



Country evaluation  
of the age and gender  
mainstreaming pilot project

*Zambia*

By Christine Bloch, Jesuit Refugee Service  
email: [christine.bloch@jrs.net](mailto:christine.bloch@jrs.net) and  
Barb Wigley, Consultant,  
email: [bwigley@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bwigley@bigpond.net.au)

EPAU/2005/3-8  
April 2005

## **Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit**

UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) is committed to the systematic examination and assessment of UNHCR policies, programmes, projects and practices. EPAU also promotes rigorous research on issues related to the work of UNHCR and encourages an active exchange of ideas and information between humanitarian practitioners, policymakers and the research community. All of these activities are undertaken with the purpose of strengthening UNHCR's operational effectiveness, thereby enhancing the organization's capacity to fulfil its mandate on behalf of refugees and other displaced people. The work of the unit is guided by the principles of transparency, independence, consultation, relevance and integrity.

Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Case Postale 2500  
1211 Geneva 2  
Switzerland

Tel: (41 22) 739 8249

Fax: (41 22) 739 7344

e-mail: [hqep00@unhcr.org](mailto:hqep00@unhcr.org)

internet: [www.unhcr.org/epau](http://www.unhcr.org/epau)

All EPAU evaluation reports are placed in the public domain. Electronic versions are posted on the UNHCR website and hard copies can be obtained by contacting EPAU. They may be quoted, cited and copied, provided that the source is acknowledged. The views expressed in EPAU publications are not necessarily those of UNHCR. The designations and maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion or recognition on the part of UNHCR concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.

## Executive summary

The evaluation of the Zambia pilot programme involved meeting with members of three separate Multi Functional Teams (MFTs), other UNHCR staff, implementing partners and persons of concern in both urban and camp settings. One MFT (Team 1) was based in the branch office in the capital and two were attached to refugee camps. Two members of one camp team (Team 2) were interviewed off site and the other team (Team 3), which is spread across a sub office and a field office, were interviewed on site.

Each MFT is at quite different stages of development, with varying challenges and obstacles to the implementation of the age and gender mainstreaming programme.

Team 1 comprises an equal mix of national UNHCR staff and IP staff. Full representation of UNHCR programme areas has been affected by staff turnover and loss. They meet regularly and demonstrated a high level of commitment to the programme, but lack of experience and authority within the office has hampered their ability to fully take up and implement their roles as envisaged in the pilot. Political and legal issues related to their local caseload of urban refugees have also meant that they felt very limited in what they could realistically achieve without the resolution of these problems. Therefore the most significant project they have worked on as a team was the preparation of a presentation on the situation of urban refugees designed to encourage senior UNHCR staff to take up an advocacy role with government. A number of the team members stated that despite their frustrations, one of the most positive outcomes of the team has been the development of positive and collaborative working relationships between UNHCR and IP team members, which provided a number of benefits in their day to day work.

Team 2 also comprises a mix of UNHCR staff and implementing partners. They had been working together collaboratively prior to the instigation of the MFTs, with a strong gender focus within their work, and with strong support from their local management. They described finding the initial workshop extremely helpful in providing them with an additional framework within which they could analyze the challenges they faced and come up with new solutions. They outlined a number of examples where the Gender and Age principles had enhanced programmes they had already in operation.

Team 3 was in disarray at the time of the evaluation, affected by staff turnover, lack of coordination and leadership. As members are spread amongst the sub and field offices, they rarely come together, if at all, as an MFT. One member had been allocated to the team after the workshop and reported being unaware of the principles of the programme and does not have current access to the written material. It did appear that some action had been taken prior to the departure of a founding member of the team, but that the loss of this member had left a vacuum that others had been reluctant to fill. Implementing partners had varying degrees of knowledge about the programme, but on the whole their awareness was limited. The workplan developed through the pilot programme had been handed to an implementing partner to implement, without ongoing discussion or connection with the MFT structure. It should also be noted, however, that the foundations for

reinstating the process were certainly present, with a well organized network of refugee groups and committees readily accessible and regular meetings between implementing partners and the field office.

