed to the organization during the 2021 Roundtable. The report of the stocktaking exercise[34] highlighted several achievements in various fields of activities (capacity development for staff and partners, more inclusive health and GBV services, cooperation with grass-roots organizations, investment in communication and advocacy), as well as areas in which further investment is required, such as data collection and capacity development of partners and staff. Efforts to increase the capacity of UNHCR staff continued, including through a foundational online course that was completed by more than 800 UNHCR personnel by the end of 2022 (from 150 at the end of 2021).

During the year in review, UNHCR also carried out two regional learning initiatives, with a blended on-line and in-person programme, for 30 staff and partners in the **Asia and the Pacific region,** specifically targeting protection staff responding to the Afghanistan situation, and a second for 40 participants, including partners and representatives of RLOs, in the **Americas**. The Regional Bureau for **Southern Africa** organized a regional training programme on processing asylum claims based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In the **MENA region**, UNHCR launched a diversity project on the protection and safety of LGBTIQ+ persons in displacement, which included the establishment of a network of focal points including civil society organizations, to promote learning and information exchanges.

Field practices

UNHCR continued to develop and leverage partnerships with LGBTIQ+ and LGBTIQ+-led organizations across its operations. In **South Africa**, UNHCR, in coordination with three LGBTIQ+ organizations, piloted the Bridging the Gap initiative focusing on school completion for 25 transgender people. Participants received financial assistance, equipment, psychosocial support and three months of tutoring to prepare for primary and high school exams. In addition, Cape Town-based organization People Against Suffering, Suppression, Oppression, and Poverty (PASSOS) was selected by the Refugee-led Innovation Fund to amplify its innovative work to boost the social inclusion of LGBTIQ+ refugees through sport and build bridges between displaced and host communities.

In **Ukraine**, UNHCR worked with five national LGBTIQ+ organizations and WLOs – Rokada, Insight, Neemia, The Tenth of April and Proliska – to implement inclusive GBV services. In **Chile** UNHCR signed a partnership agreement with Colectiva Manifiesta, a local LGBTIQ+ organization that works with refugees and migrants; in Santiago and Antofagasta, through the Business Unusual Fund of UNAIDS, the local organization Círculo de Apoyo Positivo carried out outreach and prevention activities, rapid testing and peer group gatherings. In **Malaysia**, a working group was set up with local LGBTIQ+ NGOs to increase referrals and access to services.

"WHOEVER, WHEREVER, WHENEVER EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO SEEK SAFETY." UNHCR campaign for the World Refugee day 2022. © UNHCR

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[34] While published in 2023, it includes several aspects of activities and interventions carried out during the reporting year 2022, some of which are also included in this report.

UNHCR also invested in raising awareness of the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons and in strengthening the capacities of authorities to uphold these rights. For example, following the request of the authorities in **Lithuania**, three SOGIESC training events were organized for 42 social workers, border guards and other staff of reception facilities to create a more inclusive and protection-sensitive environment. In **El Salvador**, UNHCR partner COMCAVIS Trans facilitated 10 workshops on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics, targeting 358 government officials (128 women and 118 men). In **Guatemala**, UNHCR worked with the Refugee Status Recognition Department of the Guatemalan Migration Institute in drafting a document on the situation and the profiles of people at risk fleeing Nicaragua and Venezuela, including LGBTIQ+ individuals. The documents were submitted to the National Commission for Refugees in September 2022 and are currently part of the information used for case analysis in Guatemala. In **Canada**, UNHCR provided input on Immigration and Refugee Board guidelines relating to SOGIESC claims and children.

UNHCR continued to provide inclusive assistance and services for LGBTIQ+ persons. In **Kenya**, the UNHCR health-care partner at Kakuma refugee camp continued to manage a drop-in centre, which serves as a safe space for LGBTIQ+ refugees to seek health care, while in Nairobi LGBTIQ+ asylum-seekers and refugees are enrolled in the Government's National Health Insurance Fund, which provides access to low-cost health care in national facilities. LGBTIQ+ refugees are recruited to work in health-care facilities in refugee camps, for example as health and peer educators and contact tracers, to ensure proximity and confidence in access to services. In **Colombia**, UNHCR coordinated with the public health departments of Medellin to strengthen protocols for the provision of health services to LGBTIQ+ persons requiring emergency or specialized services. With the partner Caribe Afirmativo, a dedicated guide for dignified and effective health care for trans women and non-binary refugees was compiled and disseminated through UNHCR staff, public institutions, and civil society. These efforts were complemented with emergency cash assistance to LGBTIQ+ persons for urgent protection needs. in Colombia UNHCR cooperated with the National Ombudsperson's Office for Women's Rights and Gender Issues in providing orientation to public officials in 3 departments.

A UNHCR staff member assists an older woman as she is about to board a bus carrying refugees from Ukraine at the border between Slovenia and Italy. A UNHCR team at the border provides information on asylum procedures and identifies people with specific needs.
© UNHCR/Dario Bosio

▶ Individual registration and documentation documentation (Action 6b)

B. Women and girls are provided with individual registration and documentation, directly or through support provided by UNHCR.

Core Action 6B

At a minimum, UNHCR will provide women and girls of concern with protection documentation on an individual basis, and will advocate the same with partners, including governments.

Overview

The UNHCR Results Framework tracks progress on registration and individual documentation under Outcome Area 1 – Access to territory, registration, and documentation. Overall, in 2022, nearly three million men, women, girls and boys were newly registered in 107 countries where UNHCR supported registration and individual documentation. Women and girls represented 58 per cent of new individuals registered in proGres who were issued with individual documents.

Results from the 2021 Global Survey on Registration, Biometrics, and Digital Identity, published in 2022, also show that in 71 per cent (74/104[35]) of countries, children were issued individual identity credentials and that in 65 per cent (72/110) of country operations, asylum-seeker and refugee women did not face challenges with birth registration.

UNHCR practices for the registration and documentation of women and Girls

UNCHR ensured access for women and girls to non-discriminatory registration and documentation by enhancing gender-sensitive procedures. In **Syria**, UNHCR partner awareness sessions on civil documentation included sessions focusing on women's rights and obligations arising from marriage, divorce, death, financial inheritance, widow's benefits, birth, child custody under Syrian law and access to property according to the applicable laws. In **Egypt**, women-headed households are mostly registered by female staff and women and girls are prioritized for registration interviews along with other at-risk populations. Likewise, in the **Republic of North Macedonia**, women seeking asylum are also registered

individually by the authorities and provided with individual documentation, which includes individual integration plans for those granted international protection and access to integration measures on an individual basis (employment measures, training sessions, etc.). Gender-sensitive Refugee Status Determination procedures are in place and women are assigned same-gender caseworkers.

