



Guidance Note on Gender-Responsive Assessments Ukraine Refugee Response

Photo: UN Women

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The ongoing full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has strong gendered dynamics. UNHCR estimates indicate that roughly 90 percent of refugees from Ukraine are women and children, who not only have unique experiences, but also face specifically gendered challenges to humanitarian service access and protection risks. Therefore, it is essential that the voices of women in all their diversity continue to be centered, heard, and amplified in the humanitarian response through their equitable inclusion in humanitarian assessments. Moreover, given

the quickly changing nature of the situation, understanding of the needs, risks, and priorities of refugees from Ukraine should be constantly updated to enable gender specific analyses per country. It is important to remember that many women refugees from Ukraine are for the first time playing dual roles as primary income-earners and caretakers for their families while many male family members have been conscripted to military service in Ukraine. This should be taken into consideration when designing and conducting humanitarian assessments.

Paying special attention to gender considerations when collecting data in the context of humanitarian assessments of needs and risks is not only about collecting sex and age disaggregated data but is also about ensuring that the whole process of data collection takes into account gender and diversity specificities while ensuring no harm is done to the people that are consulted.

Conducting data collection with a gender and diversity lens should not be seen as an additional burden for humanitarian practitioners but as a useful approach to conduct comprehensive assessments which lead to improved humanitarian responses.

Methodology

- Engage **gender specialists/gender focal points** in methodology design, questionnaire review, and analysis.
- **Engage with local women's organizations and networks** in the design and implementation of assessments. You might also use their spaces, given that they can offer valuable perspectives on gender, disability and diversity related issues in local contexts and will ensure ownership over findings. In contexts where it can be difficult to collect data on LGBTQIA+ populations, engaging with local organizations is particularly relevant.
- **Collect data at the individual level.** Data should be collected at the individual rather than household level. Due to the prevalence of gender norms among other factors, women may consider male counterparts in Ukraine as heads of households though they are the primary income earners. Collecting data at the individual level better captures each gender differentiated roles and needs. For interviews conducted over the phone, consider using yes/no questions to avoid placing women and other groups at risk if their answers are overheard.
- **Select representative interviewees and enumerators.** Enumerator teams should be composed in a way that represents the gender and ethnic composition of the population of interviewees. Enumerator teams should be composed of both men and women. Women's enumerators or interviewers are likely to have better access to women and children in a given community than men. Generally, it is recommended to have women interview women and men interview men.
- **Do not consider women refugees as a stand-alone group** but rather as a diverse group. Beyond gender considerations, it is important to pay special attention to age, disability, ethnic, socio-economic backgrounds and cultural sensitivities of different communities within the same country since it can make it difficult for enumerators, even within the same gender group, to collect data.
- The interviewees, including key informants, should be **representative of the demographic and geographic composition and diversity of refugees from Ukraine** and be selected impartially. Having a homogeneous composition of focus group discussions in terms of gender and age, ethnicity (Roma and other ethnic minorities) and social characteristics may be beneficial to allow participants to feel more comfortable discussing their experiences with their fellow group members and share common issues in more detail.
- **Ensure questions are gender and diversity-centered (women, men, adolescents, elderly, Roma) and context specific.** Questions should be adapted to the local context to best understand the situation and needs of interviewees. At the same time, the questions should be general enough that interviewees feel safe to answer them honestly. This pertains not only to the context of the questions, but also the use of language that is socially sensitive and will not provoke backlash.

Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD) and Gender Analysis

- **Choose a representative sampling and collect sex and age and other relevant disaggregated data (SADD).** It is important to ensure that the answers to questions received during assessments are collected in a way that enables them to be later disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, age, disability, etc.
- Include the option of **non-binary/other** in questionnaires to ensure inclusiveness of surveys.
- Beyond collecting SADD, it is important to incorporate a gender analysis into reports to inform programming and sector-specific interventions. A gender analysis does not need to be a stand-alone assessment but should be integrated into sector assessments.

Gender analysis examines how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities, rights affect differently men, women, boys and girls in certain situations or contexts.

Once disaggregated data are collected and data gaps identified, analyze the information and examine differences and inequalities in men's and women's lives (gender division of labor, access to and control over resources, barriers and constraints in participating or benefiting from policies and services). In this way, conducting a gender analysis allows for the development of interventions, policies, programmes that address gender inequalities and meet the different needs of women and men in all their diversity.