All staff who attended the workshop at the beginning of the pilot consistently stated that they found it valuable, informative and influential in their work. The degree to which they were able to sustain a focus upon the framework and a clarity as to the purpose of their ongoing role seemed to depend upon a combination of a number of factors, such as prior experience with gender principles, senior support and collaboration, the presence of motivated female staff within the team, and previously existing foundations upon which to build.

Some of the shortcomings they identified in the pilot included that they would have liked to have been more engaged and involved in the process from the planning stage. They felt that this would have fostered greater ownership of the process at a local level and a greater ability to address issues unique to their situation. In addition, as all of the MFTs rely heavily on the participation and collaboration of implementing partners, they felt it would have been beneficial for relevant IP staff to attend the workshop, rather than risk alienating them and slowing down the process of engagement and commitment.

Staff turnover weakened the process and highlights a problem with sustainability. In the first six months, a number of original members of the MFTs have left, as has the representative who was supportive of the pilot. This has left new members who are less clear on the objectives to take their places, or left unfilled gaps where staffing levels are so low that a replacement can not be found.

Developing countrywide priorities and plans was somewhat problematic when refugee issues were starkly different between urban and camp based refugees. Staff were not clear how to navigate their way around some fundamental obstacles to implementing their plans. For example, the problems with the legal status of urban refugees mean that many of them are not eligible for UNHCR services, despite their need being great. Staff working in this setting felt that the three priorities established through the pilot, those of education, livelihoods and security, were less relevant than the pressing need to assist people to gain any kind of basic support and obtain the status they required in order to address these other issues. When reductions in food rations in the camps are implemented, the loss of such a basic necessity as adequate nutrition become far more significant than other programmes. In addition, large scale repatriation exercises tended to take over the focus and priority of staff, and in the absence of a clear understanding of how to incorporate Age and Gender Mainstreaming principles into a repatriation exercise, attention to the Age and Gender Mainstreaming approach tended to become shelved until it was over, reducing momentum and focus. People felt that some kind of ongoing support and guidance would have been helpful.

Overall, the age and gender mainstreaming pilot programme has thus far had mixed success and impact across the operation in Zambia. The core ideas and principles of the programme were valued and essentially retained by staff who attended the workshop, and there are a number of examples where the framework is being put to productive use. These outcomes give cause for encouragement and therefore this evaluation finds that the programme should continue in Zambia, with some work, and that the overall initiative should continue, again with modifications. Wider

## ZAMBIA

strategies will need to be formulated to overcome the many obstacles to consistent, committed and effective ongoing mainstreaming of gender and age principles.



# Introduction

## Background to the evaluation

1. Following three independent evaluations on refugee women, refugee children and the role of community services, UNHCR launched an Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot project in early 2004. To date, country assessments followed by capacity building and planning workshops have been conducted in Iran, North Caucasus, Guinea, Zambia, Greece, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, India, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Sierra Leone.
2. The three key elements of the pilot project methodology are: Situation assessment using a participatory approach, integration workshop and the use of multi-functional teams.
3. Each country conducted a mid-term review of the work and it was agreed that a process evaluation would be conducted at the end of the pilot phase<sup>1</sup>. Evaluations have taken place in Zambia, Colombia, India, Egypt, Syria<sup>2</sup>, Greece, Venezuela and Ecuador. These countries were recommended for the evaluation exercise as they represent diverse situations: camp setting, urban and internal displacement situations. This report presents the findings of the Zambia evaluation, where the pilot has been implemented in both urban and camp settings.<sup>3</sup>
4. Following three independent evaluations on refugee women, refugee children and the role of community services, UNHCR launched an Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot project in early 2004. To date, country assessments followed by capacity building and planning workshops have been conducted in Iran, North Caucasus, Guinea, Zambia, Greece, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, India, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Sierra Leone.

## Evaluation purpose and objectives

5. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot project and to use this learning to inform the planned rollout of the project in 2005. Four areas of impact are explored. These are analytical approaches; procedures and work processes; leadership; and pilot methodology.
6. This evaluation is a process evaluation and is expected to be a learning tool. It has been designed to be a two way process, whereby the evaluation team and participants in the pilot project come together to explore learning and to build on experience. The evaluation is part of the wider mainstreaming project and as such is

---

<sup>1</sup> This evaluation should be read alongside the Mid-Term Reviews which contain additional examples of impact

<sup>2</sup> Meetings were also held with Jordan and Lebanon projects to explore impact and learning. Findings are presented separately as 'Notes for the File'.

