



Changing the way  
UNHCR does business?

An evaluation of the  
Age, Gender and Diversity  
Mainstreaming Strategy,  
2004-2009

Pre-publication edition

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# Executive Summary

## Background to the evaluation and methodology

The UNHCR Age Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) strategy was intended to introduce a new model of development for UNHCR, towards planning and implementation that put the diverse priorities and needs of persons of concern at the heart of what UNHCR does. Such a way of doing business requires proactive Executive Board and senior management leadership, effective accountability functions, and adequate resources and capacity. The evaluation concludes that despite some good progress UNHCR is still a considerable distance from being the organization envisaged in the AGDM strategy, or an organization where age, gender and diversity have been taken into account at all operational levels and have been adequately mainstreamed.

This report contains the evaluation of the AGDM strategy 2004-2009. The purposes of the evaluation were to:

- Review and assess the design and delivery of the AGDM strategy.
- Identify lessons learned, good practices and constraints.
- Identify interim results, vis-à-vis the results statements set out in the AGDM ACTION Plan 2007-2009.
- Provide recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the AGDM strategy, follow-up, capacity building and monitoring.
- Feed into the AGDM ACTION Plan 2010-2012, so as to enhance UNHCR's ability to meet this aspect of its Global Strategic Objectives.

The evaluation methodology included: establishing a Steering Committee/user group; background document review; regional and country visits to Colombia, Ethiopia and Central Europe, including an in-depth participatory evaluation methodology in Colombia; HQ interviews; an electronic questionnaire; and review of the AGDM Accountability Framework (AF). Triangulation revealed that data sources tended to corroborate each other. Bias and limitations included self-selection of reviewed country operations and questionnaire respondents, and financial decisions made by UNHCR which hindered the evaluation team's ability to spend an adequate amount of time with persons of concern in country.

## Changing the way UNHCR does business?

The aim of the AGDM strategy was to ensure a broad participatory, rights- and community-based approach within UNHCR operations, based on an analysis of protection risks from the standpoint of age, gender and other social factors. According to the AGDM ACTION Plan 2007-2009, when age, gender and diversity analysis reveals inequalities and gaps in protection, targeted actions should be implemented to address shortcomings and support empowerment, especially for groups who are at-risk or

disenfranchised. The ACTION Plan also emphasized that AGDM was the responsibility of all UNHCR staff.

The AGDM strategy introduced a shift in thinking about the meaning of "protection". It implied a change from a model in which UNHCR's work was divided between two somewhat distinct sectors: those of "Assistance" and "Protection", to an understanding that Protection itself has material, social, economic, political and legal dimensions. The AGDM strategy highlights the importance of focusing not only on the legal aspects of protection, but also the social and, economic aspects, as these are the spheres in which most rights violations of persons of concern occur.

It is important to highlight how broad and innovative the AGDM strategy was. When High Commissioner Guterres noted in 2006 that "Age, gender and diversity mainstreaming should really change the way we do business", this acknowledged that the AGDM strategy implied a dramatic shift in concepts, approaches, and work methods. While some progress has been made towards this goal, in particular the reinvigoration and systematization of contact with persons of concern through Participatory Assessments (PAs), such dramatic shifts must be phased in over a longer timeframe, with more concerted support, including through resourcing, by the Executive Committee and senior management.

### **Results in terms of institutional mainstreaming**

The implications of the AGDM strategy in terms of changing the way UNHCR does business have not been sufficiently articulated in a manner that all staff and partners can easily understand. The AGDM Strategy does not have the weight of official UNHCR policy, nor has any clear vision been laid out that states what UNHCR will look like and be able to do once AGD mainstreaming is complete. UNHCR has relied too heavily on CDGECS in moving the AGDM Strategy forward; despite its best efforts, without adequate leadership and oversight by the Executive Committee and at the highest levels of UNHCR management - needed to guide and support mainstreaming at HQ and country operations levels.

In the context of accountability frameworks in the UN system, the AGDM AF, despite some shortcomings, is a cutting edge tool and UNHCR should be commended for its methodical development and implementation. Nevertheless, the Executive Committee in particular has not fully met its responsibilities in ensuring adequate oversight and accountability, and that the AF fulfilled its planned purpose.

Overall, UNHCR has paid insufficient attention to ensure the sustainability of the mainstreaming aspect of the AGDM strategy, in the sense of building the staffing profile, training, orientation, and performance appraisal systems that will ensure that gains made to date are not lost over time. Such constraints to mainstreaming, in particular gender mainstreaming, are common in the UN; UNHCR now has the opportunity to build on new UN initiatives for mainstreaming, as well as progress made with its own AF.



## **The AGDM ACTION Plan 2007-2009 through an RBM lens**

The ACTION Plan has been a useful tool for establishing UNHCR's organizational responsibilities, but is not a rigorous RBM document, and as such resembles plans found in many UN organizations that are transitioning to RBM. Self-reporting on outputs/activities in the ACTION Plan reveal that most have taken place as planned, but there is no higher level reporting, as would be expected under RBM.

To determine whether an adequate level of mainstreaming of AGD has taken place, the next AGDM ACTION Plan should articulate a vision of what UNHCR as an organisation will look like once AGDM is complete.

## **Results of AGDM for Persons of Concern**

Overall, persons of concern valued PAs, but also expressed some negative views. They indicated that: they do not always understand what their expectations of the exercise should be; that PAs were something being done to them, rather than with them; and they often had no information about actions after data gathering, so they believe their problems have been ignored, and less likely to want to participate again.

All evaluation data sources point towards the conclusion that, given the right context, AGDM can support significant improvements in the assistance and protection situation. Fifty per cent of questionnaire survey respondents felt that PAs had improved programme and protection responses to a large extent, and 32% felt that PAs have partially improved these responses. Of 170 respondents, 76% responded that PAs have led to specific targeted actions that have resulted in improvements in the protection situation for one or more groups of persons of concern.

The remainder of this Executive Summary, as in the main report, is organised around the six thematic areas of the 2007-2009 AGDM Action Plan.

## **Results in terms of Attitudes, Leadership and Accountability**

Seventy per cent of questionnaire respondents answered positively as to whether they had seen a change in the operational culture of UNHCR since the introduction of AGDM, in terms of increased interaction with persons of concern, and in particular with vulnerable or marginalized groups. Sixty four per cent responded positively as to whether their experience of PAs had changed their own attitudes and assumptions about working with persons of concern. These positive results from the questionnaire survey were reinforced from interviews with HQ and country level staff. PAs have become *the* key assessment tool in UNHCR. In some environments PAs have given UNHCR staff a renewed sense of purpose, through contact with persons of concern. The importance of this should not be underestimated.

The evaluation has identified numerous excellent examples of senior management leadership on AGDM in country and regional operations. Yet overall, senior management leadership has been variable, and appears to be too dependent on the personal commitment of individual Country Representatives and Deputy Representatives, rather than on a systematic agency-wide approach to mainstreaming.

Results of the AGDM evaluation questionnaire illustrate that in less than 50% of operations do staff and partners feel that UNHCR senior management has fully supported PAs and the Multifunctional team approach.

The evaluation finds that the trend of senior management at country level devolving core agency-wide responsibilities to junior and CS staff has not yet been corrected by UNHCR in a significant number of country operations. A more strategic use of Community Services staff at the Management level in country operations to ensure the operation is guided by a clear, detailed and pro-active Age, Gender and Diversity Country Strategy.

#### *Coordination and partnership*

Both NGO partners and Donors have been generally supportive the AGDM strategy from the outset, seeing it as essential to UNHCR's mandate to protect persons of concern regardless of gender, age or other characteristics. NGO partners in particular see that the AGDM strategy, and particularly participatory, rights-based and community-based approaches, has brought UNHCR's work methods, objectives and approaches more closely in line with theirs. They have also made numerous recommendations concerning how the AGDM Strategy and its PA methodology could be improved, and look to UNHCR to build a greater sense of shared ownership over AGDM and its tools.

Within the IASC Cluster approach, PAs have been used successfully in a number of operational contexts to bring together other UN agencies around a common assessment framework that identified cross-cutting issues of age, gender and diversity. Globally, however, insufficient work has been done to promote UNHCR's PA as common needs assessment framework at the level of IASC, and this should be done in the next phase of the AGDM Strategy. UNHCR should encourage OCHA, as it works to identify a common needs assessment framework for humanitarian interventions, to consider the UNHCR PA tool as a valid, participatory methodology for identify age, gender and diversity issues in the context of emergency or other forms of humanitarian response.

Donors such as the U.S., Canada, Denmark and the UK have also placed a great deal of importance on the success of the AGDM strategy through their funding framework agreements. As lack of staff and funds are commonly cited among the most important factors that have hindered greater progress on the AGDM strategy, at field and country levels, it would be important for donors to consider ways to support country operations that show a willingness to improve performance on AGDM but currently do not have the means to undertake targeted actions on behalf of under-protected and at-risk population groups.

#### *Targeted actions for empowerment*

Targeted actions to address protection risks and gaps identified for specific groups through PAs and other analyses are at the heart of what the AGDM Strategy was intended to achieve. Through the AGDM strategy a number of high quality tools and guidelines supporting targeted action have been developed by HQ and disseminated to the field. The evaluation finds that technical support, in terms of visits and practical

solutions offered by HQ regional offices, has been limited due to human and financial resource limitations. So while excellent guidelines have been put in place, UNHCR has limited capacity to ensure that these can be applied consistently and effectively by country operations. Operations struggling with deeply entrenched age, gender and cultural issues that translate into rights violations on a large scale in resource poor environments have not received the technical support or financial resources to put in place targeted actions on a scale required to resolve these issues. In practice, COs may have to choose to respond to the protection risks faced by one group over another.

