REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS – KEY TO THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

From Hypothesis to Evidence 'One Size does not fit all' but the same goals can be achieved using different approaches.

The findings at a glance

Focus on the implementation of three goals central to the participation of refugee women, gender equality and an effective response to sexual and gender-based violence, reflecting commitments in the Global Compact on Refugees.

Key lessons learned over the past four years have been that:

When seeking to address these key goals and the social constructs which underpin them, we are seeking to change the status quo.

These three goals are complex and intersectional and have to be addressed as such.

Successful participation means seeding power from the dominant group of stakeholders, i.e. host and donor governments, and humanitarian aid providers at all levels, and sharing it with the refugee communities.

The response needed is contingent upon the socio-political context in each site including the ideological, cultural stance and power held by key stakeholders, and the acknowledgement of 'white', gender and 'class' privilege and how this is used or abused.

In refugee contexts this is even more challenging given the loss of legal rights and citizenship. It is imperative that further progress be made in shifting the focus and approach of aid provision in refugee contexts from humanitarian to rights based and inclusive development approaches.

Unless the social and political issues which maintain the status quo are identified and addressed in each site, addressing these goals will continue to be challenging. This project has provided evidence that this can be achieved. A major finding is that an easy-to-use tool must be developed to enable stakeholders to make a realistic assessment of what is achievable in each place in which they work. One size does not fit all but by identifying, acknowledging and responding to local conditions common goals can be achieved.

A major gap is that of sustainability and building sustainability into projects. This will be a key objective of future work, framed by the SDGS, which are reflected in the GCR.

The inclusion of supportive male refugees in the project has been recommended in each site

Recommendations have been made to address some, but not all of the challenges.

Introduction

This collaborative action research project has contributed to facilitating and monitoring the implementation of gender commitments made in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Underpinned by UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy, these commitments seek to improve international protection for refugee[1] women and girls, support gender equality, women's participation and leadership, and address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The project is led by researchers Linda Bartolomei and Eileen Pittaway from UNSW's Forced Migration Research Network (FMRN), who undertook the Gender Audit[2] of UNHCR's Thematic meetings which informed the development of the GCR. Working in partnership with refugee women, academics, service providers and UNHCR, the project has developed and trialled a suite of implementation tools and monitoring and evaluation strategies in three refugee hosting countries in the Asia Pacific. It is taking place in Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand, and at UNHCR in Geneva. It has been informed by the findings of a separately funded project in Australia.

With a focus on gender equality, and prevention and responses to SGBV, this project has addressed key gender commitments in the GCR. These include:

(i) promoting self-representation particularly of women and girls by supporting refugee women led projects
(ii) developing effective responses to address and prevent SGBV
(iii) working with refugee organisations and networks to develop and trial a suite of tools for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the GCR's commitments to women and girls
(iv) addressing the four pillars of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF); Pillar One-Reception and Admission, Pillar Two- Immediate and Ongoing Needs, Pillar Three- Host Countries and Communities and Pillar Four- Durable Solutions.

It uses the concept of intersectionality and UNHCR's AGD policy as a framework for analysing gender equality. Intersectionality holds that the classical forms of oppression within society, such as racism, sexism, and religion-based bigotry, are not experienced independently of one another. It examines how socially and culturally constructed categories, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and ability, intersect to contribute to systematic social inequality. When multiple forms of oppression intersect, it creates compounding discrimination, marginalisation and vulnerability for the individual (Crenshaw 2017; Salem 2018). Understanding the way in which intersectionality impacts refugee women and girls is imperative to ensure that they receive the services and supports they need. The AGD Policy was adopted by UNHCR in 2018 to ensure that refugee women, girls, men and boys from all backgrounds and identities are included in decision-making about programs that affect their lives. It recognises refugees and other forcibly displaced and stateless people are very diverse (UNHCR 2019).

[1] Although the primary research for this project was undertaken with refugee women, some who are also stateless, the findings are relevant for other forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls who also fall under UNHCR's wider mandate.

[2] The aim of the Gender Audits is to monitor the strong commitments to refugee women and girls first made in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, September 2016, which was the catalyst for the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), and their subsequent inclusion in pledges and implementation strategies. While funded and guided by UNHCR, it is an independent audit conducted by academics from the Forced Migration Research Network, UNSW Australia, and a team of refugee women from the five UN Regions of the world. It reflects their voices and analysis of the meetings. The conceptual framework used by the team is the UNHCR age, gender and diversity (AGD) framework and the concept of intersectionality. Gender Audits have been conducted of all major GCR related meetings since 2017. The most recent audit of the High-Level Official's Meeting (HLOM) 2021, considered not only the gender needs and commitments but adopted an intersectional lens to consider all aspects of the AGD framework and policy. The Gender Audit team are now referred to as the Intersectionality and Gender Audit (IGA) team.

Localisation and a context sensitive participatory approach

The commitments to the participation of women and girls, and the prevention and response to SGBV are evaluated within the goal of collaboration between key stakeholders. This includes a focus on the Grand Bargain commitments to provide resources to first responders and to support the active participation of affected communities. The advent of COVID-19 and the devastating consequences in the refugee sites in which the project is taking place had a huge impact on the implementation of the pilot refugee women-led projects in each site. However, rather than derailing the projects, they proved the hypothesis that refugee groups and refugee led organisations, in particular women led groups, have the capacity to contribute significantly to analysis of and the provision of effective responses to the problems experienced by refugee communities. They also have the skills to effectively implement programs, and to advocate on their own behalf. The flexibility of the funder, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and of NGO partners who were willing to receive the funds, was critical to this success.

Reports of all stages of the programs in each country site are listed and further details can be accessed via the links in the **Project Achievements Timeline** (Appendix 1). This report brings together the key learnings which have informed the outcomes and materials produced, in each stage and shaped the progressive stages of this action research project.

Summary of Lessons Learned: achievements and challenges of the project

(For detailed comparisons see below)

COVID-19 Impacts

Overall we are extremely pleased with the outcomes of this project to date. As noted above the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the ability and agency of refugees to respond to the needs of their own communities, nearly always as the first responders, and in some cases, the only hands-on responders. The willingness of DFAT for us to adapt Stage Two of the project to allow refugees to focus the planned small projects on a response to COVID-19 was a very successful strategy. These small projects have made a significant contribution to furthering the overall project goals of progressing gender equality through women's increased participation and an improved response to SGBV. This is clearly demonstrated in both the design of and ways in which the women-led groups implemented and evaluated the impacts their small projects.

Working locally and internationally

A significant strength of the project was the fact that the research team are working at both the grassroots community level and at the policy level at UNHCR Geneva. This has enabled a cohesive and well-integrated 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approach to support the implementation of the intersectional AGD approach and the gender commitments outlined in the GCR. The research at country level has provided a rich evidence base, which has directly informed advocacy at UNHCR for the implementation of key GCR commitments through an increased number of AGD sensitive pledges. This has included an increased focus on the need to address SGBV, in the number of pledges targeting SGBV responses, and in support of the meaningful participation of refugees. Partnerships with key governments, including Australia, the World Bank and major international NGOs including Refugee Women's Commission (WRC), Plan international, Care and Oxfam have been crucial in furthering high level policy commitments to gender and intersecting issues of age and diversity, including the concerns of LGBTIQ+ communities, the elderly and persons with a disability. This provided the opportunity for findings from the field to be taken directly to UNHCR, and for new directions sponsored by UNHCR to be incorporated into this work at the local level. Our work at both levels has highlighted the AGD and SGBV commitments in the GCR and has strengthened the implementation of the AGD policy and pledges addressing these issues.

The Gender Audit at UNHCR

The role that the UNSW research team has played in leading the UNHCR funded the Gender Audits of gender aspects of the implementation of the GCR, has enabled further crucial links to be made between this research project based in the Asia-Pacific and the global policy context. Working with a team of nine refugee women, representing all of the world's regions, has provided the important opportunity to extrapolate the project findings to other refugee contexts and for our work to be informed by the local knowledge and lived experience of Gender audit team members from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Latin America. The partnership with this group of refugee woman has also deepened our understanding and knowledge of the intersectional discriminations faced by many refugee women and girls. The audit team members combine both lived experience and specialist knowledge of the particular challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ and stateless women and girls, and have particular understandings of the challenges faced by elderly refugee women and women and girls with a disability.

A major outcome was that refugee women and local NGOs from this project were able to advocate for themselves at UN meetings and via video[3]. The adoption by UNHCR of an intersectional approach to addressing the needs of diverse groups coincided with our use of this analysis in the project, and we produced a jointly funded Training kit, including a video[4] on the use of AGD and an intersectional approach, presented by Andrea Ayala, a member of the Gender Audit team. Through our advocacy at UNHCR Geneva, including the Gender Audit process, we have made a significant contribution to the increased articulation of gender equality, AGD and GBV in UN fora, and have provided support to the very dedicated UNHCR staff and INGOs working to ensure that the gender commitments in the GCR are implemented. We will continue to work with UNHCR on further evaluation of AGD commitments leading to the second Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

The Bangkok meeting October 2018: Stage 1 Building crucial partnerships

The first project workshop was held in Bangkok, in October 2018, supported by key project partner the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN). The purpose of the meeting was to introduce participants to the aims, objectives and proposed outcomes of this collaborative research project, and to establish their support and willingness to participate. The workshop was attended by over 40 participants including refugee women (many of whom had spent several days travelling from inside Myanmar), local NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and government representatives, including a representative of DFAT from Australia.

Participants were provided with an overview of the GCR and its links to UNHCR's AGD policy. The workshop introduced the project methods including the Reciprocal Research Consultation methodology, and explored ways in which local stakeholders, in particular refugee women, refugee women led organisations and support services, could be involved in the project. It sought insights from participants on the most effective implementation strategy for the project in their country contexts, including identifying barriers, engaging key stakeholders, local challenges and ethical considerations. It also provided information to participants about what would be involved in joining the project as informal partners and supporting its local implementation. A training module which explored the impacts of privilege,[5] and in particular white, class and gender privilege as key barriers to genuine partnerships, proved one of the most impactful sessions of the workshop. One of our regional partners would later comment that they had been sceptical about whether we were genuinely committed to real power sharing or whether it was just the usual 'white academic rhetoric'. They expressed genuine delight at being proved wrong and have gone on to be one of our, and the refugee women's, greatest allies and supporters.

The workshop also provided a crucial opportunity for trust building between the key stakeholders. INGOs, UN and donor staff were able to hear directly from refugee women about the challenges they face and to witness the quality of their analysis and capacity. Similarly it provided the refugee women the opportunity to build their understanding of the political challenges and constraints faced by service providers and donors. In response to information and feedback from all participants, the project plan

[3] See Appendix 1 for details
[4] As above
[5] See Appendix 1 for links to the Training modules and reports

was revised so that instead of conducting an initial Reciprocal Research consultation and training with all partners in one central location, consultations were instead planned in each of the project countries.

Country level Reciprocal Research Consultations Stage 2

Research consultations using the Reciprocal Research Methodology were held in Malaysia, Thailand and Bangladesh from mid-2019 to early 2020. The same research tools and methods were used and the same research questions addressed in each site, however the approach and number of consultations held differed in response to the different country contexts. The outcomes and reports[6] of these consultations directly impacted both the next project stage and informed the local responses of UNHCR and local service providers in each site to addressing SGBV and further support refugee women's participation (See below for further details). The consultations in both Thailand and Malaysia were filmed and with the permission of the refugee women, a series or short film segments were prepared and shown at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva. The key findings from all sites also informed a short advocacy brochure which was distributed at the Global Refugee Forum in November 2019.