<sup>3</sup> The evaluator would like to thank the Acting Regional Representative, the Regional Community Services Officer and all staff, partners and people of concern who kindly gave their time to ensuring that this mission was a success.

one important step in the process. In this way, the evaluation differs from a conventional end of project evaluation, which focuses on measuring impact. The process focus also arises from the practical reason that a key focus of this project is to change attitudes and ways of working. The impact is thus less clear to measure than in a more quantitatively defined initiative.

7. The objectives of the evaluation are:

- To document and explore progress towards Age and Gender Mainstreaming
- To examine the appropriateness/ effectiveness of the methodology used as a first step towards mainstreaming
- To highlight lessons and recommendations for the roll out of the project

### **Methods and approach**

8. This evaluation was based on semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. Interviews were conducted on a one to one basis as well as in groups.

9. Stakeholders interviewed included:

- UNHCR desk staff in Geneva
- UNHCR field staff (regional/ branch office and field staff): members and non members of the MFTs and the acting representative.
- Relevant partners: Jesuit Refugee Services, Zambian Red Cross, World Vision, HODI, Local government representatives
- Persons of concern: Urban refugee group, and in the camp - Leadership representatives, separated children, community services group, SGBV group, Agriculturalists, teenage mothers. In total over 100 people of concern were included in consultations.

10. A document review was also conducted and included workplans, COPs, project submissions and other relevant documents.



# Findings

11. The UN guidelines for gender mainstreaming suggest that attention needs to be given to three areas of work<sup>4</sup>: Analytical approaches; Procedures and work processes and; Leadership. These areas, and an additional area on the pilot methodology, formed the framework for this evaluation.

## **Analytical approaches**

### **Findings regarding attitude change and the extent to which the Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot has encouraged the consideration of gender and age differences and inequalities.**

12. We interviewed members of 3 MFTs and each were at quite different stages of implementation:

13. The current members of Team 1 had limited experience of gender concepts or frameworks in the past. They were committed to the process and reported that they had learnt a lot from the workshop.

“It gave me a lot of insight into areas where I was missing things. It helped me to see the finer points”.

“When we went into the workshop, it was strong to me; the fact that people have different needs... women, men, children. We have often taken that for granted. For example, when we have men in meetings and the voice of men comes out. Now we make sure that other voices are heard.”

14. Team 2 reported having worked together prior to the establishment of the MFT, utilising a gender framework in their work. They said that the Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot helped them to broaden their view and enhanced the work they were doing.

“We used to be more just on women and now we look at everybody, it increased our focus and we look at it in a broad way. We’re more critical, considering other people with special needs.”

15. They gave a number of examples of how they had incorporated their new insights into the programmes they were already working on as a team. Benefits they identified included that “now we include everybody. They have learnt to understand each other.”

“With food distribution, men felt that they had the power. Now we have women in leadership positions with food distribution. Now were more able to have women and men working together. Now

---

<sup>4</sup> UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender issues and the Advancement of Women, Division for Advancement of Women, Office of Human Resources Management. Undated. ‘Facilitator’s Manual Competence Development Programme on Gender Mainstreaming. P.4.

there are also women as day guards. Some income for women. It's working well."

16. The two current members of the third MFT who had attended the training reported finding the workshop "an eye opener".

"The workshop was participatory, we were all able to contribute and our minds were able to be opened up"

"Since the workshop our listening has changed. We used to just give updates, now we have more meetings. As a result of the MFT we meet with more specific groups."

17. They reported liking that the approach encouraged consideration of men's and boys' issues, as they felt there had been too much emphasis on women specific issues in the past. Despite their reported enthusiasm, it seems that since the departure of the most active MFT member they have been unable to maintain the process, due in part to travel distances, lack of leadership within the team and from local and senior management and a general lack of ownership by both UNHCR and IP staff.

"This is a new concept. It's difficult for people to immediately change."

18. Understanding of the way in which age and gender perspectives are relevant to work was mixed. On the whole, the people who had attended the full workshop understood it better than others, however some appreciation of the relevance was also articulated within the programme unit. There was a tendency to think that age and gender mainstreaming rested within the domain of community services and was seen to be less relevant to protection.

