

DATA DISAGGREGATION FOR AN EVIDENCE-BASED HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN MOLDOVA

Prepared by the Protection Working Group

December 2023

Since 24 February 2022, nearly one million persons displaced from Ukraine have arrived in Moldova. Of these, almost 113,000 remain in the country, seeking safety from the armed conflict. According to government statistics 82% of arrivals are women and children. Protection monitoring by Refugee Coordination Forum partners, as well as cash enrollment figures, provide some additional data, for example on refugees with disabilities, age, and ethnicity, but this information is not systematically captured by all.

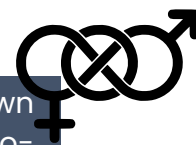
Disaggregation of data by sex, age and other variables, is critical to evidence-based humanitarian action, both for refugees from Ukraine and community members in the Republic of Moldova. Data disaggregation allows humanitarian actors to identify and analyze specific needs, vulnerabilities and inequalities affecting particular groups of people and to provide targeted protection and assistance to them. In the absence of disaggregated data, vulnerabilities of different refugees and members of the host community risk being overlooked. Disaggregated data, properly collected, analyzed and reported, helps ensure a comprehensive and inclusive response.

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development expressed a commitment to the **Leave No One Behind** principle: the needs and the risks faced by the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups must be identified and prioritized through comprehensive and systematic data disaggregation and data analysis.
- Data disaggregation is a key principle of the **Human-Rights Based approach to data**. Data disaggregation allows one to understand the situation of specific groups, compare it with others and identify data gaps. It is crucial to understand inequalities and discrimination affecting groups. Comparing the situation between groups allows one to understand who has been most affected by the crisis, in order to ensure that all affected persons have effective access to protection and services that meet their unique needs.
- **Evidence-based, effective, and transparent humanitarian assistance** relies on regular collection and analysis of disaggregated data on the population's needs across all phases of the humanitarian programming (preparedness; assessment; response; monitoring; reporting; evaluation).

“To support evidence-based responses, States and relevant stakeholders will, as appropriate, promote the development of harmonized or interoperable standards for the collection, analysis, and sharing of age, gender, disability, and diversity disaggregated data on refugees and returnees.”

Global Compact on
Refugees, para. 46.

SEX AND GENDER



Sex disaggregated data refers to quantitative and qualitative data that are broken down according to a person's sex group to enable for measurement of socio-economic and socio-cultural differences between women and girls and men and boys. It enables humanitarian actors to understand the specific situation and risk faced by refugee women and girls compared to that of refugee men and boys.

Gender disaggregation improves the understanding of the needs and challenges of persons with specific gender identities. The gender-sensitive approach assures that all gender groups are taken into consideration in the humanitarian response and are treated with respect.



AGE

Age disaggregation using age cohorts contributes to the recognition of specific needs of each age group and helps in tailoring services for them. This is the recommended disaggregation based on age, where possible:

- 1-2, 3-6, 7-10, 11-15, 16-18, 19-23 (for Child Protection and education activities, used by UNICEF)
- 24-49 (persons of reproductive age)
- 50-59, 60-69, 70-80, 80-89, 90+ (for older people, used by HelpAge)

Data disaggregation based on age helps to create more appropriate communication channels for all age categories of refugees, i.e. in-person visits and phone calls for communities with older persons, or use of social media and digital technologies for the younger generation. It also allows for the tailoring of advocacy messages for often overlooked groups.

DISABILITY



Disability disaggregation contributes greatly to addressing special needs and provides customized aid to refugees with any kind of disability.

To identify persons with disabilities it is recommended to include in the data collection processes the **Washington Group short set of questions**. This set of questions can help to identify persons with disabilities based on the difficulties they face in various functional domains during daily activities. It is considered more comprehensive than the classical medical approach that takes into consideration only persons who have been clinically identified as persons with disabilities. This contributes to a more inclusive and accessible humanitarian response.



DIVERSITY

Diversity data disaggregation aims to identify specific needs and deliver customized assistance to ethnic, national, social, political or religious minorities, who are vulnerable due to their economic, legal, educational or migrant/displacement status, or who are members of groups otherwise protected under international law.