Consultations in Malaysia

Research consultations were held in Kuala Lumpur, over a two-week period from July to August 2019. These were co-led by the UNSW team and academic partner Associate Professor Shanthi Thambiah, Gender Studies, University of Malaya, with the support of NGO partners, Tenaganita, MSRI and Asylum Access. The consultations involved 36 women leaders from twelve different countries, five refugee male leaders, UNHCR and NGOs. In January 2020, at UNHCR's request, a second series of consultations and trainings were held with a total of 47 refugee women leaders, 34 NGO staff, five academics and 21 UNHCR representatives.

Consultations in Thailand

Consultations were held on the Thai/Burma/Myanmar border in August 2019, co-led by the UNSW team and academic partners Sriprapha Petcharamesree and Ratawit Ouaprachanon, Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University with the support of the Karen Women's Organisation and The Border Consortium (TBC). The consultations involved 38 women leaders from the nine border camps, two male leaders, UNHCR and NGOs. The Final Consultations report was produced in October 2019.

Consultations in Bangladesh

Given the size and diversity of the Rohingya refugee population, involving both the long-stay and more recently arrived refugees, a different approach was taken in Bangladesh. This involved a three-step process:

(i) November 2019: Four Experiential Training of Trainer Reciprocal Research Consultations were held. One in Cox's Bazar with NGOs and UN staff, one in the Kutupalong camps and one in the Teknaf camps with refugee women, female NGOs and UN staff, and one in the Kutupalong camps with refugee men, male NGO and UN staff. The consultations and training were supported by academic partner the Centre for Peace and Justice, BRAC University. A Step by Step Facilitators guide was provided to all participants.

(ii) December 2019/January 2020: 16 camp level consultations were held with small groups of 12 to 15 refugee women and men, led by mixed groups of refugee and NGO/UN facilitators.

(iii) February 2020: Three Data analysis workshops: one in the Kutupalong camps and one in the Teknaf camps with refugee women, female NGOs and UN staff and one in the Kuttapalong camps with refugee men, male NGO and UN staff, who had facilitated and documented the camp level consultations. Individual reports informed the Consolidated Bangladesh Report.

[6] As above

One size does not fit all! But the principles do apply

As can be seen in the individual country reports, and the comparative matrices used below to analyse the achievement of the project objectives, we are pleased that we have proven our hypothesis that while 'one size does not fit all' in response to 'Participation' and a response to SGBV, the same principles can be addressed in different ways in very different contexts to achieve satisfactory outcomes. There have been challenges and we have and still are working out ways to overcome these.

The outcomes have exceeded our expectations, and the feedback has been extremely positive. It is not only the refugee women who have benefited from their involvement. We have reports from UN staff, INGOs and local NGOs about the positive impact and learning they have received from involvement in the project and the training offered. It has been acknowledged in all three sites and from all stakeholders that is has been a unique, affirming and genuinely empowering experience. We know that the project reports and training materials are being widely used and that parts of the program are being replicated in other places.

Understanding participation

Key to the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees has been the process of refugees actively participating in decision making about their futures. Refugee groups are now demanding to be heard and involved. "Nothing about us, without us" is the slogan of the Global Refugee Led Network (GRN) who have been working on developing approaches to support the meaningful participation of refugees at all levels[7]. They have progressively been supported in this demand by some NGOs, INGOs, donors and UN bodies, in particular UNHCR. It is included as a key principle in the GCR and the AGD Policy and Framework. However, there is not a clear definition of what participation means in a refugee context, nor how it can be achieved. Building on a substantial volume of work on participation in management and development studies, we are developing a flexible model for use with refugees when trialling models of participation and analysis of local contexts. A major difference between notions of participation used in development studies and projects and in a refugee situation, is that participation in development is predicated on the concept of citizenship and rights, such as the right to work, which the majority of refugees do not have. Our work to date on this will be submitted for publication later this year and will be further developed in the next stage of the project.

Acknowledging this caveat, definitions we have drawn of so far include that 'participation' is a process during which individuals, groups and organizations are consulted about or have the opportunity to become actively involved in a project or program of activity. This if often described as an understanding of 'participation as partnership' (Kenny 2011:188). We then examined some models of how participation is defined in development. For the purpose of this project, we are using the following definition:

> 'Participation means the involvement of intended beneficiaries[8] in the planning, design, implementation and subsequent maintenance of the development intervention. It means that people are mobilized, manage resources and make decisions that affect their lives' (Price and Mylius 1991:6).

This involves a number of important steps, which for a range of reasons do not always occur. These include: the political context at a host country level; the capacity of humanitarian staff; resistance from some humanitarian agencies, staff and donors; and tokenism in the use of the approach/es.

Partnerships Online suggests the following five levels of participation:

- Provision of information about a proposed project or solution.
- Consultation whereby a number of options are provided for feedback but the decision making is not in the hands of the refugees.

[7] https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/publications/brochures/61b28b734/meaningful-refugee-participation-transformative-leadership-guidelines-concrete.html

[8] While we no longer use the top-down language of beneficiaries this classic definition still resonates with our approach and understandings of participation

- Service providers and refugees deciding together about outcomes.
- Acting together to implement the projects or solutions.
- Supporting independent community initiatives.

To test these models in these projects we used the following stages:

- Stage 1 - Research and information provision
- Stage 2 - Consultation and design with stakeholders including refugees
- Stage 3 - Implementation Stage,
- Stage 4 - Evaluation Stage

As can be seen below, these played out differently in each site.

Note: Importantly as noted above, we also included participation of refugee women in advocacy, at a local and international level. This was supported through the provision of training in skills for effective advocacy at the United Nations.

Key things which must be considered in developing participatory approaches with refugee communities:

- International politics – how much support is there for the particular refugee crisis at the time?
- Is the host government supportive or hostile?
- Local politics – is the host community supportive or hostile?
- Are authorities supportive or hostile?
- The commitment to a given policy by the most powerful stakeholders.
- The values, attitudes, capacity and resources of the local staff?
- The role is ideology and culture, both of refugees, hosts and service providers plays, in particular in sensitive issues such as human rights, including gender equality, and SGBV?
- Are international agencies willing to co-operate together and work with local NGOs and refugee led groups as equal partners or does funding competition get in the way?
- The level of trust between refugee communities, UN agencies and other service providers.
- Fear that refugee-led groups are 'too political' and/or failure to accept that they can be both political advocates and rights-based service providers?
- Political constraints faced by local academic partners
- Willingness of donors to provide flexible funding
- … and more.

These are significant challenges and many are outside the control of any one body, or service provider. The major challenge is how to address these external issues, or at least get around some of them. This is explored in the matrices below and that will be further explored in the extension of this action research project.

Potential responses to these challenges include

- More focused and context-sensitive training materials developed and training provided to key stakeholders.
- Collaborative work with partners and stakeholders already onside to publicise successful refugee-led projects, such as ours and others, and building on the visible success of small COVID-19 projects.
- Increased and targeted advocacy, especially by refugees e.g., at relevant UN meetings.
- Production of workable and achievable policy and programming models which do not frighten people (see below).
- Advocacy to, and education of donors – presenting successes and accessible tools.
- Targeting governments with evidence of some of the benefits of refugee involvement and the contributions they can make in host communities.

- Funding and support for ethical participatory academic research in partnership with host country academics.

Next stage of the project:

Development of a tools to address different models of participation, the inclusion of AGD and better addressing SGBV in refugee situations

Building on successful materials already produced in this project and other existing good practices identified as part of the Gender audit process, the key outcomes of the next phases of the project will be the development and trialling of a series of tools and training materials to guide program planning and design. and include meaningful a monitoring and evaluation strategy. This will comprise:

- A tool which will assist stakeholders to assess the viability of refugee participation in specific situations, building on local strengths, infrastructure, legal issues etc., identifying challenges and potential short and longer-term solutions.
- Bringing together successful aspects of existing practice and materials, based on the AGD Analysis Matrix Tool and devising a tool/s which will encourage the use of the Age, Gender and Diversity Framework in all projects from small local programs, to large multi country programs.
- A tool to assess the extent to which SGBV is a barrier to the implementation of the participation of women and girls in all aspects of their lives and to respond to each of these in program planning and evaluation.

Recommendations by key themes based on project outcomes

Recommendations have been suggested for the majority, but not all, of the key issues. **a.** To inform the continuation of this project, and **b**. Recommendations to key stakeholders. These are indicative, not fully developed as they will need to be shaped to suit the particular events and situations where they will be most appropriately used. Implementation of these is contingent on the receipt of further funding in 2023/24.

Gender Equality Recommendations

For this Project:

The production and trialling of additional broadly accessible training materials and program models, including training which clearly defines the key concepts used in the discourse, i.e. Gender Equality, Diversity, Participation, Partnerships, and identifies ways to apply them in different contexts.

Comprehensive training models of more advanced program design and evaluation, building on the preliminary, introductory work to be developed and trialled completed for use by refugee groups, local NGOs and ING's and trialled in the next stage of this project.

A monitoring and evaluation strategy will be developed to effectively measure the inclusion of the principles in the AGD Framework in pledges and programs highlighted in the process leading to the second Global Forum on Refugees in 2023.

For Key Stakeholders

The inclusion of stronger accountability and more effective reporting mechanisms for all aspects of Gender Equality to be adopted by UNHCR and all stakeholders.

Measures of effective and transparent strategies in program design to ensure Gender Equality to be part of all donor contracts, including rigorous, pre-agreed monitoring and evaluation strategies.

The Age, Gender and Diversity Framework Recommendations

For this Project

More specific training will be developed as part of this project to enable refugee women and stakeholders to move beyond the 'What' of AGD, to the 'How' of addressing barriers and challenges of including all refugees in protection responses.

For Key Stakeholders

More targeted materials and support based on the AGD Framework, which incorporates AGD and a response to GBV be made available mandatory from UNHCR Head Office to regional and local offices, and its use made

UNHCR to maintain the important focus given to AGD and GBV by senior staff at all meetings leading to the second Global Forum on Refugees in 2023.

A comprehensive policy of addressing the AGD framework should be incorporated into all program design and evaluation, and be part of accountability mechanisms, and key performance indicators.

Responses to SGBV Recommendations

For this Project

A range of training materials addressing all aspects of SGBV in refugee situations and aimed at a wide range of stakeholders, will be developed and trialled.

A strengthened focus on SGBV will be incorporated into all new small projects developed with/by the women's groups.

The research team will continue to work with UNHCR Geneva to advocate for this to be highlighted at the second Global Compact on Refugees

For Key Stakeholders

As SGBV is included in the AGD Framework this must be highlighted by UNHCR to all stakeholders, and the recommendations, above, include an articulation and response to SGBV.

Refugee Participation and Partnerships Recommendations

For this Project

That training will be developed and trialled to assist stakeholders to be more inclusive of refugee groups, and to build stronger relationships with them, based on the models of participation which have emerged from this project.

Information about different models of participation in refugee settings, barriers and challenges will be widely disseminated, along with training materials and flexible models. It will be a focus of our ongoing advocacy with UNHCR Geneva.

That refugee women's groups and local partners are supported to design and undertake sustainable and flexible transition plans which promote self-reliance

For Key Stakeholders

All key stakeholders must be encouraged to use tools to ascertain the levels of participation possible in any given refugee site, and to use this information to inform and shape their relationships with programmes with refugee communities.

Refugee groups must be encouraged to work co-operatively to identify and engage with the models of participation possible at any given time, while working to address challenges to more inclusive models.

Refugees as Advocates Recommendations

For this project

That we continue to work with UNHCR to provide the maximum advocacy space for women from the project at UNHCR meetings.

Local advocacy with key stakeholders will be a key component of all new projects

For Key Stakeholders

That key stakeholders wishing to support refugees as advocates access some of the excellent training materials available, and take the time to consult with the refugee groups and support them to develop their own advocacy positions, and the skills to advocate effectively.

That stakeholders be encouraged to not use refugees in a tokenistic manner to support their own organisations or positions.

Value of the Reciprocal Research Consultations Recommendations

For this project

That we continue to use the Reciprocal Research Consultation Methodology as part of the process, and actively encourage our partners to do the same.

