

REGIONAL GENDER TASKFORCE FOR THE UKRAINE REFUGEE RESPONSE 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Gender Taskforce (RGTF) is a network of actors working to mainstream and integrate gender* equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the Ukraine Refugee Response. This includes international organizations, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations and civil society actors operating at the regional, national, and local levels. The ultimate aim is to ensure that all refugees from Ukraine and those affected by the crisis in neighboring countries can equitably and effectively access and use relief, services, and information.

The RGTF is part of the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) led and coordinated by UNHCR in accordance with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) in close consultation with relevant government agencies. In March 2022, the Regional Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) under the RRP agreed that an RGTF was a necessary additional element of the RCF to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the refugee response. Since then, the RGTF has been active in the areas of coordination, technical support, capacity development, and advocacy and information sharing.

Humanitarian actors have an obligation to promote gender equality following the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) 'Gender Equality Policy Statement' (2008), the IASC Policy and Accountability Framework on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action (2017), and its accompanying Gender Accountability Framework, IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action Handbook (2018), the Gender with Age Marker (GAM), the Agenda for Humanity from the World Humanitarian Summit (2016), and the Grand Bargain. Moreover, humanitarian actors have an additional obligation to support women's and girls' protection, participation and empowerment through targeted actions, as articulated in the Women, Peace and Security thematic agenda outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

This annual review identifies the results attained by the RGTF, showcases the initiatives of individual members, and considers how to best continue the work of the RGTF moving forward.

DEMOGRAPHICS (AS OF DECEMBER 2023)

5,905,000

refugees from Ukraine
in Europe, over

2,800,000

in the countries neighboring
Ukraine where the RGTF is
active under the RRP [\(Source\)](#)



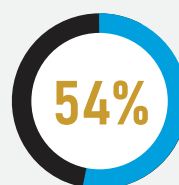
66%



of refugee households consist of two or more adults
with dependents or one adult with dependents [\(Source\)](#)

90%

of refugees from Ukraine are
women and children [\(Source\)](#)



of refugee households report national social
protection benefits as one of their main sources
of income, and this is more likely among
households with dependents [\(Source\)](#)

* References to gender, where not already explicit, are understood to refer to intersectional gender, which recognises that people's lives shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors i.e. to include age, disability and other forms of diversity relevant to the context, such as member of a minority group, LGBTQI+ persons, etc.

»» MISSION

The operational aim of the RGTF is to ensure the needs of women and girls and their empowerment is incorporated into all levels of the RRP at regional and country levels and to coordinate and provide support as needed to the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group in Ukraine and the Moldova Gender Task Force. This is achieved through providing technical and policy guidance to actors affiliated with the RRP while also engaging in coordination, advocacy, and information dissemination on gender in humanitarian action.

»» STRUCTURE

The RGTF is co-chaired by UN Women and OXFAM. As chairs, these organizations advocate for the interests of the Task Force and RRP members as a whole rather than their respective organizations.

»» AREAS OF ACTION

To work with RRP affiliated actors on the mainstreaming of gender and the empowerment of women and girls throughout the refugee response, three areas of action are prioritized by the RGTF, namely:



1. Coordination:

a. Engaging and coordinating with working groups, task forces, sectors, womens' and girls' rights networks and organizations, and other Regional RRP actors to ensure gender perspectives are addressed and represented in all stages of interventions. This includes sharing lessons learned on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through for example regular capacity development and strengthening links between local, national, and regional gender actors.



2. Technical support, guidance, and capacity development:

a. Providing technical support, expertise, and guidance for the integration of gender dimensions into sectors' work and cross-sector joint actions to ensure that the refugee responses support effective and timely gender- and diversity-responsive actions. This includes contributing to the incorporation of sex, age, and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) and where possible disaggregation by additional identities as well as gender considerations are incorporated in publications.



3. Advocacy and information sharing:

a. Knowledge building and sharing concerning gender equality programming, gender-responsive programming, and protection to ensure the incorporation of lessons learned in local, national, and regional programming. This includes producing gender briefs and analyses, strengthening regional advocacy activities, and engaging in regional platforms and dialogues with the participation of affected women at the local and regional levels where appropriate.



2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

The engagement of the RGTF with the areas of action above is based on the four result areas specified in the 2023 Work Plan. Throughout the year, the RGTF engaged in activities related to all four result areas.

RESULT AREA

1

Ensure effective coordination of gender actors working in the regional refugee response with a specific focus on promoting the participation and leadership of women's organizations across coordination and decision-making structures and processes.