Overall, the evaluation finds that the AGDM Strategy has led, in many operations, to specific targeted actions that address the heightened protection risks of specific groups, based on protection gaps identified through PA findings. Analysis shows that where special funds and extra technical support have been made available to address specific protection gaps at country operation level, there is a corresponding response in terms of targeted actions. UNHCR should be commended for this. At the same time, in no operation we are aware of, was it possible to ensure targeted actions that address the full range of protection gaps and heightened risks identified, as new protection gaps are emerging.

#### *Integration of AGDM into UNHCR's work*

The majority of respondents felt that all AGDM elements had been mainstreamed to a large extent or fully into the work of their UNHCR operations.

#### *Participatory Assessments (PAs)*

However, lessons learned from the use of the PA indicate that it is time for UNHCR to move beyond institutionalizing participatory "assessment" per se, towards an understanding of "assessment" as only the first stage in the programming cycle. While this is a fundamental principle underlying the AGDM ACTION Plan, this has yet to translated into action at the operational level.

The next step is to refocus on the objectives of the exercise, which was to ensure not only that persons of concern participate in assessing protection gaps, but that they are part of the design, monitoring and evaluation of measures to address these gaps, as well as prioritisation of programme and protection responses. The inability of operations to do so is the single biggest frustration of all parties. A revised PA tool must provide guidance on how operations should approach participation of persons of concern throughout the programme cycle.

The evaluation team also reviewed the operation of PAs in all operational environments in which UNHCR operates - advocacy, IDPs, camp-based, urban, repatriation and reintegration, and statelessness. The evaluation finds that there is no operational context in which the AGDM Strategy and the PA tool or a participatory approach related to it have not been both feasible and potentially beneficial to enhancing UNHCR's protection role and programming, provided that they are well adapted to the local context.

### *Multi-Functional Teams (MFTs)*

When asked if Multi-Functional Teamwork has improved the quality of UNHCR's program and protection responses within their operations, 66% of respondents said it had to a large extent, 31% said it had somewhat. When asked if MFTs had encouraged greater collaboration and coordination between UNCHR's Programme, Protection and CS staff, the response was also quite positive. Yet in respondents' comments, it is clear that many staff and partners feel that AGDM continues to be seen as the domain and responsibility of Community Services.

UNHCR needs to pay particular attention and be proactive in ensuring that new RBM technology promotes AGDM. There is evidence, for example in the draft *Planning Guidance* (December 2008 version) that UNHCR is being proactive in ensuring that AGDM continues under the new RBM regime, but vigilance will be required on an ongoing basis.

### *Organisational Capacity Building*

UNHCR has not as yet been transformed in terms of its organisational capacity for AGDM, although there have been some positive developments. Given sufficient investment it will be possible for UNHCR to keep progressing towards an organisation that can adequately mainstream AGD.

Without a systematic baseline against which to measure progress, it is only possible to approximate the current state of UNHCR organisational capacity, as opposed to measuring progress. One concern of the evaluation team was the Competency Framework format. Staff members are appraised on their objectives and provided that the objectives relate to AGDM, managers are able to appraise on staff members' AGDM capabilities. However, staff are assessed on aggregate rather than individual indicators. Because indicators related to AGD are included within a wider set of indicators, disaggregated data will not be available on AGD. UNHCR cannot therefore determine staff capacity or performance on AGDM through its Competency Framework. This will make it difficult to determine if UNHCR has an adequate staffing level to fulfill its current AGDM ACTION Plan, and also makes the development of the next Action Plan more challenging.

Because staff turn-over in many UNHCR operations is high, without substantial investment in on-going staff induction and orientation training on AGDM, past gains from the roll-out period will evaporate. The AGDM strategy was being viewed as an annual participatory assessment that comprised asking refugees what their needs and problems were.

The introduction of AGDM itself was seen by a majority of questionnaire respondents to have increased their capacity. AGDM was viewed as having supported capacity to take a rights and community based approach with all persons of concern.

### *Non-Negotiable Standards of Assistance*

Of all the areas of the AGDM strategy, the one that received least attention was Non-Negotiable Standards of Assistance. The 2006 budget cuts, which affected both staffing levels and the resources available to put in place targeted actions, were persistently highlighted as having been a serious obstacle to following up on priorities identified during PAs and building trust with the community.

Budget cuts often impact disproportionately on areas crucial to the protection of women, children and persons with specific needs, leaving them exposed to a variety of protection risks, particularly for persons who are already at heightened risk. Particular groups, such as persons with disabilities, tend to fall systematically through the cracks when it comes to putting in place adequate measures to ensure equal access to protection and assistance measures. The lack of prioritization through the PA exercise has exacerbated this situation.

The evaluation team finds that the objectives set for this result of the AGDM ACTION Plan are somewhat contrary to the spirit and purpose of the AGDM Strategy as whole, and also raise fundamental questions about its coherence to date.

It is difficult to align global standards of assistance with receptiveness to local diverse needs promoted by AGDM.

In many operations, staff described the challenge they face in defining appropriate priorities in line with the resource limitations. UNHCR must provide staff with more guidance as to how they are to do this in line with organizational realities and resources, and within the context of an overall AGDM Strategy. Lack of resources were a commonly cited problem for the failures of PA and the animosity that had been created with person of concern. On the one hand, this reflects the fact that UNHCR and IP staff tended to view the PA as only tied to financial resources and not as a tool to think creatively about involving the refugee community in solving their own problems. On the other hand, in many operations resources are extremely limited, and the unmet basic rights and needs are enormous.

An additional problem in several operations is that many donor-funded projects are highly restricted and funds cannot be used to address basic causes, rather than the symptoms, of some of the protection problems they are intended to address. It is recommended that a formal dialogue with donors take place to address the issue of Non-Negotiable Standards of Assistance. UNHCR's existing standards and indicators, as well as other international standards for humanitarian assistance, such as the SPHERE standards, should be systematically used as a basis for determining the funding needs of country operations. All evidence clearly shows that protection risks to women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and other at-risk groups go up as access to basic needs and the means of survival (culturally appropriate foods, water, shelter, etc.) decreases.

# 1. Introduction and Evaluation Methodology

## Purposes and users of the Evaluation

1. In response to the findings of three independent evaluations on refugee women, refugee children, and the role of community services function carried out in 2001-2002, UNHCR introduced its age and gender and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) strategy in early 2004, adding an AGDM Accountability Framework (AF) in May 2007. The roll out of the AGDM framework and its sub-elements was completed by the end of 2007.
2. As the first phase of the implementation of the AGDM strategy has been completed, and UNHCR is entering into a new phase for furthering its implementation and ensuring that the strategy is more broadly embedded throughout the organization, it was considered timely to review implementation to date. This was with a view to identifying lessons learned, interim results, good practices, remaining gaps, as well as supporting the development of strategies for an ACTION Plan for the next phase of AGDM within UNHCR. The Community Development, Gender Equality & Children Section (CDGECS) in cooperation with the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) therefore initiated an independent evaluation.
3. Main users of the evaluation were defined as the UNHCR Executive Committee, senior managers and in particular the Deputy High Commissioner, the Assistant High Commissioners (Protection and Operations), the Directors of Bureaux and Regional Service Centers, PDES and CDGECS. Different strategies were used by the evaluation team to involve these users in the evaluation process (see below).
4. The purposes of the evaluation were to:
  - Review and assess the design and delivery of the AGDM strategy to date, taking into account its rationale, objectives, opportunities, and constraints.
  - Identify lessons learned, good practices and constraints regarding AGDM in refugee, and to a lesser extent, IDP contexts.
  - Identify interim results, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, connectedness and likelihood of sustainability of the AGDM strategy, vis-à-vis the results statements set out in the *ACTION Plan to support UNHCR's Global Strategic Objective on Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming 2007 – 2009*.
  - Provide recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the AGDM strategy, follow-up, capacity building and monitoring in the future.
  - Feed into the AGDM ACTION Plan 2010-2012, so as to enhance UNHCR's ability to meet this aspect of its Global Strategic Objectives.

5. Identification of interim results was framed within the main purpose of the evaluation, which was lesson learning. The evaluation Terms of Reference are included as Annex 1.

### **Evaluation Approach**

6. The following features characterized the evaluation:

- It drew on a number of methods, was evidence-based, and impartial.
- Following the UNHCR Evaluation Policy, it was participatory in its approach, including persons of concern, UNHCR staff, partners (NGO, UN and Government) to the largest degree possible given the time and resources available.
- It incorporated age, gender and diversity analysis throughout.
- In line with UNHCR's Evaluation Policy, it took an organizational learning and utilisation-focused approach.<sup>1</sup>

### **Methodology**

7. The evaluation was managed by PDES, and conducted by two external evaluators with backgrounds in humanitarian action and gender mainstreaming. The evaluation reviewed and followed all relevant standards for the evaluation of humanitarian action, including the UNEG Norms and Standards<sup>2</sup>, the UNEG draft "Guide to integrating a human rights and gender equality perspectives into UN evaluations", UNHCR's Evaluation Policy, the ALNAP Proforma<sup>3</sup>, and ALNAP guidance on using the OECD-DAC criteria in evaluation of humanitarian action<sup>4</sup>.