That we make the Reciprocal Research Methodology and Training Materials available to all stakeholders by placing it on the UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice.

For Key Stakeholders

At an international level we will advocate for key stakeholders to recognise the value of the time and resources spent on effective consultations up front at the beginning of a project to its long- term success. We will support this with evidence of the cost effectiveness of this approach.

Issues common across all sites Recommendations

Engagement of key stakeholders at a local level Recommendations

For this Project

The project will continue to actively engage with local stake holders.

The advocacy at UNHCR will raise the engagement of local stakeholders as a critical issue and suggest strategies for improvement.

For Key Stakeholders

Senior staff in INGOs and UN bodies who articulate support for participation will be encouraged to develop strategies and provide training for their staff on the ground to ensure that the organisational commitment is reflected in practice.

International organizations engaging with local NGOs will ensure that local staff understand and are trained to work co-operatively with refugees as local partners.

Livelihoods Recommendations

For this project and key stakeholders

Money must be identified and invested in programs such as the proposed 'Entrepreneurship Program' in Kuala Lumpur, to be run by a group of Malaysian women entrepreneurs (NAWEM), skilled in working with disadvantaged groups in the community. Using a proven and successful program, it takes a group of women through a two-year process of training and support to enable them to establish and run their own businesses. They ran an excellent introductory model with 32 of the refugee women in our current project, and the learnings from that will inform the next phase of this project. They have proposed completing the process with the women and developing a full training kit, but the budget is way beyond the scope of this project. However, it a program which we believe has huge potential. It may appear to be very expensive as a one-off project only targeting 30 women leaders but will build an excellent model which could be replicated internationally.

As part of the intersectional analysis of each situation, the need for livelihoods and security of basic needs, all programs designed to support refugee participation must include a focus on livelihoods and basic security. This must be incorporated into all trainings materials and tools produced to address participation.

Training Tools and Program Model Recommendations

For this Project

A range of new training modules developed based on the feedback from the project to date will be developed and trialled and made available internationally via the UNHCR Digital Platform and the UNSW website.

A launch will be held in Geneva to raise awareness of the materials and the potential outcomes.

The need for additional appropriate new training materials will be determined by refugees.

For Key Stakeholders

The need for culturally appropriate training materials designed for different levels of education will be publicised and be part of our ongoing advocacy at UNHCR Geneva.

AGD Disaggregated Data Recommendations

For this Project

We will develop training materials based on the Matrix AGD Analysis tool on collecting, using and disseminating the disaggregated data used in this project.

This will be presented at UNHCR and available on the UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice.

For Key Stakeholders

UNHCR must respond to the recommendations stemming from the launch of the Impact Statement to further develop and use AGD disaggregated data. This commitment must be extended to all stakeholders.

Issues not directly mentioned, but pertinent to the GCR and AGD implementation and this project Recommendations

Value of refugee led work in the COVID-19 Pandemic and the role of women Recommendations

For this Project

To expand advocacy for the increased recognition and participation of refugee women equal to that of men, recognising that they are equally capable of engagement at both a social and political level.

This requires detailed documentation of successful projects and models of refugee-led work and more training and support materials developed and disseminated to support this

For Key Stakeholders

Given the recognition of the large number of refugee women led groups who have contributed so significantly to the COVID-19 response, UNHCR and other stakeholders must work to ensure that the voices of women refugees are given equal space and support as those of refugee men.

UNHCR and other stakeholders must continue to collect stories of successful and effective refugee led projects, and to advocate for these to be directly funded. UNHCR's 2022 Innovation Award which focused on refugee women led organisations is an excellent example of this approach.

Funding made available to refugee-led groups must of necessity have the same accountability frameworks as all other service providers, but, these not be any more onerous than for other NGOs and should not be conditional on the requirements of auspicing[9] organisations.

UNHCR GCR Digital Platform for Good Practice Recommendations

For this Project

All projects, training programs and tools will be available on the UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice.

For Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders are encouraged to fully evaluate all programs and to share models and key learnings on the UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice.

Stakeholders to be encouraged to regularly consult the digital platform and adopt good practice whenever possible.

Outcomes in three countries

Please refer to the matrices below for details of the outcomes and analysis of the impacts analysed against the project objectives and Appendix 1 for links to the detailed country reports.

Thailand

Pillars addressed: *While initially designed to address Pillar Two, Immediate and Ongoing Needs and Pillar Four, Durable Solutions, because of ongoing conflict within Burma, it became a mix of Pillar One, Reception and Admission and Pillar Two, highlighting the fact that refugee situations are dynamic and are often characterised by a mix of protracted and emergency situations.*

Participation model – Refugee led: supporting independent community initiatives

SGBV Response *– The women's groups already had established SGBV response models, including a network of safehouses and used the project funding to gain access to vulnerable women to extend the offer of assistance. Furthermore they trained their network of volunteers in the camps to provide additional psychosocial support for women survivors, and requested a new training of trainer model on how to assist families who had a member suicide, or to support women contemplating suicide, which was delivered via zoom to their network.*

The project in Thailand was successful because it is run by well-established women groups, the Karen Women's Organisations (KWO) and the Karenni Women's Organisation (KNWO) who have been operating in the camps and ethnic areas in Myanmar for over 20 years. They have received funding and training over that period and are skilled at designing and delivering programs across the camps. A major gain from this project was the inclusion and funding of three small emerging Muslim Women's

[9] Auspice bodies are legally registered organisations who agree to receive funds on behalf of unregistered organisations and pass then with either no or minimal administrative costs.

[10]CBOs, who have responded exceptionally well. The auspicing support by INGO The Border Consortium (TBC) was critical for them to receive the funding, but they had no influence on the projects run by the women's groups.

Note: At a side event held during the June 2022 UNHCR/NGO consultations, several large INGOs and donors discussed the importance of taking on similar auspicing roles.

Challenges to the project were local politics, the withdrawal of the majority of international aid since 2016 because Burma had declared an end to hostilities. The re-escalation of conflict within Burma in 2020, targeting the ethnic minority groups triggered a new wave of refugees entering Thailand, but with few resources from the international community. The situation went from Pillar Two, on-going needs to a mix of Pillar One and Pillar Two, a long stay camp experience became a mix of on-going need, and an emergency situation as the CBOs struggled to respond to the needs of the new arrivals, in the absence of formal permission from the Thai Government for UNHCR and NGOs to do so. Few if any of the commitments to refugee women and girls in Pillar Two eventuated because of the complex international political situation, and between donor countries and Burma. Then with the arrival of COVID-19 the camps were locked down. The serious lack of trust between the women's groups and UNHCR did nothing to assist the situation. Fortunately the networks and knowledge of the women's groups enabled them to respond to the two-pronged needs as best as they could given the huge resource shortage. They already used a participatory approach, and work on a response to SGBV. They incorporated the small funding from this project to respond more effectively to the needs, including the new emerging minority groups. They also undertook effective evaluations of the projects impacts and made considered recommendations for new projects. An extension of this project will include additional training and support for additional groups with new arrivals and diverse peoples. A good academic partnership was severely constrained by the COVID-19 Pandemic, but the team have indicated interest in continuing involvement.

Malaysia

Pillars addressed*: Pillar Two, Immediate and Ongoing Needs. Pillar Three, Host countries and communities. Because of the complex and dynamic nature of refugee movements and settlements it was impossible to focus totally on just one pillar.*

Participation Model *- Collaborative with a large element of refugee-led. A mix of stakeholders and refugees decided together about outcomes, acted together to implement the projects or solutions, and supported independent community initiatives.*

SGBV Response *- full disclosure of endemic sexual abuse of all areas of their lives, and the need for security, links made to the needs for safe and adequate livelihoods as a way to counter SGBV but the links between the two could be stronger. Some groups took part in training to work in a safe house for women. Other trained to provide peer support for vulnerable women. There were significantly improved relationships with UNHCR and NGOs, collaborative referral pathways for SGBV response and prevention.*

The project in Malaysia ticks nearly all of the boxes for best practice (see reports). A group of local NGOs worked together with UNHCR and the women to clearly identify the range of problems experienced in Kuala Lumpur and respond to these. All parties reported benefiting and learning from the collaboration. Trust was built between all parties. COVID-19 caused major disruptions in the lives of refugees in Kuala Lumpur, and again the women's groups were amongst the first responders. The diverse communities had very different needs, resources and capacities, but the project was able to encompass these, because the women in each community groups defined their own immediate needs and programs required. They also undertook effective evaluations of the projects impacts and made considered recommendations for new projects.

[10] MWO Mae La Camp, MWO Nu Poe Camp and MWA Umpiem camp

The women reported feeling more empowered, valued and positive and are planning for further business opportunities in the future. All wish to continue to work with the project to build skills and empower other women. There was consistent and positive support from our local academic partner, with on-going involvement. There were some concerns from the refugee women that the reporting procedures, for some projects were too onerous. We agree, and it will be addressed in the next phase of the project. Although extremely problematic, the urban environment gave the refugees more access to services than those refugees in camps.

Bangladesh

***Pillars addressed**: Pillar One, Reception and Admission. There was a huge influx of refugees in 2017/18 and 19. However, Pillars Two and Three were also included, as there was a mix of immediate and on-going needs, and host country and local community needs. There was also a significant cohort of refugees who had been in the camps in Cox's Bazar for more than 15 years, and an unknown number cohabiting with the local community, which also shared many of the same needs. Some of the needs of the two refugee groups and the local community were the same, others significantly different. The complex situation highlighted the impossibility of completely separating the response to the four pillars.*

***Participation Model**- First phase of the COVID-19 projects-Consultation: A number of options were provided for feedback from the informal refugee women-led groups but the decision making was not in the hands of the refugee women. Second phase: Service providers and refugee women decided together about programs, outcomes and acted together to implement the projects or solutions.*

***SGBV Response** – full disclosure of extent of the problem with analysis of existing services by women participants in consultations. Second phase of small projects -actions were decided by women to train refugee women support workers ('volunteers') to respond to the women survivors of SGBV, and models of engagement with, and reporting to camp authorities by refugee women being developed and trialled.*

The consultative process in Bangladesh was extremely successful, with 16 separate consultations held across the camps covering both the long-stay refugee population and recent arrivals. Several of these were held by refugee women, UN agencies, INGOs and local NGOs[11] who had trained with the researchers. The women participated effectively and suggested solutions regarding participation and addressing SGBV. Before we could move to engage with these, COVID-19 hit, and the camps and many of the INGOs and NGOs were locked down or sent away from the area. The first round of small COVID-19 programs were organised by a local NGO, Lighthouse and were very constrained by the restrictions placed by the Bangladeshi Government. However, the second round of projects organised by INGO Relief International (RI), who had been very involved in the project from the start and led the consultations in the Teknaf camps, was extremely successful in addressing the aims of the project. UNHCR were a major supporter of the first phase of the project, providing additional funding to conduct the camp level consultations. IOM and Relief international were also major supporters, playing lead roles in organising the camp level consultations. However the majority of international staff who first were supportive of the project have moved on which have had some impact on project continuity. Due to internal staff changes, the academic partner were not as actively involved in the data analysis phase as originally intended but they have expressed interest in on-going involvement as they are very impressed by the project's participatory approach. However current barriers to receiving external foreign funding to cover costs at their end will need to be overcome.

Myanmar

***Pillar Addressed:** Durable solutions – in this case return. This collapsed when the Myanmar Government recommenced hostilities targeting the ethnic groups (which many state had never fully ceased). Funding which had been going to the Thai-Burma border had almost ceased, despite nearly 100,000 people still*

[11] UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, Relief International, Action Aid, Danish Refugee Council, BRAC, NGO Forum for Public Health, Technical Assistance Inc.

stranded there, and been re-directed to peace building and relocation of refugees inside Burma. All of this came to a halt.