Statelessness

Overall, 32,426 stateless persons gained a nationality or had it confirmed in 2022. UNHCR also continued to support the elimination of gender discrimination from these processes and legislative frameworks given that 24 countries continue to prevent women from conferring nationality to their children on an equal basis with men. Most recently, Liberia removed these gender discriminatory provisions, making it the third country to do so, after Madagascar and Sierra Leone, since the launch of the #IBelong Campaign in 2014. To advance this agenda, the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, UNHCR and UNICEF co-hosted a multi-stakeholder conference in Cyprus on gender-equal nationality rights, which drew over 60 representatives from 17 Arab states. The conference enhanced participants' understanding of the benefits of gender-equal nationality rights, learned about regional best practices and exchanged ideas about possible actions at country and regional level. At country level, for example, UNHCR worked with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency in **Thailand** on activities aimed at strengthening access to legal identity and resolving statelessness for older persons. The UNHCR partner implemented mobile legal support activities and used awareness-raising media to ensure that a diverse range of stateless individuals, including some in remote locations and with limited mobility, would be able to receive assistance.

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[35] The survey covered 110 countries in total, but 6 countries reported no new issuance of individual identity credentials.

▶ Equal access to and control over assistance (Action 6c)

> **C. Women and girls have equal access to and control over the management and provision of food, core relief items, and cash-based interventions.**

Core Action 6C

> **Depending on the context, UNHCR operations will increase the percentage of women who are the primary recipients of assistance within households receiving material and/or cash-based assistance.**

Overview

Equal access to and management of assistance is key to advancing women's roles within the household and in their community. This principle, already embedded in the UNHCR AGD Policy, was also highlighted in the new CBI Policy 2022–2026. The Policy suggests that UNHCR work closely with forcibly displaced persons of diverse profiles in the planning, delivery and monitoring of CBI to advance gender equality and mitigate gender-specific protection risks. In 2022, 51 per cent of the 10 million recipients of cash assistance were women. In line with the CBI Policy commitment to inclusion, some 80 per cent of cash recipients received cash through digital means in 2022 including some 32 per cent through their own bank and/or mobile money accounts. This is a pathway to further financial inclusion of women.

In 2022, approximately 832,800 families received food, and other relief items such as shelter kits and cash, using the Global Distribution Tool[36] and, within these families, women were the primary recipients of assistance in 55 per cent of cases.

UNHCR practices on access, control and management of food, relief and cash-based interventions

In **Djibouti** women were the main recipients of aid provided by UNHCR within their households. Substantial cash assistance was also distributed to all women and girls of childbearing age for their monthly hygienic needs (7,910 women and girls between 12 and 49 years old). In **Kenya** and **India** the principle of gender equality was embedded in CBI programming and the selection of recipients, such that the specific needs of women and girls, including GBV survivors, were prioritized. In India, UNHCR also provided sanitary materials to 21,830 women and girls and dignity kits to 12,022 women and girls. In Kenya all women and girls of reproductive age in the major refugee camps of Kakuma and Dadaab, including women with disabilities, received sanitary materials. The use of proGres by field staff was instrumental in implementing targeted activities such as the distribution of personal hygiene kits to women and girls of reproductive age in **Sudan**.

In **Ecuador**, UNHCR strengthened differentiated CBI mechanisms ensuring that women were the primary recipients and adjusting internal procedures to strengthen safe GBV referral systems. In **Tajikistan**, refugee women took an active role in activities, including overseeing the distribution of food and hygiene kits. In **Albania**, UNHCR increased the proportion of women as the primary recipients of cash assistance within households to 48 per cent, providing them with greater opportunities to participate in decision-making on resource allocation. In **Yemen**, cash assistance prioritized persons with specific needs as key recipients of cash assistance with 51 per cent of assisted being internally displaced women and girls with protection needs and 71 per cent of multipurpose cash recipients being refugee women. In **El Salvador**, about 58 per cent of cash recipients were women.

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[36] This is operational in 26 countries and facilitates the efficient distribution of assistance to forcibly displaced populations by UNHCR and its partners

▶ Equal economic opportunities (Action 6d)

> **D. Women and girls have equal access to economic opportunities, including decent work and quality education and services.**

Core Action 6D

> **At a minimum, UNHCR will ensure women and girls have equal access to the livelihood, education, and health programmes it delivers, and will advocate with partners, including governments, for their equal access to public services.**

Overview

In 2022, UNHCR reported about 62 per cent of women **participation in livelihood and economic interventions** globally – an eight percent increase from 2021 (54 per cent). In addition, 25 per cent of the 25 UNHCR country operations using UNHCR Livelihoods Information System, reported the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons. Through MADE51, the UNHCR global collaborative initiative to connect fair-trade refugee-made products with international markets, 35 local social enterprise partners in 23 countries worked directly with over 3,700 refugee and host community artisans in 2022. Approximately 85 per cent of the refugee artisans are women.

Education also remained central to advancing gender equality in UNHCR operations. For example, 48 per cent of the formerly out-of-school children newly enrolled in primary school under the Educate A Child Programme were girls in 2022 (46 per cent in 2021). UNHCR is also implementing the Connected Learning Programme, which provides more women and girls with the opportunity to pursue education through online digital platforms.

At tertiary level, UNHCR continued to support forcibly displaced and stateless people through the DAFI Programme, with an average of 43 per cent of DAFI scholarship recipients supported being women in 2022. An independent evaluation of DAFI (1992–2021, with a focus on the period 2015–2020) found that the programme was highly effective in facilitating the completion of undergraduate degrees with low gender differentials. UNHCR has also increased scholarships for refugee women through the 15by30 Programme and aims to achieve 15 per cent enrolment by 2023.

To champion gender equality in **health**, UNHCR worked with 9,387 Community Health Workers (51 per cent women, 49 per cent men) in 40 countries, who engaged with communities to foster healthy living, supported emergency response during communicable disease outbreaks, provided basic treatment and linked refugees to health facilities and other services. As a result, 115,488 women were provided with access to skilled birth attendants and 82,168 pregnant women received four or more antenatal (during pregnancy) consultations. Coverage of complete antenatal care was 72 per cent. Likewise, 36 UNHCR operations in 2022 supported programmes to improve services for adolescents and youth in refugee settings and 23 operations trained health-care providers in the clinical management of rape. Women and girls were also most likely to attend consultations: data from 21 countries using the UNHCR iRHIS showed that 57 per cent of the more than 8.2 million consultations were for women and girls.

In 2022, women were the majority in the consultations for mental, neurological and substance use conditions, as shown in the health facilities reporting in the iRHIS (54 per cent versus 46 per cent out of 146,166 consultations). On capacity development, UNHCR and UNFPA jointly developed a Training of Trainer package on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings, which focuses on the needs of women and girls and integrates the needs of LGBTIQ+ persons as a cross-cutting theme. Furthermore, the Toolkit for Multisectoral Action Planning for Prevention and Risk Mitigation of Suicide in Refugee Settings was released, which addresses and integrates gender and diversity considerations throughout the tool and with targeted recommendations for prevention and case management.