In collecting this data the principle of self-identification should be applied. This means that populations of interest should have the option to disclose or withhold sensitive information about their personal characteristics. Questions about personal identity should be voluntary and a non-response option should always be provided.

INTERSECTIONALITY OF DATA DISAGGREGATION

A humanitarian emergency has different impacts on individuals according to the factors that define their identity. These factors include but are not limited to: gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religious beliefs, nationality, sexual orientation, refugee or migrant status, level of education, etc. The way these factors intersect and interact with each other within systems of power, privilege, and discrimination is called intersectionality. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals can experience multiple forms of discrimination simultaneously and that these intersecting identities shape their experiences and social realities in complex ways.

"Data on experience of violence, abuse and maltreatment in later life is largely missing. While statistics on violence against women are available mainly in relation to intimate partner violence and sexual violence, most surveys typically exclude women over the age of 50 from their sample."

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, 2023

"We can only monitor progress if we have data that is disaggregated by sex, age, race, ethnicity, income, migration status, disability and other characteristics relating to the grounds of discrimination prohibited by human rights law. Only if we track progress for different population groups, in all countries, can we ensure that no one is indeed being left behind."

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

LESSONS LEARNED

- To fulfill the commitment to Leave No One Behind (LNOB), we first need to understand who are the most people at risk.
- Each organization has a specific mandate and works with specific populations but it is crucial for humanitarian actors to expand data collection efforts to include a more diverse range of groups.
- All actors need to undertake a more thorough identification of overlooked and marginalized groups/communities, going beyond generic categories and broad references.
- It is essential to identify how multiple layers of vulnerabilities intersect and compound one another. This will greatly improve the targeting of those most in need.
- Any collection of data must be done responsibly, based on an assessment of the benefits and risks of the collection exercise and adequate training of data collectors.

Through these actions, humanitarian actors can operationalize the LNOB principle and help end discrimination, achieve equality and ensure that all refugees, regardless of background, are able to access rights and services in host countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations for humanitarian actors

- **Develop internal guidance/procedures to ensure data disaggregation** by age, disability, diversity and, where appropriate and safe, diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) of populations across all phases of project cycle management.
- When building **questionnaires/surveys**, consider connections between questions asked and data disaggregation planned and phrase questions accordingly.
- **Enhance partnership and mutual capacity development with key stakeholders** through sustainable training (including training of trainers), resource-sharing and knowledge-exchange to meet the needs of diverse people.
- **Mandate the use of the Washington Group short set of questions on disability** in data collection in appropriate contexts.
- **Promote the responsible collection and reporting of data** across a wide range of vulnerable refugees in line with self-identification and do no harm principles and train humanitarian actors to do so.
- **Pay increased attention to multi-layered/intersectional data disaggregation** across the project cycle (preparedness; assessment; response; monitoring; reporting; evaluation).
- **Make best use of collected disaggregated data through analysis and interpretation** that deepens understanding of the needs and capacities of different groups.
- **Leverage disaggregated data to design projects** that tailor activities to the needs of specific groups and implement it in Moldova that tailor actions to the needs of specific groups.

Recommendations for donors

- **Encourage the inclusion of disaggregated data** by sex, age, disability and other protected grounds, where possible and appropriate **in project proposals and reports**, including monitoring and evaluation reports. (See proposed disaggregation types on page 2.)
- **Allocate proportional, needs-based programme funding to undertake responsible data disaggregation and address the specific needs of vulnerable groups identified for disaggregated data** (i.e. dedicated budget lines for disaggregated data collection, reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, and sufficient transportation to and from rural or isolate communities).
- **Promote partnership** with vulnerable or marginalized people in calls for proposals in line with the principle of participation.
- **Hold partners accountable** to their commitment to Leave No One Behind.

Contact

Andrew Painter, Sector Coordinator, UNHCR Senior Protection Officer, painter@unhcr.org

Carolina Cazaciuc, Sector Co-Chair, Ombudsman's Office, carolina.cazaciuc@ombudsman.md

Martina Gastaldello, Human Rights Officer, OHCHR, martina.gastaldello@un.org