19. Perceptions of value of the Age and Gender Mainstreaming approach ranged from a high level of commitment and clarity to a certain degree of confusion. Aside from Team 2, the other teams seemed less clear on their roles and this was exacerbated by the lack of senior staff involvement and guidance.

"I thought we were communicating properly but realised we weren't reaching the refugees. I heard things I'd never heard before."

20. The high turnover of participants and difficulty of sustaining the approach with new staff who had not been through the training presented as one of the major weaknesses of the MFT approach. The fact that the findings of the participatory assessment<sup>5</sup> had not been documented/systematized meant that a lot of the insights gained from the process were lost, and hand-over was thus more difficult.

21. Effectiveness is also significantly influenced by a range of local factors, many of which the programme has insufficient resources to overcome. For example, the level of commitment and understanding of the senior staff, the individual dynamics of each of the MFTs and lack of external follow up and support can leave the MFTs drifting and uncertain about what to do next when they face these obstacles and competing priorities.

---

<sup>5</sup> Participatory assessment refers to the element of situation analysis that involves participatory discussions with refugee communities

“It’s an ongoing process that cannot be achieved at one time. Repatriation has had a negative impact and is still ongoing in 2005” (this is referring to the difficulty some staff experienced in focusing on the approach when they felt that their attention had been diverted by repatriation.)

22. All teams demonstrated an understanding of the concepts of ‘participatory approaches’, ‘community development’ and the ‘rights based approach’ and fit with understanding of Age and Gender Mainstreaming, but some teams had a more in depth grasp and were more able to apply it effectively in practice. However, such an understanding could not necessarily be found outside the MFTs except in a couple of exceptional cases. It did not appear that any of the teams had reached the stage of conducting workshops on the approach with their colleagues, more than perhaps a short “briefing”.

### **Procedures and work processes**

#### **Findings regarding changes to practice and the extent to which the Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot has encouraged consideration of gender equality and age equality issues at critical decision-making steps of normal work routines.**

23. Team 2 said that it had enhanced their work and enabled them to take a broader approach that helped them to solve some problems they had previously struggled with. It should be noted again, however, that this team was already working in a gender sensitive manner, and found the Age and Gender Mainstreaming approach highly useful to augment the work they were already doing.

24. Team 1 demonstrated that the approach has had an influence on their work; however, due to their lack of seniority and authority, the loss of a central member, and the fact that they were part of a larger overall team, there was less evidence of overall mainstreaming.

25. At the camp covered by Team 3, a few specific projects were underway that were attempting to address the needs of specific groups, such as school retention strategies for young girls, in particular teenage mothers, and a sessional magistrate’s court on site to clear the back log of domestic violence cases. During meetings with a number of the refugee groups and committees, it also became apparent that the specific needs of a many of them had either not been identified or followed up effectively. The workplan has been handed over to the main NGO operating in the camp and incorporated to a certain extent within their sub-agreements. They could demonstrate a number of ways in which they were implementing elements of the workplan; however it is not the intent of the programme to hand over responsibility for implementation to one agency that has neither the capacity nor the authority to coordinate a multi-sectoral approach. This NGO is responsible for community development and education and there appeared no plans for UNHCR to coordinate a more comprehensive approach involving the roles of other NGOs (such as distribution of food and non-food items). Due to the absence of an MFT and clarity of the Age and Gender Mainstreaming approach amongst the UNHCR staff and implementing partners it could not be stated that therefore that the Age and Gender

Mainstreaming approach is being taken up at critical decision making steps of normal work routines.

26. One of the major changes in application since the introduction of the pilot has been a greater focus on involvement of men in e.g. in SGBV related issues and discussing the women's issues with men, and these appeared to be happening to different degrees across all three areas.

27. A number of people were concerned about lack of sufficient resources. This included concern over budget cuts that reduced the DSA, apparently preventing sub office staff from getting out to the camps as frequently as they need to in order to conduct their work effectively. This led to them being less in touch with current refugee issues and needs and less able to collaborate with the IPs in implementing the workplan. Reductions in the number of overall staff in the country as well as staff turnover meant that there was a struggle to replace MFT members and to ensure adequate representation from each of the programme areas.