8. The evaluation used both quantitative and a qualitative methods for data collection and analysis as these were deemed suitable for describing the interim results of the AGDM strategy as well as the AGDM strategy's focus on qualitative changes and perceptions, as well as understanding of a rights- and community-based approach, participation and diversity.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR (2002) *UNHCR's Evaluation Policy*. Geneva: UNHCR, p. 8: "In many cases, however, evaluation recommendations go unimplemented, often because they lack such support, because they are perceived as unrealistic or inappropriate by programme staff, or because the situation on the ground has changed by the time the report is published. With the introduction of this policy, UNHCR will strive to enhance the impact of the evaluation function by pursuing what is known professionally as a 'utilization-focused' approach to evaluation."

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc\\_cat\\_source\\_id=4](http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_source_id=4)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.alnap.org/resources/guides/evaluation/qualityproforma.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.alnap.org/resources/guides/evaluation/ehadac.aspx>

**The following methods were used:**

*A. Stakeholder Analysis and establishing the Steering Committee*

9. As a first step, a stakeholder analysis was carried out to determine who the key evaluation users and audience were and how they could be involved in the evaluation process. An evaluation Steering Committee, which was also considered the key user group, was set up, including UNHCR staff, Executive Committee members and NGO staff. A list of Steering Committee members can be found in Annex 2. The Steering Committee met three times in Geneva. It reviewed and validated the evaluation methodology, reviewed interim reports, and provided feedback on conclusions and recommendations.

*B. Background Document review*

10. An extensive document review was carried out (see references in footnotes). The purpose of the document review was to orient the evaluation team, and to provide evaluation data. As well as UNHCR and other agency formal reports, evaluations and publications, a large number of internal documents were reviewed, including Country and Regional Operation Plans, Annual Protection Reports, Standards and Indicators Reports, Participatory Assessments (PA), systematization forms, prioritization forms, and completed AGDM Accountability Frameworks (AFs).

*C. Regional and Country Visits<sup>5</sup>*

11. Regional and country visits were planned to four sites to include a representative range of UNHCR operations. However, the last field mission planned – to Afghanistan – had to be cancelled because of security conditions in the run up to the election, and it was not possible to replace this with another country given the evaluation schedule. Missions were carried out to Colombia (representative of an IDP setting), Ethiopia (urban and camp setting), and Central Europe (advocacy based operation).

12. In preparation for the missions the evaluation team reviewed relevant country level documents. During the missions the evaluation team met with UNHCR and counterpart staff, particularly those involved in Multi-Functional AGDM teams, and persons of concern both in focus groups and individually. Efforts were made to meet with a range of persons of concern, including women, older people, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. In Ethiopia, Colombia and Central Europe, focus group discussions were held with persons of concern to identify their views about the AGDM strategy and the Participatory Assessments (PAs) in which they had participated.

13. Because of funding constraints missions were short, 10-12 days in each case (see limitations, below). Meetings with UNHCR and counterpart staff and persons of concern

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<sup>5</sup> Individual country level reports are available from PDES on request.



made it possible to identify where perceptions of professional staff working in the field coincided with perceptions of persons of concern.

14. After each country mission, preliminary findings and recommendations were shared with UNHCR staff during a debriefing at the UNHCR field office, and reports were also sent to relevant country offices for review and feedback.

15. In consultation with PDES, and in order to mirror intended AGDM practice, in Colombia the evaluation used more participatory methods with persons of concerns. The evaluation team would like to note its appreciation to PDES for supporting this initiative. A review was conducted of participatory evaluation reports, discussions were held with HAP-I, and a methodological process outlined in a briefing note. A national evaluator, Ursula Mendosa, was then hired who worked with one of the international evaluators to set up and implement a participatory evaluation in four communities, involving approximately 200 persons of concern.<sup>6</sup>

16. Dale Buscher of the Women's Refugee Commission and Joanina Karugaba, UNHCR's SGBV Advisor, joined for the mission to Ethiopia to share their particular insights on AGDM from an age, gender and SGBV perspective. The evaluation manager from PDES, Esther Kiragu, joined the mission to Central Europe.

#### *D. HQ interviews*

17. Based on initial results of the stakeholder analysis, approximately 60 interviews were carried out with Geneva based staff and counterparts during three visits to Geneva in March, June and November 2009. Questionnaires were drawn up for these interviews organized around the six results areas in the AGDM Plan.

18. Additional foci during these interviews was the change management process at UNHCR, and the implications for UNHCR of the introduction of new methods of working, such as the software FOCUS, and the Global Needs Assessment and AF. Telephone interviews were also carried out with three Country Offices to discuss good AGDM practice, and the evaluation team attended a one-day self-evaluation workshop on AGDM results in March 2009. A list of HQ and phone interviewees can be found in Annex 3, and country level interviewees can be found in the relevant country mission reports.

#### *E. Electronic Questionnaire*

19. A seven-part questionnaire was disseminated through all Regional Bureaux to UNHCR staff and partners. In all, over 200 questionnaire responses were received and included in qualitative analysis, although some were received too late to be included in the quantitative analysis. 170 responses made up the body of data for quantitative analysis, including 46 questionnaire received from international and 83 national

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<sup>6</sup> Further methodological details are available in the country study, available from PDES.

UNHCR staff and 41 from government and NGO partners. Given this relatively high level of response, the questionnaire proved a useful source of data.

#### *F. Review of the Accountability Framework*

20. Discussions were held with senior managers at HQ and Country Representatives and the consultant who developed the AF. Thirteen completed AFs and the two global synthesis studies on the AF were reviewed. The evaluation team also carried out a review of comparative UN experience with accountability frameworks, drawing on ongoing work by one of the team members on accountability for gender mainstreaming in the UN system. The evaluation also incorporated comparative analysis carried out between 2007 and 2009 of AF responses, as this provided a valuable source of additional information on the extent and constraints to AGD mainstreaming within UNHCR operations.

#### *G. Triangulation*

21. Triangulation was carried out between the different data sources. The evaluation used “methods triangulation”, which involves “checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods.”<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that most data pointed to similar conclusions, so the evaluation team feels confident in the evaluation findings, despite the limitations noted below.

#### **Limitations, biases and constraints**

22. There were two main sources of potential bias in the evaluation methodology. First, countries visited were self-selected by UNHCR Bureaux in Geneva, rather than randomly or purposively selected by the evaluation team. The reason for this is that Bureaux and Country Offices needed to agree to be part of the evaluation. Second, as the evaluation questionnaire was voluntary, it may have been completed by UNHCR staff and counterparts who have had more positive experience with AGDM. As a whole therefore this report may provide an overly positive perspective on AGDM results.

23. In terms of limitations, we have noted UNHCR’s proactive efforts to support participatory evaluation processes in the case of the Colombia case study. UNHCR’s Evaluation Policy is clear concerning the importance of involving persons of concern in the evaluation process:

"UNHCR’s stakeholders, including refugees whenever possible, participate in the identification, planning, implementation and utilization of evaluation projects; evaluation findings and recommendations are never placed in the public domain without such consultation.

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<sup>7</sup> For different types of triangulation in qualitative evaluation processes, see Patton, M. (1999) “Enhancing the Quality and Credibility of Qualitative Analysis.” *Health Service Research*, 34 (5).

UNHCR will strive to develop evaluation methods that enable refugees and other beneficiaries to articulate their opinions and aspirations. In reviewing UNHCR's operational activities, evaluation projects will adopt a disaggregated approach to beneficiary and other populations, taking due account of issues such as gender, age, and socio-economic status.<sup>8</sup>"

24. This is an ambitious agenda, as it is well known that participation of the affected population is a weak area in the evaluation of humanitarian action.<sup>9</sup> To meet this agenda requires time and resources for the evaluation team. However, in the case of the international evaluator's mission to Colombia, and the missions to Central Europe and Ethiopia, the evaluation team was informed that missions could only take place over 10-12 days, because of financial constraints. While flexibility is always needed in evaluation planning and processes, the evaluation team is concerned that financial decisions hindered their ability to fulfill their evaluation responsibilities to "implement evaluation methods that enable beneficiaries to articulate their opinions and aspirations" due to the strict limitations on the amount of time that could be spent with different populations of concern in each country. This despite the fact that the evaluation's cost is the largest that PDES has dedicated to a single evaluation exercise. This issue is also of particular importance given the stress that UNHCR has placed on participatory AGDM processes, as well as the need assess when and where the views of men, women, boys and girls vary. The evaluation team recommends that in order to fulfill this important policy of ensuring adequate stakeholder, and in particular, beneficiary participation in evaluation exercises, PDES requires adequate resources to do so.

### **Outline of the report**

25. The AGDM Strategy is a complex initiative and it was a challenge to identify the best framework by which to present the range of findings and issues identified in the Terms of Reference. The evaluation team therefore decided to present the findings following the structure of the AGDM ACTION Plan itself, which lays out the rationale, results and objectives for the second phase (2007-2009) of the AGDM Strategy, preceded by two preliminary Chapters that provide some of the organisational context into to which the AGDM Strategy was introduced, as well as some of the interim results as identified by persons of concern.

