



Refugee Sector Gender Focal Points Network [SGFPN] gather at the Gender with Age Marker [GAM] Roll-out Workshop in Amman, Jordan © UNHCR / 2019

# REFUGEE SECTOR GENDER FOCAL POINTS NETWORK [SGFPN] JORDAN

Population Group:	Project Objective:	Implementing Partners:
Syrian seekers refugees.	Promote gender equality in the refugee response efforts in asylum-Jordan by strengthening the technical capacity of gender and focal points, increasing inter-sector linkages and improving capacity and knowledge management.	UN agencies and NGO partners that are part of the Syria Refugee Response in Jordan.

## 1. Project overview

The refugee Sector Gender Focal Points Network [SGFPN] was established in 2014 by the former Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) led by UNHCR Jordan, in close collaboration with other UN agencies and partners. The SGFPN is chaired by UNHCR [Inter-Sector Coordinator], and as of May 2019 has 24 members from 19 different organizations.<sup>1</sup> The SGFPN includes at least two gender focal points from each of the eight sectors contributing to the Syria Refugee Response in Jordan and at least one member from each of the sub-sectors. The main objective of the network is to promote gender equality in the different refugee response sectors: basic needs, shelter, health, education, food security, protection, livelihoods and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

<sup>1</sup> Organizations that are part of the SGFPN as of May 2019: ACTED, Action Against Hunger, CARE, Handicap International, Humanity & Inclusion, ICMC Jordan, International Medical Corps, JHAS, Jordanian Women's Union JWU, JRF, MECI, OXFAM, PU-AMI, Relief International, Save the Children, SyriaRelief & Development, War Child Canada, WFP, UNHCR.

To meet this objective, the SGFPN provides technical support, coordination, capacity building and knowledge management for gender equality. This strategic approach to building gender equality capacities from within the sectors helps ensure the continuity, accountability and sustainability of gender equality integration into humanitarian response plans and programming.

## 2. Context and needs

In mid-2016, Jordan was host to 721,369 refugees and asylum-seekers, more than 90 per cent of whom are Syrians who were forced to flee the armed conflict in their country.<sup>2</sup> Jordan also hosts 2,117,361 registered Palestinian refugees who are provided protection and assistance by UNRWA.<sup>3</sup>

It has been clear throughout the Syria crisis that cultural beliefs and practices, legal structures in countries of origin and asylum, insecurity and socio-economic pressures contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality among Syrian refugees, primarily discriminating against women and girls. This inequality allows men to enjoy greater access to and control over resources while it puts barriers in the way of women’s mobility and decision making.

Gender inequality has an impact on Syrian women’s access to humanitarian services, including health, education and livelihoods, as well as increases their risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).<sup>4</sup> When a comprehensive humanitarian effort was developed to respond to the Syria crisis in Jordan, the inter-agency coordination structure was seen to provide an opportunity to incorporate gender equality measures more systematically across all plans and programmes.

## 3. Process and activities

The objectives of the SGFPN are to promote gender equality in the refugee response effort and to ensure that diverse refugee women, men, girls and boys have equitable access to humanitarian assistance and protection. The 24 members of the SGFPN meet monthly and are drawn from UN agencies as well as national and international civil society organizations. The sector gender focal points, who may be men or women, come from a variety of professional backgrounds and possess technical expertise in many different areas.

Sectors:	Sub-Sectors:
Basic Needs, Education, Food Security, Health, Livelihoods, Protection, Shelter, WASH.	Child Protection, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Nutrition, Reproductive Health and SGBV.

Focal point membership is voluntary; sector coordinators call for nominations when turnover of existing gender focal points happens, at which point new sector gender focal points can volunteer to participate. The sector coordinator along with the Inter-Sector Coordinator, then selects the sector gender focal point, based on the following criteria:

- (1) they are active members of respective sector working groups; and
- (2) they are committed to attending monthly SGFPN meetings and undertaking the necessary follow-up actions according to respective ToR, Work Plans and agreed actions. Sector coordinators also look at levels of expertise, interest and motivation, organization, and other relevant factors when making their selections.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR. [Population Statistics – Midyear 2016 Stats](#)  
<sup>3</sup> UNRWA. [Wherewework: Jordan](#)  
<sup>4</sup> Arab Women Organization of Jordan, [Unveiling Gender-Based Violence against Syrian Women Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon – Research](#)

Focal points are not necessarily at line management level, although the line managers within each respective organization must approve the participation of their staff in the SGFPN. The role of sector gender focal point is in addition to the normal workload of staff (who may include affiliated workforce members such as consultants).