28. There were some examples where progress had been made in the protection of women, however it is difficult to confidently assert that this was always as a direct result of the pilot programme. For example, a magistrate's court was being established in one of the camps to deal with SGBV cases. In general each of the refugee groups interviewed could not identify any specific changes in the time frame of the pilot, and the urban refugee group could only state that they felt things had deteriorated and their access to the UNHCR office had been reduced. An interview with separated children in one of the camps identified a number of outstanding and unaddressed issues of basic concern that could be seen as problems related to their protection. For example, they had few means to ensure that they had access to some basic necessities of life, such as adequate food, bedding and clothes, and some of the children in foster families felt that they were being neglected and mistreated by their host families and did not know who to talk to about this.

29. Team 1 could definitely state that coordination between UNHCR MFT and IP staff had been improved as a result of the pilot programme. It was not necessarily the case that this coordination had extended beyond the members of the MFT, however all felt that the relationships within the team were of considerable benefit. Team 2 already had strong relationships, as already mentioned. Systems are already in place for coordination between field staff and local IPs related to Team 3, however this does not necessarily extend to the members located at the sub office, as their visits to the field site are rare.

30. As stated already, Team 2 appeared to be the team that has most successfully managed to incorporate the Age and Gender Mainstreaming approach into their day to day work and this seems very much to do with the fact that they already had a functioning team in place that comprised a collaborative effort between UNHCR and IPs, and were already committed to working within a gender framework.

31. It seems possible that the establishment of a team "from scratch" presents many vulnerabilities for the programme, as there is no guarantee that the team will be able to develop to the point where they are able to function effectively and achieve what the programme has set out to do. Many variables influence the process, such as ownership, leadership, local office culture, gender balance, experience with this kind of work, the demotivating influence of distances, existing relationships with IPs,

level of authority, staff turnover, skills in influencing and changing the understanding and attitudes of colleagues, available resources (including human resources), etc.

32. There was little evidence that situation analyses, or participatory assessments had been specifically taken up as an ongoing tool of the MFTs. People cited a number of intervening obstacles, such the large scale repatriation programme last year and the significant turn over in staff, including the representative. It seemed that the assessment done during the pilot was still being relied upon and the situation analysis tool that they have access to is seen as “daunting” and too long. This is not to say that refugees are not being consulted, however. Team 1 had consulted widely with urban refugees in the preparation of a paper on their situation, and the camps have systems in place whereby different groups can be accessed.

33. The original participatory assessment conducted during the establishment of the pilot had uncovered valuable information that was still being utilized. For example, the needs and issues of the urban refugees in Lusaka had been more clearly identified, and the separated children in one of the camps had been identified as a specific and highly vulnerable group.

34. With reference to other aspects of the draft terms of reference for the MFTs, a number of key intentions of the TORs are not in place. None of the teams have an emphasis on leadership in supporting their colleagues outside of the team to implement the policies and to not assume responsibility for the work themselves. Anything that is being done is effectively being shouldered by the teams themselves, or has been transferred to IPs, for example where Team 3 have handed the workplan over, without ensuring a multi-functional (or sectoral) approach. While it can be asserted that at least something is happening, neither outcomes are in the spirit of the approach, which intends to mainstream gender and age into the overall work of the agencies, and improve collaboration across and within programmes and services.

35. Some specific difficulties of applying the model countrywide where there exists considerable diversity of conditions and issues were also evident in this setting. Significant variations in need between urban and camp settings meant that the very different problems that each group faced were not necessarily addressed adequately. The amount of work and resources required to develop and implement a tailored plan for each area, however, would perhaps mean an untenable workload for the smaller, more remote teams.

### **Management leadership**

**Findings regarding changes in managerial behaviour and the extent to which management has taken an active role in providing guidance to staff about objectives and responsibilities for Age and Gender mainstreaming, and provided a supportive environment for staff to explore issues and approaches.**

36. It seemed that the original Representative was supportive of the initiative by attending the workshop, but did not necessarily take an active role in the setting up and functioning of the MFTs. There did not appear to be a handover of the project to the acting representative and as a consequence, the acting representative did not have knowledge of the pilot project, and had not participated in the workshop.

