UKRAINE REFUGEE EMERGENCY
REGIONAL PROTECTION WORKING GROUP (RPWG)
MEETING
Meeting Minutes

Time & location:	14 October 2022 15:00-16:30, online
Participants:	
Agenda:	1. Making the Invisible Visible, an evidence-based analysis of gender in the regional response to the war in Ukraine (Regional Gender Task Force) 2. Presentation on the practical implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive (UNHCR) 3. Key findings of protection profiling and monitoring exercise in the context of Ukraine (UNHCR) 4. Updates from sub-working groups 5. AOB
AGENDA POINT	**DISCUSSION**
1) Making the Invisible Visible, an evidence-based analysis of gender in the regional response to the war in Ukraine (Gender Task Force)	• The report is a product of the Regional Gender Task Force that is composed of nearly 40 organizations • The analysis is done based on secondary data from over 40 sources. The objective is to analyze emerging trends, build evidence base to inform advocacy and programming, and develop practical recommendations that would inform regional and national responses to the crisis. • The analysis is only based on materials available in English released between February to August 2022. Since it is a rapidly changing context, some of the information may be outdated or incomplete • The analysis mainly focused on the participation and leadership of women led organizations, women's rights organizations, women and marginalized groups, the prevention, mitigation and response to GBV and access to sexual and reproductive health. Some of the key findings of the analysis are: - Even prior to the crisis, GBV was prevalent in Ukraine - Since the escalation of the crisis, three forms of GBV are commonly reported, namely conflict related sexual violence, domestic violence, and human trafficking - There is insufficient data to allow an accurate representation of the full spectrum of risks

- PSEA remains a concern – this is mainly linked to the heavy reliance on humanitarian aid, the proliferation of volunteers and inconsistent access to information
- There is a need for all survivors of violence to have safe access to quality GBV services and survivor centered care
- Gaps have been identified in the operational response including on the application of minimum standards for GBV risk mitigation, particularly in collective shelters and private accommodations
- Lack of risk analysis at border and transit sites
- The socio- economic impact of GBV remains largely unaddressed

Main gaps included:

- lack of in-depth information on some of the experiences and needs of certain population groups including minorities
- Unclarity as to the implementation of existing recommendations on GBV risk mitigation by informal and volunteer networks providing shelter
- Use of "vulnerable" "most vulnerable" and "most at risk" without providing criteria for such categorization

Sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

- For internally displaced people and for people who remained inside Ukraine, attacks on healthy facilities have seriously disrupted access to sexual and reproductive healthcare
- In host countries, the barriers impeding access to sexual and reproductive care predate the war. These are mainly related to national and legal policy frameworks including in relation to abortion
- Cost is also a barrier for many people as certain forms of sexual reproductive healthcare are not covered by public health insurance or other subsidization schemes
- lack of available and geographically accessible sexual and healthcare providers
- Language barriers are also reported
- In some countries, there have also been constant efforts and initiatives by anti-gender actors to roll back on the protection of sexual reproductive health rights
- Certain groups are more affected than others including women, girls, and LGBTQI people
- The lack of sexual reproductive health and rights structures in coordination. SRHR is addressed through GBV structures, which confines its scope to GBV survivors. Other issues are largely left out
- Organizations working on this area also face various challenges including in terms of funding. There is also a general lack of political support. These organizations often face smear campaigns and related obstacles.

	Key recommendations
	- Coordination, collaboration, and collective strength - Gender-based violence – creating awareness on the impact of GBV in the current crisis - An inter-sectional approach to gender and diversity - Prioritizing sexual reproductive health and rights throughout the humanitarian and refugee response - Women's participation and leadership - Providing long-term funding and flexible support
2) Presentation on the practical implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive (UNHCR)	- The scale of the displacement crisis in Ukraine is huge. As of 11 October, over 7.6 million refugees have fled to Europe. In response, the EU triggered the application of the TPD for the first time. This report looks at the practical implementation of the Directive - In general, the implementation of the TPD has been a great success. Over 4.2 million refugees from Ukraine have registered for TP or similar national protection schemes across Europe - The research covered 26 countries, and is mainly conducted by UNHCR country operations - ICVA members including DRC and WVI and partners have contributed to the research for four countries included in the analysis **The four key findings of the research are:** - The rights under the Directive are interdependent. The inability to exercise one right has a knock-on impact on the enjoyment of other rights - Refugees faced various practical, administrative, and legal barriers to accessing their rights - The challenges faced by TP beneficiaries are also faced by refugees from elsewhere - Persons with specific needs faced increased challenges to access rights, partly due to the lack of identification procedures **In terms of rights:** Registration - Several good practices have been adopted to address issues around registration - Some of the key challenges reported include long queues, lack of interpretation services, and difficulty accessing registration points

Documentation
- The types of documents issued by countries differ
- There is also a difference in the time it takes to issue these documents. In some countries, it takes hours or days. In other countries, it could take weeks or months.

