Refugee Sector Gender Focal Points Network [SGFPN]
Roll-Out of the Gender with Age Marker [GAM] in Amman, Jordan ©UNHCR 2018

REFUGEE SECTOR GENDER FOCAL POINTS NETWORK JORDAN [SGFPN]

Population Groups	Project Objective	Implementing Partners
▪ Syrian Refugees ▪ Refugees other origins ▪ Asylum-Seekers	Promote Gender Equality in the Refugee Response in Jordan efforts by strengthening the technical capacity of sector gender focal points, increasing inter-sector linkages, and improving capacity and knowledge management.	UN Agencies and I/NGOs partners that are part of the Syrian Refugee Response in Jordan.

1. Project Overview

The refugee Sector Gender Focal Points Network [SGFPN] was established in 2013 by the former Inter-Agency Task Force [IATF] led by UNHCR Jordan with the support of the GenCaps and in close collaboration with other UN agencies and partners. UNHCR has chaired the SGFPN since 2015 and in September 2020 was joined by UNW. As March 2021 the network has 17 members from 14 different organizations.[1]
The SGFPN aims to include at least two sector gender focal points from each sector: Basic Needs, Shelter, Health, Education, Food Security, Protection, Livelihoods and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene [WASH], and at least one member from each of Child Protection, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Nutrition, Reproductive Health and GBV.

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

[1] Organizations that are part of the SGFPN as of March 2021: ACTED; Action Against Hunger; IOM; Jordan River Foundation; Norwegian Refugee Council; OCHA; Relief International; Save the Children; Terre des Hommes -Italia; UNHCR; UNICEF; UNW; WFP and WHO.

2. Context and Needs

In mid-March 2021, Jordan was host to 753,676 refugees and asylum-seekers, more than 90 per cent of whom are Syrians (664,898), 66,753 Iraqis and 22,025 from other origins who were forced to flee the armed conflict in their country.[2] Jordan also hosts 2,206,736 registered Palestinian refugees who are provided protection and assistance by UNRWA.[3]

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

Gender inequality has an impact on Syrian women's access to humanitarian services, including health, education and livelihoods, as well as increases their risk of gender-based violence (GBV).[4] When a comprehensive humanitarian effort was developed to respond to the Syria crisis in Jordan, the Inter-Agency Coordination structure was seen to provide an opportunity to incorporate gender equality measures more systematically across all plans and programmes.

3. Process and Activities

The objectives of the SGFPN are to promote gender equality in the refugee response effort and to ensure that diverse refugee women, men, girls, and boys have equitable access to humanitarian assistance and protection. The 17 members of the SGFPN meet monthly on the first Thursday and are drawn from UN agencies as well as national and international civil society organizations. The sector gender focal points, who may be men or women, come from a variety of professional backgrounds and possess technical expertise in many different areas.

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

Focal point membership is voluntary; sector coordinators call for nominations (see Annex 1) when turnover of existing gender focal points happens, at which point new sector gender focal points can volunteer to participate. The sector coordinator along with the Inter-Sector Coordinator, then selects the sector gender focal point, based on the following criteria:

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

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

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[2] UNHCR. Population Statistics – Mid-March 2021 Stats

[3] UNRWA. Where we work: Jordan

[4] Arab Women Organization of Jordan, Unveiling Gender-Based Violence against Syrian Women Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon – Research

The Terms of Reference for the SGFPN (see Annex 2) and for the Sector Gender Focal Points (see Annex 3) display out the following responsibilities for focal points:

1. Regularly attending the meetings of their nominating sector, raising awareness on, and providing updates on key gender issues in the sector.
2. Regularly attend and actively participate in SGFPN monthly meetings.
3. Participating in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the SGFPN products, such as ToR, annual work plan and/or other materials and documents in a timely manner.
4. Sharing resources within their sectors/organizations and to SGFPN members (tools developed internally or by other organizations, new studies, policy documents, etc.), including relevant outcomes of SGFPN meetings on core commitments on Gender Equality Programming.
5. Attend at least one GAM, SADD, and Gender Analysis training annually.
6. Identify sector gender capacity needs and in collaboration with Sector Leads, support the organization and delivery of relevant capacity building and training sessions for sector member organizations on gender tools such as GAM, SADD and Gender Analysis training plan for their sector and other relevant subjects.
7. Monitoring the use of GAM and SADD within the sector, supporting the development of a response-wide perspective on the use of these tools/methods so as to support efforts to encourage uptake and strengthening.
8. Participate in monthly reporting to the ISWG's Monthly Refugee Sectors Update, providing monthly gender updates to Sector Leads in accordance with the ISWG Coordination reporting calendar (see Annex 4 & 5).
9. Provide quarterly dashboard on gender within the respective sector, utilizing data available on the ActivityInfo platform.
10. Collaborate with Sector Leads to design and implement annual sector gender analysis to be shared with SGFPN and Sector Leads for utilization in the development of sector workplans under the Jordan Response Plan; support other focal points in the gender analysis process through the provision of qualitative feedback on the design process and review of final product.
11. Support the development and finalization of the annual SGFPN report to be shared with ISWG Coordinator, Sector Leads and other relevant stakeholders.
12. Collaborate with Sector Leads to develop and implement an annual workplan for the respective sector, integrating SADD and GAM trainings and other planned activities to strengthen gender mainstream in the sector and strengthen coordination for gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian response.
13. Participate in the development and review of sector workplans.
14. Support respective Sector Leads to ensure gender is adequately mainstreamed in project proposals as members of the respective sector Technical Review Committee (TRC) for the Jordan Humanitarian Fund [(JHF) see Annex 6].
15. Participate in the Jordan Humanitarian Fund technical evaluation process (and notify SGFPN Co-chairs of any inability to perform this function, including conflict of interest) and represent other gender focal points on the TRC based on an agreed rotation when other focal points have conflicts of scheduling or interest.
16. Sharing with the SGFPN information on key processes and assessments related to their sector and relevant to gender.
17. Communicate to the SGFPN co-chairs and Sector Leads any change in their membership status or temporary unavailability.