37. There is a sense of uncertainty as the office waits for the arrival of the new representative as to whether the process will be supported and enhanced, or whether “it will be seen as another time waster.”

38. The current regional advisor has taken an active role in trying to revitalize the branch office MFT since arriving after the establishment of the MFTs and provides them with guidance and support. In the absence of active involvement by other senior staff and given a number of the other functional problems, there is however a risk that this role could revert to being the focal point for Age and Gender Mainstreaming issues and carry the major responsibility for its implementation.

39. An “obvious gap in resources” was seen as a major stumbling block to effective implementation. “I don’t think we have failed to identify gender or age needs. But the problem is so then what?” In a context of falling staff numbers and diminishing budgets, there is certainly an argument that resource issues present an obstacle to the effective establishment of the programme, particularly to track and support MFTs across a number of sites. Specifically, lack of available staff and a sufficient DSA budget to allow staff at the sub office to travel to the field office and camp frequently enough were cited as some of the most significant barriers. Greater commitment on the part of the sub office to ensure that staff make the journey to all camps on a regular basis is also needed, as the roles of many of the staff situated at the sub office are vital to the effective provision of services at the camps. A clearer understanding of the aims and objectives of the approach at a senior level may assist in identifying means by which the programme could be more fully implemented and supported even in the absence of additional resources. It was too early to establish whether the work-plan will be fully integrated into the COP for 2006, and necessary allocations will be made for its successful implementation, including the workings of the MFT.

40. At the field level there is variable leadership between local leadership and the MFTs. Team 2 reported having had a very supportive Head of Sub Office who had made some resources available to them and this had made a positive difference. The other team experience somewhat of a disconnection between local leadership and their programme. In order for the MFTs to take on the type of leadership roles envisaged in the pilot, they need there to be clear and vocal support from management at all levels.

“We are down here but we need support from the top”

41. Thus, until there is an opportunity to re-establish leadership of the programme in line with the TORs, the accountability mechanisms of the programme have not been achieved.

### **Pilot methodology and delivery**

**Findings regarding the extent to which the Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot was delivered effectively and appropriately, highlighting areas of learning and for improvement.**

42. All staff who attended the workshop at the beginning of the pilot consistently stated that they found it valuable, informative and influential in their work. The degree to which they were able to sustain a focus upon the framework and a clarity

as to the purpose of their ongoing role seemed to depend upon a combination of a number of factors, as outlined previously, such as prior experience with gender principles, senior support and collaboration, the presence of motivated female staff within the team, and previously existing foundations upon which to build, for example.

43. Some of the shortcomings they identified in the pilot included:

- They would have liked to have been more engaged and involved in the process from the planning stage. People commented that the specificities of their country situations could have been more accurately addressed and accounted for if they had contributed at an earlier stage. They also felt that this would have fostered greater ownership of the process at a local level.
- It was commonly felt that the participatory assessment had been carried out by the HQ staff, which likewise led to less local ownership. One IP stated that the refugees had not wanted to speak in front of local staff, afraid of retaliations. However, it should be noted that the process is not one of inspection or investigation, and that local ownership is the key objective for such a process.
- One team commented that they should have been involved in designing the questionnaire that was used in the pilot. They said that the questions were too advanced and they should have been consulted prior to the process to tailor the tools.
- As all of the MFTs rely heavily on the participation and collaboration of implementing partners, they felt it would have been beneficial for relevant IP staff to take fully part in the initial assessment and to attend the workshop, rather than risk alienating them and slowing down the process of engagement and commitment. People noted that although they expect their IPs to implement the workplan, it is difficult for them to take ownership of it as they were not involved in the drafting of it.
- It was noted that there were insufficient materials provided during the workshop, which caused some tension as everyone wanted copies. This had an impact also on the ability of new members to MFTs who did not attend the workshop to brief themselves on the model. A new member in one office did not have access to a copy of the materials at all as the other members were based in an office several hour's drive away.

44. Staff turnover weakened the process and highlights a problem with sustainability. In the first six months, a number of original members of the MFTs had left, as had the representative who was supportive of the pilot. This left new members who were less clear on the objectives to take their places, or left unfilled gaps where staffing levels were so low that a replacement could not be found. This was made more problematic by the lack of documentation of the initial findings in the participatory assessments.

