



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



Age, Gender and Diversity

textbook version - AGD training course

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Module 1: Course Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the textbook version of the Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) training course. This textbook version has been developed for accessibility purposes and compliments the AGD online learning modules. This textbook is comprised of 10 modules that align with the AGD online micro-learning modules:

Module 1: Course introduction

Module 2: AGD approach & the protection environment

Module 3: Age, gender, Diversity & Intersectionality

Module 4: AGD Policy 2018 & AGD actions

Module 5: Disaggregated data

Module 6: Participatory approach

Module 7: People-centred approach

Module 8: Twin-track approach and working with specific groups

Module 10: AGD and programming

What will you learn?

During this course we will look at the basic principles of UNHCR's Age, gender and Diversity (AGD) approach, and what we need to do to make sure that we incorporate the age, gender and diversity approach into all our work.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- explain how the intersection of age, gender and diversity can affect protection risks;

- explain how an AGD approach to programming can improve how we collectively deliver protection services;
- explain how to apply the AGD approach in working with displaced and stateless persons; and
- identify where targeted actions are needed based on an AGD-sensitive analysis



Module 2: AGD Approach and the Protection Environment

This module introduces the AGD approach and describes what it means, as well as how the AGD characteristics affect people's protection needs.

Your understanding of the UNHCR AGD approach

First, let's look at what the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity approach is and what it isn't. The Annual Participatory Assessment Exercise conducted by a multifunctional team is not the same as the AGD approach. It is an important component of implementing the AGD approach, but it does not in itself constitute the AGD approach.

What is AGD?

The AGD approach means recognizing that each person is unique, with specific characteristics that play a central role in determining their access to rights. Under this approach, UNHCR seeks to ensure that all forcibly displaced and stateless people enjoy their rights on an equal footing and can participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives. The AGD approach requires that we incorporate the different capacities, needs and exposure to protection risks of all displaced and stateless people from all age, gender and diversity backgrounds into everything we do and throughout programming.

By analysing intersecting characteristics in terms of AGD, we can better understand the multi-faceted protection risks that individuals and communities face, identify their capacities, as well as any barriers and risks they may encounter, and thus act in a manner that is more effective, sustainable and accountable to the people with and for whom we work.

The AGD approach means seeking to understand the different needs, priorities and capacities, as well as societal influences that determine each person's ability to enjoy their rights.

What is AGD not?

The AGD approach is not the same as establishing a gender balanced multifunctional team to conduct assessments. Establishing a gender balanced multifunctional team with diverse technical expertise is only one of many actions that would support the implementation of the AGD approach in an operation.

It is not a technique to replace the community-based approach. The AGD approach does not and cannot replace the community-based approach - in fact the community-based approach is critical to the effective implementation of the AGD approach.

The AGD approach is not simply a process to be conducted in addition to participatory assessments and the community-based approach. Participatory assessments are an integral part of implementing the AGD approach. Community-based approaches and the AGD approach complement each other. A community-based approach is critical for the successful implementation of an AGD approach. Similarly, using an AGD lens is key to the effective implementation of a community-based approach and vice versa.

AGD: Meaning and principles

Looking and seeing

Take a look at the street shown here. What first catches your eye when you look?



Perhaps you noticed the cobbled road, the green plants or the arched door that the street leads to. But did you manage to spot the black cat on the right of the photo? If not, take another look.

It is often hard to see something if you are not looking for it. An AGD approach encourages us to look beyond the visible, and consider which hidden characteristics or situations we need to identify in order to prevent and address protection risks.

Understanding the AGD approach

We'll now look in more detail at what an AGD approach means, and what we need to ask ourselves when implementing it.

An AGD approach means that whenever we carry out an assessment, make a decision, design a programme or take any kind of action, we take age, gender and diversity issues into consideration.

This approach ensures that we work in partnership with and are accountable to the people we were with and for by actively engaging with them and considering their needs, views, capacities and priorities throughout the decision-making processes. This will help us to identify issues that can be easily missed and address them in a way that ensures equal access for all refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, IDPs and stateless persons of all ages, gender and diverse backgrounds.

We need to ask ourselves:

- What are the age, gender and diversity issues in a given situation and how do they affect different sub-groups within the forcibly displaced and stateless communities?
- What do we need to do to ensure that all displaced and stateless people can access their rights on an equal basis?
- How can we avoid exclusion and/or unintended discrimination of certain persons or groups, simply because we did not pay enough attention to their specific circumstances and needs?



The importance of AGD

Why is it important to analyse age, gender and diversity?

We know that forced displacement and statelessness impact people differently depending on their age, gender and diversity characteristics. We need to analyse these characteristics so that we can build an effective response.

Recognizing multiple characteristics

Displaced and stateless people are often disadvantaged, marginalized and/or oppressed due to the multiple age, gender and diversity characteristics that they have.

Developing a better understanding

Through an age, gender and diversity analysis we can better understand how multiple characteristics affect people differently. This will enable us to better assess and review operational priorities and programmatic approaches.

Applying an AGD lens to our programmes

Using an AGD lens helps us develop programmes that respond to the particular protection challenges that different groups experience.

The AGD approach in action

To understand how an AGD approach helps us to improve our protection activities, let's look at some field examples from Rwanda and Sri Lanka.



Rwanda

In Mahama Camp, Rwanda, refugee and host community girls gather together in the 'Girl's Safe Room.' This space provides a place for girls where they can get free sanitary pads, take showers and change their clothes if necessary. Previously, girls used to have to go back to their homes when they were menstruating, leading to them missing school. The Girl's Safe Room also provides a space for girls to gather together to read, socialize and have discussions on issues relevant to them.



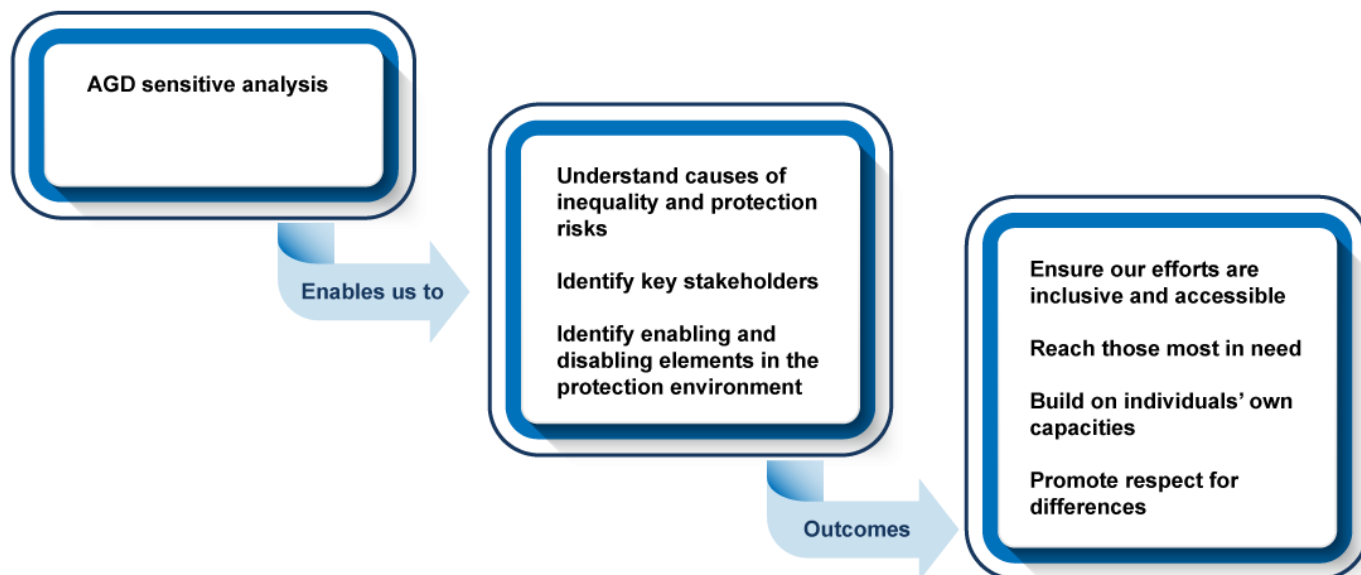
Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, consultations with both refugees and asylum-seekers led UNHCR to the identification of persons at heightened risk of retaliation from local community and anti-Muslim sentiments.

Consultations with women also revealed that the lack of economic opportunities and income generation had increased intra-household tension and the risk of domestic violence. Hence, UNHCR embarked on the implementation of a National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence (GBV), which includes a component to support home-based, income-generating activities.

What does the AGD-sensitive approach help us to do?

Incorporating an AGD approach into our everyday work is critical for the effectiveness of programmes and to ensure our efforts to protect displaced and stateless people do not inadvertently exclude those at heightened risk.



An AGD-sensitive analysis enables us to understand the complex and inter-linked causes of inequality and protection risks and identify key stakeholders.

This in turn enables us to ensure that our efforts are inclusive of and accessible to all and that we are accountable; reach marginalized groups and persons at heightened risk; build on displaced and stateless persons' own knowledge and capacities; and promote respect for differences.



AGD: The protection environment

Relationships and the protection environment

People experience forced displacement in different ways based on the intersection of their age, gender and diversity characteristics with the environments they find themselves in. It is important to understand how our relationships and the environment we live in can influence our protection needs.

One way of doing this is to consider that we live in the centre of a set of spheres. The spheres around us are our family, community and society. These spheres interact to create our protection environment either positively or negatively. They overlap and factors at one level may influence factors at another level.



Understanding our relationships

We may find ourselves in a harmful environment, where we experience abuse and discrimination. On the contrary, our surrounding environment may be providing us with the protection and support we need to enjoy our rights. One environment may be positive and nurturing for one person, while negative and destructive for a person with different age, gender and diversity characteristics. For a person in forced displacement, many of the relationships within and across their environment may be damaged or broken, and the support systems they benefited from previously may have become non-existent.

For example, during displacement, persons with disabilities are at risk of losing their assistive devices, their primary support persons and/or peer support network, and may not be able to access the services they need, such as health services and social protection services, due to physical barriers or lack of information in formats they can understand and use.

Family

Our family context influences our personality, knowledge, belief, norms and socio-economic status. The family is the basic unit of society and has the potential to be the first provider of protection. Family relationships can have a positive or negative impact on an individual's protection environment.

Community

Community influences can establish norms, acceptable behavior and social networks. Understanding these is important as it allows us to analyze how they impact the protection situation of various members of the community differently, whether positively or negatively. We need to also recognise that communities employ their own protection strategies, which can also have positive or negative impacts on the protection situation of different members of the community.

Society

A community exists in a wider societal, economic, political, cultural and environmental context. These contexts impact community and family norms and behaviours. In times of crisis and hardship, gender and age roles may change or become stronger or more inflexible, exacerbating existing protection risks or creating new ones for some members of society.

How the protection environment is structured

Let's look at the protection environment of Hashim, an Afghan boy who has been forcibly displaced. Here are some of the elements that influence the protection environment that Hashim finds himself in.



Family

The family is an important unit in Hashim's culture. Young family members live with their parents until they have families of their own. Children who lose their parents are taken care of by other family members.

Community

Men and boys are advantaged compared to women and girls. Boys are the ones who go to school, while girls often stay home to help their mothers with the house chores. Women belong inside their homes.

Society

The society is a patriarchal one where men have a lot of influence. The father of the family is a traditional head of household who makes decisions for the entire family and is responsible for providing for the family.

Now that you've seen the protection environment of Hashim, take a look at three situations and see what the environmental influences for each situation are.

<p>A friend of Hashim's sister no longer leaves the family house. It is believed that a teacher abused her. The community is not willing to denounce the teacher. National laws acquit perpetrators if they marry their victim.</p>	<p>National laws that acquit perpetrators by marrying the victims is an example of society-level influence.</p>
<p>Hashim's best friend, Jamal, has a disability. In their community, shame surrounds families that have a child with a disability. Jamal is kept at home.</p>	<p>Stigma and isolation experienced by persons with disabilities and their families is an example of community influence.</p>
<p>Hashim's cousin Abdul is an orphan. After the death of his mother, Abdul came to live with Hashim's family. Hashim's family expect him to work to cover his own expenses and often beat him if he comes home empty-handed.</p>	<p>Abdul's experience of physical abuse and forced labour is an example of family influence.</p>

Think about your own experience of these protection spheres and how they are related to protection and forced displacement.

What causes exposure to risk?

Having seen how different people face different protection risks, we will now look at how we can more systematically analyse a person's protection environment in order to identify the specific risks that they may face.

A person's experience during forced displacement is influenced by the interaction of:

- each individual's unique characteristics as determined by age, gender and other diversity factors; and
- the protection environment in which they live, including:
 - cultural norms;
 - socio-economic conditions;
 - laws and policies; and
 - Informal rules and regulations

These apply to all displaced and stateless persons but might affect them differently, depending on their age, gender and diversity.

Cultural norms and implications for protection

Cultural norms are beliefs, ideas and expectations about accepted and unaccepted patterns of behaviour within a given context. Some of these can negatively impact individuals and groups.