UNHCR practices on access to opportunities

In 2022,[37] UNHCR **livelihoods and economic inclusion** programmes had a positive impact on the employment rate of women (baseline 64 per cent/endline 65 per cent) and men (baseline 63 per cent/endline 68 per cent)[38]. For example, in **Brazil**, a joint initiative between UNHCR, the United Nations Global Compact Local Network and UN Women has supported refugee women empowerment since 2016, by increasing employability through training and access to employment. In 2022, 102 refugee women were trained, 58 employed in addition to 30 family members, and 255 relocated through the internal voluntary relocation. The Refugee Entrepreneurs platform, an initiative by UNHCR and the United Nations Global Compact Brazil, supports more than 130 refugee small businesses across the country, more than half of which are led by women. In **Uganda**, UNHCR, in partnership with Swisscontact and in collaboration with the Government, convened and facilitated private sector companies to provide training on mushroom production, extension services and access to markets for 1,168 refugees, 61 per cent of them women. Similarly, in **Afghanistan,** UNHCR supported 31,465 individuals with business start-ups and 3,760 individuals with entrepreneurship and business support, either through cash grants or in-kind assistance; 64 per cent of recipients were women-led activities. In this context, UNHCR also conducted a comprehensive market system analysis in partnership with ILO to identify constraints hindering job creation and inclusive growth, with a particular focus on women, which will inform programme design in 2023.

A second product collaboration with UNIQLO brought over 5,300 beaded pieces made by **South Sudanese** women to UNIQLO customers worldwide. According to an impact assessment, 53 per cent of the order value went to artisan payments, which refugee women reported using to support household expenditure. In **Argentina**, in alliance with the Government of Buenos Aires city, UNHCR launched a scholarship programme – Nosotras Conectadas ("We Connected Women") – for a virtual training in programming delivered by specialized institutions in the technological-digital field targeting 160 refugee, migrant and other vulnerable women who will receive certification demonstrating their skills to work on the front-end and back-end of web development. In **Georgia**, in Abkhazia, 40 per cent of grants disbursed to individual farmers were allocated to women, while active farmers groups reached almost equal representation of women and men.

Country operations that enhanced gender equality in and through **education** include **Ethiopia**, where only 20 percent of the 19,587 students enrolled are girls; early marriage and pregnancies are two key factors lowering transition rates from primary school. Based on evidence from an Action Research programme, UNHCR and the implementing partner Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission established a school-based baby-care centre at a secondary school within the Kule Refugee camp (Gambella), going on to expand the initiative to two additional camps. Awareness campaigns on girls' education and gender equity in education, child rights and protection were also run alongside the distribution of dignity kits and teacher training in gender-sensitive pedagogy. This package of interventions led to an increase in teenage mothers' re-enrolment and a positive impact on girls' overall school enrolment and attendance, which has almost doubled.

Similar efforts were promoted in **Morocco**, leveraging CBIs to prevent early marriage and promote education, while in **Pakistan**, proactive outreach was conducted, including with older men, to shift attitudes towards incremental participation of women in community empowerment initiatives. As a result, the participation of female Pakistani refugees in the DAFI programme increased from 23 per cent to 49 per cent during 2022. In **Iran**, UNCHR launched awareness sessions for Afghan parents on the importance of education, with particular emphasis on reducing school dropout rates among boys and girls at risk of child labour to supplement household incomes.

Concerning **health**, in all operations in the scope of the Regional Bureau for **Asia and the Pacific,** referral pathways to services for survivors of rape and domestic violence survivors were in place. The programmes ensured the recruitment of male and female community and health facility staff to make services available to women and girls. Health data was systematically disaggregated by age and sex to monitor the health status of different groups. In **Bangladesh**, UNHCR promoted and supported optimal infant and young child feeding, mother-baby bonding sessions and early child development play activities benefiting over 8,200 children under two years of age and their parents. At community level, 2,702 mother-to-mother support groups and 24 father-to-father support groups were functional and 4,615 children including their mothers/caregivers received counselling. In **Colombia**, UNHCR coordinated with the public health department of Medellin to strengthen protocols for the provision of health services to LGBTIQ+ persons who required emergency and specialized services. A dedicated Guide for dignified and effective health care for trans women and non-binary refugees was compiled and disseminated in alliance with Caribe Afirmativo. Across Colombia, through UNHCR-funded and operational partners, LGBTIQ+ refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons living with HIV were provided with access to HIV tests (6,965), counselling and referral to sexual and reproductive health services.

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[37] UNHCR, Report to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2022).
[38] Endline is still ongoing for some countries, in particular those with a high representation of women beneficiaries – Argentina, Chile, Djibouti, El Salvador. The final results will be available by the end of 2023.

Spotlight. Working with older persons

Overview

Older refugees make up four per cent of all forcibly displaced and stateless people and remain one of the most at-risk populations. In 2022, UNHCR provided targeted support to at least 5,300 older persons in 16 countries, enhancing access to multi-sector services such as cash assistance, assistive devices, home-based rehabilitation, mental health and psychosocial support, and job skills training. For instance, UNHCR estimates that in 2022, 9 per cent of individuals participating in UNHCR-supported livelihood programmes lived in households with at least one member aged 65 years or older.

UNHCR also worked with partners on the development of tools to make programming and assistance more inclusive of older persons. These efforts include the work with HelpAge on the Facilitator's Guide entitled Working with Older Persons on the Move. The training package includes four interconnected modules to support UNHCR staff and partners in facilitating learning events and provide a better understanding on the rights of older persons, as well as strategies to promote their inclusion and ensure protection. The modules build on a joint evaluation carried out by UNHCR and HelpAge on Ageing on the Move that analysed the intersectionality between ageing and human mobility, focusing on five countries: El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. The Regional Bureau for the Americas also supported field operations in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating protection and solutions strategies, including through the provision of training and capacity-building for UNHCR personnel and partners concerning older persons.

Field practices

UNHCR continued to include and deliver assistance to older persons across its operations, including by working with local groups and partners. In **Georgia**, UNHCR engaged youth volunteers to provide psychosocial support and non-specialized services such as regular visits, positive communication, and a hot meal once a week in addition to targeting displaced older persons through the provision of in-kind assistance (food parcels, hygiene kits and diapers). In **Mozambique**, UNHCR worked with the psychologists of the Association of Volunteers in International Service (AVSI) and provided psychosocial support through home visits to households hosting older persons among other profiles at risk. In **Egypt**, UNHCR established a mechanism for the prioritization of persons with specific needs to access reception, including older people, and trained 100 NGO staff members on age and gender sensitive reception and counselling, particularly for consultation/preparation of the newly registration activities.

Older persons were considered when determining eligibility criteria for multi-purpose cash assistance. For example,

in **Ukraine**, UNHCR assisted 987,000 individuals with multi-purpose cash, 15 per cent of whom were older women and 7 per cent older men (60 years+). In **Kenya**, UNHCR advocacy led to the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers residing in urban areas in the 70+ cash assistance programme targeting older persons and in the National Health Insurance Fund, which was also extended to residents of the Kalobeyei Settlement; programmes that mirror safety nets for Kenyan nationals. A total of 24,789 persons benefited from these programmes in 2022.

