

TRAINING REPORT

GENDER AND REFUGEE  
RESPONSE TRAINING SERIES:  
**TURKEY REGIONAL REFUGEE  
AND RESILIENCE PLAN (3RP)**



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**GENDER AND REFUGEE**  
**RESPONSE TRAINING**  
**SERIES**

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The Syria refugee crisis remains the largest humanitarian and development crisis in the world. Across the five main Syrian refugee-hosting countries included under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP),<sup>1</sup> over 10 million people—some 5.5 million Syrian refugees and 4.8 million impacted host community members—will need some form of humanitarian and resilience support in 2021. This is the highest number of people in need of assistance in this decade-long crisis.

Turkey hosts the largest number of persons under temporary and international protection in the world: 3.6 million Syrians are under temporary protection in addition to approximately 320,000 international protection applicants and status holders. Currently, over 98 per cent of Syrian refugees living under temporary protection reside in urban and rural areas; less than 2 per cent reside in Temporary Accommodation Centres.<sup>2</sup>

3RP remains central to regional- and host country-level responses to the Syria crisis. In line with 3RP work in Turkey, the UN Women Country Office in Turkey, along with the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECARO), carries out programme implementation and coordination in order to promote gender-responsive norms, policies and legislation.<sup>3</sup> UN Women works to strengthen Turkey's refugee response by implementing programmes and projects that benefit vulnerable Syrian refugee women and girls and by engaging in policy dialogue with local and national authorities in order to help them overcome service delivery, resource allocation and other challenges.

Since 2017, the UN Women Country Office in Turkey has supported the implementation of projects financed by the European Union and the Governments of Japan and Iceland for 3RP. As a result, more than 13,000 refugee and host community women and girls received gender-sensitive refugee response services, including protection and access to livelihoods, and over 4,000 women and girls participated in activities and events that fostered social cohesion. UN Women continues to amplify the voices of refugee and host community women in decision-making and advocacy platforms by providing capacity-building and mentoring programmes to women-led organizations and leadership training to grass-roots refugee women's groups.

UN Women has also been partnering with government institutions, other UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations. Among other accomplishments, the collaboration with Association for Solidarity with Asylum seekers and Migrants led to the Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt (in order of the number of refugees hosted).

2 Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan – Regional Strategic Overview 2021-2022. Available at: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/28jan.pdf>

3 <http://unwomenturkeyrrp.tilda.ws/>

4 Available at: [http://sgdd.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/The\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_ENG\\_WEB.pdf](http://sgdd.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/The_Needs_Assessment_ENG_WEB.pdf)

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Following up on UN Women’s support in 2020 for gender-responsive approaches and awareness in the Syria Coordination mechanisms in Turkey and in 3RP, the UN Women Country Office in Turkey and the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia organized a **Gender and Refugee Response Training Series**, held virtually on 26 January 2021. With translation services provided in Arabic, English and Turkish and attended by 144 participants (including representatives from the Syrian Task Force clusters, UN Agencies and international organizations), the training covered key subjects for addressing gender in refugee responses and highlighted country-specific practices.

The agenda included gender mainstreaming principles and their application to refugee response programming; legislative frameworks for gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence at the national (Turkish) and international levels; monitoring and evaluation practices; and the use of gender-sensitive data and indicators. Focusing on gender-responsive approaches in humanitarian action, the training increased capacities in using the Interagency Steering Committee (IASC) Gender with Age Marker (GAM) self-reporting tool and its use in designing gender-responsive projects.

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**Moderator Valeria Vilardo, Gender-Responsive Resilience and Recovery Specialist at UN Women ECARO**, opened the training and welcomed participants by presenting its main objectives on strengthening the gender-responsiveness of 3RP in Turkey.

In her opening remarks, **Asya Varbanova, UN Women Turkey Country Director**, highlighted the criticality of supporting refugee women and girls and their host communities, particularly in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus. Ms. Varbanova stressed that the 3RP response in Turkey needs to address different groups by strengthening the gender lens of all interventions while bearing in mind the short-, medium- and long-term effects of the pandemic, increasing inequalities (such as language and economic barriers), women’s limited or lack of access to services and the “shadow pandemic of violence against women and girls.” She welcomed the trainings as an important tool to inspire and deepen the knowledge of those working on 3RP, thus ensuring targeted responses to refugee women and girls in their new communities.