Education
- The biggest barrier is the lack of space in local schools
- Lack of permanent address also impeded access to education, particularly for refugees residing in temporary accommodations

Labour market
- Lack of childcare, language barriers, lack of information and lengthy and complicated skills recognition procedures are among the key challenges

Social protection
- Lack of information is one of the major challenges
- There is also a difference in the levels of access to social protection between nationals and TP beneficiaries as well as between refugees and TP beneficiaries

Healthcare
- A number of challenges have been identified including the lack of capacity in the national healthcare system and lack of information
- There are also a number of good practices including the hiring of health professionals from the refuge population

Accommodation
- All countries have accommodation assistance scheme in place
- However, these assistance schemes are predominantly for the short-term. The lack of access to long-term housing affects access to a range of rights including education, accommodation, and social protection.

Persons with specific needs
- According UNHCR's protection monitoring report, 24 percent of households have at least one family member with a specific need
- In 17/26 countries monitored, there is an identification procedure in place, although with some gaps

	Freedom of movement - In most countries monitored, travel to Ukraine or to a third country has no impact on TP status - In some cases, TP could be revoked and/or social benefits could cease - The Commission has recommended to put the TP status on hold instead of revoking it Family separation - It is one of the defining features of the conflict - 11/26 countries monitored do not have a system in place to reunite families **Key recommendations** - Holistic approach to enhancing access to rights - Addressing various barriers is critical to ensure inclusion - Refugees can be part of the solution - Early and systematic identification of PSNs needed - Lessons learned from the application of the TPD have potential wider relevance
3) Key findings of protection profiling and monitoring exercise in the context of Ukraine (UNHCR)	- 34,000 interviews were conducted between May and September 2022 - The protection monitoring exercise focused on seven countries (Poland, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Belarus, Hungary, and Bulgaria) - 99% of refugees interviewed are Ukrainians - 88% of those interviewed are women and children **Key protection findings** - Very high level of family separation, mainly due to the martial law. Nearly 80 percent of respondents are separated from their immediate family members - Some 17% of people have been displaced within Ukraine before fleeing to other countries - Around 15% of respondents transited through at least one other country before arriving to their current host country - 23% of respondents have been back to Ukraine since their initial departure - Some 94 percent of refugees carried their national passports when they fled Situation in host countries - The top three priority needs are cash, employment, and accommodation - About 30 percent live with host families - There is a need for information on financial aid, job opportunities, medical care, legal status etc. - The preferred channel of information is mainly social media. Persons above age 60 prefer to receive information

	through family and friends - Over 80 percent of the population want to return to Ukraine at some point. - Only 13 percent reported plans to return to Ukraine in the near future. Among those who are planning to return to Ukraine, 87 reported having concerns. One of the main concerns impeding return is insecurity due to the ongoing conflict. The report is planned to be released in October 2022
4) Updates from sub-working groups	GBV sub-working group - There is a plan to establish some form of regional response including on capacity building, development of tools and advocacy CP sub-working group - There was a presentation from Moldova and a deep dive by UNICEF and UNHCR colleagues on NCP case management. The document on vetting of volunteers and volunteer organizations was also presented to CP colleagues.
5) AOB	• UNHCR, in close coordination with IOM and UNICEF in particular, developed guidance on vetting of volunteers and volunteer organizations. Since the guidance goes beyond anti-trafficking, it is suggested that it should be adopted as a product of the Regional Protection Working Group. In the coming days, the guidance will be shared with Protection Working Group members for input • The mockup of the interagency regional protection update was shared with members yesterday. The main objective of the update is to highlight country level response and updates from sub-working groups and the Anti-trafficking Task Force. Please Share any comments by mid-next week • The regional protection indicator for the 2023 refugee response plan is 'the number of individuals supported in accessing protection services'. Instead of singling out a particular activity, it will be a general indicator. • The CDAC Network released a report on the state of communication, community engagement and accountability across the Ukraine response. The findings of the report will be presented in the next meeting.

No.	Action point	FP	Status
1.	Share the external version of the guidance on vetting of volunteers and volunteer organizations with members of the RPWG	Geraldine	pending
2.	Members to provide comment on the mockup of the regional interagency protection Update by mid-next week (19 October 2022)	Members	pending