45. One of the MFTs commented that they feel it is too early to roll out the programme across the rest of the organisation. They felt that there is still more to learn; "to have a model, to say it's a success; it's too early for us".

46. Developing countrywide priorities and plans was complicated by the fact that refugee issues were significantly different between urban and camp based refugees. Staff were not clear how overcome some fundamental obstacles to implementing their plans. For example, the problems with the legal status of urban refugees mean that many of them are not eligible for UNHCR services, despite their need being great. Staff working in this setting felt that the three priorities established through the pilot could not be effectively addressed in the face of the pressing need to assist people to gain legitimate status. Reductions in food rations in the camps result in hunger and malnutrition, overshadowing other initiatives. In addition, large scale repatriation exercises tend to take over the focus and priority of operations and staff were unclear how to incorporate Age and Gender Mainstreaming principles.

47. People felt that some kind of ongoing support and guidance would have been helpful from the pilot staff. On an overt level, MFT members said they would have liked access to advice on how to deal with difficulties as they arose, and one team even said they would have liked pressure to assist them in meeting deadlines and staying focused. This could also be seen as a desire for HQ staff to provide the leadership that was lacking at a local level, and a reflection of the need for assistance in developing the functioning of some of the teams to a point where they could carry out their TORs and roles more effectively and clearly. Problems of communication would need to be addressed even if such support was forthcoming from HQ. Some of the teams have unreliable access to email and telephone.



## Learning and recommendations

### Learning

48. The key learning to arise out of the pilot project in Zambia is as follows:

#### *MFTs*

- MFTs that are not being established within existing frameworks or processes require a higher degree of support and guidance, both from the programme team at HQ and from local management. As stated above, it seems that the establishment of a team “from scratch” presents much vulnerability for the programme, as there is no guarantee that the team will be able to develop to the point where they are able to function effectively and achieve what the programme has set out to do. Many variables influence the process, such as ownership, leadership, local office culture, gender balance, experience with this kind of work, the demotivating influence of distances, existing relationships with IPs, level of authority, staff turnover, skills in influencing and changing the understanding and attitudes of colleagues, available resources (including human resources), etc. Therefore the Age and Gender Mainstreaming approach may have increased likelihood of success in the short term when it augments existing processes and initiatives and where staff have more experience with gender frameworks.
- Composition of the MFTs with regard to programme representation, gender balance, experience balance, seniority are critical to the effectiveness of the teams
- Problems of staff turnover need to be addressed to promote sustainability of the programme and the MFTs
- MFTs require sufficient authority in order to meet their TORs, such as influencing practices in their offices
- More specific and perhaps localised guidance may be needed to assist MFTs to overcome external obstacles such as urban refugee policy (both of UNHCR and host governments), food rationing in camps and large scale repatriation programmes.
- Implementing partners are a vital element of the programme and need to be included from the earliest phase possible as full members of the initiative.

#### *Leadership*

- Sufficient resources need to be invested in the briefing and education of representatives and local senior managers in order to ensure a consistent level of support for the programme

- The programme is less likely to fulfill its objectives without broad ranging commitment from senior management

#### *Pilot Programme Methodology*

- The basic principles conveyed through the workshop were well responded to and had an impact on attitudes and to some degree upon the practices of the people who participated
- Diversity of programmes within (and between) country operations needs to be taken into account to assist MFTs in addressing, for example, the contrasting issues inherent in both urban and camp situations
- Locally based staff need to be involved in the process as early as possible to facilitate ownership
- Additional strategies may need to be developed to assist in strengthening an understanding that Age and Gender Mainstreaming is not just a concern of community services workers and in fact has strong relevance to protection and programme areas.