UNHCR also directly provided older persons with in-kind assistance and social programmes to improve their health and well-being. For example, in **Syria**, 36,174 older persons with severe health situations and persons with disabilities received hygiene management materials for incontinence, and 9,412 older persons and persons with disabilities benefited from home-based rehabilitation programmes. In **Angola**, in Lunda Norte, in 2022, a total of 1,391 refugees in vulnerable situations were assisted through social programmes implemented by UNHCR and partners, 11 per cent of whom were older people with specific needs. In **Jordan**, 1,314 older refugees with specific needs received support by the end of 2022

Programmes delivered by UNHCR and its partners also entailed skills development for the provision of care for older persons. For example, in **Lebanon**, UNHCR provided 18 vocational courses to 310 out-of-learning young refugees, marginalized Lebanese and stateless youth, which included, inter alia, skills development in care for older persons. Seemingly, in **Nepal**, new partnerships with the private sector (WinAge) were forged around skills employment training on care for older persons, while in **Uruguay** the collaboration with the City of Montevideo and NGO Casa de la Mujer supported 76 forcibly displaced people in need of professional skills reconversion with training including care services for older persons.

An older man finds new ways of using discarded plastic and other materials in the garbage dumps at Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan.
© UNHCR/Shawkat Alharfoush

▶ Gender-based violence prevention and response services (Action 6e)

> **E. Women and girls have access to comprehensive GBV prevention and response services.**

Core Action 6E

> At a minimum, UNHCR operations will adopt and implement SGBV standard operating procedures, operationalizing the four main referral pathways for all survivors (safety/security, legal, medical, and psychosocial), and will promote the same with partners, including governments.

Overview

A total of 63 of 106 (62 per cent) operations selected the GBV Outcome Area in the UNHCR Global Results Framework in 2022 strategies and 73 per cent of countries where UNHCR operates (131 countries reporting) had GBV services available for survivors and those at-risk, percentages similar to 2021. In addition, based on reporting countries (57), it is overall estimated that some 994,000 women and girls accessed sexual and reproductive health services offered by UNHCR and partners.

In this regard, UNHCR allocated over $57 million to over 200 international, national, and local actors to specialized GBV prevention and response programming. This included $29 million provided to 155 national and local NGOs, including women-led organizations. Importantly, 229 WLOs were part of or were co-chairing GBV coordination mechanisms in refugee settings in 2022, which is a 63 per cent increase over 2021. Partnerships with WLOs were prioritized, especially those led by displaced and stateless women and girls. In this regard, findings from the 2020–2022 WLO Engagement Assessment guided the development of recommendations to improve UNHCR engagement with local actors.

At global level, UNHCR contributed to the 2022 updated Terms of Reference of the IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action and, as part of the IASC Result Group on Humanitarian and Development Nexus, UNHCR shared guidance notes, promising practices on GBV and gender equality in the context of the "triple nexus" contributing to the development of a global repository of knowledge resources and

tools. UNHCR also updated the Brief Guidance on Integrating GBV Prevention, Risk Mitigation and Response, the UNHCR Safety Audit Toolkit was made available in four languages and support was provided to conduct GBV situational and risk assessments and to identify interventions to address GBV risks across sectoral programming.

UNHCR practices on access to comprehensive services addressing gender-based violence – selected examples

In 2022, **UNHCR continued to provide operational assistance**, including through the Safe from the Start deployment scheme, which supported the deployment of GBV specialists to 14 emergency settings, including **Poland**, **Moldova**, **Ethiopia**, **Iran** and **Pakistan**, to strengthen lifesaving GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response interventions and programming from the onset. This reached over a million forcibly displaced persons. In **Burkina Faso**, **Mali** and **Niger**, new mobile teams improved access to GBV services and support in remote areas.

UNHCR engaged with grass-roots and community-based organizations, including WLOs, in designing and delivering comprehensive GBV prevention and response services. In **Ethiopia**, the success of the Grinding Mill project in Tsore Refugee Camp, designed and implemented with refugee women, inspired a similar project in Sherkole Refugee Camp to mitigate the risks of GBV, including sexual violence, faced by women and girls travelling long distances to access milling services. The project also contributed to improving livelihood

opportunities for refugee and host community women. In **Kenya**, UNHCR provided a grant to the WRLO Halgan as part of its cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), which enabled the organization to reach 1,945 community members (919F, 1,026M) to share information on GBV services and support and to initiate discussions on the prevention of GBV. Halgan also provided expert input to the development of the Inter-Agency GBV and Community-based Protection. UNHCR **Hungary**, with the support of the Digital Innovation Fund, developed a project called Wide Browsing, Safe Posting to establish an online guide to raise awareness of different types of online violence, including GBV, and where to seek support.

Further, **UNHCR and partners continued to implement GBV prevention programming to address the root causes of violence**. This included the Engaging Men in Accountable Practices (EMAP) programme in **Iraq**, **Malaysia**, **Nigeria**, **Pakistan**, **South Sudan**, **Syria**, and **Thailand**; the Start, Awareness, Support, Action Together (SASA! Together) model in **South Sudan** and **Uganda**. **It also** included the Girl Shine effort in **Bangladesh**, **Cameroon** and **Syria**, which is a model designed to empower, protect and support adolescent girls in humanitarian settings. UNHCR had expert global partnerships with the International Rescue Committee and Raising Voices to develop the capacity of the models across operations.

UNHCR continued to work closely with national authorities across settings. For example, in **Italy**, UNHCR strengthened its cooperation with the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica resulting in the inclusion of a dedicated section on forcibly displaced and stateless people in the upcoming national GBV data collection.

A youth basketball club in Pretoria, including refugees and asylum seekers, participates in a basketball tournament to raise awareness of gender-based violence.
© UNHCR/Sbonga Sibiya

II. Organizational Accountability

The UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection speaking to the Advisory Board of Organizations led by Displaced and Stateless Persons at UNHCR HQ.
© UNHCR/Rebecca Liron

▶ II.i Diversity, equity and inclusion in UNHCR

In 2022, UNHCR started to develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Framework to build inclusive, enabling working environments and workplaces for everyone across the organization and to support UNHCR to ensure its effectiveness in delivering its protection mandate. Embedded in the DEI Strategy are UNHCR action plans in three main areas that UNHCR continued to implement in 2022, namely:

- The Gender Parity Action Plan, updated with actions for gender parity for all levels

- The UNHCR Action Plan on Race Equality and Equity, which outlines key actions for eliminating racial discrimination and racism

- The UNHCR Five-year Action Plan for Disability Inclusion outlines actions across the organization in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and UNDIS.