Cultural norm	Implication for protection
The role of the man is to provide for and protect the family.	If unable to do this, they can lose status in the family and community resulting in low self-esteem, a feeling of hopelessness and possibly engage in negative coping mechanisms, such as domestic violence and substance abuse.
Women are expected to support and obey their husbands.	They may be unable to participate in public life and decision-making within their own home. They may also be discouraged from seeking support when experiencing abuse.
Persons with mental health issues are evil and a shame to the family.	They may be physically abused and neglected by their families and may be denied access to the services they need or to engage in their community.
People who are LGBTIQ+ bring shame to the family.	They may be stigmatized, forced to hide their identity, and excluded from the society and/or physically attacked.
Girls should stay home and do the majority of domestic chores.	They may be denied access to education, lack economic independence and may get married at an early age.

As you can see, some cultural norms can be harmful to individuals. In our work, we need to engage with communities and learn about the diversity of attitudes, practices, behaviours and social/cultural norms, and understand how these impact the protection environment from an AGD perspective.

Our approach to cultural norms

UNHCR and partners should identify and support positive social norms, attitudes and behaviours, and support community members to promote and disseminate those. We should also provide information and support to communities to address harmful practices and social norms, working together to prevent and respond to possible protection risks created by such norms.

Other environmental factors affecting protection

The socioeconomic conditions, laws and policies and informal rules may also influence the protection environment of individuals. It is therefore important that our situational analysis applies an AGD lens to identify where such factors impact forcibly displaced and stateless people and which groups or individuals are most affected by them. See a few examples below:

Lack of employment opportunities and poverty

These conditions could lead to several concerns, such as:

- older persons struggling to meet their basic needs;
- men feeling they cannot live up to what their society expects of them, which in turn may lead to gender-based violence;
- women who are not economically self-reliant facing greater protection risks;
- children being withdrawn from schools by their parents;
- children engaging in exploitative labour and girls married off at an early age; and
- men and women working in exploitative and hazardous conditions.

Laws and policies

These could lead to several concerns, such as:

- denying forcibly displaced children and youth access to schools and higher education;
- penalizing displaced and stateless people who have no legal documents;
- criminalizing same-sex relationships;
- giving impunity to perpetrators of GBV and deny survivors access to justice; and
- discriminating against persons with disabilities.

Informal community justice

This could lead to several concerns, such as:

- discriminating against women in situations of intimate partner violence; and
- discriminating against members of a particular minority group.

AGD and protection risks

How individual circumstances create protection risks

We've seen that each individual's protection environment is influenced by family, community and wider societal, economic, political, cultural and environmental factors.

However, these factors also interact with the particular situation of each person (or a group of persons who share certain characteristics) to create specific protection risks. The people in these images face specific protection risks because of the contexts they live in. We will now look at the risks that each group may face.



Persons with disabilities, including physical, psychosocial, intellectual, hearing and visual impairments

- may experience difficulty in moving, hearing, seeing, communicating or learning;
- are more likely to be exposed to violence, including sexual and domestic abuse, exploitation by family members and discrimination in their communities; or
- may face physical, information and attitudinal barriers to accessing basic services, including education.

For more information, please consult UNHCR's Need to Know Guidance on Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement.



Older women and men

- may experience difficulties in their mobility;
- may find that their capacities diminish;
- may have chronic health conditions and specific nutritional needs;
- may experience violence, neglect, discrimination and exploitation by family members; or
- may face information and physical barriers to access services and assistance.
- Older women (particularly those who are widowed) may be deprived of inheritance or expelled from their homes.

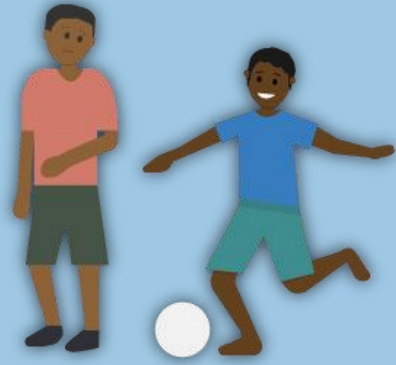
For more information, please consult UNHCR's Need to Know Guidance on Working with Older Persons in Forced Displacement.



Men and boys

While often portrayed as facing fewer protection risks, they:

- may experience sexual or other violence or be forcibly recruited by armed groups;
- may be at higher risk of arbitrary arrest, detention and refoulement;
- may experience mental health and psychosocial issues as a result of torture; or
- may experience mental health and psychosocial issues as a result of the loss of livelihoods.



Youth and adolescent boys

- may be forcibly recruited and used by armed forces or groups;
- may need to engage in exploitative and hazardous labour; or
- may be at heightened risk of substance abuse or getting involved in gangs.



Youth and adolescent girls

As families face greater socioeconomic challenges, youth and adolescent girls:

- may be married off at increasingly younger ages;
- may be engaged in survival sex as the only way to support themselves and their families;
- may be at risk of exploitative labour (e.g. as domestic workers) and being forcefully recruited and used by armed forces; or
- may be attacked as they look for firewood or water outside the camp.



Women and girls

- are more likely to experience sexual violence;
- may be subjected to intimate partner violence;
- may be deprived from accessing support when abused;
- may not have equal access to and control over management and provision of food, core relief items, and cash-based interventions;
- may face a heightened risk of abduction, rape and sexual abuse, especially in remote areas; or
- may be forced to travel long distances through dangerous areas, perhaps in the dark, in order to go to school, work, or to collect firewood or water, particularly in rural and camp settings.



LGBTIQ+ persons

LGBTIQ+ persons often hide their sexual orientation and gender identity out of fear. It is therefore difficult for humanitarian actors to identify them. They:

- may be at risk of violence, including sexual abuse, torture and murder at the hands of state actors or community and family members, often without police protection;
- may experience severe discrimination and a lack of access to health care, housing, education, employment and other social services;
- may be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention and extortion, especially in countries criminalizing same-sex relations.

For more information, please consult UNHCR's Need to Know Guidance on Working with LGBTIQ+ Persons in Forced Displacement.



Minorities and indigenous people

In conflict situations, national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous groups:

- may face protection risks based on their perceived or real affiliation to the “opposite side”. Women may be at particular risk of sexual violence as an act of revenge, while men may be accused of being associated with fighting parties.
- may be at risk when services are not equally accessible to everyone. For example, people from a minority may not be able to access information, reach UNHCR offices, attend school or use health facilities due to their physical location in an area with a majority group population.

For more information, please consult UNHCR's Need to Know Guidance on Working with National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Forced Displacement.



Module 3: Age, Gender, Diversity and Intersectionality

This module explains why it is important to look at age, gender and diversity and introduces the concept of intersectionality.

Age

Why is it important to look at age?

Age refers to the different stages in a person's life cycle. It is important to be aware of where people are in their life cycle for several reasons.

- The capacities and needs of individuals can change over time and this affects our programming.
- Age can enhance or diminish a person's capacity to exercise their rights which means that they may need additional support from UNHCR.
- People of different ages can experience different protection risks which require tailored interventions.

How does age impact exposure to risks?

Children, older persons and youth are groups with their own characteristics that can affect their exposure to risks differently.



Children

Children bring unique and valuable perspectives and solutions to problems confronting them and their communities. Children and adolescents should be supported to participate and express their views in all matters affecting them in accordance with their age, gender, maturity, and capacity. Children and adolescents are entitled to special protection and assistance because they are at greater risk than adults of abuse, neglect, sexual and other forms of violence, exploitation, trafficking and forced recruitment into armed groups.



Older persons

Older persons may face heightened protection risks, as a result of aging factors alone, or in combination with other individual characteristics. The specific risks older persons face can be the result of physical and mental conditions, but can also result from obstacles encountered due to societal perceptions and the interactions of an individual with their environment. Older people can play vital roles in their households and communities, for example as transmitters of knowledge, culture, and skills.



Youth

Youth are frequently overlooked as a social group, and have the potential to make important contributions to protection and solutions for themselves and their communities, when given the opportunity to develop their leadership, talents and skills. Displacement frequently forces female and male youth to take on new roles and responsibilities to try to meet their own and their families' protection and assistance needs. Forced displacement can lead to harmful coping strategies, such as sexual exploitation and sex work, the risk of forced recruitment in criminal and armed groups, and exploitation in the labour market.



Gender

Why is it important to look at gender?

Gender analysis examines how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect women, men, girls and boys including those with disabilities, older persons and LGBTIQ+ displaced and stateless persons in certain situations or contexts. Gender analysis examines the relationship between females and males, their access to and control of resources, and the constraints they face relative to each other.

The understanding obtained from a gender analysis should inform policy development and service delivery. To do this, we need to first distinguish between the two words: “gender” and “sex”.

Socially constructed or biologically defined?

Take a look at these photos. Do you think the roles they show are **socially constructed** or **biologically defined**?



All of these images are examples of socially constructed identities that are influenced by social and cultural norms.

The differences between sex and gender

As you saw, many roles that we think of as either “male” or “female” are in fact socially constructed identities that are influenced by social and cultural norms (gender-based), rather than biologically defined (sex-based).

We'll now look in more detail at the differences between the two.

Sex

Sex refers to the classification of a person as having female, male and/or intersex characteristics. A person's sex is a combination of bodily characteristics, including chromosomes, reproductive organs and secondary sex characteristics. In most cases, a person's sex is determined at birth by looking at their physical features.

Examples of features determined by sex characteristics include:

- individuals with female sex characteristics can give birth, while individuals with male sex characteristics impregnate; and
- mostly, individuals with female sex characteristics eventually menstruate and develop breasts and lactate.

Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles for women and men, which are often central to the way in which people define themselves and are defined by others. Gender roles are learned, changeable over time and vary across cultures. Gender often defines the duties, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and privileges of women and men in any context.

Examples of socially constructed roles include:

- women being in charge of housework and raising the children;
- men providing for and protecting the family; and
- women working as nurses, while men working as construction workers.

Sex, gender and protection risks

From a protection programming perspective, it is important for us to understand the needs and challenges that result from both a person's sex and their gender roles. It is critical that we become aware of some of the assumptions we make based on someone's gender which could impact how we design our interventions.

For example, assumptions about men and boys never experiencing sexual violence may result in our GBV response programming only focusing on women and excluding men and boy survivors from much-needed support.

Protection consequences and programming implications

Understanding how sex and gender influence individuals has both protection consequences and programming implications.

Needs defined by sex are generally similar across regions, e.g. ensuring sanitary material provision to all girls and women of reproductive age, and ensuring availability of reproductive health services.

Risks defined by gender are contextually defined and require a combination of gender mainstreaming and targeted interventions, based on an analysis of locally and culturally defined roles.

Take a look at the protection consequences and planning implications of these four statements related to sex and gender.

	Protection consequences	Programming implications
<p>“Women are gentle; men are tough.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men who are unable to express pain may experience depression or turn to alcohol or drug abuse. Women are expected to put up with their husband’s behaviour and suffer silently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We may need to provide shelters for survivors of GBV. Leadership training for women and awareness-raising on gender roles. Supporting empowerment processes and working with men and boys.
<p>“Women can breastfeed babies; men can bottle-feed babies.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breastfeeding mothers may be affected by food insecurity. Women with small children may be at higher risk of GBV including sexual exploitation and abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and girls should have equal access to and control over management and provision of food, core relief items and cash-based interventions. Safe access to cooking fuel could ensure that breast-feeding women are better able to nourish themselves.
<p>“Men should be the leaders in decision-making structures.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women are underrepresented in decision-making and resource allocation structures. This may mean that their needs are not prioritized and the protection risks that they face are not addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that mechanisms are set up for women to be equally and meaningfully represented in decision-making structures. Campaigns can be developed to influence cultural norms that prevent women from being involved in decision-making.
<p>“Women menstruate while men do not.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Menstruation and lack of access to sanitary materials may limit women and girls’ ability to attend school or engage in livelihoods. Women may resort to survival sex to increase their income to cover sanitary and personal hygiene needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to ensure that appropriate sanitary materials and personal hygiene kits are provided to all women and girls of reproductive age. Sanitary materials should be distributed regularly. Provision of cash-based interventions so that women can purchase their own sanitary materials.

UNHCR's approach to gender equality

We have seen how gender roles have an impact on the needs, risks, capacities and opportunities of individuals of all age, gender and diversity backgrounds during forced displacement. For UNHCR, gender equality is fundamental to the well-being and rights of all displaced and stateless people; it is central to UNHCR's AGD approach; and it is relevant to every aspect of UNHCR's work.

UNHCR's approach to working with women and girls and addressing their specific needs has evolved considerably from focusing on women as a specific target group, to adopting a much broader age, gender and diversity approach.

UNHCR has two main strategies for promoting gender equality:

- targeted actions and interventions to address existing gender inequalities that contribute to persistent discrimination and exacerbate inequalities; and
- age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in all policies, programming and practices.

UNHCR's commitments to women and girls

UNHCR has adopted five institutional commitments to women and girls to advance their rights and implement concrete measures to improve their protection. These commitments also constitute five of the 10 Core Actions included in UNHCR's AGD Policy 2018.