#### *Participatory Assessment Tool*

- Key issues were identified through the use of the tool during the establishment of the pilot, leading to further work in the case of urban refugees. The needs of one identified group, i.e. separated children, are yet to be adequately addressed.
- The version of the assessment tool that was distributed to Zambia was regarded as too daunting and time consuming and is insufficiently user friendly to encourage its ongoing use

### **Recommendations**

49. The key recommendations for the future development of the Age and Gender mainstreaming initiative in Zambia are as follows:

- While Zambia is facing a number of obstacles to the smooth and effective implementation of the initiative, there are a number of good practice examples that give cause for considerable encouragement. It is therefore recommended that the initiative continue, with a renewed effort to address current problems.
- Wider commitment of leadership needs to be established including at the representative, heads of department and heads of sub office level. The document outlining the TORs for the MFTs and the role of the representative would be a useful tool in clarifying the intent of the initiative
- Composition of some of the MFTs could be reviewed by the representative in consultation with other senior staff to ensure broad

representation across programme areas and sufficient authority to meet objectives

- The skills and successes of MFTs could be capitalised upon to assist all the teams to learn from each other and to address local problems by bringing the teams together, along with the representative and section heads.
- The team dealing with urban refugees may need increased senior level support and input to develop strategies to address where the problems of urban refugee policy and the objectives of the Age and Gender Mainstreaming approach intersect.
- Some deadlines and guidance need to be established by the representative in collaboration with the head of sub office for the camp based team that is not currently actively functioning, in order to assist them to refocus their energies and reinstate the programme. The problems of distance and resources for travel need to be addressed, including agreement upon a minimum number of camp visits per year.
- The Protection section needs to strengthen its participation in the process.
- Accountability for the implementation of the work-plans as well as for the functioning of the MFT needs to be strengthened not least for Representative, /Deputy Representative, and other senior staff.
- Accountability for follow up to address the needs of specific and identified refugee groups needs to be clarified to ensure that the protection needs of groups such as teenage mothers, separated children and the disabled are addressed.
- Identified protection problems that remain unmet due to budget restrictions should be documented and included in Country Operation Report (COP). Identified protection problems that remain unsolved due to political or other restrictions should be included in the Annual Protection Report (APR).
- The newer, simplified version of the participatory tool should be obtained and a strategy developed to implement the regular use of the tool as envisaged by the programme, especially for planning and prioritization purposes.

50. The key recommendations for the proposed wider roll out of the initiative are as follows:

- On the basis of the evidence of positive changes with regard to knowledge and some of the activities, it is recommended that the roll out go ahead, with adjustments to the methodology to address lessons learned.
- The positive response to the content and form of the workshop in Zambia should be noted and taken into account so that the gains of that part of the process are not lost
- The participatory tool needs to be as user friendly as possible and the programme should ensure that local MFTs are very clear as to what is expected of them with regard to its use.

- Involvement of both locally based staff and IPs from the planning stages is key to ensuring local ownership and tailoring to specific local conditions
- Some form of preliminary assessment as to local conditions, staffing issues, political and policy issues, attitudes and other potential obstacles to the programme may need to be made in order to put strategies in place to overcome them
- The particular circumstances of urban refugee caseloads may need to be taken more into account in the design of the approach
- Strengthening the approach for briefing senior staff is needed to consolidate support for the programme after the initial set up is complete
- Some system for ongoing support and mentoring of the MFTs is needed to assist them to develop as a team, to maintain their focus and to increase accountability
- The roll out may be more effective if done in a phased way over a period of time to facilitate consolidation of learning and establishment of the local structures.
- More attention may need to be paid to variation in skill and knowledge levels prior to the training, particularly with regard gender frameworks, team management, and informal leadership
- Information gathered in the participatory assessments needs to be documented/systematized so that it can inform the APR, planning and prioritization processes and the COP.
- Work-plans of the MFT should be integrated into the COP so as to avoid parallel work-plans, and sufficient resources for its implementation.
- Work-plans needs to cover TOR for the MFT
- Workshop might have to take shape of training of trainers if it doesn't include a significant percentage of staff and partners in order to enable the MFT to carry out their leadership and training role vis-à-vis the other staff.
- Training materials should be developed/pulled together from existing training materials for the purpose of training of staff outside the MFTs.
- Age and Gender Mainstreaming, including the setting up and functioning of MFTs has to be included into accountability frameworks, not least for Representative/Deputy Representative and other senior management staff.

### **Overall conclusion**

51. Overall, the Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot programme appears to be having a mixed impact across the operation in Zambia. The core ideas and principles of the programme were essentially retained by the staff who attended the workshop, and there are some examples where the framework is being put to productive use. Wider strategies will need to be formulated, however, to overcome the many

obstacles to consistent, committed and effective ongoing mainstreaming of gender and age principles.