26. The Structure of this report is therefore:

- Chapter 1. Introduction and Evaluation Methodology
- Chapter 2. Background, Scope and Resourcing of the AGDM Strategy
- Chapter 3. Results from the Point of View of Persons of Concern
- Chapter 4. Attitudes, Leadership and Accountability
- Chapter 5. Coordination and Partnerships
- Chapter 6. Targeted Actions for Empowerment
- Chapter 7. Integration into UNHCR's Work

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<sup>8</sup> UNHCR Evaluation Policy, p. 4

<sup>9</sup> See the ALNAP meta-evaluations in the ALNAP *Review of Humanitarian Action*.

Chapter 8. Organisational Capacity

Chapter 9. Non-negotiable Standards of Assistance

Chapter 10. Main Conclusions and Recommendations

## 2. Background, Scope, and Resourcing of the AGDM Strategy

27. This chapter outlines the development, resourcing, and relevance of, the AGDM strategy. As identified by High Commissioner Guterres in 2006, the AGDM Strategy was designed to change the way that UNHCR does business. This chapter examines the breadth and scope of the changes implied by the AGDM Strategy since its initial roll out. It also reviews the AGDM ACTION Plan from a results-based management (RBM) perspective, and makes recommendations for the formulation of the next AGDM ACTION Plan.

28. As mentioned in Chapter 1, between 2001 and 2003, three evaluations were undertaken of UNHCR's implementation of its protection policies on women and children and the function of community services.<sup>10</sup> The evaluations recommended the following: improved participation by women and children in programmes and decisions affecting them; systematic analysis with partners of the protection situation; enhanced coordination between protection, programme and community services staff, and greater accountability by senior management for policy implementation in these areas.

29. During the same period covered by the evaluations, UNHCR was also shaken by a number of 'scandals' highly publicized in the media, and damaging to its reputation. Most notable was the West Africa sexual exploitation scandal of 2002, that saw UNHCR and other humanitarian agency staff accused of sexual exploitation of women and girls they were mandated to protect. These scandals brought home to UNHCR that without a heightened focus on age and gender as variables that can place persons of concern at heightened protection risk, and without increased accountability of staff and senior management with respect to UNHCR's policies and protection mandate, such scandals would occur again.

30. In response to the recommendations of the three evaluations, and also indirectly to the scandals, a number of related initiatives were undertaken to address the common causes of the problems identified, and to bring about needed changes to UNHCR's organisational culture. One initiative was the introduction of the Code of Conduct for UNHCR staff, partners and suppliers; another was the creation of the Community Development, Gender Equality and Children Section (CDGECS) in 2004,<sup>11</sup> to support the delivery of policy and technical guidance in these areas in a coordinated manner.

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<sup>10</sup> UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women and Guidelines on their Protection: An assessment of 10 years, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, May 2002; Meeting the Rights and Needs of Refugee Children, Valid International, Oxford, UK, 2002; the Community Services Function in UNHCR, CASA, Montreal, Canada, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> The section brought existing units dedicated to Women, Children and Community services into a single section.

31. In 2004, the Division of International Protection Services (DIPS) and the Division of Operational Support (DOS) presented an action plan to address the main findings of the evaluations to a Steering Committee comprised of Executive Committee (Ex Com) and NGO partners. The Steering Committee oversaw and monitored the follow up to the evaluations and the implementation of the plan, which was to evolve into UNHCR's AGDM strategy. This strategy is the subject of this evaluation, and is therefore outlined in the following sections.

### **Definitions, aim and assumptions of the AGDM Strategy**

32. The three evaluations emphasized that a major weakness of UNHCR was its lack of capacity to carry out situation analysis using local, contextual information and opportunities to address protection issues and gaps at the operational. The need for closer coordination between two historically distinct advisory/technical support functions, one on women and the other on children, and the logic behind the creation of CDGECS as one section, was the recognition that improving protection at field level required a much clearer understanding of the ways in which age, gender and other social and cultural characteristics of persons of concern can, at different times and places, create particular protection risks. Such protection risks are not universal - women, for example, are not universally and naturally more "vulnerable" than men, but may become so due to the power relations, and the physical, cultural, social, economic, and legal context in which they find themselves. Inequalities and protection risks inherent in the local context under normal conditions are exacerbated by forced displacement, and the breakdown of law and order and community-based aspects of protection.

33. In 2007 UNHCR produced an "ACTION Plan to support UNHCR's Global Strategic Objective on Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming, 2007-2009," which set out the rationale, objectives and outputs of AGDM. In the ACTION Plan UNHCR defines AGDM as follows:

**Mainstreaming age, gender and diversity** means that the meaningful participation of women, girls, boys and men of all ages and backgrounds is integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all UNHCR policies and operations. Mainstreaming is a strategy to support the goals of gender equality and the enjoyment of rights by all persons of concern. The strategy also calls for targeted actions to address identified inequalities and protection gaps, and empower those who are discriminated. The strategy requires action by staff at all levels.<sup>12</sup> The definition of mainstreaming is thus strongly based on the participation of persons of concern in all aspects of UNHCR work.

34. The aim of the AGDM strategy was to ensure a broad participatory, rights- and community-based approach within UNHCR operations, based on an analysis of protection risks from the standpoint of age, gender and other social and economic

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<sup>12</sup> UNHCR, AGDM Action Plan 2007-2009, p. 2

factors: *"The AGDM strategy seeks to ensure that all UNHCR's interventions promote and aim to fulfil individual rights, with an emphasis on those persons who might be discriminated against because of their age, gender or background. These interventions should also enhance people's capacity to protect, claim and exercise their rights and find solutions to their problems. In short, the strategy adopts a rights and community-based approach which finds support in the Agenda for Protection, Executive Committee Conclusions and UNHCR policy documents."*<sup>13</sup>

35. According to the AGDM ACTION Plan 2007-2009: to mainstream age, gender and diversity UNHCR and partner staff should "systematically analyse how the protection situation and protection interventions impact women, girls, men and boys of different ages and backgrounds. It requires consideration of people's rights, differential needs and specificities from the outset to ensure that any actions taken promote gender equality, rights for all and equitable outcomes. This applies to all UNHCR activities including policy formulation, legislative drafting, training, protection strategy development, operational planning, programme implementation, protection -including assistance- delivery, and monitoring and evaluation."<sup>14</sup> As we shall see in this report while important gains have been made to date, the mainstreaming process is far from complete, nor are the gains made yet sustainable over the longer term.

36. According to the AGDM ACTION Plan, when age, gender and diversity analysis reveals inequalities and gaps in protection, targeted actions should be implemented to address shortcomings and support empowerment, especially for groups who are often disenfranchised such as women, youth, minority groups and persons with disabilities. The ACTION Plan also emphasized that AGDM was the responsibility of all UNHCR staff: *"The broad consultative process undertaken and the ACTION Plan support the organisation's efforts to move responsibility for ensuring age, gender and diversity mainstreaming from one section in UNHCR to embedding it across the organisation as a corporate strategy."* As a means of embedding AGDM within the work of country operations, the Participatory Assessment (PA) tool was introduced to ensure persons of concern (PoCs) were able to participate in defining the protection agenda and Multifunctional team approach, involving the participation of all staff functions in carrying out, analysing and responding to results of PAs. A further means of imbedding the AGDM approach within country operations was the Accountability Framework (AF), which was rolled out in tandem with the ACTION Plan in 2007 and is evaluated in Chapter 4. However, as discussed in Chapters 4, 7 and 8, UNHCR needed to define more clearly its mainstreaming strategy and the different responsibilities and requirements of staff.

### **Changing the way we do business: Conceptual and Methodological Changes implied by the AGDM Strategy**

37. In reference to the definition and aims of the AGDM strategy, it is important to "unpack" the implications of the AGDM strategy, and how significant an undertaking it

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<sup>13</sup> The 1951 Convention relating to the status of Refugees, the Agenda for Protection, UNHCR, 2003, UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusions and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

<sup>14</sup> UNHCR, AGDM Action Plan 2007-2009, p. 2

was from the outset in terms of proposing fundamental changes to the way UNHCR operates.

### **AGDM as three inter-related approaches: Rights-based, Community-based and Participatory Approaches**

38. The AGDM Strategy consists of inter-related approaches, guidelines and methods that are fundamental to the way that UNHCR carries out its work, but not always presented in a manner that UNHCR staff, governments and partners can easily understand. It introduces simultaneously three approaches to UNHCR that were to be articulated together : a participatory approach that sought to link participation to program design, feed-back and budgeting in a more direct way than ever before; a community-based approach focused on identifying and building on community capacities for self-protection; and, an expanded vision of a rights based approach, beyond the rights of persons of concern as refugees and IDPs, and encompassing their capacity to enjoy and advocate for the full range of human rights.

### **AGDM as a conceptual shift from "Women and Children" to "Age and Gender"<sup>15</sup>**

39. The AGDM strategy introduced a conceptual shift from pre-identified groups of "vulnerable" or "extremely vulnerable persons" typically used for categorisation in UNHCR operations (i.e. women, single-women-heads of households, unaccompanied minors, etc), to the broader concepts of age, gender and diversity. These broader, universal concepts encourage staff and partners to go beyond simply labelling individuals as "vulnerable" or not according to a pre-defined system, to analysing the protection context with persons of concern to identify the different vulnerabilities and capacities of all age and both gender groups, and thus to a rights and community based approach. As we shall see in greater detail, this shift alone presented a significant conceptual and analytical challenge for many staff members and partners, and required sustained support to ensure understanding and application. As will be explored in Chapter 9, the importance of this "bottom up" approach to defining what "vulnerability" and "risk" mean in the local context can be confused by overlapping layers of pre-existing policies and guidelines that flow downward from HQ level (e.g. High Commissioner's Five Commitments to Women and the provision of sanitary materials) concerning specific forms of assistance that are mandated from above.