The following statements are included in the five institutional commitments:

- Women and girls participate equally and meaningfully in all decision-making, community management and leadership structures, and committees of forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- Women and girls are provided with individual registration and documentation, directly or through support provided by UNHCR.

- Women and girls have equal access to and control over management and provision of food, core-relief items and cash-based interventions.
- Women and girls have access to comprehensive GBV prevention and response services.
- Women and girls have equal access to economic opportunities, decent work, and-quality education and health services.

You can learn more about UNHCR's updated commitments to women and girls in the 2018 AGD Policy. You can also find out more through UNHCR's Gender Equality Toolkit.

Diversity

Why look at diversity?

While the age and gender dimensions are present in everyone, other characteristics vary from person to person. These differences must be recognized, understood and valued by UNHCR in each specific context and operation, thus promoting a protective, inclusive, accessible and non- discriminatory environment where everyone's rights are upheld.

Diversity refers to the different values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, health, social and economic status, skills and other specific personal characteristics.

Minorities

A minority is an ethnic, religious, national or linguistic group, less in number than the rest of the population, whose members share a common identity. They may share characteristics that differentiate them from the majority, and they generally seek to maintain these distinguishing identities.

Minorities might be discriminated against by other forcibly displaced people or the local population, resulting in minority groups having limited access to services, experiencing violence, not being able to practice their religion or to speak their own language.

Indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples generally have a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories. This continuity may be in the form of occupation of ancestral lands (at least in part), ancestry, language and/or cultural manifestations. Indigenous communities tend to be non-dominant compared with majorities.

Indigenous persons who are refugees are likely affected both by the immediate events leading to their forcible displacement as well as the long-term legacy of discrimination.

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, psychosocial, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with various barriers, hinder their full participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Persons with disabilities are often excluded from programmes, lack support networks and are denied participation in decisions that affect their lives. As a result, they may face heightened protection risks and be unable to access humanitarian assistance and programmes, such as education, livelihoods and health care.

LGBTIQ+ individuals

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ+) individuals are people who do not conform to conventional or traditional norms of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and/or sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

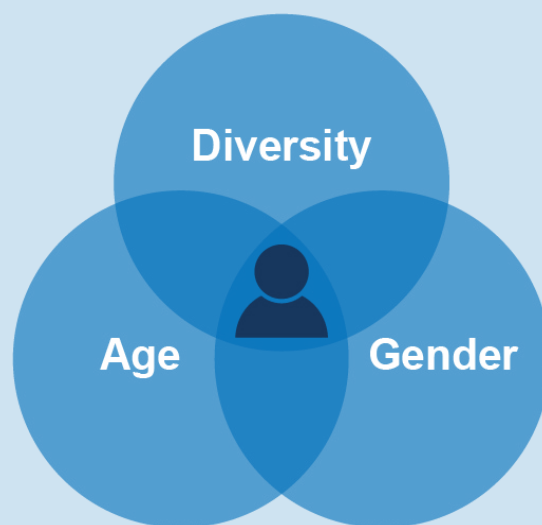
They may experience stigmatization and violence, including sexual abuse, torture or murder. They often face severe discrimination and exclusion from accessing services, including health, documentation and livelihoods.



Intersectionality

Understanding intersectionality

Having seen how different people face different protection risks, we will now look at how we can more systematically analyse the intersection of individual characteristics with the surrounding environment. To do so, we will look at age, gender, diversity and the intersectionality approach.



Age, gender and diversity characteristics vary from person to person and intersect to shape an individual's identity and experience.

Intersectionality is the interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion/inclusion and inferiority/superiority.

An intersectional approach recognizes that each person is unique and values differences between persons, whether actual or perceived, as defining characteristics of a person's capacities, needs and exposure to risks.

Intersecting identity markers

Here are three examples of groups which have intersecting identity markers.

	Age	Diversity	Gender
Children with disabilities are at higher risk of not attending school.			
Older women are at higher risk of abuse within the family or lack access to services.			
Lesbian women from a minority group may not have access to information to report violence in their community.			

The Age, Gender and Diversity approach requires consideration to be given to how age and gender intersect with other characteristics, such as disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ethnicity, income level and education and how such intersections may lead to different capacities, experiences and aspirations.

Introducing the AGD lens

As we saw with the earlier photo with the cat, it can sometimes be difficult to see something if we do not know how to look for it. Too often, our protection strategies risk failing because of our own attitudes and beliefs which can contain rigid perceptions or unconscious bias due to taught stereotypes.

Internalizing age, gender and diversity means re-training our minds to be open when entering into a community. We should notice the dynamics in a community and question how this impacts the protection needs of diverse groups, as well as the implications for the way in which we deliver services.

Doing this is like putting on a special pair of glasses with lenses that make us see each person as an individual with their own past, present and future, as well as with their own diverse needs, experiences and capacities.

Using the different AGD lenses

Let's see how we might apply the AGD lens to a simple, everyday scene. Can you spot the protection risks in this scenario?



Think about what you could learn if you re-examined this scenario from different angles:

- using an “age lens”;
- using a “gender lens”; and
- using a “diversity lens”.

Are things different when we use multiple lenses at the same time?

Age analysis

Age analysis shows us that:

- Children might be at risk of not attending school.
- Children might be at risk of working in exploitative conditions.
- Children might be more at risk of forced recruitment.
- Children might be more at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Children might also be at risk of trafficking.

Age and gender analysis

What else can we see when we combine the age lens with a gender lens?

- Girls might be expected to do the housework and not attend school; boys might have to engage in physical labour.
- Girls and boys are at risk of forced recruitment.
- Girls and boys might be at risk of sexual abuse.
- Girls might be at risk of child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Age, gender and diversity analysis

What can we see when we apply the age, gender and diversity lens together?

- Children from an ethnic or religious minority might be discriminated against by majority communities.
- Children with disabilities are likely not to attend school or experience bullying and be excluded from playing with others.
- Also, violence may be exacerbated against adolescents who are perceived to be LGBTIQ+. Adolescent LGBTIQ+ females may be particularly at risk of honour killing and rape.

In all situations, it is important that we apply an age, gender and diversity analysis to ensure that we are not overlooking anyone, we adequately identify the issues and protection concerns, their causes and consequences, and we design programmes that adequately respond to them.



Module 4: AGD Policy 2018 & AGD Actions

This module introduces UNHCR's AGD Policy (2018), explains who is responsible for the AGD approach and describes the actions we need to implement an AGD approach.

Who is responsible for the AGD approach?

The AGD approach is UNHCR's way of working. It is our collective responsibility whether we work in the field or in Headquarters, in an advocacy-based operation or in direct service delivery. Each member of the workforce has a role to play, irrespective of their functional area.

UNHCR's AGD Policy 2018 identifies 10 mandatory Core Actions which guide UNHCR's progress towards fuller inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless persons' perspectives and more effective, accountable responses to their needs.

The updated policy is an organization-wide commitment and must be implemented by all functions of the workforce. The policy is mandatory for all of our operations and applies to all persons falling under UNHCR mandate: refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless persons.

Importantly, the policy recognizes the need for us to work with other actors, including governments, to address inequalities and to help build environments conducive to the empowerment of disenfranchised people affected by forced displacement.

Mandatory Core Actions of the AGD Policy 2018

The AGD Policy is composed of 10 Core Actions representing **three key areas** of commitment for UNHCR.

1. AGD-inclusive programming

Core Action 1 is that all programming is based on an analysis of data disaggregated by age, sex and diversity characteristics. This includes introducing targeted actions where needed.

2. Accountability to Affected People

Core actions 2-5 represent UNHCR's commitment to Accountability to Affected People (AAP) through:

- Participation and inclusion of diverse AGD groups across all programming;
- Communication and transparency to ensure access to timely, accurate and relevant information;
- Feedback systematically received and responded to, and corrective action takes as appropriate
- Ongoing organizational Learning and adaptation informed by displaced and stateless persons.

For more information, please review 'UNHCR's Operational Guidance on Accountability to Affected People'.

3. Gender equality

Core action 6 highlights UNHCR's commitment to Gender Equality which require:

- The equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making and leadership structures;
- Individual registration and documentation for women and girls;
- Equal access to and control over management of food, core relief-items and cash- based interventions for women and girls;
- Access to economic opportunities, quality education and health services for women and girls; and
- Access to comprehensive GBV services for women and girls.

For more details, you can review the 10 Core Actions in the 2018 AGD Policy.

UNHCR's AGD approach in our work

UNHCR's AGD Policy covers all forcibly displaced and stateless persons and applies to all operations, Regional Bureaux and Headquarters in all areas of UNHCR's work. This means that each one of us, in all functions and sectoral areas, has a responsibility to apply an AGD approach in the work that we do.

Advancing the core actions of the policy requires that we carry out several activities in several areas while working together with various entities and sectors. For us to effectively advance an AGD approach, we need to implement the following:

- Collect age, gender and diversity data, analyse information using AGD
- disaggregation, and use the findings for programming.
- Use participatory approaches that consider the views, needs and priorities of diverse AGD groups across all phases of programming, and in decision-making processes.
- Ensure forcibly displaced and stateless are at the heart of programming by undertaking an AGD analysis, and implementing community-based and rights-based approaches.
- Promote a multifunctional team (MFT) approach to facilitate joint AGD
- analysis and development of AGD-sensitive responses.
- Identify where we need targeted actions to address protection gaps faced by specific AGD groups.
- Ensure we are accountable to all displaced and stateless people from diverse AGD groups.
- Respond to the feedback received from displaced and stateless people and adapt programmes accordingly.

We will discuss those actions in the following modules.



Module 5: Disaggregated data

This module explains data that is disaggregated, how to obtain it, and how it can be used for programming purposes.

What is disaggregated data?

Disaggregated data refers to data that is organized and sorted into smaller defined categories of analysis, such as age groups, sex and other diversity characteristics. This disaggregation can be done both for quantitative data and qualitative data, for example statistical demographic data, results data and information on protection gaps.

Core Action 1 of UNHCR's AGD Policy requires that all data collected by UNHCR be "disaggregated by age and sex and by other diversity considerations, as contextually appropriate and possible, for purposes of analysis and programming".

Disaggregated data: True or False?

Take a look at these statements about disaggregated data. Do you know which are true, and which are false?

“Data on the same set of AGD categories (e.g. age, sex, disability, ethnicity, linguistic group, sexual orientation) should be collected for all activities and programmes across an operation.”

This statement is **false**. Data should be collected and analysed with disaggregation by sex, age and disability at a minimum. Each operation will determine which other diversity criteria should be prioritized to meet their protection and solutions objectives, after identifying and mitigating potential risks and sensitivities associated with the collection, storage, processing, analysis, sharing and use of the data. This will allow UNHCR to align with global standards and practices that require organizations to collect at a minimum sex, age and disability-disaggregated data.

“Collecting disaggregated data is only necessary for programmes that are directly implemented by UNHCR - we cannot expect that partners will do so as well.”

This statement is **false**. Core Action 1 of the UNHCR AGD Policy is applicable to UNHCR’s primary data collection activities, i.e. to data that is collected directly by UNHCR and by partners that signed a project agreement with UNHCR. In cases where other actors are collecting data, UNHCR’s role on AGD disaggregation varies: it has a standard-setting role for inter-agency responses that it coordinates, and an advocacy role with operational partners and governments.

“Collecting and analysing data disaggregated by age, gender and diversity is essential to understanding the needs and capacities of people of all AGD groups with whom we work, in order to provide an appropriate response.”

This statement is **true**. The collection and analysis of data disaggregated by age, sex and diversity characteristics is essential to understand the capacities, needs and exposure to protection risks of women, men, girls, boys and people of all gender identities. Therefore, it should be used to inform multi-year strategy development and programme design to identify targeted actions, and to monitor and evaluate our responses and interventions. Data disaggregation helps determine the extent to which programming is inclusive of age, gender and diversity dimensions, addresses specific barriers and contributes to the fulfilment of rights for all displaced and stateless persons.

“Core Action 1 of the AGD Policy pertains to operational data as well as to internal corporate systems and activities such as financial data, human resources data and administrative data.”

This statement is **false**. Core Action 1 of the AGD Policy pertains only to operational data, defined as data and information that pertains to a crisis/situation, the persons affected by the crisis/situation and the response to the crisis/situation. It is applicable only to data where the denominator is people, meaning that only data referring to people (at the individual, household or community level) will be disaggregated. This includes, for example, the percentage of girls out of the total number of children assisted, or the number of complaints received by a household with a person with disabilities out of the total number of complaints received by the refugee population.

“Information management colleagues are the only ones responsible for ensuring that disaggregated data is collected and analysed.”

This statement is **false**. Data disaggregation that serves operational objectives requires coordination between protection, programme and information management colleagues throughout the entire process, from defining the AGD criteria that are relevant to and necessary for a given exercise, to conducting AGD-sensitive analysis and disseminating and using the findings. Lack of such coordination and collaboration may result in an inability to maximize the benefits of AGD-disaggregated data for operational activities.

For more information on disability-disaggregated data, please see the Washington Group Short Question Set, UNHCR’s Need to Know Guidance on Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement and COMPASS guidance on Developing the Results Framework.