The Gender Parity Action Plan aims to support UNHCR in achieving gender parity by 2026, as UNHCR progresses towards numerical parity across all levels and contractual arrangements. UNHCR has successfully been closing gender gaps in the proportion of women and men in the organization across all staffing levels except senior management. Figure 1[39] shows that women are almost at parity at P4 and P5 level, nudging 47 per cent and 48 per cent respectively, whereas at D1 and D2 level the proportion has fluctuated and/or declined since 2018. Currently, the biggest gender gap impacting on women is at senior management level, with 42 per cent women at D2 levels and 44 per cent women at D1 levels. In 2022, UNHCR updated its Recruitment and Assignment Policy. Now, women must be included on every shortlist for each post, including at national levels, and evidence shows an increase in the numbers of women from P4 to P5 levels. The new Policy also allows for extending the length of assignment for up to two years for reasons related to disability and considers geographic diversity. Since 2022, UNHCR staff and applicants can self-report disabilities and ethnicity, providing UNHCR with more in-depth information about the diversity of its workforce, key for mobilizing and reinforcing talent across the organization.

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[39] In 2022, there was only one P1 post and one USG post (the High Commissioner)

Figure 1. Distribution of women and men by grade, January 2023
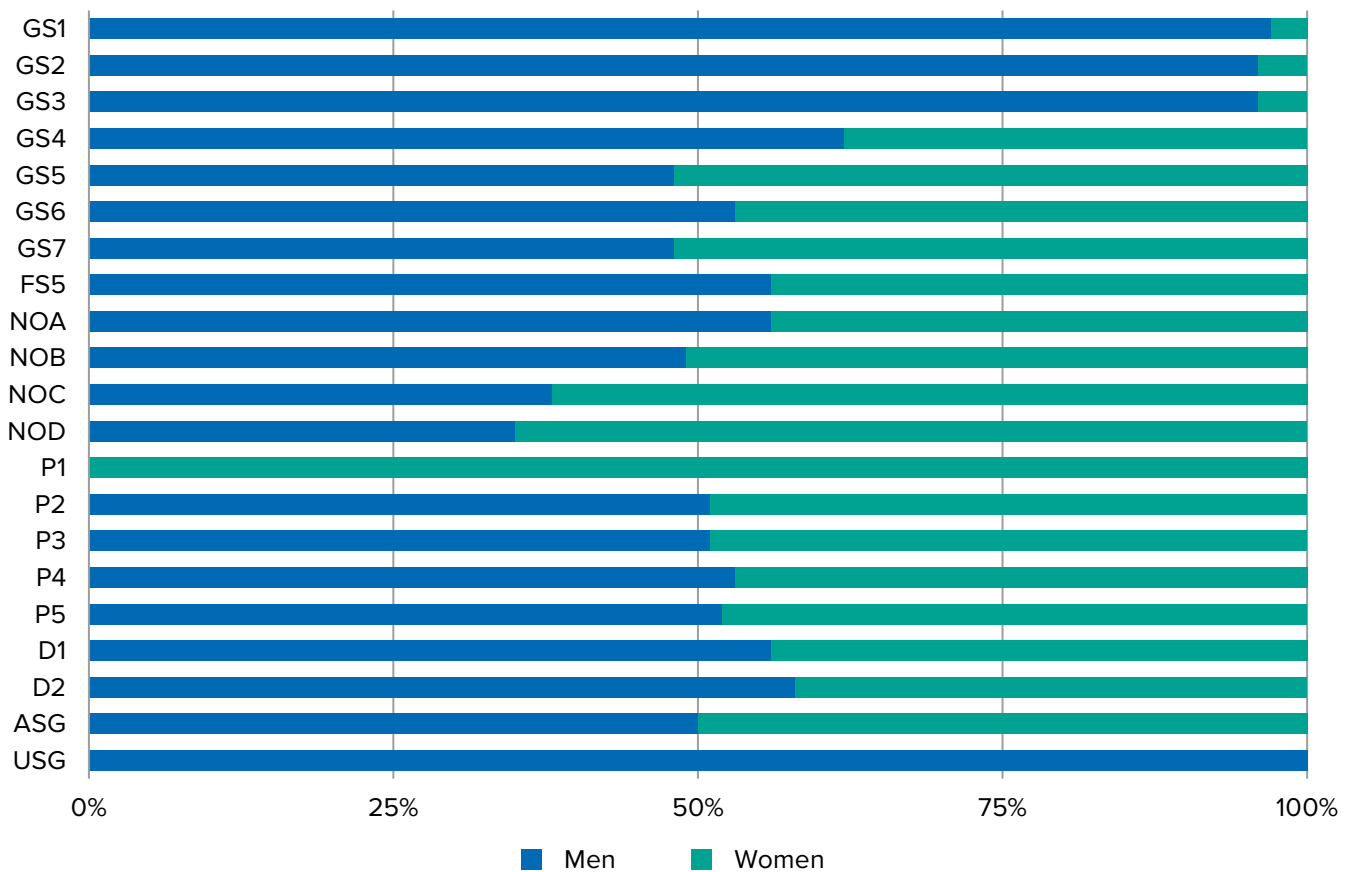
To support women in leadership, UNHCR continues its partnership with INSEAD to support women leaders. The Women in Leadership Development Program reached women at P5 to D1 levels and in 2022 was extended to women at National Officer levels up to P4. Women's Leadership Ally Circles were established to provide peer coaching, support and mentoring, as well as opportunities to further extend professional networks. Dialogue sessions about problems of domestic abuse were held with the Deputy High Commissioner and the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations during the 16 Days of Activism against GBV. These served to stress the importance of reporting abuse and breaking stigma, as well as being an opportunity for colleagues to learn where to go for help within the organization.

Figure 2. Gender breakdown by region (May 2023)
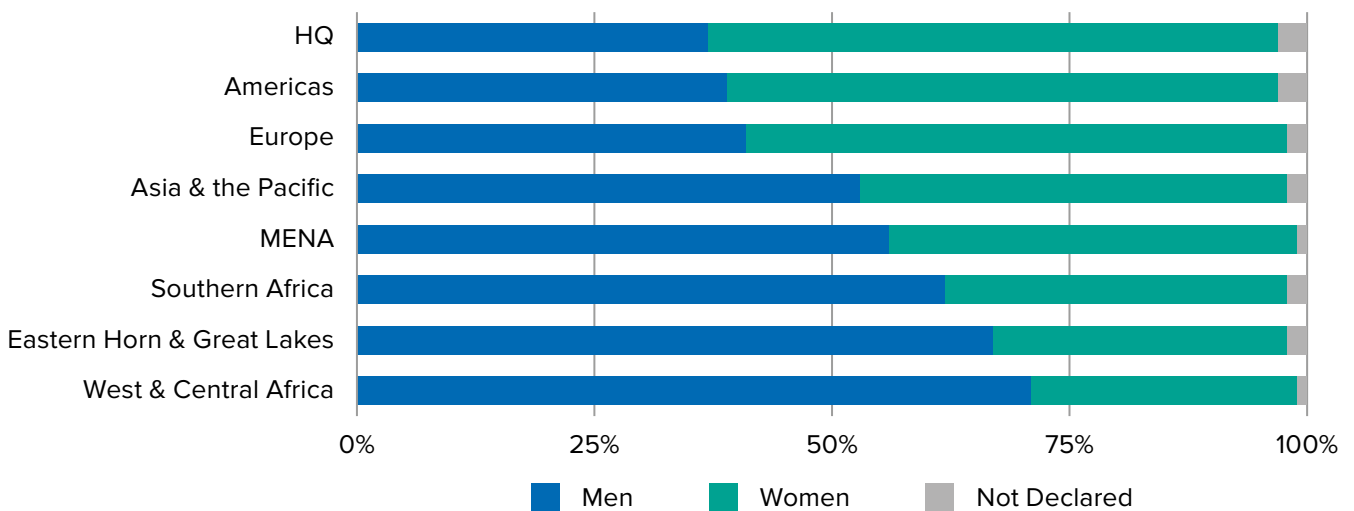
UNHCR launched the first Multi-year Race Equality and Equity Action Plan following the conclusion of an Independent Review on Race Equality and Equity in the Workplace. The Independent Review involved over 300 engagements through interviews, focus groups and a Global Race Equality and Equity Survey receiving 6050 responses (33 per cent), as well as a desk review of geographical representation[40] across grades.