The training began with a series of presentations. The first, **Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Turkey**, was given by **Marta Pérez del Pulgar, International Consultant in Gender-Sensitive Humanitarian Capacity Development, UN Women Turkey**. The presentation used an interactive dialogue to discuss definitions of gender and gender-related terms, key terminology and concepts. Participants answered questions on topics such as equal pay for women and men and access to the Internet, which led to discussions on cultural barriers and burdens on gender equality. Ms. Pérez del Pulgar stressed the differences between sex and gender in line with economic and social factors, leading to constructive roles and responsibilities in societies. Discussions followed on gender stereotypes and equal opportunities for women and men. As one participant stated, “I was not given the same opportunities as men no matter how hard I worked. I was put in a situation where I could not reach above a certain level in my achievements. I would love to receive support and improve myself to be able to narrow this gap.”

Marketing and the media were also discussed during the session. Participants stated that marketing strategies trigger submissive behaviours in women and that the media targets women for body and beauty standards that negatively affect their daily lives. For example, one participant stated, “toys push girls to be submissive; they are always about roles at home, cooking, taking care of a baby, etc. From a

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**“Refugee and local women’s empowerment is critical, not as recipients of assistance but as agents and leaders of transformative change. Given all of the challenges that the world is facing, advancing women’s rights and their meaningful participation in building sustainable peace and resilience is more important now than ever.”** *Asya Varbanova, Country Director, UN Women Turkey*

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young age, girls are deemed to have a certain role in life.” Underscoring that the ways in which the media portrays women affects their daily lives, participants asked if gender monitoring of the media was possible. “I believe that women can be empowered by changing the discriminatory and sexist approach the media takes,” said one participant.

The following session, **National and International Legislation and Regulations for Gender Equality**, was presented by **Nevin Şenol, National Training Consultant in Gender-Sensitive Refugee Response**.

The session covered legislative frameworks for gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence at the national (Turkish) and international levels. Special emphasis was given to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a foundation and basis for international legislative frameworks and conventions (including the 1951 Refugee Convention). Ms. Şenol’s presentation focused on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, sexual violence in conflicts, women’s representation in peacebuilding processes, women’s contributions to national and international legal frameworks, the strong and sound legal basis for women’s protection in Turkey (and the concurrent need to apply it and for women to benefit from it), and the potential for women to seek help and legal support from the Turkish Bar Association. “If we want results, we should use any means we can find, especially laws and social media campaigns. We should make sure that we persist and raise our voice in any way that we can,” said Ms. Şenol.

In discussing legal actions to take when authorities refuse to act according to the law, participants shared their views and observations from the field, such as law enforcement officials not sharing correct information, not taking women refugee’s complaints and putting women and girl refugee’s lives at risk by sending them back to the places where they experienced violence. Participants discussed officials’ inappropriate and degrading treatment of refugee women and girls, bringing light to the perspectives of vulnerable groups. A participant noted, “when we go to the police stations with LGBT individuals, helping them to exercise their rights and report violence they experienced, we usually face inappropriate treatment and even refusal to carry

out reporting processes. In such cases, occasionally, I found it useful to state that I will complain about them for not carrying out their duties in the capacity of law enforcement pursuant to Article 7 under Law Number 6284.”<sup>5</sup>

The next session, **Gender Analysis in a Refugee Context**, was presented by Ms. Pérez del Pulgar. The session focused on gender mainstreaming principles and their application to refugee response programming. **Ms. Pérez del Pulgar** stressed that gender analysis, sex-disaggregated data and national context in terms of policy, culture and social norms (including gender-sensitive language) form the basis for successful gender mainstreaming. Ms. Pérez del Pulgar also presented tools for inclusively and efficiently mainstreaming gender into all aspects of the programme cycle. These tools included key elements of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls.

The second part of the training opened with a presentation on the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s Gender with Age Marker**.<sup>6</sup> Led by **Valeria Vilardo, Gender Sensitive Recovery and Resilience Specialist, UN Women ECARO**, the presentation included tools for a successful gender analysis of activities and discussed the Gender with Age Marker’s guidelines on how to ensure a project is gender- and age-sensitive. Ms. Vilardo underscored that good programming requires the adequate participation, inclusion and influence of affected people at all stages of a project, stressed the need to consult with all targeted groups and emphasized the need to avoid conceptualizing individuals as homogeneous groups. She further noted that needs analyses should be transparent, should share information with beneficiaries and should include their feedback. “Programmes should logically flow from the gendered analysis to tailoring or adapting activities in response to analysis, through to who benefits from the intervention,” said Ms. Vilardo, adding “there is a need for adequate participation of women and men beneficiaries of interventions not only in the planning phase but in the whole project cycle to better inform the refugee response on the specific gender needs.” Ms. Vilardo further discussed efficient actions to analyse the specific needs of women and

5 Law to Protect Family and Prevent Violence against Women. Law No. 6284, Article 7, Section 1: “If there has been violence or there is a risk of it, everybody can report this situation to the official authorities and organs. The public officials who receive the report are obliged to fulfill their duties without any delay and inform the authorities for the other measures needed to be taken.”