How to obtain disaggregated data

Data can only be disaggregated by AGD characteristics if data and information on those AGD characteristics are collected or previously available. For example, if data on “total people affected” needs to be disaggregated by age and sex at the analysis step to inform programming decisions, age and sex data must be collected or otherwise available from existing (secondary) sources. Therefore, it is essential to define the list of AGD characteristics that are needed when the data collection exercise is being designed.

Sources of AGD-disaggregated data

Depending on their design, AGD-disaggregated data can be available in multiple sources such as:

- Registration, case and identity management systems
- Protection and sectoral monitoring
- Programme response monitoring and evaluation
- Participatory assessments
- Activities related to consultations with communities and various feedback and response mechanisms
- Studies conducted by government (for example census and survey data), universities, think tanks, research groups and other organizations

Producers of AGD-disaggregated data

Many actors generate AGD-disaggregated data and information, such as:

- UNHCR
- Other UN humanitarian agencies
- Development actors, including UN agencies (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF) and multilateral development banks (e.g. World Bank's World Development Indicators)
- Global SDG Indicators Database
- Government ministries and institutions, notably national statistical offices (NSOs)
- International NGOs
- National NGOs
- Displaced and stateless persons, and other community members

AGD Data Disaggregation and Programming

UNHCR's multi-year strategic programming cycle has three phases; to plan for, collect and present results. Throughout, AGD-disaggregated data must be systematically collected, analysed and used in programming. COMPASS, UNHCR's approach to Results Based Management, provides for disaggregation of indicator data by age, sex and disability.

This data can be used for programming purposes in the following ways:

- AGD-disaggregated data can be used to inform the development of multi-year strategies that address the needs, protection risks and priorities of all groups of displaced and stateless people.
- The analysis of AGD-disaggregated data will also help you determine what targeted actions are required to respond to the needs of specific groups in the population.

- AGD-disaggregated data can be used to take decisions on prioritization and targeting, to advocate for funding to support targeted actions, and to determine if our programmes have been inclusive and have responded to the identified needs of each AGD group.
- When you develop partnership agreements you should make sure these are designed based on an analysis of the needs and priorities of different groups of the population.
- Finally, it is important to describe the needs and protection risks of each AGD group in internal and external reports, as relevant, to highlight which challenges and risks are faced by each group and how UNHCR is responding to them.

Examples from the field

Let's look at two examples of how disaggregated data enhances an AGD approach in practice.



Mauritania

In Mauritania, AGD-disaggregated data for people at heightened risk of abuse and discrimination, enabled the prioritization of these groups for refugee status determination. Continuous updating and recording of AGD-disaggregated data also facilitated monitoring and the provision of assistance to specific groups in the community. For example, persons with reduced mobility, such as older persons, were provided with support through general food and cash distributions, including home delivery.



India

In India, data disaggregated by age, sex and disability were used to design cash-based interventions and to better plan the distribution of items to Rohingya refugees. This data was used to project the numbers, in specific locations, of possible recipients, such as girls of school age, women who could benefit from hospital deliveries, older persons and persons with disabilities without effective family support.



Module 6: Participatory approaches

Core Action 2 of the AGD Policy requires that country operations employ participatory methodologies through all phases of programming in order to incorporate the capacities and priorities of women, men, girls and boys of diverse backgrounds into protection, assistance and solutions programmes.

Meaningful participation by all will often require special efforts to ensure that those often marginalized, such as women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and minority groups, are given support and specific opportunities to contribute.

Tips for using participatory approaches

Instead of making decisions on behalf of displaced people, when we follow a participatory approach, we:

- Listen to what they tell us;
- Facilitate discussions, so they can directly identify their priorities and contributions;
- Draw on their knowledge and skills;
- Give feedback on what the outcomes of these discussions are in terms of changes to practices, actual results and ongoing processes; and
- Support their active role in implementing and monitoring the solutions they identified.

Without broad participation, only a few individuals end up deciding for all, and those few individuals might control information and resources. This can lead to abuse of power, including amongst forcibly displaced persons.

Using a participatory approach and undertaking regular participatory consultations with all segments in a community helps ensure that we develop a comprehensive and sustainable protection response that considers their priorities and builds on their capacities and skills.

What are participatory approaches?

We will now look at some statements about participatory approaches. Some are true, and some are false.

“The participatory assessment is an activity that we carry out once a year to inform programmes.”

This statement is **false**. Participatory assessments are a continuous process, not a one-time activity. Participatory approaches should apply to all our work and across programming, including planning and monitoring, and from the very beginning of an emergency. Participatory approaches should be integrated into the informal daily contact that UNHCR has with forcibly displaced and stateless people and communities, whether face-to-face or through virtual channels

“Conducting a participatory assessment is the first step in identifying and understanding the protection risks, priorities and capacities of different age, gender and diversity groups.”

This statement is **true**. The participatory assessment is a method for establishing dialogue with communities, and identifying, analysing and systematizing the protection risks, priorities and capacities of forcibly displaced and stateless people with different age, gender and diversity characteristics. It is the first step in identifying and understanding the protection risks, priorities and capacities of different age, gender and diversity groups. Importantly, a participatory assessment is only one element in implementing an age, gender and diversity approach, but not sufficient in itself to meet operational commitments to AGD.

“Always consider focus group discussions as the most effective way to engage with diverse AGD groups.”

This statement is **false**. Focus group discussions with selected AGD groups are useful to gather information about their views and experiences of a topic. However, there are many different methodologies that you can use to ensure the participation of diverse groups. Selecting the most appropriate methodology is based on:

- What you seek to achieve (your purpose);
- The specific topics you want to explore;
- The specific groups you want to engage; and
- Other factors in the local context, such as security, access, time and resources.

“Results from the use of participatory approaches should be used to shape decision-making in all activities conducted by UNHCR.”

This statement is **true**. **Core Action 5** of the AGD Policy requires that, “At a minimum, UNHCR operations adapt programmes and strategies in response to input from forcibly displaced and stateless people, and document this in Country Operations Plans and Annual Reporting”. By learning from our continuous engagement with communities and adapting programmes in line with their feedback, we ensure that programming is informed by, and adapted to, the voices, perceptions and needs expressed by displaced and stateless persons.

Examples from the field

Let's review some examples of how we have used the participatory approach in different settings.



Uganda

In Uganda, multiple consultations took place with women, men, youth, and boys and girls of diverse backgrounds, including persons with disabilities and ethnic and religious minorities. Such consultations informed decisions on the opening of bank accounts and the provision of cash-based assistance and menstrual hygiene management kits. For example, consultations were held with women and girls of various ages to discuss preferences and possible monetization of sanitary kits, based on which the operation followed up with sanitary pad suppliers to improve the quality of products and introduce reusable pads in some regions.



Europe

In Europe, consultations with youth during the monitoring and evaluation phases were a mandatory feature of the small projects supported through the Youth Initiative Fund (YIF). Some 43 projects led by youth across 29 countries were supported by UNHCR in 2018-2019 through the YIF. Spearheaded by community mobilization and action, youth benefited from the leadership opportunities provided and, in exercising their roles, proved their potential in serving communities as connectors and protection actors.



Myanmar

In Myanmar, a lack of field access to the IDP population was a challenge for UNHCR. Since communication, especially with women and older persons, primarily relied on face-to-face encounters, the limited access resulted in gaps in understanding the concerns and risks faced by those groups. UNHCR overcame this challenge by engaging key informants in the community to report on protection concerns and advocated with partners and cluster members to use participatory approaches and establish multiple communication channels.

Employ diverse participatory methodologies

To be effective, our participatory approaches must be selected and adapted based on the objective, the topic we explore, the group we engage with and our context (e.g. security and resources). Let's explore a few different methodologies that we can use.

Surveys

- Surveys are a quantitative data collection method for gathering information from a selected group of people or other units such as households.
- Useful for gathering information in a structured manner.

Focus group discussions

- A focus group discussion (FGD) is a structured or semi-structured conversation with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences of a topic.
- Useful for understanding the range of views and issues within a group.

Key informant interviews

- A key informant interview takes place with individuals with prior and specific knowledge on an issue, situation, group or location. It uses a structured or semi-structured questionnaire adapted to respondents' expected knowledge, for example about the impact of the crisis among different population groups, protection risks, challenges, opportunities and resilience.
- Useful for exploring issues that communities do not want to discuss openly, e.g. taboo topics, due to fear of reprisals or shyness and nervousness.
- Useful for exploring an issue in more depth.

Participatory observations/ transect walks

- Observation is an individual or team activity to look at the actual situation in a location, and/or the situation and behaviour of certain people in a given location (e.g. to triangulate existing information).
- A transect walk consists of walking with local people through an area, using the opportunity to observe, discuss and listen to the variety of people encountered and stopping at areas identified by you or the group. Ask what the area is used for today, how it was before, what caused the change and impact of the changes. Transect walks can be designed to identify particular barriers or protection risks, such as physical barriers in the environment or risks to access services (e.g. road safety).
- Useful for understanding the range of views and issues that exist within a group or in a location.

Community workshops

- A participatory workshop involves facilitating discussion and collaborative activities for community members to collectively explore a specific topic.
- Useful for a range of purposes, including mapping relationships, identifying root causes of problems, and identifying priorities and solutions.

For more information on needs assessments and participatory methodologies, review UNHCR's Needs Assessment Handbook (2017).

Adapt participatory methodologies

Once you have selected your participatory methodologies, you should consider what adaptations are needed to ensure that engagement is accessible and meaningful to all sub-groups within a community. Here are some examples of adaptations when you engage with different AGD groups.

- Sign language can support the participation of people with a hearing disability.
- Asking LGBTIQ+ people about the safest time and place for them to meet.
- Providing interpretation for linguistic minorities.
- Providing transportation for persons with limited mobility.
- Participation through art and play for children.
- Use easy-to-read materials or visuals to share information with individuals with limited literacy or with persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Consult with AGD groups to identify their preferred choices for staff gender.
- Facilitating day care to allow participation of mothers.

Example from the field: Walking in the shoes of refugees

UNHCR Ethiopia introduced a participatory methodology called “walking in the shoes of refugees” to complement a series of focus group discussions. This approach was used with groups at heightened risk to assess their protection needs.

In each camp, tours through the camp were guided by selected refugees of diverse background (e.g. persons with disabilities, female head of household with 8+ dependents, older persons and unaccompanied/separated children). Tours were undertaken with teams consisting of several refugees and two staff members, with each tour lasting up to three hours.

This methodology was used so that UNHCR staff could witness the daily life of refugees and observe the barriers experienced in accessing programmes and services. After the tours were conducted, UNHCR staff met together to share and exchange their experiences and observations. Collecting observations on the ground in this way gave them an improved understanding of the more practical protection and assistance challenges that might have been difficult for participants in focus group discussions to articulate.



Module 7: People-centred programming

This module explains what a people-centred approach is, how to use an AGD lens, and explores applying a rights-based approach, community-based approach and multifunctional team (MFT) approach.

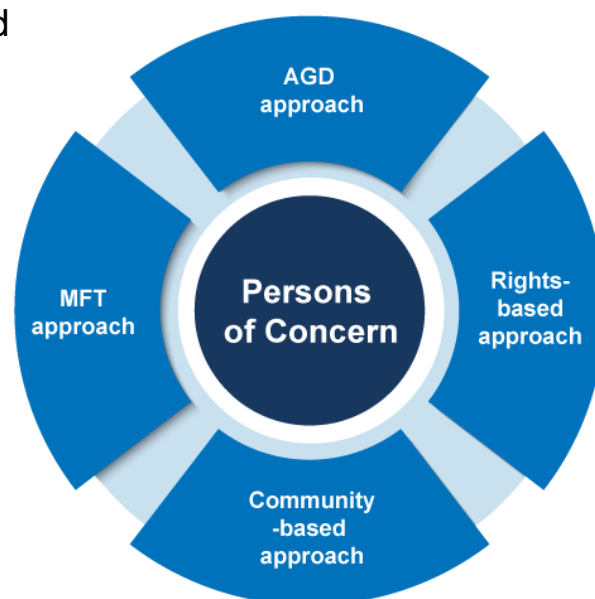
Putting forcibly displaced and stateless persons at the heart of programming

Putting forcibly displaced and stateless people at the heart of our programming is about taking their age, gender and diversity characteristics into account, and planning, implementing and monitoring our activities on that basis.

There are three elements to putting displaced and stateless persons at the centre of programming:

- Applying an AGD lens to all the work that we do including during the analysis of data for the purpose of programming;
- Jointly designing inclusive and accessible responses that are informed by people's priorities; and
- Working with communities to implement protection and solutions that recognize their capacities and resources.

To achieve this, UNHCR carries out AGD analysis and applies a community-based approach, a rights-based approach and a multifunctional team (MFT) approach.



Using an AGD lens to understand protection risks

The first element in people-centred programming is to carry out an AGD analysis, or use of the AGD lens, to understand the risks experienced by different groups in the community and develop a suitable response.

Here are some photos from a displacement situation. While you are looking at these photos, consider the following questions.