Since the launch of the Multiyear Action Plan, UNHCR has launched a speaker series entitled Anti-racism by (Re) design and ensured an emphasis on DEI in onboarding activities. UNHCR Staff Counsellors have also completed year-long comprehensive training to better aid colleagues dealing with racism and racial discrimination. To enhance diversity in leadership, UNHCR established a partnership with McKinsey & Company, which led to the launch of the Connected Leaders Academy programme targeting 74 African descent staff[41]. This programme offered networking opportunities with external professionals, to sharpen their leadership skills and broaden their professional circles. UNHCR launched its #ICommit campaign on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2022 and internal DEI resources are now available providing valuable tools for managers on our ongoing anti-racism journey.

UNHCR also enhanced the inclusion of persons with disabilities, through the implementation of its Five-year Action Plan for Disability Inclusion (2020–2024). In line with this, UNHCR developed a new Policy on fit-to-work, which includes workplace accommodation and establishing a process for workplace accommodation requests, to be managed by the UNHCR Division of Human Resources – Medical Services. Furthermore, career fairs were organized with UNHCR staff with disabilities, who are members of the Disability Inclusion Resource Group, to enhance career outreach and employment for persons with disabilities at UNHCR. These efforts were combined with capacity-building sessions for staff on disability-inclusive recruiting and online pages have been made available providing tools and resources.

The organization undertook a digital accessibility assessment of UNHCR digital platforms and developed a roadmap for enhancing capacity, in line with the Accessibility Maturity Model, to build digital accessibility across the organization. Lastly, employee resource groups have gained a more influential voice in discussions and decision-making, facilitating internal dialogue, and encouraging inclusion. Going forward, UNHCR will finalize the upcoming DEI Strategic Framework, integrating intersectional and holistic approaches and complementing existing policies and frameworks such as the 2018 AGD Policy.

▶ II.ii Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

In 2022, UNHCR focused on strengthening operational capacity to mitigate the risks of, prevent, and respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) by supporting learning and capacity-building, strengthening PSEA in emergencies, promoting community engagement and participation, and operationalizing UNHCR Policy on a Victim-Centred Approach (VCA Policy). This work is led by the Office of the Senior Coordinator on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment and coordinated with the Regional Bureau, operations and relevant headquarters divisions and entities in line with the 2020–2022 Strategy and Action Plan for Tackling Sexual Misconduct.

The Office of the Senior Coordinator on PSEA/SH delivered learning activities to 954 UNHCR and partner personnel across all 7 regions, a 63 per cent increase from 2021. Dedicated sessions on sexual misconduct were also integrated into eight other organizational learning programmes, with attention to AGD considerations, while the Office of the Senior Coordinator on PSEA and SH worked with regional PSEA Focal Points and in-country facilitators to support the global roll-out of the new internal PSEA/SH Learning Package.

The capacities of partners were also strengthened: some 80 per cent of UNHCR non-governmental partners with direct contact with communities had been assessed in terms of their PSEA capacity by either UNHCR or another United Nations agency using the common assessment tool. Most partners with low and medium capacity (84 per cent) had Capacity Strengthening Implementation Plans to advance their capacities to prevent and respond to SEA.

In the past year, **UNHCR implemented a new approach to PSEA mainstreaming in emergency response**. At the outbreak of the Ukraine emergency, dedicated PSEA coordinators were deployed to Poland, Romania, Moldova and Hungary (covering the Czech Republic and Slovakia) to lead and coordinate interagency PSEA efforts. Additionally, UNHCR included PSEA and SH as core principles in its new policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response to ensure that these considerations are incorporated into the organization's response to other emergencies.

Furthermore, the joint UNHCR/International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) PSEA Community Outreach

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[40] Nationality used to proxy race.
[41] To be expanded to Latin and Asian descents in 2023.

and Communications Fund[42] provided small-scale grants to 15 NGO projects in 2022. The grants targeted different AGD profiles and aimed to engage communities in the planning and implementation stages of the projects through extensive consultations and coordination with different local stakeholders, as well as PSEA actors.

II.iii Evaluation of age, gender and diversity in UNHCR work

Between 2019 and 2023, UNHCR commissioned an external independent evaluation of its 2018 AGD Policy. The evaluation was conducted in selected operations (Chad, Greece, Kenya, Mexico and Thailand) through mixed methods, including field visits and remote consultations, key informant interviews and focus group discussions[43]. It covered the following aspects:

- Overall level of understanding and implementation of the AGD Policy in country operations

- AGD data collection methods, use and integration into operation management and reporting

- Effectiveness of support systems in helping to enhance implementation

- Likelihood of UNHCR achieving the goals of the Policy

- How the Policy enhances dialogue with partners

- Lessons learnt and examples of promising practices emerging from implementation of the AGD Policy

The initial findings of the first two years highlighted how there is a broad understanding of the policy and its aims among staff and how attention to age, gender and diversity elements, including a commitment to gender equality and inclusion is integrated into the way UNHCR operates. Most staff and partners recognize that UNHCR is playing a valuable role in championing AGD concerns and that progress has been made towards several goals of the policies, including inclusive programming through participatory assessments, improved data collection and the inclusion of diverse groups in leadership structures.

The evaluation suggests further socializing the AGD Policy with staff and partners, identifying actions to improve implementation and accountability and continuing to invest in training for staff. The evaluation highlights how data is routinely collected and disaggregated during processes of registration and suggests that the potential of the current systems

can be further utilized. The findings reveal that there is a strong advisory system at the HQ level, as well as a notable engagement in cross-agency working groups and considers that efforts need to continue to systematically support operations. The evaluation also stresses the importance for operations to continue to invest in engagement with populations with and for whom UNHCR works and ensure that their views and feedback systematically informing planning and programming in general.

