

Lessons learned, challenges, and good practices on intersectional data analysis in the Ukraine refugee response

Summary note and key outcomes

On 27 June 2024, the Ukraine Situation Regional Gender Taskforce (RGTF) chaired by UN Women and the Regional Information Management Working Group (RIMWG) chaired by UNHCR, convened a joint meeting to discuss “lessons learned, challenges, and good practices on intersectional data analysis in the Ukraine refugee response”. Attended by more than 80 members of international and national UN agencies and non-governmental organizations working throughout the region, the objective of the session was to share experiences, challenges, good practices, and lessons learned surrounding intersectional data analysis in the context of the Ukraine Refugee Response.

After a joint opening by the co-chairs of the RIMWG and RGTF, the meeting began with a presentation by the RIMWG co-chairs on the role of data collection and analysis exercises thus far in the context of the Ukraine Refugee Response including with a focus on key guiding principles (IASC guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action and Grand Bargain commitment - Improve Joint and impartial needs assessments) and approaches, and the role of interagency collaboration in producing intersectional assessments. The 2023 MSNA and 2024 Social Economic Insights Survey (SEIS) were presented as good examples of intersectional assessments in practice.

Afterwards, there was a discussion on integrating gender, age and diversity into data collection and analysis with a contribution by UN Women about what a gender, age, and disability responsive approach entails throughout the process of developing and conducting assessments, based on examples developed thus far in the context of Ukraine. This was complemented by IOM Poland who presented key takeaways from the recent conference “Women in humanitarian data and research: By women, for women”. In the contribution, IOM highlighted how the conference was initiated based on the unique vulnerabilities that women have faced in the context of the Ukraine Refugee Response but also the perspectives, challenges, and contributions women researchers make to humanitarian research and data analysis. Key takeaways from the conference in relation to intersectional data analysis such as the importance of engaging those with diverse backgrounds and expertise in research processes, mixed methods research to provide more nuanced insights, and the importance of initiating studies that focus particularly on marginalized populations were highlighted.

The next sections of the agenda focused on reflections related to the challenges that have been faced in conducting intersectional analyses as well as the lessons and good practices that have been learned. These insights were based on contributions from UNHCR regionally and in Slovakia, IOM regionally and in Poland, REACH, UNFPA, and other participating organizations. These discussions indicated several key challenges, lessons, and good practices for data collection and analysis that are responsive to the multiple identities and experiences of refugees from Ukraine and other crises are addressed.

Key challenges that emerged from the discussion related to the planning of assessments, the nature of data, and resource commitment. Specifically, difficulties concerning the regular incorporation of intersectional assessments into Response planning to ensure data, resources, and other needs can be tailored accordingly was discussed as a barrier to the continual prioritization of intersectional assessments. This was also connected to the way that the nature of data collection including in relation to sample-size, inclusion of minority communities, survey fatigue, individual-indicators in household surveys, and data standardization with associated implications for stratification, disaggregation and access to minority communities create difficulties for intersectional assessments. A final broader challenge that was highlighted in the discussion was the insufficient commitment of financial, expertise, time, and related resources to develop targeted intersectional assessments.

Based on these challenges and the following discussion on lessons learned and good practices, several key **recommendations** resulted for refugee response data analysis moving forward:

- Questions of intersectionality need to be integrated into the process of assessments from the **beginning of the research development process** to ensure such concerns are comprehensively represented.
- Intersectional assessments enable the **identification of unique needs** that may not match the general population for which data can be collected, with implications for the design.
- **Inter-agency and organizational collaboration** is key for addressing resources and expertise challenges to intersectional data collection and analysis.
- **Context analyses and scoping exercises** are necessary for understanding local contexts and the relevant concerns for producing intersectional assessments.
- **People-centered approaches** are key to meaningfully defining and contextualizing intersectionality in data collection and analysis exercises.
- Interagency exercises are time consuming, however they allow to **combine the expertise from different agencies and organizations and maximize resources** while reducing the exposure of respondents to research fatigue. Such exercises also enable the creation of teams with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise which contributes to assessments that are responsive to the varied identities and experiences of refugees from Ukraine and other countries.
- **Enumerators should be trained** on how to handle sensitive matters related to intersectional data collection exercises.
- **Integrating gender-based violence (GBV) specific indicators across sectors** is integral for revealing specific GBV and protection risks and needs experienced by refugees.
- In order to have access to bigger datasets, it is necessary to **work with national governments and statistical institutions** to produce quality intersectional analysis.
- **Regularly coordinating to work through interagency and intersectional teams** for data collection and analysis exercises with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- To gain nuanced insights related to intersectionality, **mixed methods approaches** are needed in the process of developing assessments.
- Including **targeted intersectional data analyses and publications** in the planning for the Refugee Response.
- **Transparency** in how data is analyzed and integrated into assessments.
- Centering assessments on **partnerships with local organizations**.