**Who represent the majority of displaced people?
What are the implications of this on our planning?**



**Who is communicating the needs to the humanitarian actors?
What are the implications of this on our planning?**



**Who is more visible to humanitarian workers and can access services easily?
What are the implications of this on our planning?**



**Who has the responsibility of collecting water and firewood?
What are the implications of this on our planning?**

Applying an AGD lens

Here are some protection risks we could miss if we don't apply an AGD lens:

- Access to services and humanitarian assistance might exclude certain groups.
- Our understanding of protection risks will be incomplete.
- Exclusion of certain groups can further stigmatize them and reinforce discriminatory practices.

Applying an AGD lens will ensure that we are inclusive of all groups when planning for access to services and humanitarian assistance and that we have a more comprehensive understanding of protection risks being faced by the people we work with and for.

Excluding certain groups can lead to further stigmatization and reinforce discriminatory practices. The same applies to community leaders, whom we will need to consult, but not exclusively and with a grounded understanding of the power dynamics in the community.

Specific protection risk

As we have seen, some groups experience higher risks during displacement.

Applying an AGD lens helps us identify the many different characteristics of the individuals that live within a given community, to analyse how these characteristics combine, resulting in unique experiences of discrimination, oppression, but also opportunities.

Let's look at how age, gender and diversity intersect and how, combined with the protection environment, they may increase protection risks for some groups.



Children who are taking care of their grandparents:

- May not be able to attend school because of their caring responsibilities.
- This may mean they cannot access their basic rights to education and play.
- Lack of academic certification and basic knowledge/skills will also reduce the chances of future income-generation opportunities as an adult.
- Lack of education also has proven health implications, including an increased chance of contracting diseases.
- If the child becomes the head of household and there is no other wage earner in the family, the child might engage in hazardous and exploitative labour conditions or engage in survival sex.



Persons with disabilities:

- Might not have access to the information they need to access services;
- Might experience difficulties to receive or carry their food rations or wait in queues;
- Might encounter attitudinal and communication barriers to report violence (including GBV) when experienced;
- May have to pay a part of their rations to other persons to get the food for them, reducing their food intake;
- May be hidden from/by the community and not given opportunities to voice their concerns; and
- Their skills and capacities may not be recognized, and they may be excluded from decision-making.



A woman who cares for an extended family and is also the main wage earner of the family:

- Might not be able to work regular working hours due to responsibilities towards family members who need her care.
- This will have an impact on the income she is able to earn.
- When experiencing such difficulties, she may need to take up exploitative work or engage in survival sex.
- In addition, she might not receive adequate nutrition or rest, which could be particularly problematic during pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- If working, she might not be able to come at any time of the day to receive assistance.

What do you see when applying an AGD lens?

Applying an AGD lens means:

- Looking at a community of displaced persons not as a homogeneous group, but as diverse and distinct individuals, who have differing needs, life experiences, coping mechanisms and face differing protection risks.
- Recognizing that they all have knowledge, skills and capacities through which they contribute to their families, social networks and the broader community.
- Identifying barriers and factors of inequality, while supporting the existing initiatives and capacities that exist in the community to address these diverse needs.

Applying an AGD lens makes our work more inclusive, accessible and appropriately targeted. It allows us to take account of the needs, skills and capacities of all individuals, and makes us more accountable to the communities we serve. This, in turn, ensures that our work has a greater and more sustainable impact.

Making programmes inclusive and non-discriminatory for all

These activities are examples of making our programmes inclusive and non-discriminatory:

- Organizing food distribution modalities in a way that allows all persons to access food, not only those who are physically fit.
- Recruiting and training interpreters, including sign language interpreters, to be available in UNHCR offices and at service delivery points.
- Organizing flexible office opening hours in a way that allows all groups to access programmes and services.
- Establishing clinics in locations that are safely accessible to people belonging to an ethnic minority.

If only one group in the community is able to access assistance, we instantly create a situation of dependency for the others. For example, if only men are able to carry food, build shelters or use heavy water pumps, older persons, women or children may need to provide favours, including sexual favours, in order to receive assistance.

If we organize strict office opening hours, then people who work or live far away cannot access the programme. This will result in them not being able to report protection incidents and seek the support they need.

If we establish clinics in a neighbourhood dominated by the ethnic majority, ethnic minorities may be exposed to risk or not feel safe coming to the clinic and seeking critical medical services.

The example of education programmes

Think about making protection inclusive and accessible to all children. What does an AGD analysis mean for education programmes?

This table matches five groups of children with the considerations specific to that group.

Group of children	Specific considerations
Children with disabilities	Might require additional learning support by the teacher. They might also need support with transport to school and adjustment of materials and the physical environment i.e. classrooms, learning resources, sanitary facilities, etc.
Children from economically disadvantaged families	Might not come to school because their families do not have the resources to pay for uniforms, transport and textbooks.
Child-headed households and working boys and girls	Might have a different time schedule due to their family responsibilities. School hours therefore need to be adjusted to their needs or alternative programmes be made available.
Children from minority families	Might not speak the language of the majority and might need additional support or instruction in their mother tongue.
Girls	Travel to school and the school environment needs to be safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. Private lavatory facilities need to be provided and sanitary materials may need to be provided.

You can see that, depending on the situation, children might need different types of support.

Examples from the field (Bangladesh)

Let's examine some examples of how an AGD analysis impacted our response:

During consultations with the Rohingya forcibly displaced community in Bangladesh, registered women in camps reported feeling uncomfortable accessing health services, because of the lack of female doctors and nurses. Language barriers and limited access to information about available community resources were also some of the issues raised in accessing healthcare. Take a look at potential responses, and why they were rejected or selected.

Multiplying the number of health clinics

Multiplying the number of health clinics will make the clinics more accessible for women if these were brought closer to where women are; however, this still doesn't address the cause of the problem.

Setting a schedule for women to come to the clinic on particular day

Dedicating specific days for women to come to the clinic may make women more comfortable knowing that no men will be present at the clinic; however, limiting women's access to the clinic to only few days of the week may lead to difficulties for women who cannot come during that time. There should be no restrictions to access clinics. Gender disaggregated schedules may also lead to exposing some groups in the community such as transgender individuals to risk.

Recruiting female staff who are Rohingya speakers

In this case, the operation advocated with partners, resulting in the successful recruitment of female staff and Rohingya speakers which addressed the main cause of the women's reluctance to access the clinics.

Examples from the field (Syria)

Older persons may be more hidden in the community, or humanitarian actors may not be sensitized to issues of ageing.

An assessment with older persons in Syria revealed that older people experience difficulty reaching food distribution points, queueing for long periods of time or transporting food rations back to their home. Furthermore, nutrition programmes and psychosocial support rarely targeted older persons and focused mainly on children. Appropriate responses in such situations could include:

- Introducing smaller packages distributed on a more frequent basis for older people to be able to carry them.
- Mobilizing the community to facilitate home delivery of food items.
- Introducing cash-based initiatives that allow flexibility to purchase age-appropriate food.

Each of the actions alone will not address all the issues identified. Instead, a combination of all three approaches may be a good solution when this is possible, as it can support the autonomy of older persons. In every case, it is important to consult with older people to decide the most appropriate actions.

- Introducing smaller packages may make it easier for older people to carry those packages. However, keep in mind that asking older people to come more frequently to collect their food packages may also result in additional difficulties and cost for the individuals.
- Mobilizing the community to support older people is a favorable approach, as it contributes to the resilience of communities and is a more sustainable solution.
- Introducing cash-based initiatives will allow for the purchase of items that are best fit for each individual, providing a more dignified means to ensure the specific needs of older people are met.

Examples from the field (Japan)

In Japan, participatory assessments with female displaced persons from diverse backgrounds highlighted that women from a religious minority community had experienced difficulties accessing services. These barriers included lack of transport, lack of knowledge of the local language and temporary legal status.

Which of these ideas do you think could be appropriate responses in such situations?

- Establishing a community centre dedicated to the women from this minority group to meet.
- Providing language programmes by female instructors.
- Arranging for transportation or providing transportation fees.
- Recruiting interpreters and facilitating access to legal documentation.

Establishing a community centre for women to meet, support each other and discuss their needs is a good idea; however, it is important to consider that limiting this space to only this group of women may contribute to further isolation and exclusion. Instead, it is best to support the inclusion of these women in activities targeting the broader community and support their integration efforts as part of a wider community. In this example, UNHCR Japan facilitated the establishment of language programmes by female instructors and the provision of transport, in addition to making arrangements for interpreters to be present during RSD interviews, facilitating access to legal documentation.

Applying a rights-based approach and a community-based approach

To support people-centred, inclusive and non-discriminatory programmes, UNHCR employs a rights-based approach and a community-based approach.

Rights-based approach

Under the Rights-based approach, UNHCR staff have four key obligations:

- Shift attitudes so that displaced and stateless persons are seen as rights-holders with legal entitlements, not as our beneficiaries
- Identify factors in the community and society that lead to inequality and situations of discrimination and engage communities in identifying ways of addressing them
- Strengthen the capacities of displaced and stateless persons as right-holders to claim their rights
- Strengthen the capacities of the duty-bearers such as humanitarian and development actors and governments to be able to satisfy those claims.

Community-based approach

The CBP approach and AGD approach go hand-in-hand and require various actions:

- Take every opportunity to meet diverse persons; don't assume that everybody can reach you
- Promote participation of women, persons with disabilities, older persons and youth in community structures
- Support safe and meaningful participation of minorities, indigenous peoples and LGBTIQ+ persons
- Consult with communities to identify their strategies to address pressing protection issues including GBV, child recruitment, and insecurity
- Train community volunteers from diverse backgrounds to identify people at heightened risk
- Develop safe and confidential referral pathways in consultations with communities and ensure community volunteers are trained on using them.

Examples from the field

Let's review some examples of community-based protection and how it contributes to the protection of diverse age, gender and diversity groups in the community.

Tunisia

In Tunisia, UNHCR supported the creation of a Senior Persons Group dedicated to persons over the age of 60. The monthly group sessions aim to break the social isolation experienced by older asylum seekers and refugees and allow them to come together for activities that target their needs and build on their capacities. These activities are inclusive of older persons' children and grandchildren as a means to promote their well-being.

Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, community representatives were elected in four camps. Women represented 55% of the voters, 50% of the candidates and 46% of the elected representatives. In 2020, out of 115 community groups established across 23 camps, 49% were formed by women and female youth. Having women represented in Block and Camp Committees, as well as in community groups, ensures that it is not only the voices of men that are heard by government officials, humanitarian partners and the UN. It is an opportunity to ensure that the lived experience of women and girls are recognized and addressed, not to mention an opportunity for women to see themselves in a new role in the community.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, UNHCR collaborates with an organization of persons with disabilities to regularly conduct meetings, campaigns and home visits to all persons with disabilities in the camp. The results of discussions feed into UNHCR's implementation and monitoring activities. One example is establishing a sign language club with 20 members at the early childhood development centre to make education more inclusive and increase participation of persons with disabilities.

Venezuela

In Venezuela, UNHCR works with community structures which are trained in the identification of persons at heightened risk using an AGD approach. The community structures are in charge of conducting outreach to persons with specific protection needs, including women and children at risk, older persons, LGBTIQ+ persons, indigenous people and persons with disabilities. Those structures also conduct awareness sessions and disseminate information on referral pathways

Promoting a multifunctional team approach

We will now examine how a multi-functional team approach advances the AGD approach.

This table shows which of these statements about a multifunctional team (MFT) approach are true, and which are false.

	True	False
An MFT approach allows us to brief different colleagues about what we have been doing.		
The MFT is a fixed structure with a fix composition throughout the year.		
The MFT is brought together once a year to carry out a participatory assessment.		
The MFT comes together to analyse the protection environment, and to design and deliver a response that is more complete and age, gender and diversity-sensitive.		
The MFT requires the participation of colleagues from several functional units such as UNHCR's Protection, Programme, Administration, Finance, Supply and other sectors.		

The MFT brings together individuals with different skills and perspectives to analyse the protection environment, and to design and deliver a response that is more complete and age, gender and diversity-sensitive.

The MFT does not call for a fixed structure and is understood as a flexible approach, with expert participation dependent on the specific matter at hand.

At its core, the MFT requires the participation of colleagues from several functional units such as UNHCR's Protection, Programme, Administration, Finance, Supply and other sectors, depending on the operational context and the purpose of the MFT.

For certain exercises, such as participatory assessments and/or the design of multi-year strategies, UNHCR should expand the MFT to include a wider range of actors, such as governmental counterparts, sister UN agencies, NGOs, donors and more importantly, forcibly displaced and stateless persons, and the communities hosting them.

The MFT approach should be applied throughout programming and requires strong leadership, especially from Representatives and Heads of Offices, as well as active engagement from all members of the MFT.

Why do we need the MFT approach?

An MFT approach harnesses the expertise, knowledge and skills available within the different functional roles in the multifunctional team and builds on a variety of perspectives.

This approach ensures that common goals and approaches are followed to address protection risks.

It strengthens comprehensive analysis for programming purposes.

It ensures that prioritization, planning and implementation are informed by the feedback obtained from communities in their diversity.