Data Collection

- **Prepare enumerators appropriately.** Enumerators should receive training on matters of gender, age and diversity, protection risks including GBV and child protection, PSEA, and handling disclosures and referrals, among other subjects. If it is not possible to train enumerators on these issues, it is important that they be aware of the proper referral pathways in case a related matter is disclosed during the interview. Enumerators should also be aware of how to avoid discrimination in terms of location, timing, and the methodology of the interview.
- **Schedule data collection activities at convenient times according to gender groups.** Women may have their movement restricted due to caretaking responsibilities for children, older people, and people with disabilities. On top of this, women may be pursuing language courses, work, and/or trainings that constrain their time availability. Therefore, assessments should be conducted in a space and at a time that is easily accessible for women. Often, Ukrainian women refugees are single-headed households, and may be the sole responsible for their children. This should be considered during assessments. Some topics may not be appropriate in front of children and women may be hesitant to speak in front of them. Appropriate allocated time and location when conducting surveys will have a direct impact on the quality of the data collected.
- **Pilot assessments prior to implementation.** Assessments should also be piloted to gain a better understanding of, and attempt to mitigate, exposed risks. After testing during the piloting phase, there might be the need to adjust the tools.
- **Consider the specific needs of Roma communities.** When interviewing minority communities of refugees from Ukraine, such as the Roma, it is important to ensure that interviews are conducted in a way that respects cultural norms concerning information access, language, and gender.

Ethical Considerations

- **Be transparent about the process and purpose of the assessment and seek informed consent from participants.** Before starting the interview, take some time to build trust by informing the participants about the purpose and anonymity of the research, the roll out of the interview, how data will be used and ensure they understand that participation is voluntary and that they can stop the process at any time or ask as many questions as they wish. It is also important to explain how the data collected from the interviews will benefit the interviewees and inform the development of projects and policies to better address the needs of both men and women affected by the war.
- **Avoid stereotypes and triggering questions.** Questions should be asked in a way that do not indicate any bias or stereotypes that misrepresent the experience or situation of interviewees. Enumerators should also avoid asking questions that may lead to the disclosure of trauma, GBV, or other protection issues. If a disclosure occurs, it should be responded to as specified above.
- **Ensure anonymity of individuals and organizations participating.** Moreover, anonymous surveys contribute to enhancing the quality of qualitative assessments.
- **Ensure privacy and secure space for interviews.** Schedule interviews in convenient, confidential and appropriate places paying special attention to restrictions on women's mobility and safety to ensure good response rate (separate spaces for men, women, adolescents, elderly, LGBTQIA+). For assessment participants staying in collective accommodation, it is important to ensure that when the interview is conducted participants have access to a private space, whether the interview is conducted in person or via the phone/video call.

Protection and Do not Harm

Safety and protection should be the leading principles in humanitarian data collection and analysis processes.

- **Anonymity** and management of data is critical to prevent risks of significant harm.
- **Do not collect data unnecessarily.** Collecting too much information may cause survey fatigue or emotional distress to participants as the recalling of painful experiences.
- **Be prepared to respond to disclosures of GBV appropriately.** In case of a disclosure of a GBV case by a survivor, enumerators should not try, in any case, to address the issue themselves. Enumerators should empathize and show that they will keep details confidential and that they believe the respondent and refer them to the proper GBV assistance pathway. If an interview is being conducted over the phone, following the disclosure it may be wise to ask a series of yes/no questions to determine whether it is safe for the participant to continue speaking. For example, "Are you by yourself right now?"; (If no) "Is it safe to speak to me with that person there?"; "Do you feel you are in danger right now?" In some cases, you may also establish a code word the individual can use to indicate danger. Enumerators should not judge or blame an individual, adopt body language that indicates disbelief (e.g. arms crossed), ask the interviewee to provide more details, or speak about the incident to colleagues until away from the interviewee and only if this is an appropriate action. If the interviewee is in distress, stop the process. Provide existing information on referral mechanisms in place, and services available.

References

[IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Settings-](#)
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[Gender mainstreaming checklists to inform refugee response in Moldova-](#) UN Women Moldova- 2022

[CARE Rapid gender analysis toolkit on how to undertake gender analysis during a humanitarian response](#)

[UNRWA Gender analysis manual](#)