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

- From 2016-2021, delivered annual training on Gender in Humanitarian Action to humanitarian workers involved in refugee response planning and programming in Jordan, benefiting a large number of staff from eight sectors and respective sub-sectors, as well as other gender experts not regular members of the network.
- Facilitating workshops to update sector-specific gender analysis.
- Assisting the sectors to develop and implement tailored impact indicators related to participation and gender equality.
- Roll-out and supporting accurate and consistent usage of the IASC Gender with Age Marker [GAM] in Jordan Humanitarian Fund proposals and encouraging sector organizations to incorporate the Gender with Age Marker in all their work.
- Piloting projects on the revised IASC Gender with Age Marker.
- Ongoing advocacy to mainstream gender equality in each sector.

In addition, the SGFPN Work Plan for 2021 (see Annex 7) includes planned activities in the areas of coordination, planning, resource sharing, management and development, capacity building, monitoring, analysis and reporting, application of the IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM), SADD and GA.

4. Partners and Resources

As previously mentioned, the SGFPN consists of a total of 17 Sector Gender Focal Points from each humanitarian sector and sub-sector. A variety of UN agencies and civil society organizations contribute staff to the SGFPN at any given time, thereby broadening participation and ownership of Inter-Agency Coordination responsibilities beyond the most established actors.

The SGFPN does not independently raise funds or manage resources; instead, each UN agency and civil society organization has the chance to contribute resources by undertaking activities prioritized by the SGFPN. UNHCR's Inter-Agency Coordination Unit has been allocating budget and resources to the network since its creation. UNHCR efforts strengthening synergies to build on a gender middle-long-term vision and strategy in Jordan closely bridging between the Inter-Agency Coordination Unit and the Protection Unit as so uniting efforts more effectively from 2021. While the SGFPN's specific focus is on humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, it also maintains contact and engages in coordination with such bodies as the Gender Theme Group of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group of the Humanitarian Partners Forum (HPF) and national women organizations. The network over the years has benefited from the support of the Senior Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) Advisers every time that was solicited. The GenCap is an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) initiative launched in 2007 with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

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

5. Participation and Accountability

The SGFPN is a highly participatory forum, where sector gender focal points can openly raise issues, discuss, and propose joint activities. The SGFPN is accountable to the refugee Inter-Sector Working Group as well as each sector coordinator. SGFPN members are also individually accountable for implementing their ToR (see Annex 2 & 3) and annual Work Plan (see Annex 7). All organizations active under the refugee response coordination structure are ultimately accountable to the Government of Jordan.

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

UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Approach [AGDs]

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

6. Results

Since 2013, the work of the SGFPN has resulted in greatly improved gender mainstreaming in the work of UN agencies and civil society organizations providing humanitarian assistance in Jordan. This was achieved in part by building awareness of the different needs, levels of access and participation of diverse women, men, girls, and boys within Jordanian refugee programming.

Concrete results include:

- Sector Gender Focal Points have benefited from increased authority in the sector meetings, especially if they are skilful in leading and coordinating gender mainstreaming and programming targeting women and girls within their sector.
- All sectors having completed the process are currently started revising and updating gender analyses and sector sheets.
- Greater knowledge and skills on gender equality among humanitarian staff due to training initiatives.
- Piloting of various IASC gender equality tools, rolling-out the new tool and contributing to the implementation of the IASC Gender with Age Marker [GAM] and a monitoring tool for the Gender Empowerment Measures.
- Improved gender equality mainstreaming in refugee response programme design, through support for the correct usage of the IASC Gender with Age Marker in Jordan rolled-out in December 2018 (hosted by UNHCR) and fully implication on the Jordan Humanitarian Funds proposals (JHF) as since 2018 gender is now part of the selection project criteria based on the agreed between UNHCR and OCHA.

- Development and implementation of impact indicators related to participation and gender equality within all refugee sectors.
- Update of the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) toll to take in consideration the new Gender with Age Marker.
- Increased documentation and analysis of Sex and Age-Disaggregated Data (SADD) in assessment, monitoring and evaluation, which has led to practical changes in programming.

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

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

Sustainability

The SGFPN is quite sustainable in that it does not rely on external funds or other resources, but on small funds allocated by UNHCR (Inter-Agency Coordination Unit and Protection Unit) and contributions of staff time by many agencies and organizations. As such, sustainability is closely linked to the continued overall coordinated refugee response.

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

7. Lessons Learned

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

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

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

8. Recommendations

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

9. More Information

- UNHCR Jordan:

  joram@unhcr.org I https://www.unhcr.org/jordan I https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria http://scs.raisunhcr.org/
- SGFPN Induction Package:

  [1] SGFPs Nomination Process & Responsibilities 2021
  [2] Sector Gender Focal Points TOR 2021
  [3] SGFPN TOR 2021

[4] SGFPN Work Plan 2021
[5] Quick Guide SGFPN JHF_2021_Update 21102021
[6] Online Trainings Gender in Humanitarian Action
[7] UNHCR AGDs Policy
[8] UNHCR Gender Equality Tool Kit
[9] GAM Overview
[10] GAM Endorsement Background Paper - IASC
[11] Frequently Asked Questions on GAM
[12] SGFPN in Jordan
[13] Gender Handbook Approved by IASC