And it brings together external partners to work jointly as catalysts in ensuring the integration of the AGD approach throughout the programming and in external practice.

Examples from the field - an MFT approach

Let's take a look at some examples of MFT practices in the field.

Chad

UNHCR Multifunctional teams (MFT) have been involved in all stages of programming, from planning and execution to implementation and monitoring. In total, MFTs were made of more than 56 members (among them 18 women), including UNHCR and partner staff, refugees, local authorities and NGO staff. Their activities included participatory assessments, the country operations planning process, monitoring of activities, and mid-term and end-of-year reporting.

Egypt

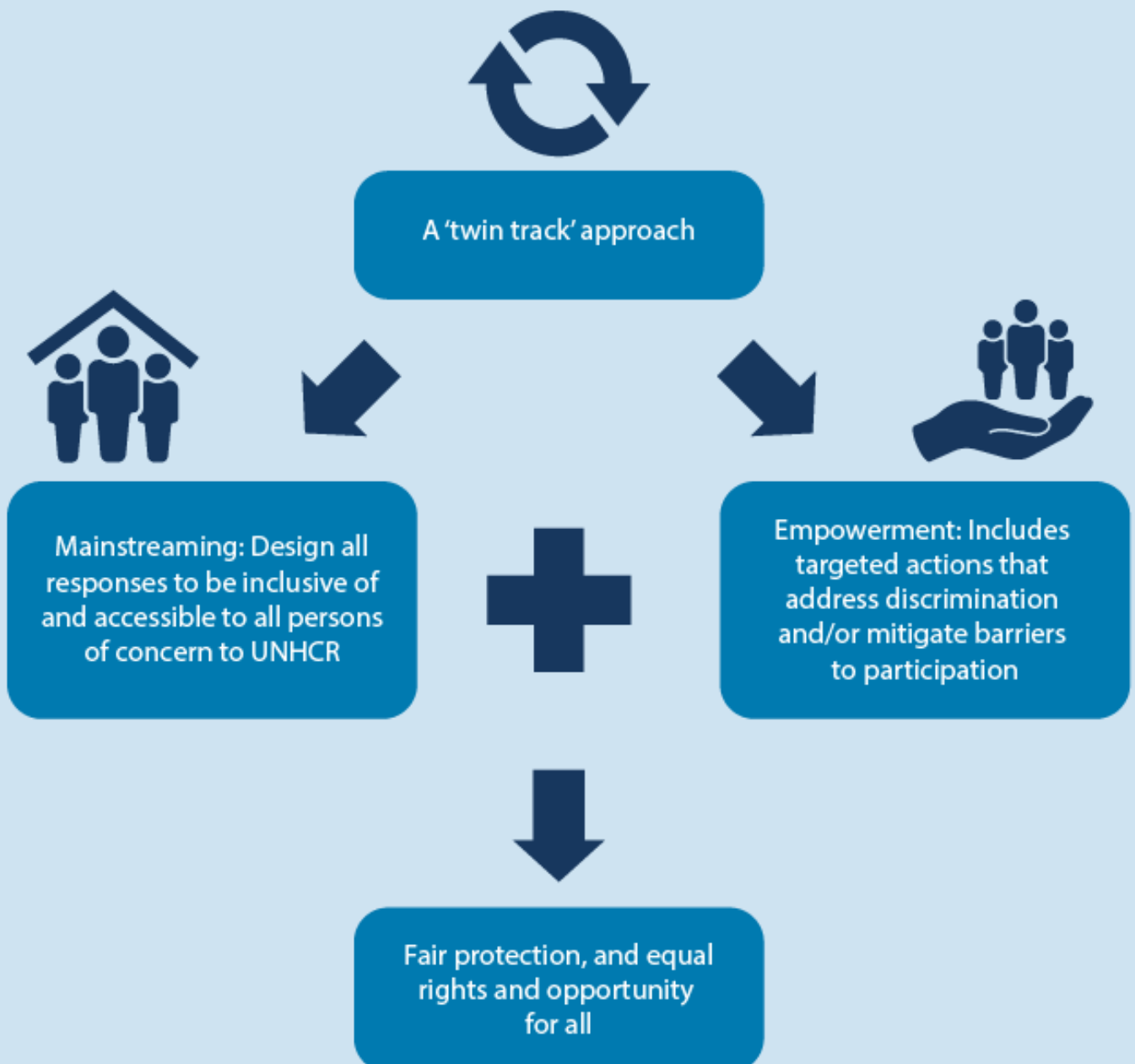
Refugees are engaged by MFTs in performance monitoring where their inputs are solicited about their satisfaction with the services rendered and what could be done to improve them. The operation maintains an active outreach programme with MFTs, and UNHCR's partners visit communities on a regular basis to continuously monitor their protection conditions, share updates on services and receive feedback.

Ukraine

For monitoring of both partner projects and activities under direct implementation, such as shelter, UNHCR engages an MFT, including staff members from programme, protection, project control, field and supply functions. The monitoring involves direct engagement with forcibly displaced and stateless people to receive their feedback on the quality of implementation.



Module 8: Twin-Track Approach and Working with Specific Groups



Introducing the twin-track approach

To better address the needs of particular groups, we need to adopt a twin-track approach for all areas of programming.

Track 1 is Mainstreaming. That means we design all responses to be inclusive of and accessible to all forcibly displaced and stateless persons. Track 2 is Empowerment. That means we include targeted actions that address discrimination and eliminate barriers to participation.

It is important to remember that each person is unique and that within each group, there will be different needs and capacities based on the intersection of age, gender and diversity, and how these interact with the protection environment, potentially resulting in protection risks. Not everybody in a particular group faces the same protection risks so make sure you have mechanisms in place to support the identification of individual risk factors and needs.

Let's examine certain groups of forcibly displaced and stateless persons and explore some specific actions appropriate for them.

Identifying targeted actions

An age, gender and diversity analysis will help us identify where we need to take targeted actions to address inequality and discrimination, and improve protection for groups that are most at risk in the community.

For example:

- Older people may need support from community workers to access services.
- Advocacy activities may be needed to ensure that refugees with disabilities are included in decision-making processes.
- Targeted measures may be needed to ensure both boys and girls have access to safe learning environments.

It is important that such analysis is undertaken regularly throughout the year so that we take into account the changes that happen in a situation and accordingly, adapt our planning and programming in a timely manner.

Older people

When forcibly displaced, older women and men have the same basic needs as others but may also need targeted support. Older women and men may be less mobile, and

they may have chronic health problems or specific nutritional needs. They may be at heightened risk of violence, exploitation by family members and discrimination. Older people are often excluded, lack access to information and documentation, and have limited access to basic needs such as shelter, food and nutrition, and healthcare.

Targeted actions for older persons include:

- Use a range of approaches and methodologies to consult and involve older women and men in decision-making and leadership structures. Give them opportunities to voice their opinion and participate in the design, assessment, monitoring and evaluation of activities in order to meet their needs.
- Train staff and partners to raise awareness of age-based discrimination, address their own attitudes and build skills to design and deliver age-inclusive programmes.

Involving older persons in livelihood programmes and including food rations that are easy to chew and digest are examples of mainstreaming. We should consider a combination of both mainstreamed and targeted types of interventions.

For more information, review Need to Know Guidance on Working with Older Persons in Forced Displacement; and Tip Sheet on Older Persons and AGD.

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities have the same rights and basic needs, and face the same challenges as other individuals. But they also face particular protection risks such as heightened risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, as well as high levels of stigma. Further, persons with disabilities face numerous barriers to accessing humanitarian assistance, education, livelihoods, healthcare and other services; may be denied certain legal rights, such as the right to a nationality; and are often excluded from decision-making processes and leadership opportunities.

Actions like collecting data using the Washington Group Questions on Disability and using accessibility standards when constructing or improving camp infrastructure promote equality for persons with disabilities and should be mainstreamed in any intervention.

Targeted actions to ensure non-discrimination for persons with disabilities include:

- Plan for the provision of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities who face barriers to communication (e.g. budget for provision of sign language interpreters). (Targeted action)
- Establish appropriate mechanisms to identify and monitor disability-related

violence and abuse. (Targeted action)

For more information, review Need to Know Guidance on Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement; and Tip Sheet on Persons with Disabilities and AGD.

Children

Children are at greater risk than adults of abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, trafficking or forced recruitment into armed groups. They may experience and witness disturbing events or be separated from their family. At the same time, family and other social support networks may be weakened and education may be disrupted. During emergencies and in displacement, girls face particular gender-related protection risks.



The Framework on the Protection of Children specifies six goals to address child-related protection risks include:

- ensure that girls and boys are safe where they live, learn and play
- ensure children's participation and capacities in protection
- provide access for girls and boys to child-friendly procedures
- obtain legal documentation for girls and boys
- provide targeted support for girls and boys with specific needs
- achieve durable solutions for girls and boys that reflect their best interests

For more information, review the following documents:

- A Framework for the Protection of Children
- 2021 UNHCR Best Interests Procedure Guidelines
- Refugee Education 2030 - A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion
- Tip Sheet (Children)

Youth

Youth have the right to participate, to have their well-being assessed and considered, and to have the opportunity to be agents of change in their communities. During displacement, young people's transitions to adulthood are marked by exposure to complex protection risks that adversely affect their development and well-being. With limited access to post-primary education and livelihoods opportunities, young people are often unable to plan a future life for themselves. Yet young people are resilient and possess the ability to adapt, frequently playing substantive roles in positive change. They self-organize, form groups, and offer peer-to-peer and wider community support. They are agents of change, and they must be supported.

The following have been identified as Core Actions in support of engaging forcibly displaced youth:

Action 1

Empower forcibly displaced youth through meaningful engagement by facilitating opportunities for them to voice their ideas, engage in decision-making processes and develop their leadership potential.

Action 2

Recognize, utilize and develop forcibly displaced youth capacities, skills and qualifications; support access to quality and inclusive learning opportunities, including formal and non-formal education, skills building and jobs training; and facilitate employment and livelihood opportunities.

Action 3

Ensure forcibly displaced youth-focused protection and engage youth in protecting themselves, ensuring that they have access to personal documentation, freedom of movement, and protective services that are attuned to their needs and ensure their safety.

Action 4

Support the physical and emotional well-being of forcibly displaced youth and enhance their ability to engage and develop socially, physically, spiritually and emotionally with their peers, family and community.

Action 5

Facilitate forcibly displaced youth networking and two-way sharing of accurate, honest, age-appropriate and context-specific information with and among youth through channels and structures that are easily accessible.

Action 6

Channel and reinforce forcibly displaced youth's abilities to build connections and relationships across social, cultural, linguistic, political and other differences and support them to contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding processes.

Action 7

Generate data and evidence on forcibly displaced youth, their needs, priorities, skills and contributions to promote accountability to youth.

More information

For more information, look at the following documents:

- Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, 2016
- Data Collection & Age Disaggregation for Young People in Humanitarian Action, 2019
- IASC Guidelines on Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises, 2021
- Resettlement of Children and Adolescents at Risk, 2016
- Core Actions for Refugee Youth, 2016
- Tip Sheet (Youth)

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons

LGBTIQ+ people in forced displacement often experience severe protection risks and have difficulty accessing services to respond to their protection needs. Let's look at how targeted actions contribute to better responses to support LGBTIQ+ individuals.

You are approached by Afsar, a transgender woman who tells you she was attacked by young men in her neighbourhood. Afsar tells you about feelings of being different and not accepted in the community. She finds it very hard to obtain work and often goes without food or medication for days. Which of these actions do you think would be appropriate for Afsar?

- **Link Afsar with a trained volunteer to accompany her to providers of GBV services.**

This is an appropriate action. Afsar may not feel safe to access GBV services. Volunteers who are trained to support LGBTIQ+ people can facilitate Afsar's access to the services she needs.

- **Establish whether Afsar is following any hormone treatment which is being interrupted due to her economic status.**

This is an appropriate action. Afsar may be undergoing a hormone treatment as part of her transition. Interruptions of such treatment may lead to severe psychological consequences. Work with LGBTIQ+ organisations to identify MHPSS services that are sensitive for the needs of transgender people.

- **Advise Afsar to report the incident to the police.**

This is not an appropriate action. In countries where being LGBTIQ+ is criminalized, approaching the police may put Afsar at risk. Establishing trained LGBTIQ+ focal points at the police aims to ensure that LGBTIQ+ persons are treated with respect and are placed in gendered accommodation that respects their gender identity.

- **Link Afsar with a LGBTIQ+ support organization and an LGBTIQ+ peer support group.**

This is an appropriate action. Linking Afsar with a trusted local LGBTIQ+ support organization or a peer support group will facilitate her access to LGBTIQ+-friendly services, including safe accommodation arrangements. Map LGBTIQ+ organizations and support groups and engage them in setting services and referral pathways.

- **Refer Afsar to a livelihoods programme to support her in becoming self-reliant.** [This is an appropriate action.](#) How Afsar’s gender identity is perceived makes it difficult for her to find work. This increases the risks of engaging in exploitative work. Planning livelihoods options, such as home-based work using digital platforms, allows transgender persons to safely access income-generating activities.