A group of refugee women from Myanmar were able to join us for the joint partners planning meeting in Bangkok, held in October 2018. Several had spent two days making the dangerous and arduous journey from the ethnic areas of Burma to Bangkok. Subsequently planning began on visits to Myanmar and a series of trainings and consultations with returned women. Tragically, we were unable to start the project in Myanmar due to political instability and renewed conflict. One of the women who attended the Bangkok meeting was shot and killed in Chin State while peaceably protesting. We were also unable to identify an appropriate academic partner within Myanmar. It was a clear example of how unexpected and unplanned events can derail projects. However, as testament to the strength and ingenuity of the refugee women with whom we worked, through informal channels some aid was made available to returnees fleeing for their lives within Myanmar, (money was raised independent of this project funding) and new arrivals on the Thai/Burma/Myanmar border. Others internally displaced within Myanmar were assisted by the women's groups when aid was not available through mainstream agencies and donors.

Note on Comparison between the "four pillars" of the GCR

While significant at the beginning of the GCR process, the notion of 'four pillars' lost prominence as the implementation progressed. In this project, Myanmar was to be the case study of durable solutions/returnees, Thailand of long-term encampment, Malaysia of informal local integration, and Bangladesh addressing new arrivals and reception. However as noted above the circumstances of the refugees changed in all sites.

Some excellent materials are being developed by other NGOs and academics groups internationally responding to the needs of refugees in the very different refugee situations in each of the four pillars. We found however, that in this project, when examining implementation of the areas on which we focused, (SGBV, participation, stakeholder collaboration and localisation) our findings supported our experience over 30 years in the field and at an international level. No matter how good the tools and policies which are developed, implementation is a local issue, and the old concept of 'street level bureaucracy' (Lipsky 1980), that is, the further away from head office, the less likely policy will be implemented as intended, is still a major factor in whichever pillar we are working.

Key learnings

The project is underpinned by two key principles (which at times overlap) and which address the four project aims:

- Gender equality is critical to the protection of refugee women and girls. To facilitate and support this, the project will promote refugee women and girls' participation and leadership in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Global Compact on Refugees' AGD and SGBV commitments. This will include refugee women-led projects and advocacy at local, national, regional, and international levels working partnership with relevant stakeholders (Aims 1-4)

- Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) is a cross cutting issue and a major barrier to gender equality. Working with range of stakeholders including refugee women and girls as key actors, the project will address this using an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) sensitive framework to identify and develop good practice models and tools to support SGBV prevention, mitigation and response (Aims 1-4).

Project Aims

Aim 1: To address gender equality for refugees in diverse contexts and across the four pillars through the participation and improved protection measures

Aim 2: To ensure that gender differences, AGD Principles and SGVB are reflected throughout the implementation of the GCR.

Aim 3: To address the participation of refugee women in all aspects of program design, delivery and advocacy

Aim 4: To contribute flexible tools across all four pillars and program models

In this section, we have measured the successes, challenges and barriers to achieving these measured against the relevant paragraphs in the GCR, The Areas of Engagement in the AGD Framework, and the projects aims. The UNHCR Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Violence provided commitments which crosscut all sections, and builds on the AGD Policy Area of engagement 6E, which has a strong commitment to prevention and response to SGBV. There is significant cross over of the issues identified to participation, for example, the importance of education, and livelihoods to protection from SGBV. This has highlighted the usefulness of an intersectional analysis. We have presented the findings in two ways:

1. Comparison of key learnings in Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh.

These are:

- Progress towards Gender Equality
- Application of the Age, Gender and Diversity Framework
- Addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence
- Refugee Participation and Partnerships
- Engagement of key stakeholders
- Refugees as advocates
- The value of the Reciprocal Research Consultations held in Stage Two of the project

2. Key learnings common to all sites

These are:

- The value of the training provided.
- The need for more flexible funding models to support sustainable refugee-led and participatory approaches
- Lack of AGD disaggregated data
- The key role of livelihoods for refugee communities
- The impact of COVID-19
- The importance of refugees as advocates.
- The UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice

Comparison of key learnings in Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh.

1. Gender Equality – overarching theme

Global Compact on Refugees Para 13, Program of Action, covers all aims and objectives, paras 34,40, participation and inclusion, para 53 reception and admission para 57 security, documentation, food security and nutrition, para 68,69 education, para 72,73, health, paras 56,57 safety and security, para 79 shelter, energy and natural resource management.

AGD Areas of Engagement – 1. AGD Inclusive Programming. 6. Advancing Gender Equality

Reflected in *Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 1: To address gender equality for refugees in diverse contexts and across the four pillars through the participation and improved protection measures

Aim 2: To ensure that gender differences, AGD Principles and SGVB are reflected throughout the implementation of the GCR.

Aim 3: To address the participation of refugee women in all aspects of program design, delivery and advocacy.

	Thailand	**Bangladesh**	**Malaysia**
Achievements with refugee women	The well-established refugee women's groups, who have received training and funding for many years successfully incorporated aspects of this project into their ongoing work. Three emerging smaller groups also received funding They also provided support through informal channels to women groups in Myanmar and women fleeing Myanmar The involvement of emerging small organisations with agency over program implementation provided status within the community and contributed to gender equality. The refugee groups declined an invitation to take part in international advocacy directly but allowed film of them taking part in the consultations to be used at UNHCR Geneva, and in Paris for the Generation Equality Forum.	While a lot of international funding was being poured into Bangladesh at the beginning of the 2017 influx, with a considerable focus on refugee women and SGBV, it was not always effective. New arrivals were traumatised, disoriented and lacked the training which long term refugee women had been able to access. However, despite massive challenges including COVID-19, women organised themselves, participated enthusiastically in consultations, and are taking an active role in their communities. At least a small step towards gender equality. While several of the women would have liked to take part of UN advocacy, it was not possible to include them in zoom meetings, because of both political and logistical reasons.	The urban refugees in Kuala Lumpur come from many different countries and ethnicities. They are very diverse and range from pre-literate to highly educated, urban and rural backgrounds, and length of refugee status. They have a history of not mixing with other ethnic groups. In this project we worked with women from 8 communities, who came together to share common issues and also worked within their own communities to address specific issues identified by the women participants. Different approaches for each group, but all enhancing the principal of gender equality. Refugee women from different groups took part in several UN meetings via zoom and gave permission for film of them in consultations and evaluation session to be used at UNHCR.
Academic Involvement	At the beginning of the project the academic partners	A representative of the academic partner took part in the	The academic partner in Malaysia has a strong gender

	were very involved in the project. They procured ethics approval for the project and played an active role in the consultations on the Thai Burma Border (TBB). The long lockdowns in Thailand caused by COVID-19 meant that they could not travel to the TBB to undertake some of the evaluation interviews, or conduct additional trainings. Their focus was on Human Rights and they were extremely receptive to the gender aspects of the project They have indicated their willingness to contribute to program extensions.	initial meeting in Bangkok, provided ethical approval, and assigned two research assistants, who took part in the consultative process. One of these has subsequently left the University. The COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult for them to attend the camps, but the second researcher joined us as a participant in the Zoom training sessions. They have youth and women's programs in the camps with a focus on gender equality and peace building and are keen to continue as a project partner.	studies background and was active throughout the project, and very supportive of furthering women's human rights. As well as gaining ethics approval, she took an active role in training sessions in stages 1 and 2, and hosted meetings at the University. She conducted some evaluation interviews and produced a report of these. She also Joined advocacy meetings between refugee women and the government of Malaysia. She has indicated that she would like to stay involved in the project
UNHCR involvement	The refugee women's groups and UNHCR on the TBB and in Bangkok. UNHCR staff attended the consultations, and committed to responding to the recommendations, but there was no further engagement with UNHCR following this.	Were initially actively supportive of the project, including significant funding, involvement in training and running consultations etc. They requested the production of a series of Training materials for women's groups responding to the COVID-19 needs of their communities to use in the camps, which were translated into 8 languages, and which were reportedly widely used. The current team, in particular the local staff are keen to continue with future extension of the project.	UNHCR Malaysia is a key partner in the success of the project there. The head of the office has made gender equality and women the key focus of their work, and he and his staff have been actively and effectively engaged throughout the project. They have provided funding for sub projects and logistical and staff support. They attend project meetings with the refugee women and opened communication channels with both the women and the local NGOs, building a much more positive

			and productive relationship than was there before. They will ensure the continuation of the project while the same senior staff are in place.
Role of Local Agencies	In Thailand, the project was almost totally refugee led. Because of logistical problems getting funding to the women's organisations, the money was auspiced by the Thai Border Consortium (TBC), who also provided interpreter and logistics backup when needed, and as a contribution to the project. TBC is totally committed to gender equality and saw this project as an important contribution, in particular to the newer refugee-women led organisations. They will support the project into the future.	Challenges and barriers to the involvement of local agencies were very much proscribed by the political environment in Bangladesh and the rules and regulations regarding the type of programs being offered and access to funding from overseas sources. This has become stricter over the course of the project and also applies to our academic partner. However, a large INGO, Relief International (RI), who had coordinated the consultations among the long-stay refugee population, subsequently expressed interest in working with us, and has run a very successful program supporting women led organisations with a focus on equality, advocacy and prevention of SGBV. They have expressed interest in continuing the project.	The response of local agencies, in particular Tenaganita, which has auspiced the project and managed the funding has been key to the success of the work in KL. Their commitment to gender equality is present in all of their work. Their commitment to working with UNHCR to build a stronger relationship with them, with other NGOs, MSRI and Asylum Access and with the women's groups has been exemplary. They have contributed an enormous amount of work and helped develop a model of good, or even best practice for this work. They have been part of both national and international advocacy.

Analysis

We are pleased to see that in all three sites where we are directly involved, there is a heightened response to addressing gender inequality, although the response has been different in each place. The successful implementation of programs such as this is very dependent on local staff, the international staff of INGOs, and the ideological position of organisations, including the senior staff, and the political context in which they take place. These are all moving pieces of a puzzle, and they cannot be relied on

not to change. The more engaged the local staff, in particular with regard to gender equality, participation and an effective response to SGBV, the more successful the project.

Impact

The project in Malaysia is having maximum impact. The support from the senior level, the commitment of local NGOs and the academic partner, and the strength and response from the refugee communities is bringing significant benefits from a relatively small bucket of funding.

In Thailand, the money is being spent very effectively because of the skills and experience of the established women's groups. Perhaps the greatest benefit is for the small newly emerging Muslim women's groups, who have not previously had the support to demonstrate their capacity and strive for gender equality and effective responses to SGBV. The willingness of a large INGO to 'hands off' auspice has been a major contributor to the success.. In Bangladesh, the project has been very constrained by local and national politics, and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the initial significant involvement of UNHCR, IOM and a network of other agencies and more recently local staff in a large INGO has proven to be extremely successful in fulfilling the goals of the project.

Despite the very different models, structured to address local conditions, the women are empowered and keen to continue to move forward. They are participating in decision making and taking an active role in many aspects of their lives and are actively involved in seeking solutions to addressing SGBV. NGOs are acknowledging and supporting the important role taken by the women and are themselves learning from the process.

Recommendations

For this Project:

The production and trialling of additional broadly accessible training materials and program models as detailed below, including training which clearly defines the key concepts used in the discourse, i.e. Gender Equality, Diversity, Participation, Partnerships and ways to apply them.

Comprehensive training models to be developed and trialled of advanced program design and evaluation, building on the preliminary, introductory work completed for use by refugee groups, local NGOs and INGOs and trialled in the next stage of this project.

A monitoring and evaluation strategy will be developed to effectively measure the inclusion of the principles in the AGD Framework in pledges and programs highlighted in the process leading to the second Global Forum on Refugees in 2023.

For Key Stakeholders

The inclusion of stronger more effective reporting mechanisms for all aspects of Gender Equality to be adopted by UNHCR and all stakeholders.