6 <https://www.iascgenderwithagemarker.com/en/home/>

girls and how targeted actions affect different gender and age groups.

The following session on **Monitoring and Evaluation and the Use of Gender-Sensitive Data and Indicators** was presented by **Arif Mert Öztürk, Monitoring and Reporting Analyst, UN Women Turkey**. Mr. Mert Öztürk explained the pillars of gender statistics common to all areas of humanitarian, development and peace interventions: sex-disaggregated data, data pertaining specifically to women or to men and data that captures specific gender issues. He also discussed developing gender-responsive indicators and using data for successful monitoring and evaluation efforts. He discussed changes in gender equality and women's empowerment and discussed gender-sensitive indicators as efficient tools to measure and analyse changes in gender-related conditions or situations.

Mr. Mert Öztürk stressed that advocacy efforts should include the demand for strengthened and improved data collection and use in gender-sensitive analyses. In presenting the Gender-Sensitive Resilience Index pillars, Mr. Mert Öztürk explained that the Index documentation includes information on how the Index is calculated and he used examples from Iraq and Gaziantep to discuss how ratios could differ between contexts.

When discussing the importance of gender-targeted data, Mr. Mert Öztürk stated, "it is crucial to highlight that violence statistics are under-reported for various reasons and that specialized surveys can be a better instrument to capture this data for various reasons, including but not limited to the higher likelihood of survivors to disclose incidents when asked rather than going to the police."

The next session included **Voices from the Field from 3RP Partners, UNFPA and Women's Organizations**. The session featured front-line responders who shared their experiences and views on gender-responsive interventions. **Bora Özbek, gender-based violence expert from Humanitarian Aid UNFPA Turkey in Ankara**, presented the scope of their work and the support they provide to refugees in Turkey and other 3RP countries. These services include (but are not limited to) group counselling, gender trainings, legal counselling services for survivors of gender-based violence, rural and urban vocational training, youth programmes and centres for disabled women and girls. In discussing programmes that empower and strengthen women and girls and

programmes that promote their physical and emotional safety, Mr. Özbek emphasized the importance of safe spaces. He also emphasized the importance of reaching out to men and boys in order to raise awareness about the prevention of child marriages.

**Fahika Mercan and Ceren Gursoy from the Leader Women Association (Lider Kadın Derneği)** in Diyarbakir and Mardin, presented their Association and their work to understand the barriers that women and girls in vulnerable situations face, to eliminate gender-based violence, to offer support for mothers in need, to provide care centres and playrooms for children and to target support for mothers through free service shuttles. Ms. Gursoy discussed the Association's programmes and projects, underlining that they also include addressing the needs of boys and men, conducting awareness-raising activities, providing social support, pursuing advocacy activities and supporting the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

Ms. Gursoy emphasized the importance of family-oriented workshops being inclusive of children, mothers and fathers and of working for equal dimensions in families. "It is not enough for women to learn what we teach them; it is equally important for the men and boys to learn about gender equality. This is why we try to include men and boys in our workshops as well." Ms. Gursoy further discussed wanting to achieve a world of equality and stressed how this is only possible with the full empowerment of women.

**Perihan Uluğ from the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (Kadın Emeğini Değerlendirme Vakfı – KEDV)** presented the Foundation's work and stressed the importance of building bilateral partnerships and building synergies between women. Since 2019, the Foundation has been advancing women's empowerment principles by promoting women's participation in their communities. One of KEDV's main objectives is to include women in all phases of project planning and implementation, thus ensuring an inclusive project cycle and women's engagement as active implementers. Ms. Uluğ also presented their work in building joint and safe spaces for all women when establishing women's centres and stressed the importance of including dialogue with local authorities. In discussing the challenges of the pandemic, she highlighted how remote work and information sharing needs to be accessible to all groups.

**As reflected in a post-training survey, participants widely regarded the sessions as successful and relevant to their work. Key survey results include:**

- 97 per cent of participants increased their understanding of gender-related concepts;
- 81 per cent of participants improved their understanding of national and international legislations and regulations on gender equality;
- 88 per cent increased their knowledge on gender mainstreaming in refugee resilience programmes;
- 88 per cent raised their knowledge of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Gender with Age Marker;
- 86 per cent of the participants agreed that the training increased their knowledge of gender-responsive indicators and data; and
- 93 per cent of participants responded that they could use the knowledge gained in the training in their fieldwork.



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