The evaluation notes how local partnerships are an effective way to enhance innovative approaches concerning AGD areas of engagement, while promoting knowledge exchanges. It considers that UNHCR has been making progress in engaging and working with local organizations including those led by women, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons, and youth.

The final report of the longitudinal evaluation will be published in 2023 and will present recommendations advising UNHCR on how to progress with the objectives of the 2018 AGD Policy while building on the progress made over the past five years.

II.iv United Nations System-Wide Frameworks

UNHCR continued to fulfil its system-wide responsibility and contribute with its annual inputs to key United Nations accountability frameworks, notably the response the United Nations system-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality (UN SWAP), the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and the United Nations Youth Strategy (Youth2030). In line with the recommendations of the United Nations Secretary General Report on Our Common Agenda (Action 52), UNHCR also started to coordinate a dialogue with OHCHR and UNWOMEN on the development of a United Nations system-wide Policy that puts people at the centre of all its action, enhances participatory approaches and considers the impact of age, gender and diversity characteristics. The discussion, which continues in 2023, focused on the nature of the policy and on the linkages with the existing – or under development -strategies and frameworks to measure the accountability of United Nations Agencies towards different elements of AGD.

The following section provides information on the implementation status of UN SWAP, UNDIS and Youth2030 and what UNHCR aims to do to further advance the delivery of all commitments under these frameworks.

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[42] With financial support from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
[43] During the three years of implementation, the evaluation team interviewed 755 UNHCR staff, donors, government and non-governmental partners, and conducted 891 interviews with forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

The United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Like other United Nations entities, UNHCR has periodically assessed its commitment and realization of gender equality through UN-SWAP, revamped in 2018 to align with the 2030 Agenda and promote the realization of SDG 5. The UN SWAP 2.0 self-assessment and reporting requires a whole-of-organization approach to assess progress against 17 Performance Indicators, clustered around two groups, on gender-related SDG results and on institutional strengthening respectively. The indicators cover six broad areas: results-based management; oversight; accountability; human and financial resources; capacity; knowledge, communication and coherence.

The UNHCR results for 2022 show that the organization met or exceeded the requirements for 14 of the 17 applicable performance indicators. This represents the best performance that UNHCR has achieved since the start of UN-SWAP 2.0: it was comparable to the average of similar UN entities but above that of the overall UN system. More specifically, UNHCR exceeded requirements, for the first time, on the indicators for evaluation and leadership and improved on its 2021 score relating to the gender architecture and capacity assessment.

The UN-SWAP 2.0 assessments indicated that improvement is still needed in financial resource tracking and allocation and in the equal representation of women in senior leadership positions (as shown in Section II.i). In this regard, the Gender Parity Action Plan provides UNHCR with suggested actions and priorities to progress towards gender equality while UNHCR is also committed to strengthening financial resource allocation to advance gender-responsive budgeting moving forward.

The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy

Endorsed by the United Nations System in 2019, UNDIS includes a policy and a system-wide accountability framework with clear actions that United Nations entities must take to enhance disability inclusion. In 2019, UNHCR undertook its first round of reporting, which provided a baseline, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and informed the UNHCR five-year Action Plan (2020–2024). This plan lays out the institutional and operational changes that will make UNHCR a disability-inclusive organization at all levels. Mirroring the UNDIS Accountability Framework, the Plan covers four core areas:

1. Leadership, strategic planning and management;
2. Inclusiveness;
3. Programming;
4. Organizational culture.

Under each core area, the Action Plan includes specific actions that UNHCR must undertake to promote progress in how it works with and for persons with disabilities.

Figure 3 presents the average score[44] for each UNDIS core area in 2019 and 2022. The comparison shows that UNHCR has achieved substantive progress across all four core areas. The greatest gains were attained under Leadership, strategic planning and management, which highlights the commitment of UNHCR, particularly of senior managers, to embed disability into organizational strategies and policies.

Figure 3. UNHCR average progress against UNDIS commitments, by strategy core area

While Figure 3 shows that progress has been slower under the core area of Organizational culture, UNHCR has revised its Recruitment and Assignments Policy, which will bear fruit in the years ahead. The Policy includes provisions for extension of the length of duty due to disability reasons for both staff with disabilities and caregivers. In the area of Inclusiveness and Programming, substantive change was fostered through collaboration with the IDA and the work of UNHCR Inter-Divisional Task Team on Engagement and Partnership with Organizations led by Displaced and Stateless Persons. These efforts were complemented by the

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[44] Each of the four areas includes several indicators that can be scored on a four-point scale measuring progress toward disability inclusion: 0. Missing, 1. Approaches, 2. Meets, 3. Exceeds. The histogram provides the simple average of the score for each core area specific indicator, by year of implementation (2019 and 2022).

inclusion of organizations of persons with disabilities on the UNHCR Advisory Board of Organizations led by Displaced and Stateless People.

UNHCR has also worked toward an inter-agency framework agreement with companies to provide sign language interpretation and live captioning services for conferences. Most recently, UNHCR contributed to the discussion for the development of the Secretary-General Report on the Status of the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, focusing on situations of risk and the use of easy-to-understand communication to include persons with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual and learning disabilities.

In 2022, UNHCR scaled up operational support provided by disability focal points in numerous system-wide emergencies. In moving forward, UNHCR will focus on better articulating disability inclusion within the UNHCR AGD approach in programmatic areas. Capacity-building adapted to the needs of regional bureaux and operations, including the new features available in COMPASS, such as a disability marker function, will play a key role in strengthening disability inclusion in programming. Lastly, UNHCR plans to improve procurement processes, especially in the context of its standard Core Relief Items, to consider disability inclusion requirements both in the selection of services and goods and in the vendor selection perspective.

▶ The United Nations Youth Strategy

Youth2030 was launched by the Secretary-General in 2018. It provides a blueprint for the work with and for youth across the United Nations system. Currently, implementation engages with 33 United Nations Entities and 130 United Nations Country Teams across the three pillars of Youth2030, namely peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development. As in previous years, UNHCR participated in the reporting exercise for the year 2022. The reporting was carried out against key performance indicators[45] through a United Nations entity scorecard organized into five areas/sections, namely:

1. Youth focus on strategic plans of United Nations entities;

2. United Nations entities and knowledge leadership on youth;

3. Support for localization of global agendas and frameworks on youth;

4. Coordination and capacities for youth in United Nations entities;

5. Leadership and Culture in United Nations Entities for meaningful youth engagement.

Overall, in the 2022 reporting cycle UNHCR was among the top three United Nations entities for progress between 2021 and 2022, having improved 33 per cent of its scores[46]. The 2022 results for UNHCR show significant improvement in scorecard sections 5 and 4 compared to 2021. Importantly, the results for scorecard section 5 indicate that UNHCR has already achieved the commitments set in the strategy. Under scorecard section 4, UNHCR saw improvements in the engagement of youth in internal processes, the inclusion of young United Nations staff and the strengthening of staff capacities on youth issues. UNHCR has also acquired a stronger profile in knowledge Leadership on Youth[47], through its work at global and regional levels. Country-level youth work results, under scorecard section 3, are largely comparable to those reported in 2021, indicating the need to continue to invest in strengthening staff and first responders' capacities to address youth issues.