Measures of effective and transparent strategies in program design and evaluation to ensure Gender Equality to be part of all donor contracts, including rigorous, pre-agreed monitoring and evaluation strategies.

2. Application of an Age Gender and Diversity Framework

Global Compact on Refugees: Part A paras 45,46 and 47 data and evidence collection, para 58 registration and documentation.

AGD Areas of Engagement: 1 AGD Inclusive Programming.

Reflected in *Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 1: To address gender equality for refugees in diverse contexts and across the four pillars through the participation and improved protection measures

Aim 2 To ensure that gender differences, **AGD Principles** and SGBV are reflected throughout the implementation of the GCR (NB: The AGD Policy includes LGBTIQ+ communities).

Note: The matrix model of exploring and analysing age, gender and diverse aspects of issues of concern and key protection issues was enthusiastically embraced by the refugee women and all stakeholders in all sites, and by the Division of International Protection, UNHCR Geneva (See Consultation Reports and the UNHCR HLOM Report).

	Thailand	**Bangladesh**	**Malaysia**
Refugee women's groups	The groups have reported that they have specifically targeted people from diverse (and vulnerable) groups with the aid and services they have provided. The inclusion of new Muslim women's groups in the program is one example of this.	The women's groups supported by RI have actively encouraged the inclusion of women from diverse groups in their projects. This includes members of the LGBTIQ+ communities and women and girls with a disability.	It is reported that within the already diverse groups, there has been a real effort to include an AGD approach.
Local NGOs and UNHCR offices	All state they have taken an AGD approach.	All state they have taken an AGD approach.	All state they have taken an AGD approach.

Analysis

While we were aware of and referred to the UNHCR AGD Framework when designing this project, within the participating organisations it has become much more prominent in the last four years. However, an automatic acceptance of this as a guiding framing work in all policy and practice is slow to happen. There has been significant improvement across sections at head office level, although it is still absent from some important meetings and documents. It is far less apparent in the field where application and knowledge about it remains patchy. While there has certainly been an awareness of the need to apply an AGD approach in every situation in which we worked there is still quite a long way to go before it happens automatically and comprehensively. It is important to recognise that we are asking refugee groups to do something that is not always modelled by humanitarian aid providers, either at a local or international level. It was noted that in many cases this was the first time that most had considered the different implications of challenges on diverse groups. The needs of older women and youth are more often articulated, and people with a disability mentioned more than previously, but the LGBTQI+ communities are not often included. To their credit, the majority of the refugee women with whom we work were incredibly responsive once they are aware of the issues. However for this to occur consistently and effectively, additional support and resources must be provided. UNHCR Geneva has taken a very active role (along with a group of INGOs called 'Friends of the AGD' to which we belong) in supporting the implementation of the AGD Framework, ensuring that sessions are held in all major

events, and producing good accessible materials to assist adoption of AGD in GCR pledges and implementation strategies.

Note: The key AGD response at the HLOM was overwhelmingly about children (Gender Audit Report 2021) with few other categories comprehensively covered.

Impact

Women in all sites noted the impact of the AGD training and the use of the AGD Matrix exercise on their awareness of diversity, planning and response to inclusion in the projects they helped to design, however, few mentioned specific steps which had been taken to ensure this happened. This is particularly the case with regard to the LGBQTI+ communities.

Recommendations

For this Project

More specific training will be developed as part of this project to enable refugee women and stakeholders to move beyond the 'What' of AGD, to the 'How' of addressing barriers and challenges of including all refugees in protection responses.

For Key Stakeholders

More targeted materials and support based on the AGD Framework, which incorporates AGD and a response to GBV must be supplied from UNHCR Head Office to regional and local offices.

UNHCR must maintain the important focus given to AGD and GBV by senior staff at all meetings leading to the second Global Forum on Refugees in 2023.

A comprehensive policy of addressing the AGD framework should be incorporated into all program design and evaluation, and be part of accountability mechanisms, and key performance indicators.

3. Responses to SGBV

Global Compact on Refugees: Para 13, commits to implementation of the AGD policy in all situations. paras 53, 54, safe spaces in reception and admission, paras 56, and 57, safety and security.

AGD Areas of Engagement, 6. Gender Equality, section, 6E, SGBV Prevention and response

Reflected in *Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 2: To ensure that gender differences, AGD Principles and **SGBV** are reflected throughout the implementation of the GCR (NB: The AGD Policy includes LGBTIQ+ Communities)

	Thailand	**Bangladesh**	**Malaysia**
Local NGOs	The women's groups who were the NGO partner in this project in Thailand have been active over many years in raising the issue of endemic SGBV both in Myanmar and the camps. It was again a key issue raised in the consultation.	After completing orientation and training in Bangkok, the head of Mukti, a large Bangladeshi NGO instigated a Gender focal point, rules, guidelines and reporting procedures relating to acceptable behaviours SGBV	Local organisations already aware of the level of SGBV were never-the less shocked by the extent revealed by the consultations. Services have been extended by Tenaganita, MSRI, Asylum Access and UNHCR and women

	They have advocated for a range of services in the camps, although as funding has been withdrawn these have been severely impacted. They also offer a number of services themselves and used some of the small project funding to train more women to respond to SGBV. They also used material assistance to enable them to access vulnerable women and offer SGBV support. They identified that the need for SGBV services is still enormous, and few of the intersecting services such as education safe livelihood's, secure housing etc are available to the women and girls.	complaints within his organisation.	have been trained to work in these.
Refugee women's groups	The women's groups with whom we work provide a range of SGBV services, but they are not fully resourced to do this.	Refugee women in the consultations, and both small projects have discussed the extent and impact of SGBV and the importance of addressing it. In the second small project co-ordinated by RI, training in peer counselling was suggested to enable women to respond more effectively to women survivors. One of their main aims with the project is to work with camp authorities and gain recognition by them of the women volunteers, to enable them to report incidences of SGBV	Women also identified SGBV as a key barrier to participation and security in the consultations and requested training in their small groups to train women in peer counselling and support. Despite the good relationships which have been built between women's groups and local NGOs and UNHCR and increased reporting by some groups, there still appears to be reluctance from some women to report to UNHCR and other agencies, and

		directly to the authorities and to have them taken seriously and acted upon.	this has to be explored in the next phase of this project.
UNHCR	UNHCR is working with the few NGOs still working in the area to provide a range of SGBV services, but they also have had their funding cut.	UNHCR local staff are actively involved in the provision of SGBV services but are under resourced to do this as effectively as they would like to. They are part of a coalition of NGOs and UNWomen working to co-ordinate services and ensure that the international funding directed to SGBV is spread evenly and effectively across the camps. Given the massive amount of funding directed towards SGBV.	UNHCR Malaysia has made addressing SGBV a major focus for the office and is supporting a number of NGOs who are providing a range of services for the communities. However, they report that despite the evidence presented about the extent of the problem, many women seem reluctant to report. They are working to address this.

Note: Senior staff at UNHCR Geneva have increasingly mentioned the seriousness of, and need to address SGBV, and are providing a good intersectional analysis in presentations made at key meetings. This is extremely important modelling and is enabling it to be incorporated into the mainstream discourse. However this is not always reflected in all areas of the organisation.

Analysis

Refugee women are now talking much more freely about SGBV, and many NGOs are listening, but there is still a reluctance to perceive it as a major problem and a barrier to participation, education, livelihoods etc. The important intersectional links are still not being made. Women are still sometimes reluctant to disclose, not because of shame, the 'easy' answer', but because they continue to lack trust in the response they will receive. Many key stakeholders are still really reluctant to fully address it and it still sits on the sidelines as a 'women's issue'. This has to be recognised and addressed.

Impact

Women are ready to describe, talk about and suggest solutions to address SGBV, and make conceptual connections in consultations and discussions. NGOs heard this, and were very shocked. While some have instigated direct programs specifically to address it others have not or do not consistently include it in program planning. While SGBV is an important part of the AGD Framework, and UNHCR does have an SGBV Policy, this issue is still not front and centre in all responses. Too often it is still regarded as a 'women's issue', and not directly related to gender equality, participation and leadership.

Note: In the 2021 UNHCR HLOM Outcomes Document, there are 20 plus mentions of AGD with clear commitments as sub recommendations in almost half of the 20 top tier recommendations. However GBV is only mentioned twice and does not feature at all in any of the 20 recommendations or their sub recommendations.

In terms of refugee women making the connections between other key protection measures and SGBV, once again this is strongly articulated in discussion, but less so in program design and suggestions for change. It is still a side issue. This is less successful than we had hoped because, as discussed above, the need to fulfill basic needs for themselves and their families brings a focus on livelihoods first, and all other concerns later.

The Gender Equality Unit in Geneva, which has carriage of the AGD Policy and GBV Unit have worked closely to co-ordinate responses to AGD and GBV, and this has also happened in their offices in Bangladesh and Malaysia. The strategies are most effective when this happens and maybe suggests that the two Units should be combined. This would ensure that SGBV received the attention it needs, which does not always happen. It is hope that the increased attention to the application of an intersectional analysis is addressing this. However, they are a small voice in a large organisation.

It is apparent that more applied training materials are needed to unpack the intersections between SGBV and other areas of discrimination and need, and the challenges to addressing these. The longstanding reluctance to address SGBV, or to accept that it is so endemic in refugee situations has to continue to be a major focus, until it is mainstreamed as a norm.

Recommendations

For this Project

A range of training materials addressing all aspects of SBV in refugee situations and aimed at a wide range of stakeholders, will be developed and trialled.

A strengthened focus on SGBV will be incorporated into all new small projects developed with/by the women's groups.

The research team will continue to work with UNHCR Geneva to advocate for this to be highlighted at the second Global Compact on Refugees

For Key Stakeholders

AS SGBV is included in the AGD Framework this must be highlighted by UNHCR to all stakeholders, and the recommendations, above include an articulations and response to SGBV.

4. Refugee Participation and Partnerships

Global Compact on Refugees: Paras 34,40, para 44, sport, para 51, engagement in using the AGD Framework, paras 74,75 including women and girls, para 76 children, adolescents and youth, para 84 good relations and peaceful coexistence. *Feedback and response* paras 45 – 47, data and evidence.

AGD area of Engagement 2. *Partnership and Inclusion*

Reflected in *Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 3: Addressing the participation of refugee women in all aspects of program design, delivery, evaluation and advocacy.