More information

For more information, please review the following documents:

- The Need to Know Guidance on Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Persons in Forced Displacement
- Tip Sheet (LGBTIQ+)

Women and girls

The human rights violations that women and girls experience are not only a result of forced displacement. They are directly related to the discrimination and violence women and girls endure in peacetime, since women and girls do not enjoy equal status with men and boys in most societies.

During conflict, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society. Gender-based violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation primarily target women and girls. They are at risk of abduction and forced recruitment by armed groups. Even when it becomes possible to return home, women and adolescent girls have fewer opportunities to participate in peace and reconstruction processes.

Gender equality is fundamental to the well-being and rights of all persons we work with and for; it is central to UNHCR’s AGD approach; and it is relevant to every aspect of UNHCR’s work.



UNHCR's 5 Commitments to Women and Girls

Let's take a look at UNHCR's 5 Commitments to Women and Girls as presented in the AGD Policy, and some examples of targeted actions.

5 Commitments

- **Core Action 6.a.:** 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.
- **Core Action 6.b.:** UNHCR will provide women and girls with protection documentation on an individual basis, and will advocate the same with partners, including governments.
- **Core Action 6.c.:** Depending on the context, UNHCR operations will increase the percentage of women as the primary recipients of assistance within households receiving material and/or cash-based assistance.
- **Core Action 6.d.:** 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.
- **Core Action 6.e.:** UNHCR operations will adopt and implement GBV 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.

Examples of targeted actions

- Identify and mitigate physical, information and attitudinal barriers that may prevent women and girls from accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare (e.g. addressing misconceptions on their right to access these services; providing information in accessible formats; planning outreach mechanisms).
- Ensure all school-aged girls are provided with the necessary material and non-material support to enrol in school, including access to menstrual hygiene (sanitary) kits and reproductive health services for adolescent girls.
- Address the barriers that women and girls may face in accessing documentation; take into account issues of statelessness, discriminatory nationality and citizenship legislation.

More information

For more information, review the following documents:

- UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls
- UNHCR Gender Equality Toolkit
- IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM)
- The Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action
- UNHCR Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation and Response to Gender-based Violence, 2020

Case study

A young female asylum seeker arrives at the UNHCR office. You are a male Protection Officer in charge of the first protection interview. The girl enters the room but will not speak to you. She also refuses to speak to the female translator.

What can you do to solve this problem?

Trying to find out whether the girl would require support to communicate due to a hearing or speech disability before you go any further is a good starting point, but the girl has no such disability and is still not communicating.

Asking a female colleague to carry out the interview for you is a good idea, but the girl is still not communicating, even to your colleague.

A thorough analysis of the age, gender and diversity of all the people involved would provide you with a better understanding of how to deal with the situation. For example:

- She may be scared to speak to a man. In many cultures, women do not feel comfortable disclosing private issues to a man and in particular, a foreign man. In fact, they may put themselves at great danger if community members find out that they have been talking to a man outside the family.
- She may not trust the translator. Perhaps she is from a different ethnic or religious group or has powerful relatives in the refugee community and fears reprisal if she discloses certain information.

This was actually the case in this real example.

Men and boys

During displacement, men and boys may face threats to their life and liberty, sexual violence (particularly in detention), forced recruitment, arbitrary detention and exploitation and refoulement.

Here are some examples of targeted actions:

- Offer educational, after-school, sports and recreational activities for boys and male youth to reduce the risk of recruitment or substance abuse.
- Disseminate information on services and contact information for men and boys survivors of sexual violence.
- Provide training for UNHCR and partner staff and ensure GBV prevention and response programmes are inclusive of men and boy survivors of GBV.
- Develop partnerships with male community groups, youth and children's clubs, sports associations, schools, vocational institutions, microfinance clubs and other organisations.

More information

For more information, review the following documents:

- UNHCR Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation and Response to Gender-based Violence, 2020
- GBV related policies and guidance

National or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous groups

Minorities and indigenous peoples frequently encounter obstacles to realizing their rights, and are often excluded from participation in decisions that affect them, or can experience violence and discrimination by others in the communities they live in.

Targeted actions may include:

- Take appropriate measures to ensure that displaced minority and indigenous communities can maintain their cultural heritage and identity.
- Make sure that minority and indigenous persons have space to practice their cultural traditions.
- Make information more accessible, e.g. by providing translations into minority languages
- Conduct cross-cultural sensitization programmes on the cultures, traditions and values of the coexisting communities.
- Map local organisations led by indigenous or minority groups

More information

For more information, review the following document:

- Need to Know Guidance on Working with Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Forced Displacement.

Change attitudes and promote respect for diversity

Attitudes and beliefs of service providers and community members are central to the inclusion or exclusion of particular groups, such as widowed women, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ people and minority groups. Negative attitudes, unconscious bias and assumptions about those groups are often the most significant barriers to achieving rights and accessing services; they exacerbate social isolation; and can lead to violence and discrimination. Highlighting the capacities and positive contributions and aspirations of all members of a community, regardless of their age, gender, disability, gender identity, race, education and social background, can help to challenge negative stereotypes.



Keep in mind

We need to constantly talk to people so that we can analyze their situations, and identify emerging specific protection risks.

- View people as resourceful and with skills and diverse capacities and remember that not all persons belonging to the groups we just covered have additional needs or experience heightened risk.
- Recognize that vulnerability is not permanent and can change over time.
- Use your AGD lens at all times to identify multi-layered characteristics. For example, after you start working with persons with disabilities, make sure that actions you suggest address particular risks for women with disabilities, children with disabilities, etc.
- Reflect on your own AGD characteristics and how this may or may not influence any unconscious bias that you may have.

Module 9: Accountability to Affected People (AAP)

Introduction to Accountability to Affected People (AAP)

UNHCR's commitments to accountability to affected people (AAP) are outlined in the AGD Policy Core Actions 2 to 5. AAP is defined as an active commitment by humanitarian actors and organizations to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to and being held to account by the people they seek to assist.





Participation and Inclusion

Core Action 2 of UNHCR's AGD Policy requires that: Country operations employ participatory methodologies at each stage of programming, to incorporate the capacities and priorities of women, men, girls and boys of diverse backgrounds into protection, assistance and solutions programmes.



Communication and Transparency

Core Action 3 requires that: At a minimum, all country-level protection and solutions 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.



Feedback and Response

Core Action 4 requires that: At a minimum, all UNHCR operations will establish and promote feedback and response systems, including for confidential complaints.



Organizational Learning and Adaptation

Core Action 5 requires that: At a minimum, all UNHCR operations will adapt programmes and strategies in response to input from forcibly displaced and stateless persons, and document this in Country Operations Plans and Annual Reporting.

This part of the module will focus on Communication and Transparency (Core Action 3) and Feedback and Response (Core Action 4). Participation and Inclusion (Core Action 2) and Organizational Learning and Adaption (Core Action 5) have been covered in other parts of this learning.

Being accountable to communities

To meet our commitments, we need to engage the community at all levels and in all their diversity and:

1. Ensure we conduct programming in a participatory, community-based way
2. Understand and act on the community's right to have access to information in their preferred languages and formats
3. Establish safe and accessible two-way communication channels, including feedback mechanisms.

Accessible and appropriate two-way communication and feedback and response systems allow us to hear directly from displaced communities, to have a real-time understanding of the protection risks they face, and to gauge the impact of our programming. In addition, it allows us to share with communities timely, accurate and relevant information as identified by communities.

Ensuring these actions will help us to reach our ultimate goal of AAP: participatory programming informed by, and adapted to, the voices, perceptions and needs expressed by communities. Now, let's take a look at how we can do this more in depth.

Move from one-way to two-way communication

Let's take a look at the key actions under Communication and Transparency.

- Facilitate two-way communication and dialogue among UNHCR, its partners and affected people throughout programming.
- Share information and communicate in languages, formats and media that are culturally appropriate and accessible for all groups in a community and using channels that are identified by the community as preferred and trusted.
- Ensure women, men, boys, girls and people of diverse identities and backgrounds have access to timely, accurate and relevant information on (i) their rights and entitlements, and (ii) UNHCR and its partners' programmes.

Why is communication so important?

Communities have the right to be informed and engaged on issues affecting their lives. This entails receiving information on their rights and entitlements and how to access them, and being kept aware of protection and assistance programmes as they evolve, thereby making information an aid deliverable itself.

Access to transparent, accurate information allows communities to make informed decisions for their safety and protection, and to hold humanitarian actors accountable. Effective communication between UNHCR and communities also serves to manage expectations about the type and level of assistance that can be provided, to whom and why.



Communication is, by definition, not one-sided. When information is provided by one party, there should be a response to show it is understood in the same way by both sides. The same is true for communication between UNHCR, its partners and the community.

Develop a communication plan alongside other activities. Some key steps of developing a plan include:

- Map existing communications infrastructure
- Assess the communications needs
- Define objectives
- Validate with the community
- Identify and use multiple channels to ensure accessibility and inclusion for all the community

See UNHCR's AAP Operational Guidance, 2020, pages 20-21 for pros and cons of different communication channels.

What good communication looks like

The table shows some statements which are examples of good communication, and some which are examples of bad communication.

	Good	Bad
Community members have safe, regular access to timely, accurate and contextually relevant information.		
UNHCR only dialogues with community elders, who make decisions on the basis of information available to them.		
Diverse groups in the community are engaged in dialogue as partners.		
Community members are aware of the means by which they can meaningfully participate and give feedback.		
Community members have a say in the channels of communication and the types of information they need.		
Community male leaders are the primary recipients of timely, accurate and contextually relevant information.		

When, as an operation, we ensure safe and accessible communication for diverse groups, there will be increased trust amongst all members of the community, and all members of the community will have access to correct and timely information and will be able to make informed decisions. In addition, community members will be able to share information with UNHCR, and UNHCR will have more information about protection concerns and risks and the different needs and preferences of diverse community groups, which will allow for better and more informed programming.

When only men and elders have the opportunity to meaningfully participate and engage in programming, we risk not addressing the needs of all members of the community.

Feedback and response key actions

Let's take a look at the key actions under Feedback and Response.

- Establish multiple communication channels tailored to the preferred and different needs and capacities of people we work with and for, including for example, children, older persons and persons with disabilities (i.e. languages, formats and media).
- Use confidentiality safeguards to ensure that matters such as sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are handled in a protection-sensitive manner.
- Have standard operating procedures for the collection, acknowledgement, assessment, analysis and referral of feedback and for the operational response to it (i.e. referral and response pathways), setting out roles and responsibilities.

What is a feedback system?

We'll now look in more detail at feedback systems.

Feedback

Feedback is formal or informal communication from forcibly displaced people received through feedback mechanisms. It can either be positive or negative (complaint) and informs programming or requires corrective action (response). Feedback first needs to be acknowledged and can then either be acted upon directly or referred to

others for later action, as appropriate. The subsequent back and forth communication cycle is what's referred to as the "feedback loop". The goal is to consistently close the feedback loop. Closed feedback loops require that data on feedback received is collected, stored, analysed, responded to and reported on.

Feedback mechanisms

Feedback mechanisms are ways through which forcibly displaced and stateless people can safely communicate with, and receive responses from, the organization. Feedback mechanisms can be community-based (using community structures), or they can be agency run (suggestion box, hotline, etc.) or interagency (agency run on behalf of multiple agencies). A suggestion box/hotline is an example of a feedback mechanism.

The most important step in establishing a feedback mechanism

Engagement and consultation with the community is key before, during and after establishing a feedback mechanism. First, map existing channels of communication, including those set up by partners. Then, engage and consult the community on their preferred means and methods for providing feedback, including sensitive complaints (Note: different community members may have different preferences depending on the type of feedback).

TIP: Identify and capitalize on existing, trusted communications channels for different groups in a community to give feedback in multiple and inclusive ways.

Feedback systems

Feedback systems refer to the processes, methods and tools that are in place to ensure the loop from receiving feedback to responding to feedback is closed (collection, acknowledgement, storing, recording, assessment, referral and report), constituting a feedback and response system.

Closing the feedback loop

Collecting the feedback from forcibly displaced and stateless people is merely one part of a feedback and response system. An equally important element is closing the feedback loop by receiving, acknowledging and responding to feedback.

How to close the feedback loop

To close the feedback loop, you must:

- Clearly establish the internal process flow for feedback, including roles and responsibilities regarding referrals (e.g. operation level feedback flow chart);
- Collect, process, store and analyse data using pre-existing systems or creating context-specific systems. Ensure feedback data is disaggregated and establish timelines for each step (from collection to processing, storage, analysis, response, reporting, etc.); and
- Ensure a referral process exists for feedback related to services provided by partners and requests for support that UNHCR does not provide directly.

Attributes of a good feedback and response system

Here are some key features of a good feedback and response system:

- The dignity and value of forcibly displaced and stateless and their right to be heard is affirmed through receiving and acting on their feedback, including comments, suggestions and complaints.
- UNHCR and partners are alerted to any protection issues that need to be addressed.
- The impact of protection, assistance and solutions programmes are consistently monitored and emerging, or aggravated needs, trends and perceptions highlighted.
- Storing, recording and analysis of feedback data provides useful information for impact evaluation, and better understanding of community needs and expectations. The result is more effective programming through the adaptation of programmes.