- ✓ 11 RGTF meetings held to discuss the development of joint products and activities, discussing member initiatives to promote gender mainstreaming, and reviewing progress made.
- ✓ Engaged with approximately 30 women's rights, women-led, and LGBTQIA+ organizations in activities, including promoting their work through presentations and engagement in key fora.
- ✓ Organized consultations with approximately 30 representatives of women-led, women's rights, and LGBTQIA+ organizations in [Poland](#) and [Slovakia](#) with the aim of identifying common challenges, lessons learned and opportunities as well as recommendations for strengthening gender mainstreaming in the refugee responses in both countries.
- ✓ Conducted a mapping exercise across Eastern and Central Europe to identify women-led and women's rights and LGBTQIA+ Organizations supporting refugees from Ukraine, and worked to engage with the relevant organizations identified through activities and trainings.

2

Develop regional intersectional gender briefs and disseminate to targeted audiences to provide an evidence base that informs relevant regional-level decision-making, policy, strategy (including the RRRP) and advocacy.



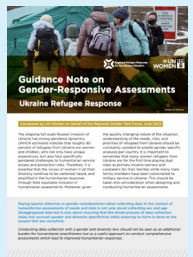
Promoted implementation of the recommendations of the RGTF Joint Gender Analysis: [Making the Invisible Visible](#) launched in October 2022.



Developed a [Gender Brief on the Livelihoods and Access to Work of Refugees from Ukraine in Neighboring Countries](#). This brief provides an analysis of the access to employment and livelihoods of refugees from Ukraine in neighboring host-countries and the gender dimensions involved. The brief works with existing data and interviews to show that refugees, particularly women, face challenges of underemployment and difficulties accessing livelihoods which are also associated with protection risks, language barriers, inequity in the distribution of care responsibilities, and financial challenges. These factors are found to be uniquely challenging for Roma women who face additional barriers. The brief concludes by presenting good practices and recommendations.



Created a [Guidance Note on Gender-Responsive Assessments](#) conducted as part of the refugee response. This guidance note explains how the gender composition and dynamics of refugees from Ukraine should be integrated into humanitarian assessments. It covers key considerations related to methodology, data collection, ethics, and protection and do not harm. The importance Sex and Age Disaggregated Data to enable meaningful analysis is emphasized, in addition to the importance of tailoring assessments to Roma communities. The note was presented by UN Women at a number of inter-agency coordination structures and disseminated widely.



Facilitated a resource-mobilization webinar aimed at assisting women-led, women's rights, and LGBTQIA+ organizations overcome barriers to obtaining funding and provide insights into developing an effective resource mobilization strategy. The webinar covered topics such as the Feminist Funding Ecosystem Framework, key funding actors, key components of an effective resource mobilization strategy, and practical tools for resource mobilization. The webinar was registered for by 142 civil society organizations including national, and international women-led, women's rights, and LGBTQIA+ organizations.

3

Support capacity exchanges on GiHA related topics by supporting country-level working groups and other existent structures.



The RGTF provided inputs into the 2024 Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) indicators to ensure the mainstreaming of gender across all sectors and assessment components.



Supported Poland and Slovakia UNHCR Country Offices in mainstreaming gender into country MSNAs through review of data disaggregation plans.



Organized [trainings](#) on Gender in Humanitarian Action in Poland and Slovakia, in collaboration with local women-led and women's rights organizations, namely Polskie Forum Migracyjne in Poland and Mareena in Slovakia. Women-led, women's rights, and LGBTQIA+ organizations from the local, regional, and national levels working on the Ukraine refugee response were engaged. The trainings enhanced the capacity of these organizations to mainstream gender in their work by discussing why gender matters in humanitarian contexts beyond protection and GBV, how to conduct gender needs assessments and analyses using the Gender with Age Marker and SAGDD, and how to mainstream gender throughout the development of strategic response plans, among other topics.



The RGTF, primarily via UN Women, has engaged in providing support in the development of a 2024 MSNA Regional Analysis through regular engagement in Regional Information Management Working Group Meetings. Moreover, the RGTF has been engaged to ensure the mainstreaming of gender and SAGDD throughout the analysis and the inclusion of gender and age issues in a distinct section.



The RGTF, primarily via UN Women, supported the incorporation of a gender perspective and areas for potential integration of SAGDD in the Poland Protection Analysis.

Strengthened collaboration, communication and coordination across the RRRP structures to inform advocacy and strategic planning priorities.

- ✓ Regular engagement with other regional working groups under the RRP such as the Information Management, Protection, GBV Working Groups and Anti-trafficking Regional Task Force. At the country level, regular updates were provided by the Moldova Gender Task Force and Ukraine GiHA Working Group co-chairs on key initiatives.
- ✓ Engaged in wider advocacy across working groups and RRP partner organizations for the mainstreaming of gender throughout documentation and activities.
- ✓ Developed and disseminated key messages in preparation of International Women’s Day 2023, in collaboration with Regional GBV Working Group. The messages were aligned with the UN theme for 2023: *DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality* and focused on the importance of promoting digital inclusion of Ukrainian women, IDPs and refugees, and the prevention of the risks associated with technology-facilitated Gender-based violence.
- ✓ Released the Joint Statement [Bridging the Gap: Investing in Women-led Organizations as a way of Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls 16 Days of Activism 2023](#), prepared in collaboration with the Regional GBV Working Group and the Regional Anti-Trafficking Task Force.
- ✓ Promoted the [Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action](#) among local organizations working on the Ukraine Refugee Response.