	Thailand	**Bangladesh**	**Malaysia**
Academics	The academic partners were supportive of the concept, but because	The academic partners in Bangladesh were supportive of the	The academic partner in Malaysia was extremely supportive of the

	of the COVID-19 restrictions had little opportunity to actively engage with the women's groups.	concept but were somewhat constrained by the conditions in the camps which made it very difficult. Programs which they ran had a very positive empowerment focus.	participation of refugee women in the planning and execution of the small projects.
UNHCR	. The local representative who attended the consultations seemed very upset by what she heard, and offered to meet with the women's groups to explore funding their work, but the COVID-19 struck and she subsequently left her position. as she	The senior staff in the Bangladesh office were very supportive at the beginning of the project, but they were overstretched and under resourced. They had a strong community development and GBV Unit, and were and are very supportive of women's participation, but they do face enormous barriers because of the national and local politics and the structure and lines of authority within the camps. As part of their commitment to women's empowerment one of the important outcomes of this project was a series of training kits for use by women's groups in the camps, was requested and supported by a member of UNHCR, who had the materials professionally translated and audio versions recorded in all relevant languages Following COVID-19 and a change of senior international staff, there was less	UNHCR Malaysia engaged with the project from the start. They were fully supportive of refugee participation in all aspects of their work and took major steps to facilitate this. They provided additional funding, access to facilities for meetings, changed access to UNHCR for refugees and opened channels of communication. They made response to SGBV and Gender Equality a priority for their office. The head of office spoke at the Generation Equality meeting in Paris via zoom about the value of the project, and the importance of gender equality. Following feedback from women participants, UNHCR established a complaints and response mechanism, which is highly appreciated by the refugee women. The office arranged for the materials produced for the groups in Bangladesh to be translated into additional languages for the women to use in Kuala Lumpur, and

		direct involvement in the project, although full logistical support for it was still provided. Staff has since again changed and the local staff who have been there since the beginning are very keen to re-engage.	additional training of trainer sessions were held for them. The Sri Lanka UNHCR Office is interested to implement a similar approach, following communications with staff in Malaysia
Local Agencies and INGOs	The main refugee women's groups with whom we worked are almost totally independent and autonomous. They organised the consultation, brought refugee women from 9 camps to Mae Sot. They included three emerging Muslim women groups and these groups received funding and have led successful small projects. They were major recipients of what this project had to offer. There was a nice cross over as the women's groups on the border accessed the training materials requested by the women in Bangladesh. They the requested additional training materials on working with suicide. The Thai Burma Border Consortium (TBC), a major INGO which auspiced the funding are fully supportive of the refugee women's groups, and took a hands off approach, supporting with interpretation when necessary.	Local agencies played an important role in the consultations, engaging in training of trainer courses and running some of them themselves. They were very supportive of women's involvement but were challenged by the multiple barriers posed by local politics, access to funding, rules about payment of refugees, and tensions between some international agencies. COVID-19 had a major impact in the camps and on the humanitarian aid workers. A small program which included women in the planning was run by a local NGO, and was moderately successful in fulfilling the aims of the project. RI later expressed their willingness to continue with the project and have undertaken an incredibly successful program of women's empowerment. IOM and UNHCR have expressed interest in continuing the project in	The local NGOs were key in Kuala Lumpur. They were led by Tenaganita, and worked closely with UNHCR and the refugee women's groups to develop small projects and hold training, all done in consultation with the women, who were the key decision makers. It was a complex and time-consuming process led by NGO partner Fajar Santoadi (Tenaganita) and has been extremely effective. It is being written up as an example of Good Practice for the UNHCR Digital Platform. Fajar spoke at the Generation Equality Forum and on several videos about the importance of participation to address SGBV and the importance of this project to himself, Tenaganita and the refugees in KL.

	While these independent groups are extremely effective, it is sad that they cannot work more effectively with UNHCR to address the problems experienced by their communities.	partnership with local agencies.	
Refugee Groups	As noted previously, the key refugee groups are essentially the key local agencies and wield considerable power in the camps along the border. They are however still dominated by the senior refugee men. For most, this project was an extension of what they already did, however the inclusion and support for the new and emerging groups was a major and positive outcome. Several of the women have been featured in video presentations shown at the UN and in the recently produced Intersectionality and AGD training video.	The conventional wisdom when we started this project was that for many reasons, both personal, cultural and structural, the women in the camps in Cox's Bazar were not actively involved in decision making nor were likely to be able to participate. This project challenged many of these myths and brought the already happening women's movements and activities more to the fore. Without a doubt there are more barriers for the women than in Thailand and Malaysia, in particular those who came in the mass influx of 2017, but here are many strong women, with an appetite for participation, and UNHCR, UN Women, IOM and several of the INGOs are keen for this to happen and support what the women are already doing themselves, despite the barriers. Unfortunately, while there has been a lot of money put into this, much of the	Refugee women with whom we worked in Malaysia all live in an urban environment and while having very few resources, have slightly more access to services than women living in camps. Many work in highly exploitative situations. Women from 7 countries worked together in consultations and subsequently in planning joint training sessions and programs for individual communities. They all requested greater participation in decision making about their lives. Good relationships and high levels of trust developed between NGOs and UNHCR than had happened before as there was increased inclusion of the women, although there is still disquiet about the level of accountability demanded of the refugee women in some projects, Despite this the women's evaluation of what they have gained from participation in the program is

		effort has not been fully effective. Again, in the COVID-19 pandemic, refugee women were often the first and most effective responders.	overwhelmingly positive. Several of the women participated in the Generation Equality Forum, and in other UN Meetings and videos.

Analysis

In line with the section on participation, above, three very different models of participation have emerged, responding to the situation in each site. In our opinion, the most effective is the model which has emerged in Malaysia, that of a combination of service providers and refugees deciding together about outcomes, acting together as partners to implement the projects or solutions and supporting independent community initiatives. The relationship, trust building and collaboration between the refugees and other stakeholders has been inspirational to be part of. The fear is that it is very dependent on particular senior staff in organisations, and if they leave, the future direction of the program might not be guaranteed. The refugees are still very dependent on the other stakeholders and have very little actual power. Ways need to be identified for transfer of power in all three situations.

The model in Thailand is a great example of what refugees, who hold a high degree of power, can achieve by themselves. Almost totally community led, it is a model of participation through supporting independent community initiatives. It could be enhanced by a more co-operative relationship with UNHCR and other stakeholders however the problem here is historical and would take all stakeholders to come together to resolve.

The first small project in Bangladesh is best described as '*Provision of Information*' about a proposed project or solution, with only some small part in decision making. This did not fulfill the wishes of the women for a more participatory role. However, the model employed by RI, which seeks to respond to the refugee women's aspirations, faces the challenges of local politics, the difficulties of funding and engaging local agencies directly, while at the same time encouraging and supporting women's participation in decision making and engaging their own communities.

More work is still needed on the application of an AGD approach, and intersectional analysis from all stakeholders in all sites, and the links between women's empowerment, leadership and participation and SGBV are still not clearly articulated by either the refugees or the service providers. While some of the academic partner staff, and NGOs were theoretically in favour, they found it quite challenging to implement. There is still a mistrust of refugee groups and organisations over accountability, and a tendency to think that 'we know best'. As this was challenged by the involvement of the refugees they became more comfortable in sharing power, and enthusiastic about the benefits of doing this. We will continue to build on this positive shift in the next stage of the project.

Impact

Although very different models have emerged, and circumstances are extremely different, all three pilot projects have in different ways fulfilled the objectives of the project. In Malaysia, the project has brought the participation of refugee women to the fore of local service provision. The women have responded well, are feeling more confident about their abilities and responses to SGBV have improved. In Bangladesh, it has also played a significant role in the acknowledgement of the contribution made by women and the importance of women's participation in decision making, and in the prevention and response to SGBV. In Thailand it has reinforced the very positive role played by women's organisations both in participation in decision making in many areas, and in responding to SGBV. It has also opened the door for new players to enter the arena.

As can be seen in the project evaluation the impact on the women themselves has been at times overwhelming. Women have cried because they cannot believe they have the freedom to decide on

which projects they want, and how they will be involved. The women and the local NGOs and UNHCR staff in Bangladesh and Malaysia have all commented on the increase in confidence and trust the process has achieved. At first many could not believe that they were being seriously consulted and involved. Many talked about the tokenistic nature of many of the short 'tick a box' consultations they have attended in the past, with few responses to their suggestions. Participants are proud of what they have achieved, and hungry for more involvement in programs such as these. The small amounts of money provided for the projects have achieved quite amazing outcomes and seriously challenge the often expressed worry that refugees will not be accountable. Their frustration is that programs like this are seldom offered. They also demonstrate the value for finding dollars of refugee-led work.

Recommendations

For this Project

That training will be developed and trialled to assist stakeholders to be more inclusive of refugee groups, and to build stronger relationships with them, based on the models of participation which have emerged from this project.

Information about different models of participation in refugee settings, barriers and challenges will be widely disseminated, along with training materials and flexible models. It will be a focus of our ongoing advocacy with UNHCR Geneva.

For Key Stakeholders

All key stakeholders must be encouraged to use tools to ascertain the levels of participation possible in any given refugee site, and to use this information to inform and shape their relationships and programmes with refugee communities.

Refugee groups must be encouraged to work co-operatively to identify and engage with the particular models of participation which are possible at any given time, while working to address challenges to more inclusive models.

5. Refugees as Advocates

Global Compact on Refugees and AGD Framework -While not specifically mentioned in the GCR, or the AGD Framework, UNHCR Geneva ensured that women refugees, including some from this project were give a space to speak on the international stage via Zoom. UNHCR and local NGOs in Malaysia were fully supportive of refugee women advocating at a national and an international level. Refugees from this project were given several opportunities to present to the Government of Malaysia.

Reflected in *Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 3: Addressing the participation of refugee women in all aspects of program design, delivery, evaluation and advocacy.

		Thailand	**Bangladesh**	**Malaysia**
Refugee Women		Due to the ongoing crisis and other commitments they declined to engage at an international level. They did however participate in the filming and sent strong messages which were shown during the GRF.	Several women in Bangladesh would have loved to participate in meetings in Geneva and would have been quite capable of doing so. They had excellent analysis of the situation in the camps, and good	Some of the women's groups had undertaken leadership training and supported by NGOs with whom we partnered, had taken part in advocacy to the Government of Malaysia. They were the women

		The well-established organisations are skilled advocates in other fora, and have achieved significant gains for their communities.	suggestions for addressing many of the problems experienced. However, it was not possible for them to obtain permission from the Government of Bangladesh to return if they left. Nor was it possible pre COVID-19 for them to leave the camps and travel to Cox's Bazar to participate in Zoom meetings and access to internet in the camps was patchy and unreliable. Women were filmed during the consultations, but it was felt that it would be dangerous for them if they were identified. However, they gave permission for their discussions to be shared and used as part of the advocacy materials.	who came from an educated background in their country of origin, and many spoke some English, and Malay. However, the majority did not. Those who were pre-literate or did not speak English were excluded from these activities. As part of the project we looked at a model of advocacy which was predicated on consultation between women in the communities to decide on the messages to be delivered, the use of interpreters when presenting internationally on Zoom. One Rohingya women taught herself English with the help of her school age daughter so that she could represent her people. She took a key role in the Generation Equality Forum, modelling the importance of listening to people who were not necessarily highly educated, but who had excellent analysis and suggested solutions, Several of the women from Malaysia appeared at UN and other meetings via

				facilitated by APRRN via video and were very effective.
Local NGOs		While supportive of the advocacy undertaken by the women's groups, they did not intervene in this decision.	Some of the local NGOs saw a real value in supporting refugee women as advocates and ran leadership training and empowerment groups. However, the local political situation made it almost impossible for the women to travel to Cox's Bazar, and at times to access the internet to participate in advocacy. There was also a real security concern about them doing this. All partners were looking forward to the High-Profile Launch of the report of the consultations as a safe(er) space for national and international advocacy, but due to the very difficult situations in the camps when the launch was planned, it was cancelled. This was followed by the COVID-19 lockdowns. This caused deep disappointment with the partners	Local NGO partners, in particular Tenaganita were extremely supportive of the women's advocacy and facilitated meetings with local stakeholders. NGO staff also spoke at meeting on the value of this program, both for the women and for themselves, and advocated strongly for its continuation.
UNHCR		Invitations were issued from Geneva, but the women declined the offers.	UNHCR agreed with the partners. They were tasked with launching the report when the situation stabilised. This did not happen, but in the	Likewise, UNHCR could not have been more supportive, and as with local NGOs also appeared on video to support the women and the

			very recent evaluation, NGO partners and UNHCR staff have stated their commitment to hold a launch in the near future. We are currently in negotiation for this to happen and if possible, for some of the refugee women to speak. At the least, their voices and advocacy will be heard through the report circulation.	value of this project and advocate for its continuation, and wider use in the region.