What might happen without feedback and response systems?

If we do not have safe and accessible feedback and response systems in place, we risk having ineffective and inefficient programmes that are not in line with the needs and priorities of the community; programmes that are not engaged by or owned by the community; and a real risk of abuse of power going unhindered, such as SEA.



Feedback and response systems allow for us to hear directly from forcibly displaced and stateless people and will ensure we have more effective and meaningful programmes and are alerted to misconduct. In addition, effective FR systems, established in consultation with communities, will help establish trust with the community and ensure that communities feel they have means to raise their concerns, complaints and also their suggestions or ideas to improve programming.

Examples from the field

We'll now take a look at two examples of establishing accessible communication channels.

Venezuela: Consulting communities on preferred communication channels

As of June 2020, more than 5 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants have sought protection and support in neighbouring countries. This diverse population face different protection issues related to AGD factors.

In order to ensure accessible communication channels with affected communities, an assessment was administered simultaneously to more than 3,400 refugees in 15 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. They were asked about the information and communication channels that they have access to, use and prefer the most. Feedback was gathered through multiple methods, which had been developed

and tested in a consultative manner: survey, online survey, key informant interviews and FGDs, to ensure an all-inclusive approach suitable for reaching different groups among the targeted populations. All groups were given the opportunity to directly share their experiences and preferences, without any filter from, for example, community leaders.

An AGD focus was ensured, including in the analysis of findings, and with specific issues highlighted accordingly. Communication channels were aligned with the needs, capacities and concerns of communities and individuals on the most appropriate information and communication channels.

Tanzania: Tools to overcome communication barriers

In 2019, UNHCR and HelpAge International worked with Burundian refugees with communication disabilities in western Tanzania to identify communication barriers and design new tools and possible solutions to overcome them. Forcibly displaced and stateless people with communication disabilities are a heterogeneous group, including hard of hearing persons, deaf persons and persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities who used French, American, Kirundi and 'home sign' (a pidgin form of sign language), as well as gestures, movements and vocalization to communicate. The participation of the forcibly displaced and stateless people in all phases of the initiative was key, from the identification of communication barriers, to the formulation, design and testing of possible solutions.

The outcome of the project were innovative tools, such as objects, pictograms and photographs, to augment communication when paired with gestures; written text and signs designed to address the limited access to and awareness of services in camps; and less dependency on others for persons with communication disabilities.

Engaging persons with communication disabilities in the creation of a new visual vocabulary resulted in a sense of ownership and empowerment, and supported persons with communication disabilities to voice their needs, resulting in an enhanced two-way communication channel and stronger inclusive programming.



AGD and accountability

Having looked at the various actions that support an AGD approach, let's now review our responsibilities under the AGD policy. UNHCR's AGD Policy aims to promote the empowerment of all forcibly displaced and stateless people through a robust integration of an AGD approach into its work; promotion of gender equality; and strengthening of mechanisms to ensure accountability to affected people in all operations.

Compliance with this Policy is mandatory. It covers all forcibly displaced and stateless people and applies to all operations and Headquarters in all areas of UNHCR's work.

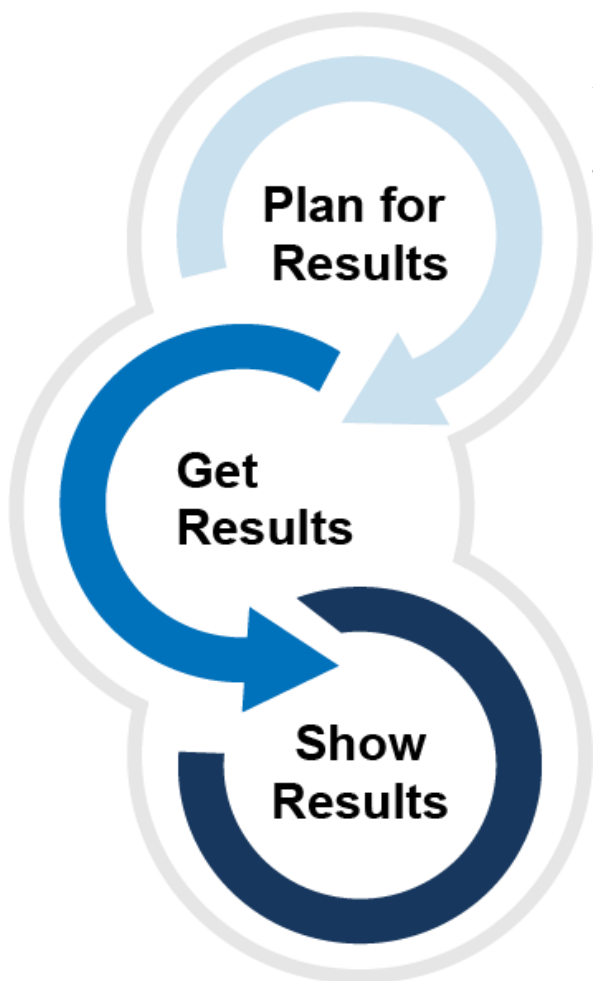
Measuring progress and reporting on results is important to increase our accountability towards affected people and form the basis for further prioritization and adaptation.

Who is responsible?

- Division Directors are responsible for ensuring that high-level policies, strategies, tools, guidance documents and learning programmes are fully in line with the AGD Policy.
- Bureau Directors are responsible for monitoring compliance with the AGD Policy in the region.
- Representatives and Heads of Offices are responsible for the implementation of the AGD Policy and for reporting on results.
- The Multifunctional Team is responsible for analysing the protection environment, design and delivery responses that are AGD sensitive.
- Staff working in all functions and sectors are responsible for applying an AGD lens in their daily interactions with forcibly displaced and stateless people and for identifying protection risks for AGD groups.

Module 10: AGD and programming

AGD in UNHCR's programming



Applying an AGD approach to its work is part of UNHCR's DNA and way of working. It should therefore apply to everything we do, from the onset of an emergency until durable solutions have been secured. Using an AGD approach through the programming phases will contribute to more effective and accountable responses. This section outlines how the AGD principles are integrated in the programming processes introduced through COMPASS as of 2021.

For UNHCR, programming is organized across a multi-year horizon and consists of three phases: Plan for Results, Get Results and Show Results.

Plan for Results

During this phase, country operations design 3 to 5-year strategies defining the desired impact, outcomes, and outputs for forcibly displaced and stateless people and the roadmap, risks, and partnerships needed to achieve them.

Multi-year strategies must set out a structured approach to addressing the factors that are causing inequalities, discrimination or persistent unmet needs for specific age, gender or diversity groups.

As part of the Situational Analysis, operations carry out a systematic analysis of AGD-disaggregated information to understand and analyse the rights, needs, risks, priorities and capacities of all forcibly displaced and stateless people.

1. Review Situational Analysis
2. Design Multi-Year Strategy
3. Manage for Emergencies

Get Results

During this phase, operations develop detailed implementation plans and multi-year monitoring and evaluation plans, and conduct annual reviews examining emerging issues and progress towards intended outcomes and impacts.

Implementation modalities and interventions must respond to the different risks, needs, and capacities of people with different AGD characteristics.

Feedback from forcibly displaced and stateless people should be systematically analysed to determine whether programmes are on track to deliver the expected results for them.

Where possible, and according to their priorities and capacities, forcibly displaced and stateless people should be engaged during programme implementation and monitoring.

4. Develop Implementation plans
5. Monitor Implementation plans
6. Manage and Adjust Implementation plans

Show results

During this phase, operations use the evidence they built to show the difference UNHCR and partners are making in relation to the lives of forcibly displaced and stateless people, make adaptations to their programmes if necessary, and learn about the relevance and effectiveness of programmes. Operations are required to provide disaggregated data by age, gender and diversity for core impact and outcome indicators. Overall, operations should always ensure that AGD disaggregated information is included

in any reporting exercise to ensure transparency about progress achieved for each group of the population and support advocacy efforts around the rights and conditions of specific groups.

7. Report on Core indicators
8. Conduct Strategy Implementation Review
9. Evaluate Strategy

Reporting on results in implementing the AGD approach

Throughout the course, we examined the different strategies to advance the AGD approach. Read some examples from the field on how core actions were reflected in their work.

- Disaggregated data was collected and is available in proGres. Detailed reporting templates were developed to guide partners to systematically collect AGD-disaggregated data and ensure quality reporting (Core Action 1).
- One of the feedbacks received from PoCs through community engagement was the lengthy time frame when obtaining birth certificates. UNHCR staff liaised with the registrar of birth and hospital authorities and an informative leaflet on the birth registration process was designed and translated into Urdu and Dari languages (Core Action 5).
- The GBV SOP was revised and adopted by UNHCR and partners. UNHCR protection and partner staff, as well as the government agencies responsible for GBV response, attended a training on the revised GBV SOPs. Case management system and referral pathways are in place (Core Action 6e).

Actions you can undertake

This table shows various actions you can undertake and the phase they correspond to.

	Plan for results	Get results	Show results
Identify resources needed to put in place the communication channels preferred by and accessible to different AGD groups.			
Reflect AGD considerations in evaluations and inform forcibly displaced and stateless people about the results of evaluations and the actions resulting from them.			
Include staff and partners with the closest contact/proximity to AGD groups in decision-making and priority setting.			
Adjust interventions based on an AGD-sensitive analysis of results from assessments, monitoring and other data collection exercises.			
Include AGD-disaggregated information in reporting, highlighting any inequalities among groups and how UNHCR is addressing them.			
Consistently provide timely and relevant information to forcibly displaced and stateless people on scope and modalities of interventions in formats that are accessible to all AGD groups.			

AGD is an approach that applies to all programming phases. There are multiple actions you must undertake at each phase to ensure our programmes are inclusive and respond to the priorities of all forcibly displaced and stateless people and that interventions are relevant and adjusted where needed based on the feedback received from persons belonging to all age, gender and diversity groups. Actions such as the ones examined in this section will allow us to identify and eliminate the barriers to the enjoyment of rights by all people we work with.

Key points

Congratulations, you have reached the end of this course! Before you move on to the final assessment, here are some of the key points that we have covered on how to implement it in our work:

- Collect age, gender and diversity data, analyse information using AGD disaggregation, and use the findings for programming.
- Use participatory approaches that consider the views, needs and priorities of diverse AGD groups across all phases of programming, and in decision-making processes.
- Ensure forcibly displaced and stateless are at the heart of programming by undertaking an AGD analysis, and implementing community-based and rights-based approaches.
- Promote a multifunctional team (MFT) approach to facilitate joint AGD analysis and development of AGD-sensitive responses.
- Identify where we need targeted actions to address protection gaps faced by specific AGD groups.
- Ensure we are accountable to all displaced and stateless people from diverse AGD groups.
- Respond to the feedback received from displaced and stateless people and adapt programmes accordingly.

Resources

- 2018 AGD Policy
- 2021 UNHCR Best Interests Procedure Guidelines
- A Community-Based Approach in UNHCR's Operations
- A Framework for the Protection of Children
- AAP e-Learning (available in Learn&Connect / Workday)
- Accountability to Affected People (AAP) Compact Guide for Managers
- Accountability to Affected People (AAP) Operational Guidance
- AGC Accountability Report
- All Under One Roof
- Community-Based Approach in UNHCR Operations Annex 2: Toolkit
- Compact for Younger People in Humanitarian Action, 2016
- COMPASS
- COMPASS Guidance on Developing the Results Framework
- Core Actions for Refugee Youth, 2016
- Data Collection and Age Disaggregation for Young People in Humanitarian Action, 2019
- GBV related policies and guidance
- Gender Equality e-Learning (available in Learn&Connect / Workday)
- Gender Equality Toolkit
- IASC Gender with Age Market (GAM)
- IASC Guidelines on Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises, 2021
- Intersectionality video
- Listen and Learn: Participatory Assessment with Children and Adolescents
- Need to Know Guidance on Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement
- Need to Know Guidance: Working with LGBTIQ+ Persons in Forced Displacement
- Need to Know Guidance: Working with Minorities and Indigenous Peoples
- Need to Know Guidance: Working with Older Persons in Forced Displacement
- Refugee Education 2030 - A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion
- Resettlement of Children and Adolescents at Risk, 2016
- Summary of Methods of Inquiry as Presented in the Toolkit on the Community- Based Approach in UNHCR
- Supporting Participation for Persons with Disabilities
- The Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action
- Tip Sheet (Children)
- Tip Sheet (Youth)
- Tip Sheet on Older Persons and AGD
- Understanding Community-Based Protection
- UNHCR Gender Equality Toolkit
- UNHCR Guidance on Disability-Inclusive Participatory Assessments
- UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls

- UNHCR Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation and Response to Gender- based Violence, 2020
- UNHCR's Needs Assessment Handbook (2017)
- Washington Group Short Question Set
- Working with Older Persons in Forced Displacement
- Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement e-Learning