40. It is important to note that UNHCR did not choose to go the route of its sister agencies in focusing only on Gender Equality in its mainstreaming efforts, but devised a more encompassing framework, for which no prior models exist. The value-added of this approach will be discussed further in this report, but here it can be said that based on interviews with persons of concern, UNHCR staff and other partners, many have come to believe that an AGDM approach is preferable to the more common "gender mainstreaming" approach since, as one UN partner representative put it:

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<sup>15</sup> UNICEF has a combined Gender and Human Rights Unit, and WFP has a Gender, Mother and Child Health Service.



"We have struggled for a long time to mainstream gender, with limited success, because gender is still confused with women only. By broadening the concepts, the AGDM helps people to understand that gender is a key, but not the only variable that can place people at risk. When you start thinking about more variables and characteristics, rather than specific groups, you are starting to think in a way that opens the mind to recognising all forms of discrimination".

### **AGDM as a shift from "Assistance and Protection" to "Assistance as Protection"**

41. Related to the above, and based on the analysis provided by the three evaluations, the AGDM strategy introduced a shift in thinking about the meaning of "protection" - the core of UNHCR's mandate. It has implied a change from a model in which UNHCR's work was divided between two somewhat distinct sectors: those of "Assistance" and "Protection", to an understanding that Protection itself has material, social, economic, political and legal dimensions. The AGDM strategy highlights the importance for UNHCR of focusing not only on the legal aspects of protection, but also the social, economic and community aspects as these are the spheres in which most rights violations of persons of concern occur.

42. The concept of the Multi-functional team, whose role is to ensure that Protection, Programme and Community Services functions are jointly involved in developing a cross-cutting set of operational policies, procedure and targeted actions that address age, gender and diversity discrimination and inequalities in access to protection and assistance is one aspect of this more comprehensive vision of UNHCR's protection mandate, although this has not always been articulated with sufficient clarity to Country Operations (COs) and poses practical problems in terms of managing staff time and resources.

### **AGDM as a shift in UNHCR's Approach to Programming and Budgeting**

43. The AGDM strategy was also intended to create a shift in the way that UNHCR develops operational budgets. The Participatory Assessment (PA) process was to be linked to financial allocations in two ways - the first by generating priority protection concerns that would be reflected in UNHCR annual budgeted activities and through targeted actions, i.e. the Country Operations Plan/FOCUS submission. It should be noted that the participation of persons of concern in the full programme cycle, including programme planning and implementation, is one of the main defining features of AGDM, and will be examined in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 7. The other way was that, at the request of donors, UNHCR would be able to generate a list of unmet needs and protection gaps. This needs-based rather than resource-based budgeting process was rolled out in 2009 as the Global Needs Assessment (GNA) in which PA results were to be integrated.

44. It is important to highlight here how broad and innovative the undertaking of the AGDM strategy is, within the context of the timeframe and human, organisational and financial resources available. When High Commissioner Guterres noted in 2006 that

"Age, gender and diversity mainstreaming should really change the way we do business", this acknowledged that the AGDM strategy implied a dramatic shift in concepts, approaches and work methods that was intended to have a dramatic impact on UNHCR's relationship to persons of concern. While much progress has been made towards this goal, such dramatic shifts must be phased in over a longer timeframe, with more concerted efforts and resourcing by senior management than are typically anticipated by most organisations.

### **The Challenge of Understanding and Applying AGDM**

45. It is important to note that an agency-wide initiative of the scope of AGDM poses challenges to staff and other stakeholders from the point of view of understanding and applying its multi-approaches simultaneously, if not accompanied by sustained training and support. Apparent "conflicts" or incompatibilities have confused and frustrate staff in the field. For example, in the course of analysis of interviews, survey questionnaires and during field visits, we find that staff are often confronted with challenging situations when a rights-based approach, a community-based approach and a participatory approach may seem to be incompatible with each other or with pre-existing UNHCR policies. Do the views of persons of concern take priority? How are budgets to be developed when the means are limited and there are multiple protection gaps? Which groups or views/problems get priority?

46. In Colombia, for example, staff grappled with working to preserve indigenous cultures on the verge of extinction on the one hand, and working to defend individual human rights which themselves may be perceived as antagonistic to collective cultural rights by indigenous groups themselves. In Ethiopia, UNHCR staff commented that it was hypocritical to talk about participation of persons of concern in planning, then tell refugees that there are no funds available to address their priority concerns when they know that UNHCR is implementing a \$2 million project to combat Female Genital Mutilation or other donor-driven priorities. The AGDM strategy merges a participatory approach to protection and operational planning with a large number of prior policy commitments of the organisation, such as the High Commissioner's Five Commitments to Refugee Women, without providing support to the field to deal with the types of challenges and conflicts that may arise.

47. According to one staff member who responded to the AGDM evaluation questionnaire, the UNHCR needs to be aware of the risk of falling into the practice of "positive discrimination" on behalf of specific groups which itself is not in line with a true rights-based approach :

There is a risk of creating unequal treatment among persons with equal rights (frictions with rights based approach). AGDM stresses sometimes too much needs-based responses and neglects equal treatment and non-discrimination as fundamental principles of human rights and often constitutional law. Specific needs may be congruent with rights or often go beyond. In the latter case, care must be given to justification of certain activities, particularly in programming, in order to avoid positive

discrimination.

48. As with all UN organisations, UNHCR is good at developing policies, guidelines and plans at HQ level that are insufficiently in touch with the realities on the grounds, and which are not adequately explained, supported and resourced at field level. As a general comment on AGDM and the general process of policy making within UNHCR one staff member put it: *"Generally speaking policy development is not field driven, nor does it fully take into account field realities or the larger picture such as other roll-out of other policies and the larger impact. It also deserves recognition that one policy may not be properly incorporated into a latter policy."*

49. The AGDM Strategy was designed in part to help address this problem, by ensuring that local problems and concerns could contend with HQ driven priorities. As will be seen further in this report, that objective has not yet been fully met.

50. Overall, the scope and implications of the AGDM strategy in terms of changing the way UNHCR does business, while essential and innovative, have not been sufficiently articulated and laid out in a manner that all staff and partners can easily understand and implement. The AGDM Strategy does not have the weight of official UNHCR policy, nor has any clear vision been laid out that states what UNHCR will look like and be able to do once AGD mainstreaming is completed. This will need to be addressed in the next phase of the AGDM strategy.

### **The AGDM Strategy**

51. The AGDM strategy was implemented in two distinct phases. The first phase, 2004-2007, included the development of key AGDM tools, the PA framework, a ToR for Multi-functional teams, training and facilitation materials, the training of 97 AGDM facilitators who then trained 1343 Multifunctional team members in 55 training workshops as part of the roll-out strategy to all UNHCR operations. By the end of 2007, the AGDM strategy had been rolled out to 109 country operations. These are seen by the evaluation team to be impressive accomplishments.

52. The second phase, 2007-2009, has focused on consolidating achievements of Phase 1, and monitoring outputs and outcomes. Both phases were reviewed as part of the evaluation, but for reasons of length and since many of the lessons learned from Phase 1 were duly incorporated into Phase 2, only the second phase is discussed in detail here.

### **ACTION Plan 2007-2009 and mainstreaming within UNHCR**

53. After the roll-out phase, a three year action plan was developed with concrete activities set out in the thematic areas noted above. The ACTION Plan 2007-2009 focuses primarily on work at Headquarters (Divisions and Bureaux) in order to promote a consistent approach across policy development and field support services. It was also intended to improve the technical support by Regional Offices, but the evaluation finds that limited results have been achieved in this area due to significant cutbacks on staffing and resources available to regional staff. It articulates a number of results for

each of the thematic areas, and objectives and outputs to be delivered as defined by the responsible entity at Headquarters (Bureaux and Divisions). It is organised as follows:

- Attitudes, leadership and accountability
- Coordination and partnership
- Targeted actions for empowerment
- Integration of AGDM into UNHCR's work
- Organisational capacity-building
- Non-negotiable standards of assistance

54. As noted, the main sections of this evaluation follow this organisation. The 2007-2009 ACTION Plan was intended to mark a shift from CDGECS as the main actor, to creating a corporate responsibility for AGDM across the organization, with a system-wide approach to support field operations. It was intended that the ACTION Plan would be a collaborative effort within UNHCR, monitored by CDGECS/DIPS.

55. However, the evaluation finds that the planned shift towards greater ownership and responsibility for AGDM within Headquarters (HQ) and Regional Service Centres has not taken place as planned, and the responsibility for moving the AGDM strategy forward has largely remained with CDGECS in practice, if not in theory. It has been left to some extent to CDGECS' to push forward the AGDM strategy and carry out monitoring thereof, alongside its other technical support functions in the areas of child protection, gender equality, sexual and gender-based violence, and support to community services staff worldwide.