Analysis

The need for, and power of good advocacy by refugees is now almost universally acknowledged, but it does not 'just happen'. Refugees require information and knowledge of how systems work, including the game of diplomacy, in order to be effective advocates. When supporting refugees as advocates a range of good quality training is required, which requires time and resources. This is particularly the case for women, many of whom have been denied education and access to decision making. This must include renumeration and equal participation in meetings, meaning that if other participants in forums and events are paid, or do it as part of their employment, that the refugees are entitled to the same remuneration. At times, refugees are recruited as 'advocates' by organisations simply to be mouth pieces for the particular position they wish to promote, without the provision of training or support. These tokenistic activities do little to advance the position of refugees. The most important comment made about the refugees who advocated as part of our team was that they did not just 'tell sad stories' but brought a high level of analysis and potential solutions to the table. Several organisations and parts of UNHCR are doing fantastic work in producing training and support refugees and this is extremely beneficial. However it was the work done by the refugee led groups in the COVID-19 pandemic which was a key advocacy moment as they modelled their capacity, knowledge and ability. It is sad that it took a pandemic for this to happen.

This highlights the facts that while there is a support from many governments and donors and NGOs to support refugee women speaking out and advocating on their own behalf, there are still substantial barriers. Many of these depend on the rules and regulations imposed by host governments, such as granting permission for refugees to travel, both locally and internationally, and their ability to listen to what the refugees report and request without a punitive response. The lack of adequate funding, and the 'flavour of the month' allocation of what is available has meant that many of the valid requests made by refugees groups in their advocacy have been ignored, which can cause a reluctance to advocate in the future. However, there is an increased realisation of the value of advocacy by all stakeholders, including refugee women, and it is growing. The implementation of several key commitments in the GCR have made a valuable contribution to this happening. It is also noted that however knowledgeable women are about conditions, training on advocacy skills is invaluable in making the advocacy more effective. This true for most of us in the field. The need to give access to less educated and non-English speaking refugees via training and the use of interpreters also has to be addressed, as these groups often bring a real and urgent and uniquely insightful perspective to the table.

Impact

The value of the opportunity to advocate on their own behalf and representing their communities has been overwhelming in all three sites. Participating actively in consultations is also a form of advocacy, as key local stakeholders attend the final session to hear a presentation from the women. In Thailand, the women who took part in the consultations for the first time expressed their appreciation of feeling respected, being asked their opinions, analysis and solutions, and stated that for many, it was both the first time they had been given an opportunity to speak out, and that they felt they had been listened to. There was a very similar response from the women in Malaysia and Bangladesh. The women in Thailand and Malaysia also expressed a level of disappointment that after having been honest about their needs, in many cases, not all could be achieved. However, they all felt that the opportunity to speak out had been inspiring and was good for morale and in planning ways forward. The participation of a number of women from Malaysia in international advocacy was seen to be empowering for the entire community.

Recommendations

For this Project

That we continue to work with UNHCR to provide the maximum advocacy space for women from the project at UNHCR meetings.

Local advocacy with key stakeholders will be a key component all new projects.

For Key Stakeholders

That key stakeholders wishing to support refugees as advocates access some of the excellent training materials available from a number of organisations, and take the time to consult with the refugee groups and support them to develop their own advocacy positions, and the skills to advocate effectively.

That stakeholders be encouraged to not use refugees in a tokenistic manner to support their own organisations or positions.

6. Value of Reciprocal Research Consultations Stage 2

Global Compact on Refugees

AGD Areas of Engagement – 6. Advancing Gender Equality

Reflected in *Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 1: To address gender equality for refugees in diverse contexts and across the four pillars through

Aim 3: To address the participation of refugee women in all aspects of program design, delivery and advocacy

Note: The Reciprocal Research Consultations were a powerful process which framed all of the subsequent work. We refer to the detailed reports from each site. The major comment was that what is usually referred to as consultation in refugee settings usually consists of a two- hour focus group, often without interpreters, which have limited value. We are aware that some of the INGOs such as TBC and RI have regular and effective consultation mechanisms in place. They were also very appreciative of the training and depth of the consultations which were part of this project.

	Thailand	**Bangladesh**	**Malaysia**
Refugee women	The established women's groups brought women from seven of the nine camps along the border. They	After our initial scoping trip to Bangladesh, we realised that one or two consultations would only scratch	Consultations were organised by a groups of local NGOs led by Tenaganita. At first, they thought that separate

	included three emerging groups of Muslim refugees, and new arrivals from the conflict in Myanmar, as well as many long stay residents who had not had previous opportunities for training and consultation. They were able to do this because of the relationships, many of them informal, which they had built with local authorities and refugee leaders in the camps. Formally, it would have been extremely difficult to have the women travel to attend the four-day consultation. Two members of the local academic team took an active role, and UNHCR organised a separate session for local staff and agencies. The result of the consultation painted a horrendous and detailed picture of the conditions in the camps and the situation of the women and their families and what was needed to address it. Video of the process informed the advocacy materials presented at UNHCR. The women all expressed their appreciation of participating in the process. The materials covered in the four days informed the very successful and	the surface of what was happening across the 30 + camps which constitute what is generically referred to a Cox's Bazar. We consulted with UNHCR and local NGOs and designed a program which covered 16 consultations in 13 camps. 208 refugee women and 85 refugee men participated. More men were included in this project at the request of the refugee women and NGO partners, who had identified men's engagement as a critical element in addressing SGBV and achieving gender equality. Partners were trained in the methodology in November 2019 and formed teams to run consultations with refugees in the camps. These occurred in January. In February they then came together for a data analysis workshop and produced their own reports. A separate consultation with one of the self-organisation refugee women leaders groups was also conducted. A final meeting was held in Coxs Bazar. Members of the local academic team were active in the consultative process.	consultations would need to be held for each ethnic group as there had not be much communication across the groups. After discussion it was decided that they would be invited to work together. This posed some challenges because of the number of languages and the need for multiple interpreters but was easily addressed and the women worked together collaboratively, with representatives of several NGOs. Many similar experiences were quickly identified, and other specific to diverse groups and solutions proposed. The academic representative took a full and active role in the consultations. There was an excellent presentation by the women to a number of key stakeholders at the end of the process.

	inclusive COVID-19 small projects which they ran as part of this program. Local NGOs and UNHCR staff attended the final presentation from the women, but representatives from UNHCR Bangkok did not attend.	In total 18 reports were produced providing an extremely comprehensive picture of the situation in camps across the target areas, and differences between the various groups. These were brought together in a final report. It was an extremely successful project which built capacity for all partners, and actively involved refugee women not only in sharing their concerns and analysis, but also in running consultations and preparing reports. It was planned that the launch of the report would be the key presentation to major stakeholders, but as noted that has not yet occurred.	
Other local stakeholders	The few local agencies who attended were extremely affected by the consultations. TBC stated that the in- depth analysis enriched their work	Feedback from all the participating organisations was extremely positive. All agreed that the consultation methodology provided a far deeper and richer analysis than the traditional focus group approach.	The final presentation was well attended by local NGOs, UNHCR staff, government agencies and academics. They were all very engaged in a stakeholder planning session following the women's presentations in making commitments for future action in response to the issues raised.
UNHCR	UNHCR did reach out to the women groups following the consultations, but nothing came of it.	UNHCR were extremely active in the process of the consultations, and fully appreciated the	UNHCR were so impressed with the Consultations, they funded a second round. In January

		value of the process, but COVID-19, and political situation constrained their response.	2020, consultations and trainings were held with a total of 47 refugee women leaders, 34 NGO staff, five academics and 21 UNHCR representatives.

Analysis

The Reciprocal Research Consultation Methodology is an incredibly effective mechanism for engaging with refugees, building trust and identifying key issues for them and their communities. However, to do it properly it takes time and resources, and key players have to be initially convinced of its worth. Once they have been involved, they are almost universally converted! This methodology was the key to the success of the small projects in Stages 2 and 3.

Impact

All key stakeholders who engaged in the process report positively on the impact it had on them. They all noted that it provided a powerful framework through which to really listen to the refugee women and men. Short consultations and focus groups have traditionally only asked refugees to identify problems. They find it eye opening to hear the analysis and suggestions for moving forward given by the refugees. They also appreciated the training components for themselves and their staff. Many commented that participating made them reflect on their own, and their organisations programs and processes, and instigate changes in their own practice.

Recommendations

For this Project

We will continue to use the Reciprocal Research Consultation Methodology as part of the process, and actively encourage our partners to do the same.

For Key Stakeholders

At an international level we will advocate for key stakeholders to recognise the value of the time and resources spent on effective consultations up front at the beginning of a project to its long- term success. We will support this with evidence of the cost effectiveness of this approach.

We make the Reciprocal Research Methodology and Training Materials available to all stakeholders by placing it on the UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice.

Issues common across all sites

Importance of the engagement of key stakeholders at a local level

Global Compact on Refugees Para 37, a multi partner and stakeholder approach

AGD Areas of Engagement – 2. Participation and Inclusion

Reflected in *Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 2: To ensure that gender differences AGD principles and SGBV are reflected throughout the implementation of the GCR.

Plus: UNHCR Grand Bargain 2019 Commitment: To transfer 25%+ of program expenditures to local and national responders.

Analysis

If the commitments made in the GCR are to fully be implemented, key stakeholders (i.e. staff with power to act) at local levels, including UNHCR, must be actively engaged and committed to the projects. This is also dependent on a positive response from host governments. In the case of international and UN bodies, there should be clear commitment to implementation from the highest levels, including the provision of training, resources and KPIs for successful implementation for relevant staff. Barriers to this include: the impact of constant staff turnover and poor handover in donor/UN bodies; poor communication between humanitarian aid agencies, donors and refugees; competition for funding; lack of AGD sensitive accountability mechanisms (as per the Global Affairs Canada model). A level of disconnection between UNHCR Geneva and their regional and local offices is apparent in some cases. While less evident we suspect it is the same with many INGOs.

Impacts

As noted throughout the report, the engagement of host governments and local stakeholders is critical to achieve the meaningful participation of refugees.

Recommendations

For this Project

The project will continue to actively engage with local stake holders.

The advocacy at UNHCR will raise the engagement of local stakeholders as a critical issue and suggest strategies for improvement.

For Key Stakeholders

Senior staff in INGOs and UN bodies who articulate support for participation will be encouraged to develop strategies and provide training for their staff on the ground to ensure that the organisational commitment is reflected in practice.

International organizations engaging with local NGOs will ensure that local staff understand and are trained to work co-operatively with refugees as local partners.

The importance of livelihoods

Global Compact on Refugees: Paras 70,71 jobs and livelihoods.

AGD Areas of Engagement: 6D. Women and girls have equal access to economic opportunities, including decent work and quality education and health services.

Reflected in *Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 1: To address gender equality for refugees in diverse contexts and across the four pillars through the participation and improved protection measures

Aim 3: To address the participation of refugee women in all aspects of program design, delivery and advocacy

Analysis

While refugee women desperately want participation and inclusion in decision making at all levels, we had underestimated the importance of livelihoods to the emotional and physical wellbeing of the women with whom we worked. We ignored the proven concept of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, that until people can secure food, water, and shelter, they find it difficult to engage in more abstract activities. Any programs focusing on participation must include this aspect and respond to it. It is a fraught area. The world is littered with failed livelihoods projects. Problems include focus on unrealistic projects, often supported by poor quality programs provided by well-meaning NGOs. The interest of bodies such as the World Bank and major corporations in supporting sustainable livelihoods is a major and positive step forward. It is imperative that this include a central focus on refugee leadership and programs focusing on refugee participation more broadly. The links between secure incomes and education as a preventive measure against SGBV must be strengthened and articulated much more clearly.

Impacts

Quite simply, without secure livelihoods to provide basic needs for their families, women do not have the energy or inclination to participate in other programs.

Once basic needs are covered, women are incredibly keen to engage, and more than capable of identifying barriers and challenges to participation, developing solutions and engaging in the implementation of these. If these basic needs are not addressed, participation will be the domain of those refugees who are better educated, and/or have more access to resources and the power structures both within their own communities and those of other stakeholders. This will exclude women who have a wealth of knowledge and experience and who have much to contribute to solutions in refugee and other displacement situations.

