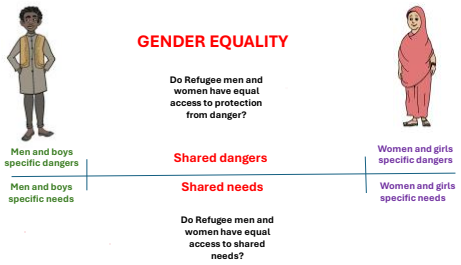
Module 4: Background Reading on Age, Gender and Diversity

The UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to reinforce UNHCR's longstanding commitment to ensuring that people are at the centre of all that we do. This requires that we apply an age, gender, and diversity (AGD) approach to all aspects of our work. Through this Policy, we aim to ensure that persons of concern can enjoy their rights on an equal footing and participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities (UNHCR 2018)

Full policy available at: https://www.unhcr.org/au/media/policy-age-gender-and-diversity-accountability-2018

Different but equally important



The question is often asked: "Why such a focus on women and girls — surely men and boys are just as important?" The needs of both groups are equally important, but different, and without effective policy frameworks and tools, these differences are not recognized. There is a male bias in refugee policy, an assumption that women's needs will be automatically covered by addressing needs articulated for and by men. However, if these differing needs are not articulated, they are often not addressed (Oosterveld 2017; Callamard 2002).

Many single young men take dangerous journeys to seek asylum, as a result of forced recruitment into terrorist groups; they face human rights abuses, including rape (Freccero et al. 2017; UNHCR 2017b). Gender affects every stage of the refugee journey, from reception to durable solutions. Unless these realities are acknowledged, there will be a failure to develop effective responses to meet the different needs of refugee women and girls, men and boys. Men and boys are also victims of sexual and gender-based violence, which again generates the need for different and appropriate responses (Freedman 2016; Krause 2015). (Excerpt of article by Pittaway and Bartolomei 2018)

References and Further Reading

Pittaway. E and Bartolomei. L (2018) *From Rhetoric to Reality: Achieving Gender Equality for Refugee Women and Girls*, WRC Research Paper No. 3, World Refugee Council Research Paper Series- https://www.cigionline.org/publications/rhetoric-reality-achieving-gender-equality-refugee-women-and-girls

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Freedman, J (2016) "Sexual and gender-based violence against refugee women: a hidden aspect of the refugee 'crisis'." *Reproductive Health Matters* 24 (47): 18–26.

Krause, U (2015) “A Continuum of Violence? Linking Sexual and Gender-based Violence during Conflict, Flight, and Encampment.” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 34 (4): 1–19.

Oosterveld, V (2017) “Women and Girls Fleeing Conflict: Gender and the Interpretation and Application of the 1951 Refugee Convention.” In *In Flight from Conflict and Violence: UNHCR’s Consultations on Refugee Status and Other Forms of International Protection*, edited by Volker Türk, Alice Edwards and Cornelis Wouters, 183–214. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.