KEY TOPICS DISCUSSED AT THE RGTF IN 2023



- [Financial inclusion and resilience of women refugees from Ukraine](#), presented by Women’s World Banking.
- The impact of the Russian invasion on the lives of LGBTQIA+ refugees from Ukraine, presented by Gender Stream.
- [“Holosy Voices on Gender in Ukraine” podcast series](#) developed to disseminate wider information to the public related to the voices, needs, and experiences of women and LGBTQIA+ refugees from Ukraine related to youth experiences, digital entrepreneurship, humanitarian diplomacy, and LGBTQIA+, developed and presented by UN Women.
- Regional [child protection](#) and [income expenditure](#), presented by IMPACT/REACH with assessments conducted jointly with Save the Children.
- Gender and social inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in Polish host communities, presented by Mercy Corps.
- Needs, access requirements, challenges, and situation of Roma communities affected by the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, presented on separate occasions related to separate reports by War Child Holland and [OXFAM](#).
- [Livelihoods and access to work of women refugees from Ukraine](#), presented by UN Women.
- [Service access for refugees from Ukraine in host communities](#), presented by ACAPS.
- The protection of sexual and reproductive health rights of refugees from Ukraine in host countries, covered by the Center for Reproductive Rights (International); EMMA Association (Hungary); E-ROMNJA (Romania); FEDERA (Poland); FEMINOTEKA (Poland); Freedom of Choice (Slovakia); FILIA (Romania); ALEG; and Independent Midwives Association (Romania).
- Enhancing funding for gender equality in the refugee response for women-led organizations, general discussion.
- [“In the Shadows. Ukrainian Domestic Workers in Poland”](#) report presented by CARE International and the Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE)
- [Ukraine Rapid Gender Analysis 2023](#) main findings and recommendations by CARE International with the collaboration of Ukraine GiHA WG.
- Call for signatories of the [Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action](#). The Compact works to drive action and accountability for women and girls in conflicts and crises and is calling for five years of transformative action across five thematic pillars: financing, participation, leadership, economic security, and protection.



PRIORITIES 2024

With the Regional Refugee Response and Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine entering its third year, the RGTF will continue to support the mainstreaming and integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the Ukraine Refugee Response. The RGTF will continue to work closely with working groups, RRP partners, and local and national organizations to ensure that the needs of women and girls and challenges faced are addressed in the response and that women and girl refugees are empowered in the process. By continuing in this direction, the RGTF will continue working towards the ultimate aim to ensure that all refugees from Ukraine and those affected by the crisis in neighboring countries can equitably and effectively access and use relief, services, and information in a way that respects and promotes fundamental human rights.

Specific focus areas for the work of the RGTF in 2024 will include:

- **Contributing to the enhancement and mainstreaming of collection and use of SADD** across the activities of actors engaged in the Regional Refugee Response.
- **Conducting gender assessments and analyses** that also reflect the situation of minority communities and ensuring gender is integrated into the products of all sectors.
- **Supporting capacity building and funding access** for women-led, women's rights, and LGBTQIA+ organizations engaged in the refugee response and engaging in regular consultations to understand how their work can be better supported.
- **Intensifying collaboration with inter-agency and local actors** to ensure the needs of women and girl refugees are meaningfully integrated into the response.

FUNDING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

The primary funding gaps in 2024 relate to coordination, capacity building on gender mainstreaming in the refugee response, gender analyses and assessments, and funding access for women-led, women's rights, and LGBTQIA+ organizations.

ACTIVE RGTF MEMBERS 2023

UN Women; OXFAM; Plan International; CARE International; Novapolis Association; Romaversitas Hungary ; UNHCR; VOICE Amplified; UNICEF; ILO; FAO; HelpAge International; Corus International; UNDP; IOM; Mercy Corps; Voice of Romni; WHO Europe; UNIDO; Ukraine Senior Gender Advisor (GenCap); Corus International; Project Hope; Gender Stream; SME SPOLU; WFP; War Child Canada; REACH Initiative

Thank you!

UN Women is grateful to the incredible efforts of humanitarian and development partners involved in the Ukraine Regional Refugee Response in 2023. A special thank you goes to the women's civil society organizations, continuing to work tirelessly throughout the year to ensure the needs and priorities of women and girls are met.

UN Women's response to the full-scale invasion and ongoing efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in Ukraine's neighboring countries, is made possible by the generous financial contributions from the US Department of State and the Government of Japan. Thank you also goes to the [12 UN Women National Committees](#) working hard to raise funds, promote women's rights and secure worldwide visibility for women and girls in Ukraine and affected countries in the region.



Gift of the United States Government



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the People of Japan