Recommendations

For this Project and Key Stakeholders

Money must be identified and invested in programs such as the proposed 'Entrepreneurship Program' in Kuala Lumpur, to be run by a group of Malaysian women entrepreneurs, skilled in working with disadvantaged groups in the community. Using a proven and successful program, it takes a group of women through a two-year process of training and support to enable them to establish and run their own businesses. They ran an excellent introductory model with 32 of the refugee women in our current project, and the learnings from that will inform the next phase of this project. They have proposed completing the process with the women and developing a full training kit, but the budget is way beyond the scope of this current project .However, it a program which we believe has huge potential. It may appear to be very expensive as a one-off project only targeting 30 women but will build an excellent model which could be replicated internationally. The women themselves will become resources, who can share the skills learned with their own communities.

As part of the intersectional analysis of each situation, the need for livelihoods and security of basic needs, all programs designed to support refugee participation must include a focus on livelihoods and basic security. This must be incorporated into all trainings materials and tools produced to address participation.

Value of Training Tools and Program Models Produced

Global Compact on Refugees

AGD Area of Engagement 5. Organizational learning and adaptation - At a minimum, UNHCR operations will adapt programmes and strategies in response to input from persons of concern, and document this in Country Operations Plans and Annual Reporting

Reflected in *Refugee Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 4: To contribute flexible tools across all four pillars and program models

Analysis and Impacts

The training components of the process are an extremely popular aspect of the project. Training was included in all three stages of the project, and was provided to refugee women, local staff and INGOs and UNHCR staff. In all three sites, additional training was requested by stakeholders covering a range of topics of local concern, such as How to respond to COVID-19 in Bangladesh. They were translated into four languages in Bangladesh, and four more in Malaysia and recorded for use with preliterate groups. RI requested training on a range of issues for their staff, including on how to support refugee women led projects. These materials were also used in the other sites. Women in Thailand requested training on how to deal with suicide as part of their peer counselling training. Training in Malaysia was provided on a number of issues requested by the women's groups, and UNHCR Malaysia requested training for their own staff. The academic partners in Thailand requested training on the methodology for their PhD students. In all sites comments were made about the accessibility of the concepts in the training and its usefulness in their work. The applied Human Rights Training, The AGD Analysis Tool Matrix exercise, and Storyboarding were very popular, and the training on white and class privilege was most appreciated, for the respect and understanding it showed for participants.

Recommendations

For this Project

A range of new training modules developed based on the feedback from the project to date will be developed and trialled and made available internationally via the UNHCR Digital Platform and the UNSW website.

A launch will be held in Geneva to raise consciousness of the materials and the need to use them.

The need for additional appropriate new training materials will be determined by refugees.

For Key Stakeholders

The need for culturally appropriate and education level targeted training materials will be publicised and be part of our ongoing advocacy at UNHCR Geneva.

Lack of AGD Disaggregated Data

Global Compact on Refugees: Part A paras 45, 46, and 47 data and evidence,

AGD Area of Engagement: 1.AGD-Inclusive Programming. At a minimum all data will be collected by UNHCR disaggregated by sex and other diversity considerations

Reflected in *Women and Girls – Key to the Global Compact on Refugees*

Aim 1: To address gender equality for refugees in diverse contexts and across the four pillars through the participation and improved protection measures.

Aim 4: To contribute flexible tools across all four pillars and program models

Analysis and Impacts

Lack of age, gender and diversity disaggregated data was apparent in all three sites and was a major focus in the evaluation of the UNHCR GCR to date. This is a major barrier when implementing or evaluating the gender commitments in the GCR. It must be addressed by all stakeholders. It was a focus of discussion about the UNHCR Indicators Report, and discussion at the HLOM and commitments were made to ensure better methods of data collection and distribution.

Recommendations

For this Project

We will develop training materials based on the Matrix AGD Analysis tool on collecting, using and disseminating the disaggregated data used in this project. This will be presented at UNHCR and available on the UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice.

For Key Stakeholders

UNHCR must respond to the calls following the launch of the Impact Statement to further develop and use AGD disaggregated data. This commitment must be extended to all stakeholders.

Issues not directly mentioned, but pertinent to the GCR and AGD implementation and this project

Visibility and value of refugee led work highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of women

As reflected throughout the report, the work by refugees as first and ongoing responders in the COVID-19 pandemic brought a sharp realisation to many stakeholders of the value of the work they performed and have done for many years in other emergency situations. The excellence of their analysis and suggested solutions and what a totally untapped resource this was, was finally recognised. It was also noted that their work was chronically underfunded, and that refugee women's groups in most host countries are not able to register their organisations, open bank accounts or receive funding in their own right. Many NGOs who auspice funding for refugee led groups do so conditionally.

Analysis and impacts

The role played by refugee women during the pandemic was demonstrated in each of the project sites. However it also highlighted the gender divide in participation. Women's projects were more socially focused, responding to needs for food, masks, hand sanitiser, and counselling. Men's inputs were more politically focused, as they were most often those at the decision-making tables, in their roles as 'community leaders'. The role of women as leaders and analysts of the challenges facing their communities was not as highly recognised, and they often did not participate at this level. Male privilege and the propensity of key stakeholder to consult with male leaders (often self-appointed) means that men are still more prominent in big picture planning processes. Because of the increased visibility of the excellent contributions made by many women, this is slowly changing.

As noted above, more inclusive participation requires more flexible funding models. The flexibility of DFAT in allowing funds to be reallocated within the project, and for the focus of part to be refined because of COVID-19 was a major contributor to its success. Promising steps are also being taken by some INGOs to introduce more flexibility in program design and evaluation through the adoption of the Monitoring Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) approach. UNHCR is a major supporter of exploring ways in which funding can be given directly to refugee groups, but there is still resistance to this from many host governments, INGOs and NGOs.

Recommendations

For this Project

This requires detailed documentation of successful projects and models of refugee-led work and more training and support materials developed and disseminated to support this.

To expand advocacy for the increased recognition and participation of refugee women equal to that of men, recognising that they are equally capable of engagement at both a social and political level.

For Key Stakeholders

Given the recognition of the large number of refugee women led groups who have contributed so significantly to the COVID-19 response, UNHCR and other stakeholders must work to ensure that the voices of women refugees are given equal space and support as those of refugee men.

UNHCR and other stakeholders must continue to collect stories of successful and effective refugee led projects, and to advocate for these to be directly funded. UNHCR's 2022 Innovation Award which focused on refugee women led organisations is an excellent example of this approach.

Funding made available to refugee-led groups must of necessity have the same accountability frameworks as all other service providers, but these should be not be any more onerous than for other NGO's and should not be conditional on the requirements of auspicing organisations.

The value of the UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice

This excellent and accessible platform provides a space for a wide range of training materials and program models which can be used across the globe. It is cost effective and when training needs are identified, such as in this project, we do not have to develop everything ourselves, but can identify models already developed and proven successful.

For this Project

All projects training programs and tools will be available on the UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice.

For Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders are encouraged to fully evaluate all programs and to share models and key learnings on the UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform for Good Practice.

Appendix 1

DFAT Project Timeline of achievements 2017 – 2022

Please click the hyperlinks for access to the reports and training modules

Pre-Project - June 2017 – March 2018- Background and Advocacy Reports and papers

1. Pittaway E., Bell C. and Bartolomei, L. 2017 *Strengthening the Response to Refugee Women and Girls in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: Recommendations for amendments to Annex I: Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), from the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, UNGA September 19 2016, with suggested models of implementation*
2. Gender Audit Final Combined Report of the Thematic Meetings and High Commissioner's Dialogue 2017
3. Pittaway E. and Bartolomei L. 2018 Enhancing the protection of women and girls through the Global Compact on Refugees, *Forced Migration Review*, February 2018:77-79 - https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/syria2018/pittaway-bartolomei.pdf

Project Stage 1:April – December 2018- Key project outcomes and reports

4. Pittaway E., and Bartolomei L. 2018 *From Rhetoric to Reality: Achieving Gender Equality for Refugee Women and Girls*, World Refugee Council Research Paper No. 3 — August 2018
5. Bangkok Planning Workshop 25 – 27 October 2018 Report
    a. Workshop training materials
6. World Bank Presentation 1st November 2018–*Putting Refugee Women First to Advance Monitoring and Implementation*' jointly presented by Linda Bartolomei, Eileen Pittaway and Melika Sheikh-Eldin. Seminar discussants included two Gender specialists from the World Bank and Ewen Macleod, Advisor to the High Commissioner, UNHCR.
7. Linda Bartolomei represented FMRN at the inaugural meeting of the Global Academic Network (GAIN) for the GCR at UNHCR Geneva in December 2018 and presented on the project in 2019.

Project Stage 2: Phase 1-January 2019 – February 2020-- Key project outcomes and reports

8. Gender Audit of the first Preparatory meeting for the GCR at UNHCR Geneva March 2019
9. Gender Audit of the second Preparatory meeting for the GCR at UNHCR Geneva June 2019
10. Malaysia Consultations Report July 2019
11. Thailand Consultation Report August 2019
12. Gender Audit of the third Preparatory meeting for the GCR at UNHCR Geneva November 2019
13. Gender Audit of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) December 2019
14. Bangladesh Consultation Major Reports February 2020
    a. Consolidated Reports of 24 Research Consultations and Workshops
    b. UNSW GCR Project Data Analysis Workshop Report Group1
    c. UNSW GCR Project Data Analysis Workshop Report Group2
    d. UNSW GCR Project Data Analysis Workshop Report Group3
    e. UNSW GCR Project Training and Consultation with Self-organised refugee women's groups
15. Bangladesh Community Consultations – Step by Step Guide for Facilitators November 2019

Project Stage 2: Phase 2- March 2020 – December 2020-- Key project outcomes and reports

16. Global Refugee Forum Geneva December 2019
    a. Gender Audit of the Meetings in Preparation for the GRF Briefing Note
    b. AGD and SGBV Panel Invitations
    c. Snapshot fliers for Pledge areas

    d. Forced Migration Research Network UNSW GCR Project Pledge
    e. Audit reports: GCR Final Gender Audit Report
    f. Contribution to 'Meaningful Refugee Participation as Transformative Leadership: Guidelines for Concrete Action'
17. KL Training and Consultation Report February 2020
18. KL Virtual Trainings on Project Design and Evaluation
    a. How to Develop and Evaluate a Refugee-led Project (Day 1)
    b. How to Develop and Evaluate a Refugee-led Project (Day 2)
19. Psychosocial Training Course
20. Light House COVID Projects Evaluation Report Bangladesh 2020
21. Suicide response and prevention training course
22. APRRN -APNOR Presentation
23. Another Set of Heroes: Refugee women making the Global Compact on Refugees real amid COVID-19 – UNSW Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law Media Story 2020
24. Malaysia COVID Projects Evaluation Report
25. Thailand COVID Projects Evaluation Report
26. Refugee Women and Girls Championing Fight against Human Rights Violations UNSW Media Story 2020
27. Gender Audit HCD 2020 – AGD side event

Project Stage 3: January 2021 – June 2022-- Key project outcomes and reports

28. UNESCAP High Level Segment Gender event Brief 2021
29. Generation Equality Event Report and Film Link 2021
30. Social Sciences week event: Intersectionality and Refugee Women and Girls
31. UNHCR - Refugee women take the lead in combating gender-based violence_ Media story Malaysia 2021
32. Gender Audit HLOM 2021
    a. AGD Satellite Event Concept Note
    b. AGD Matrix website - https://agd-matrix-tool.com/
    c. Intersectionality Film and Training Package
    d. Gender Audit Report HLOM 2021
33. Pittaway, E and Bartolomei L (2022) Forthcoming book
34. Refugee women-eld projects, Malaysia Evaluation Report 2022
35. NAWEM project Report
36. Relief International Project Report