These efforts will also build on the engagement of youth-led organizations in outreach, in the delivery of services and in the development of opportunities for resilience and solutions for youth. UNHCR is already moving in this direction; for example, through the Refugee-led Innovation Fund and the disbursement of flexible grant agreements directly to RLOs, UNHCR has already supported three youth-led organizations in 2022.

Progress is still needed for Scorecard section 1, namely Youth focus in strategic plans of United Nations entities. While the launch of the new Results Framework and RBM system has the potential to strengthen the overall accountability of UNHCR in areas relating to the AGD policy, UNHCR will place additional emphasis on better capturing data and analysis on concerning youth and better reflecting the results on youth in the strategic planning and programming cycle.

Looking forward, UNHCR needs to continue to engage in inter-agency coordinated work on youth through the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and through initiatives led by the United Nations and other institutions. UNHCR should also draw on the complementary strengths and expertise of other actors and advocate for the inclusion of displaced and stateless youth in their programmes and initiatives.

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[45] Reporting is carried out by means of a United Nations entity scorecard based on a rating scale: 2. At milestone, 1. Moving forward, and 0. getting ready. The United Nations entity scorecard can be accessed from here.
[46] Youth2030: Progress Report 2023
[47] data, evidence, knowledge sharing, norms-setting, capacity-building, advocacy and communication.

III. Ways Forward

Guatemala. A refugee girl plays with her shadow in front of a mural of Solidarity Cities, near a health center supported by UNHCR.
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As in past years, this AGD accountability report provides an ample overview of the efforts that UNHCR made throughout the year to comply with its AGD Policy, integrating age, gender and diversity considerations into its analysis, planning and interventions and enhancing inclusive programming. It also highlights how UNHCR has progressed in reflecting AGD considerations in its internal policies, tools and approaches, notably through the new COMPASS RBM system. The report also expands on UNHCR efforts to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in its workforce and to better equip the organization to respond effectively and accountably to the diverse needs of forcibly displaced and stateless persons. Finally, this year, the report also highlights the results of UNHCR action at all levels to fulfil its commitment to the key United Nations system-wide strategies and accountability frameworks.

While COVID-19 restrictions have been progressively eased, in some contexts other challenges still limited the ability of UNHCR to operate and meaningfully engage forcibly displaced and stateless persons of all ages,

genders and diverse characteristics in the programming cycle and in the delivery of assistance and services. Many operations have highlighted how external factors, such as political instability, conflict and disasters, or deliberate social and cultural constraints posed by both authorities, non-state actors and communities, contribute to restricting a full and systematic access to all forcibly displaced and stateless persons. These factors at times negatively affected efforts to work with community structures. As a result, several operations reported that the election of community representatives was on hold or had been delayed, while attitudes and social norms continued to hamper efforts made by UNHCR personnel and partners to promote women and girls' participation in decision-making and more broadly in community engagement.

While UNHCR has more limited control over external factors affecting the extent to which it can engage with forcibly displaced and stateless persons, the organization is committed to continue improving internal methodologies and approaches to enhance inclusion and participation. For example, ARRs show

that most operations organize a yearly participatory assessment at the strategic planning phase of programming. Nonetheless, efforts should continue to expand the frequency and systematically invest in participatory mechanisms in other phases of the programming cycle also through innovative technical solutions to timely capture, systematize and visualize the qualitative information and better inform interventions. Furthermore, while the 2022 AGD report shows that digital AAP has advanced significantly, operations also highlighted the frequent challenges regarding their use: limited connectivity and availability of electricity in remote areas; elsewhere, conservative approaches in communities limiting the uptake of new solutions; and insufficient human resources to follow-up on individual feedback and close the feedback loop or to build partners' capacity.

While in principle all forcibly displaced and stateless persons can access services and participate in activities across programming phases, obstacles remained for certain groups, particularly LGBTIQ+ persons, persons with disabilities and older persons. As such, these groups are at greater risk of being left behind, in emergency response and beyond. Likewise, several operations highlighted that human and financial resource constraints hampered the work of UNHCR with forcibly displaced youth, an area of work that is increasingly challenging to prioritize both at global, regional and country level within UNHCR's budgetary parameters and where complementary with other actors needs to be strategically reinforced.

The following general considerations indicate actions at various levels that UNHCR may consider undertaking to further advance the systematic implementation of the 2018 AGD Policy. These considerations may be further complemented by the overall recommendations of the longitudinal evaluation, which is being finalized at the time of this report.

I.   Ensure that participatory methodologies engage groups across the AGD spectrum and are used in all programming phases beyond the initial assessment phase.

II. Continue the institutional work of UNHCR to integrate the AGD dimension into various aspects of programme policies, tools and procedures, including COMPASS, to develop and assess partner proposals and agreements, to monitor operations and partners' deliverables and to ensure coherent and systematic reporting on AGD across the organization.

III. Provide support to operations and enhance capacity strengthening on AGD and intersectional approaches in programming, while emphasizing the importance of engaging forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

IV. Continue to invest in capacity development and technical tools to improve the disaggregation of data of forcibly displaced and stateless persons beyond age and sex, in registration as well as in monitoring, reporting and evaluation. This includes continuing socializing operations with the Washington Questions on disability, as well as agree on ways to harmonize and better capture data on SOGIESC in case management, while respecting the principles of proportionality, confidentiality and safety in all data collection and processing.

V.   Promote the engagement of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the selection, design and implementation of digital solutions and technologies to enhance two-way communication, including feedback and response systems, towards an inclusive AAP approach.

VI. Foster community-based approaches, in protection and beyond, that consider the capacity and agency of community structures and community-based and community-led organizations, representative of diverse AGD groups, to mitigate protection risks, as well as to facilitate the delivery of protection and other services, particularly in situations of restricted access.

VII. Continue to invest in tools to fully utilize information collected from consultations with forcibly displaced and stateless persons, particularly qualitative data. This will require continuous investment in innovative data collection and analysis solutions, including exploring the possible use of Artificial Intelligence, to facilitate systematization and summary of the qualitative data collected through participatory assessments and other types of feedback to ensure its timely and effective integration into the programming.

VIII. Build on successful initiatives and good practices; increasingly invest in the area of women and girls' participation, management and leadership, to overcome attitudes and gender norms that limit their engagement or perpetrate gender inequality, while continuing to engage with and sensitize men and boys on such issues.

IX. Reinforce engagement with development partners and with governments to work towards the inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless people in national systems, or non-discriminatory access to these systems, particularly in the prevention and response to violence based on age, gender and other diverse characteristics.

X.   In line with the recommendations of the UNHCR longitudinal evaluation, consider AGD as a concept and approach beyond the protection domain of UNHCR work and reaffirm it as a corporate commitment across the whole of the organization.

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Inclusive, Local and Accountable Engagement

Age, Gender and Diversity Accountability Report

2022