The [Terms of Reference](#) for the SGFPN (see Annex 1) lay out the following responsibilities for focal points:

### **1. Gender mainstreaming strategy**

- Support the Sector Coordinator and the SGFPN within/representing their nominated sector to mainstream gender into the Sector Response Plan and SGFPN activities. This should include gender analysis within situation analyses and a clear disaggregation of the gender needs of refugees, and apply the GAM which will be monitored and reported on.

### **2. Technical support within sector meetings**

- Advocate for the inclusion of gender issues in project formulation.
- Advocate for sector assessments to disaggregate data by sex and age.
- Support the sector to interpret and analyze the different needs, risks and capacities of women, men, girls, and boys in order to shape the development of appropriate activities.
- Support the inclusion of gender equality measures (IASC Gender Handbook in Emergency Action ADAPT ACT C Framework) in implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Support the sector and the SGFPN updating and monitor sector gender analysis.
- Contribute to sector information and analysis to ensure a more accurate understanding of gender equality measures in humanitarian action.
- Support the sector and the SGFPN as a member of the sector Technical Review Committee for the Jordan Humanitarian Fund (JHF).
- Promote inter-sector linkages for gender mainstreaming.

### **3. Capacity development**

- Identify the needs of colleagues for information and training in gender equality mainstreaming.
- Support the Sector and SGFPN coordinators to develop and deliver sector-appropriate gender equality analysis in programming workshops as well as training in the use of the IASC Gender with Age Marker.
- Encourage and support staff in raising gender equality issues in the sector.

### **4. Knowledge management**

- Participate in the SGFPN meetings and activities.
- Share information and experiences with the SGFPN members, contribute to SGFPN advice and guidance to elements of the Inter-Sector Working Group structure, and ensure that SGFPN messages are communicated regularly with all sector members.

### **In keeping with these areas of responsibility, activities of the SGFPN have included:**

- In 2016-2018, delivered annual training on Gender in Humanitarian Action to humanitarian workers involved in refugee response planning and programming in Jordan, benefiting 30 staff from eight sectors.
- Facilitating workshops to update sector-specific gender analysis.
- Assisting the sectors to develop and implement tailored impact indicators related to participation and gender equality.
- Roll-out and supporting accurate and consistent usage of the IASC Gender with Age Marker in Jordan Humanitarian Fund proposals and encouraging sector organizations to incorporate the Gender with Age Marker in all their work.
- Piloting projects on the revised IASC Gender with Age Marker.
- Ongoing advocacy to mainstream gender equality in each sector.

In addition, the SGFPN Work Plan for 2019 includes planned activities in the areas of coordination, resource sharing, capacity building, application of the IASC Gender with Age Marker, monitoring and analysis (see Annex 2).

## 4. Partners and resources

As previously mentioned, the SGFPN consists of a total of 24 gender focal points from each humanitarian sector and sub-sector. A variety of UN agencies and civil society organizations contribute staff to the SGFPN at any given time, thereby broadening participation and ownership of Inter-Agency Coordination responsibilities beyond the most established actors.

The SGFPN does not independently raise funds or manage resources; instead, each UN agency and civil society organization has the chance to contribute resources by undertaking activities prioritized by the SGFPN. While the SGFPN's specific focus is on humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, it also maintains contact and engages in coordination with such bodies as the Gender Theme Group of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). The network has benefited from the support of the Senior Gender Capacity (GenCap) Advisers.

The SGFPN's work to promote gender equality has been greatly facilitated by supportive leadership at the UNHCR's Inter-Agency Coordination Unit, the Inter-Sector Working Group and sector levels. Senior leadership has made gender equality a priority, ensuring its importance in the entire humanitarian response.

## 5. Participation and accountability

The SGFPN is a highly participatory forum, where gender focal points can openly raise issues, discuss and propose joint activities. The SGFPN is accountable to the Inter-Sector Working Group as well as each sector coordinator. SGFPN members are also individually accountable for implementing their ToR (see Annex 1) and annual Work Plan (see Annex 2). All organizations active under the refugee response coordination structure are ultimately accountable to the Government of Jordan.