56. The AGDM Strategy appears to have become stalled at HQ level, with limited uptake by other sections and units within HQ, and CDGECS lacking the staff and financial resources to carry both its significant technical support function and advocacy functions, as well as moving forward the AGDM strategy.

57. The evaluation team finds that:

- Institutional mainstreaming has not taken place, due to lack of ownership of and investment in of the mainstreaming process at the appropriate level, that being at the level of the High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner, and Assistant High Commissioners who oversees both UNHCR's Protection and Operational functions.
- The AGDM ACTION Plan was overly ambitious for the timeframe, human and financial resources allocated. The significant changes anticipated would not normally be feasible between a three- to six-year period given current organisational capacity.
- There has been insufficient attention and investment provided by senior management to ensure the sustainability of the mainstreaming aspect of the

AGDM strategy, in the sense of building the staffing profile, training, orientation, performance appraisal systems that will ensure that gains made to date are not lost with time.

58. One of the challenges for UNHCR has been to distinguish the AGD Mainstreaming process and agenda, its results and implementation which were intended to be agency wide, from the more specific and varied technical support functions to be provided by CDGECS as a section. Distinguishing these two roles, and ensuring the AGDM strategy is driven from the right level within the organisation, would help UNHCR to move beyond the current impasse. It was never appropriate to expect a small technical support unit like CDGECS to take the lead on an institutional mainstreaming process of the breadth and scope of the AGDM strategy. The next phase of the AGDM ACTION Plan must correct this situation if the significant gains to date are to be consolidated and sustained.

### **Outputs and Products of Phases 1 and 2**

59. The outputs and products of the two phases of the AGDM strategy are too numerous to be listed here. Regular CDGECS reporting confirms a very high level of performance, and that at the output level, nearly all the elements of the AGDM ACTION Plan have been followed up on and completed. CDGECS and other sections involved should be congratulated for the high level of productivity in pushing forward such an ambitious agenda.

### **Budgets allocated to CDGECS since 2004**

60. At the height of the AGDM Roll-out in 2006 and 2007, CDGECS received significant funding which was shielded from the dramatic budget cuts that affected other aspects of UNHCR's work. The recognition at the time of the need to sustain funding for the AGDM strategy and CDGECS role therein is seen as an appropriate measure on the part of senior management.

61. Yet with time, these budgets have evaporated and by 2010, the section that is required to provide technical support to the field on AGDM and a number of other priority issues for the agency now no longer has the means to visit the field, with travel funds equivalent to 1.5 international trips per year (see Figure 1). Given the tasks that UNHCR has allocated to it, CDGECS is hard pressed with a professional staff of five, and five JPOs and interns, and virtually no capacity to travel to the field, to carry out the monitoring, technical support and capacity building that the AGDM strategy requires at this point in time. Additional budgets and staff capacity will be required for the next phase of the AGDM strategy if gains made to date are to be build upon, rather than eroded.

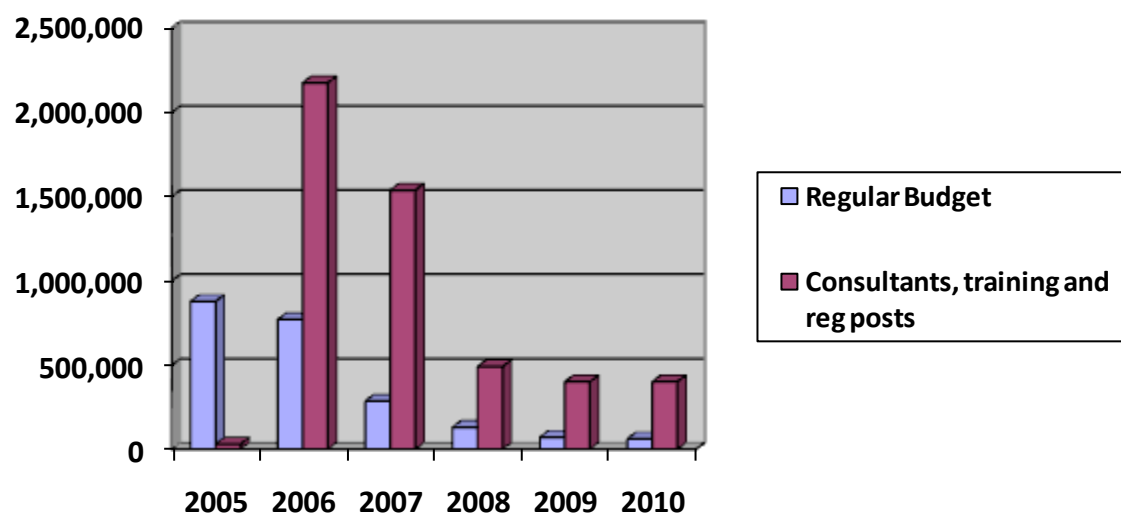


Figure 1. CDGECs Annual Budgets, including AGDM and funds allocated to Regional posts, 2005-2010 in US\$

### Form and Content of the AGDM ACTION Plan 2007-2009 as a RBM Framework

62. The evaluation team reviewed the AGDM ACTION Plan 2007-2009 through an RBM lens, with a view to making recommendations to UNHCR on the format and organization of the next AGDM ACTION Plan.

63. The ACTION Plan has been a useful tool for establishing UNHCR's organizational responsibilities, but it is not a rigorous Results-Based Management (RBM) document, and as such resembles plans found in many UN organizations that are transitioning to RBM. Self-reporting on outputs/activities in the ACTION Plan reveal that most have taken place as planned, but there is no higher level reporting, as would be expected under RBM. The following sets out key RBM principles in relation to the development of the next phase of the AGDM ACTION plans:<sup>16</sup>

- The ACTION Plan should be further tied into the strategic objectives of the organization. While reference is made in the AGDM ACTION Plan to strategic planning documents (p. 2), the link needs to be made more strongly as to how the results of the AGDM ACTION Plan will feed into UNHCR's Global Objectives, with the latter included at the top of the results hierarchy.
- The ACTION Plan needs to highlight and track results statements at an

<sup>16</sup> See OSAGI (2009) *Development of an Action Plan for the UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Mainstreaming. Discussion Paper*. New York: OSAGI, mimeo. This paper reviews the gender mainstreaming action plans of 13 UN organizations, and 10 other organizations. For RBM principles, see UNIFEM (2005) *Results Based Management in UNIFEM*. New York: UNIFEM <http://www.undg.org/?P=1249>

appropriate level. Under RBM, results rather than activities should be tracked. In the AGDM ACTION Plan most of the “outputs” are in fact activities, e.g. “Funding earmarked to support the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325”; or “AGDM ACTION Plan presented to host and donor governments to increase awareness” (which is included as both an objective and as an output in different parts of the ACTION Plan). In addition, there is a mix of different kinds of results included as “outputs”, some of which are quite broad, such as “85% of refugee and asylum seekers individually registered” or “Participatory assessments are undertaken with stateless populations or updated accordingly in countries where activities are envisaged for such groups in COPs”, and others such as those noted earlier in the paragraph, which are quite narrow.

- The results hierarchy needs to flow logically, with plausible links between each level. That is, using current terms in the ACTION Plan, outputs need to be linked to achievement of objectives, which should be linked to results. The ACTION Plan is reasonably effective at making these connections, but the connection is not always made, e.g. between the result in Section 2 and Objective 2.1.

64. Results and activities should be separated. For example, the result under Section 3 reads as follows:

Field operations receive quality technical support from headquarters and multifunctional teams in regional offices to better protect discriminated groups and individuals at heightened risk; these persons are better able to benefit from longer term solutions and to exercise their rights.

65. The first half of this statement is an activity and the second half the intended result. While the result is an important one to measure, measures at the result level are not included and need to be defined for UNHCR to be able to effectively measure progress on AGDM.

- There are too many outputs/activities – about 125 for 2008 alone. The focus should be on the main results to be achieved. Activities to support these results can be placed in an Annex.
- The ACTION Plan should allocate responsibility for results on a systematic basis. This is particularly important where there is an attempt to mainstream responsibility for AGD across UNHCR. Given the move to linking results and resources in UNHCR, it may also be useful to include budgetary requirements wherever possible.
- The ACTION Plan needs to set out a monitoring and evaluation framework, with measurement at the highest level of the results chain possible. Currently

monitoring is mainly of activities.<sup>17</sup>

- The ACTION Plan should use current UNHCR RBM terminology.

### **Towards Minimum Standards for AGDM mainstreaming within UNHCR**

66. To determine whether an adequate level of mainstreaming of AGD has taken place, the next AGDM ACTION Plan should articulate a vision of what UNHCR as an organisation will look like once AGDM is complete, with resources, a timeline, and responsibilities set out. Part of this vision is already present in the AGDM Accountability Framework (AF) framework, but this covers senior staff only. The challenge is therefore to expand the “indicators” in the AF to organization-wide AGDM minimum standards, that identify roles and responsibilities of all staff functions for AGDM.

67. Several potential minimum standards for organizational mainstreaming are also included in the current ACTION Plan, for example changes in staff attitudes, leadership, and regular use and follow-up to participatory assessments (PAs). Additional minimum standards should be included concerning older persons of concern and persons with disabilities for example who are poorly represented.

68. In the UN context where accountability functions are in general relatively weak (e.g. low levels of compliance with performance assessment), and despite recent attempts in UNHCR to strengthen these, the current best case scenario for mainstreaming is a set of agency wide AGDM minimum standards for key agency functions (e.g. COPs, APRs, evaluation and audit). The UN system has moved in the last three years from reactive establishing of checklists to proactive setting of standards, tied to accountability functions. Setting minimum standards requires:

- Developing the standards with the relevant section of HQ. For example is the case of COPs/Focus submissions this would involve establishing the minimum levels of attention to AGD in the overview, operational goals, beneficiary population, etc., sections of the COP.
- Testing the standards with Country Offices.
- Setting a baseline and targets, and tying the targets to the agency wide accountability framework, and ensuring that the relevant section in UNHCR follows up regularly to measure progress towards targets.
- Estimating the level of resources required to reach the targets, and allocating these resources (staff time, expertise and money) accordingly.
- Developing these standards involves a substantial investment of time and resources but is a key method of promoting mainstreaming and accountability.

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<sup>17</sup> See the CDGECs-generated results matrices for the six areas of the *Action Plan*.



69. UNHCR can also track the experience of sister agencies that are following a similar process, as well as progress with the draft minimum standards for the UN *System-wide Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*.<sup>18</sup> Another useful example to follow, already mentioned, is the *UNDG UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*, which sets out minimum standards of gender mainstreaming for UNCTs, a mechanism for measuring if these standards are being met, and follow-up procedures for strengthening UNCT performance.<sup>19</sup>

70. Among the indicator areas suggested by HQ staff to measure organizational AGDM, which could be turned into minimum standards, are the following:

- Training and competencies adequately promote AGD
- AGD is mainstreamed throughout the operational cycle
- Results at the field level are measured/reported on a regular basis using a standard procedure
- Adequate oversight mechanisms are in place

71. UNHCR, based on its commitment to the AGDM strategy, should therefore seek to strengthen, based on minimum standards, all its technical support functions and units in relation to age, gender and diversity analysis, response and mainstreaming.

### Key Findings and Recommendations

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and resources</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
It is not appropriate for a technical support unit like CDGECS to take the lead on an institutional mainstreaming process of the breadth and scope of the AGDM strategy	The next phase of the AGDM Strategy must distinguish the role of senior management in driving and monitoring the AGDM strategy from the technical support role of CDGECS	2010, internal resources	Assistant High Commissioners, ExCom members and donors
Given the tasks that UNHCR has allocated to it, CDGECS is hard pressed with its	Additional budgets and staff capacity/expertise will be required by CDGECS for the next phase of the AGDM	2010-2015, external and internal resources	UNHCR Senior Management and Donors

<sup>18</sup> To be tracked through regular meetings of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.

<sup>19</sup> UNDG (2008) UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=222>

current staffing and resources to carry out the monitoring, technical support and capacity building that the AGDM strategy requires at this point in time	strategy if gains made to date are to be build upon, rather than eroded		
UNHCR needs to develop measures of institutional mainstreaming (such as the minimum standards recommended) before it can determine its optimal organizational structure vis-à-vis AGDM. There is quite a way to go before UNHCR could be considered to have mainstreamed AGD.	UNHCR should commission an organizational review to determine the optimum organizational arrangement for AGDM and support the development of minimum standards for organizational mainstreaming.	Fall 2010, US\$50,000	Assistant High Commissioners
UNHCR's AGDM function is not currently on an adequate RBM basis.	UNHCR should ensure support from in-house RBM specialists when drafting the next AGDM ACTION Plan. UNHCR may also want to consider hiring a consultant for this purpose if adequate internal resources are not available.	Period of development of the next AGDM Action Plan, internal	CDGECS
UNHCR has no specific measures of organizational mainstreaming of AGD.	The next ACTION Plan should include an outline of what UNHCR would look like as an organization that had fully mainstreamed AGD, including minimum standards of mainstreaming.	Period of development of the next AGDM Action Plan, internal	CDGECS

### 3. Results of AGDM for the Protection and Assistance of Persons of Concern

72. As highlighted in the evaluation ToRs, the evaluation team has paid particular attention to the experiences of persons of concern by age, gender and other characteristics, whose views of the AGDM strategy are described in this section.

#### Results of AGDM as seen by persons of concern

73. To document the results of AGDM for persons of concern, the evaluation team met with focus groups of refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers during the course of field visits to Colombia, Eastern Europe and Ethiopia, reviewed relevant background documents, and followed up with UNHCR staff to gather examples of changes in the lives of persons of concern. As persons of concern are generally not aware of the broad objectives of the AGDM strategy as a whole, the evaluation team focused discussions with them on the PAs that they had participated in, which for some represented their first experience of direct contact with UNHCR and/or partners, and other aspects of the strategy that they were aware of. Overall the persons of concern who have participated in PA positively value the exercise and would support it in the future, but they have expressed both positive and negative views.

#### Positive results

74. **Awareness of differences within their populations of concern:** Many persons of concern who had participated in the PA processes said that the very form of PA, breaking up into age, gender and other groups, had been an education for them and provided them and the community with greater awareness of the diverse protection problems and needs of the community, of which they were previously unaware.

75. **Enhanced visibility of persons of concern to government and civil society actors:** The PA process gives persons of concern the opportunity to directly address government officials and NGO actors who can have a great influence over their lives, and to discuss group-specific issues that are often overlooked by formal leadership structures. This direct contact and communication was seen as very positive, especially for people who feel that they are easily ignored or treated like numbers. The perspectives of children and young people are easily overlooked unless they are specifically invited to share their concerns. As one community member in Colombia said: *"They (UNHCR) called a meeting and gave many workshops – UNHCR brought with them many local officials. After that we felt we existed. The local government was there, and whereas we were nobody before, now we existed in the minds of people who are supposed to help us."*<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Community member of the Neighborhood Familias en Acción. Tumaco, Nariño.

76. **Group visibility to UNHCR:** PA processes give persons of concern unprecedented access to UNHCR personnel. Persons of concern, particularly those encountered in UNHCR Ethiopia, felt that without PA, there were insufficient opportunities to discuss problems directly with UNHCR staff, rather than only government or NGO partners.

77. **Strengthening of community capacity within a community-based and rights-based approach:** When practiced appropriately, PA, followed by participatory action planning with all partners, was seen as empowering by the population of concern. This was expressed in case studies carried out in Colombia and Nepal, where persons of concern took an active role after PA in finding solutions for the problems identified (see Good Practice in Nepal in Annex 9).

### Negative impacts

78. According to persons of concern interviewed, negative impacts of PA arise when people become angry and frustrated and no longer want to engage in PA or similar exercises (for risk mitigation strategies see Chapter 7). Such consequences arise when:

79. **Expectations are not clear:** Persons of concern indicated that negative attitudes arise when they do not know what they may expect from the exercise. For example in Shimelba camp, elder Kunama men expressed that they had only one request for UNHCR, which was to give them lands to graze their animals and they had made this request for five years in PA. While this was beyond the power of UNHCR, not one had clearly explained to them the limits of what UNHCR could do on this question. By the time of the evaluation visit, their frustration was extreme and their position categorical: *"If you can't give us land to graze our animals, get out of this camp and out of the country!"*

80. **Information is taken from them and not returned to them:** Some persons of concern felt that PA was something being done to them, rather than with them: *'I have been PAed many times already and nothing has changed!'*. They would have liked to know the big picture. They knew what was said in their own group, but not what other groups have identified as problems, and hence do not know what the priorities should be.

81. **There is insufficient action taken after the data gathering process:** When people have no information about actions that have been taken after the data gathering has taken place, they believe their problems have been ignored, and they are less likely to want to participate again.

82. **People are treated like they are not part of the solution:** As one respondent noted: *"Here we refugees are doctors, lawyers, nurses and teachers. We are educated people with a lot of skills. We are ready to help - even to work for free - to help improve living conditions in the camp. We just need to given the chance to participate."*

## **Improvement in assistance and protection as a result of AGDM Strategy**

83. As noted in the Chapter 2, the AGDM ACTION Plan tended to focus on activities and outputs rather than higher level results, so there is no one credible and systematic source of internal information concerning the success or otherwise of ADGM to date. The evaluation therefore used four main data sources for estimating changes in the protection and assistance situation of persons of concern: field visits, interviews with staff and counterparts, the questionnaire survey, and background documents such as country level reporting. All of these data sources point towards the conclusion that, given the right context, AGDM supports significant improvements in the assistance and protection situation.

84. The number of small and large improvements to the assistance and protection situation identified by the evaluators in different country operations are too numerous to document exhaustively. Some of these are identified below, and for more details see the three country level reports (see also Good Practice Compendium in Annex 9):

85. - In Colombia, the evaluation documented that in three out of four communities studied in which PA had taken place, IDPs reported that the situation in their communities had improved significantly since PA was carried out, based on combined efforts of UNHCR (in the form of small protection projects and targeted actions), the local or regional government (more action and interest in the community) and the community itself. Improved access to water, electricity, childcare, schooling, prevention of youth recruitment were just some of the improvements identified by IDPs who participated in the PA process.