Cases of sexual exploitation and abuse identified within the various sectors may be referred to the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse mechanism via, for instance, the gender focal points from the protection sector.

### Age, Gender and Diversity Approach

The gender equality training provided by the SGFPN takes into account different age, gender and diversity groups. While the principal focus of the SGFPN is gender equality, analysis frequently takes into consideration related elements of diversity, including, for example, age, disability and LGBTI issues.

## 6. Results

Since 2014, the work of the SGFPN has resulted in greatly improved gender mainstreaming in the work of UN agencies and civil society organizations providing humanitarian assistance in Jordan. This was achieved in part by building awareness of the different needs, levels of access and participation of diverse women, men, girls and boys within Jordanian refugee programming.

### **Concrete results include:**

- Gender focal points have benefited from increased authority in the sector meetings, especially if they are skillful in leading and coordinating gender mainstreaming and programming targeting women and girls within their sector.
- All sectors having completed the process are currently revising and updating gender analyses and sector sheets.
- Greater knowledge and skills on gender equality among humanitarian staff due to training initiatives.
- Piloting of various IASC gender equality tools, contributing to the implementation of the IASC Gender with Age Marker and a monitoring tool for the Gender Empowerment Measures.
- Improved gender equality mainstreaming in refugee response programme design, through support for the correct usage of the IASC Gender with Age Marker in Jordan and fully implication on the Jordan Humanitarian Funds proposals (JHF) as since 2019 gender is now part of the selection project criteria.
- Development and implementation of impact indicators related to participation and gender equality within all refugee sectors.
- Update of the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) tool to take in consideration the new Gender with Age Marker.
- Increased documentation and analysis of sex and age-disaggregated data (SADD) in assessment, monitoring and evaluation, which has led to practical changes in programming.

For instance, as a result of monitoring and evaluation of SADD, the reasons behind the low participation of girls in camp child- and youth-friendly spaces, youth committees and volunteering committees have been re-examined. Protection actors have drawn on the findings to improve programming and take measures to address the barriers that prevent girls from accessing and participating in camp activities.

Similarly, actors in the health sector examined health-seeking behaviors among Syrian refugee women and used the findings to reduce the effects of the socio-cultural barriers that prevent some refugee women from accessing public health units in the camps. This was done through the appointment of more female doctors and female health professionals, such as midwives.

## **Sustainability**

The SGFPN is quite sustainable in that it does not rely on external funds or other resources, but on small contributions of staff time by many agencies. As such, sustainability is closely linked to the continued overall coordinated refugee response.

However, the frequent turnover of humanitarian staff and the departure of trained gender focal points continue to have a negative impact on the sustainability of SGFPN work. More efforts to ensure that the two slots for gender focal points per sector are always filled may be helpful in overcoming this challenge.

## 7. Lessons learned

Each sector is at a different level in terms of integrating gender equality into its humanitarian programming. While some sector coordinators demonstrate an interest in discussing, understanding and better implementing gender equality and the Gender with age Marker in their sectors, others have struggled to prioritize gender equality in the face of competing demands. Clear messages from the Inter-Sector Working Group and/or sector coordinators provide the incentive to incorporate gender equality measures into the needs analyses, activities and performance indicators of the respective sectors.

The SGFPN was created with only the limited participation of refugee women, men, girls and boys and other stakeholders, such as local women's organizations and host communities. It would therefore benefit from fresh and sustained consultations with diverse refugees and local and national organizations working on gender equality.

While the SGFPN is able to support the integration of gender equality at the sector level, the full application of gender equality measures at the institutional level within the organizations involved in the network requires additional efforts.

## 8. Recommendations

The SGFPN is a good practice that can be replicated in other humanitarian contexts with sector or cluster approaches. However, clear support from sector and inter-sector coordinator, and the coordination mechanisms at disposal, as well as senior management within the relevant UN agencies and civil society organizations is critical for the SGFPN to be effective. In addition, before the start of an initiative like this it is important to consult directly with refugee women, men, girls and boys as well as host communities; national and local civil society organizations and others working on gender equality; and identify and consult with existing networks and mechanisms for communication and collaboration.

## 9. More information

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Annex 1: SGFPN, [Terms of Reference for Sector Gender Focal Points](#) (SGFPN and ISWG 2019)

Annex 2: SGFPN, [Sector Gender Focal Points Network Work Plan](#) (2019)