86. - In Central Europe PAs were useful in highlighting the issue of delays in processing of asylum seekers claims, and lack of access to appropriate legal advice; the PAs were also useful in identifying the specific needs of marginalized groups such as the disabled. At the policy level, PAs had identified the issue of lack of attendance by asylum seekers' school age children in Hungary because of lack of funds for bus tickets and school supplies. The relevant legislation was amended so that funds are now provided for these children. Policy makers were more sensitized to AGD issues and this is likely to feed indirectly into changes in legislation. PAs have been successful as advocacy instruments keeping pressure on governments to meet their international commitments, even in cases where the AGDM process was not welcomed. There was also greater sensitivity to cultural and religious practices, for example concerning the types of food being served in centres, and the availability of food, for example during Ramadan.

87. In Ethiopia: As led to numerous actions, from implementation of Child Protection Programmes in all camps, safe houses for women, efforts to improve health services and referrals, as well as large scale project like the Kebribeyah water project that brought electricity not only to camps but to local people as well, are just a few examples of change that has directly affected the wellbeing of refugees.

88. In Kosovo: Through PAs, the Field Office learned about an increasing number of problems of returnees in terms of access to schools and provision of schooling materials. Funding was provided the next year to address these problems.

89. In India: As a result of PAs, in August 2005 the UNHCR Office opened a women's protection clinic for Myanmar refugees. The clinic was opened where refugees lived, so they no longer had to come to the UNHCR office. Six hundred women were then interviewed individually (all of the Myanmar female refugees). Information from the interviews was reviewed by a UNHCR protection panel which made a recommendation in every case.

90. In Namibia: PAs identified lack of school uniforms as a barrier to children attending school, which were subsequently provided, and has supported abused women in legal cases. UNHCR also developed a Code of Conduct for refugee committees.

91. In Bosnia: Following a PA with women in collective centers the Office established a special humanitarian task force to improve the situation in the center and jointly identify most adequate durable solutions for these refugee women. The housing monitoring program (that was established) led to regular exchanges with authorities and an agreement on joint review of refugee claims that had been refused.

92. In the Kenyan camps: PAs led to women economic empowerment through Income Generating Activities (IGAs), the expansion of girls' enrollment in school by creating a boarding school in the refugee camp, BID for unaccompanied children and foster care placement, increase participation of persons with disabilities in the community activities in the camps.

### **Differential perceptions of results**

93. Just as women, men, boys, girls, older women and older men face different protection problems that can be identified by PAs, so too their perceptions of the results of PAs are also different. The participatory evaluation exercise conducted with IDPs in four communities in Colombia indicate that actions implemented as a result of PAs tended to respond to a greater extent to the protection risks identified by children, adolescent boys and girls, and adult women (i.e. problems of basic needs, water, youth recruitment, safe access to education). Adult men and people with disabilities tended to feel that their protection needs and concerns had not been met to the same extent as those of other groups.

94. In the case of adult men, their concerns related mainly to their economic situation - the lack of access to paid employment, or credit to start a small business. They focused on their inability to complete their traditional gender role as "economic providers" for their families, often leading to substance abuse and other serious consequences. The area of livelihoods is one that UNHCR and partners often have difficulty addressing programmatically. Similarly in some parts of Eastern Europe middle-aged male refugees were not accessing legal services because they did not feel it was appropriate to be discussing their cases with local lawyers who were younger women - even though in

one case the lawyer's office was within a five minute walking distance from their residence. In Ethiopia, there were similar findings, where it was clear that PA had not been an effective tool for exploring heightened protection risks for men, particularly young men, associated with secondary movements, nor have any successful remedies been identified. It appears that the concept of gender as a variable that can render both women and men vulnerable to different protection risks that require different solutions has not yet been fully explored and developed within UNHCR. In this context, UNHCR Colombia should be recognised for identifying the importance of gender as a relational category - made up of both men and women and their inter-relationships.

95. Persons with disabilities, on the other hand, represent in each community studied a very small minority of the IDP population, and given scarce resources, it is very challenging to identify special measures to address their protection problems. Overall, it is positive that UNHCR is at least able to identify any special protection needs for persons with disabilities as unmet needs, and may provide some low-cost assistance to communities to help ensure inclusion to the greatest extent possible (i.e. accessibility ramps in schools and other public buildings, family support groups for parents looking after disabled children, etc.).

### Key Findings and Recommendations

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and resources</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Negative impacts of participatory assessments can occur when persons of concern do not understand the nature of the exercise and are not included in follow-up action planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	UNHCR should revise the PA tool to address concerns raised by persons of concern, staff and partners as part of this evaluation	2010-2011, internal	CDGECS or other unit as designated by the AGDM Steering Committee
Participatory evaluation processes, such as the one carried out by the AGDM evaluation team in Colombia, are important learning opportunities for UNHCR at HQ level and country	UNHCR at HQ and country operations level should build participatory monitoring and evaluation processes into the AGDM strategy and PA framework	2010, internal resources	UNHCR HQ and country operations

operations			
Good practices exist on a gender approach, such as UNHCR Colombia's Gender Policy and programmes on masculinities that are little known within the organisation	UNHCR Bureaux, CDGECS and Regional Centers should actively promote the sharing of good practices and successful experiences on gender that recognise men as a gender group and work on masculinities, including translation of key documents into English	2010-2015, internal resources	Bureaux, Regional Centers, CDGECS
UNHCR operations have a tendency to treat gender as being solely about women.	All UNHCR operations should ensure that the distinct protection risks faced by young and adult males are considered and addressed within their gender analyses and that UNHCR expand its programming and protection capacities to address these.	Include in next AGDM Action Plan, internal resources	UNHCR Country operations



## 4. Results in terms of Attitudes, Leadership and Accountability

96. In this section, we will consider the extent to which UNHCR has progressed towards the expected result set out in the ACTION Plan 2007-2009 on Attitudes, Leadership and Accountability. This result was expressed as "*The quality of protection services to persons of concern is improved through increased participation by persons of concern in evaluation work and greater transparency and accountability supported by exemplary leadership.*"

97. Specific objectives of the 2007-2009 ACTION Plan were:

- Persons of concern are able to provide offices feedback on the delivery of services and staff attitudes in country operations.
- Leadership by regional and country representatives to multifunctional country teams in the areas of mainstreaming, targeted action and the right attitude is strengthened through senior manager coaching.
- Senior management accountability for AGDM is improved through the implementation of the AGDM accountability framework, analysis and dissemination of the results and an incentive system for managers with outstanding performance.

98. In the sections below we examine progress on the expected result, and some of the objectives of the AGDM Strategy regarding attitudes, leadership and accountability on age, gender and diversity mainstreaming.

### Changes in organisational culture and staff attitudes

99. The 2006 review of organisation culture in UHCR found that: "there is a strong perception in the organisation that there is insufficient accountability and this taints the image people have of the organisation they wish to be proud of."<sup>21</sup> The 2002 evaluation of the Community Services function found: "limited ability of current UNHCR planning and management procedures to adequately reflect and address emerging social and protection needs, and to identify priorities and adjust spending in line with changing field-based realities....Generally speaking, the dominant mode within UNHCR is top-down, paternalistic, and compliance oriented. Monitoring is carried out to some extent in relation to what has been delivered, but very little with respect to differential risks and access, or in regard to the effectiveness or impacts of assistance and programming.

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<sup>21</sup> Wigley, B. (2006) *The State of UNHCR's Organisational Culture*. Geneva: EPAU/2006/01.

Programmes and inputs change little in response to needs assessments or field based analyses.”<sup>22</sup> It was this culture that the AGDM approach intended to change.

### Positive perceptions of changes in staff attitudes

100. The AGDM evaluation questionnaire asked UNHCR staff to say whether they had seen a change in the operational culture of UNHCR since the introduction of AGDM in terms of increased interaction with persons of concern, and in particular with vulnerable or marginalized groups. Overall, 70% answered positively, while 17% answered negatively.<sup>23</sup>

101. Those who responded negatively generally felt that UNHCR's operational culture had not changed sufficiently. For example, one representative respondent from Uganda explained: " ...with extremely vulnerable individuals, they are classified based on AGDM, and yet, nothing is being done to assist their specific needs. The focus is on hut construction/livelihoods for the elderly, while other categories of persons with special protection needs are largely ignored (e.g., developmentally delayed children, disabled who need wheelchairs)."

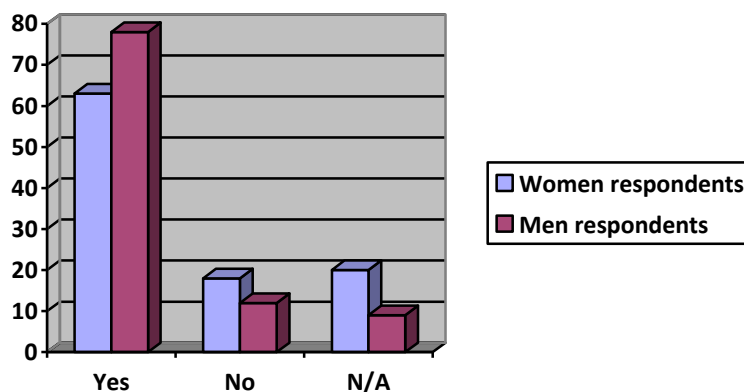


Figure 2. AGDM has led to change in operational culture (% of respondents, by gender group, n=170)

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR (2003) The Community Services Function in UNHCR: An Independent Evaluation. Montreal: CASA Consulting, p. viii.

<sup>23</sup> Those not responding were mainly UNHCR partners not familiar with UNHCR's operational culture.

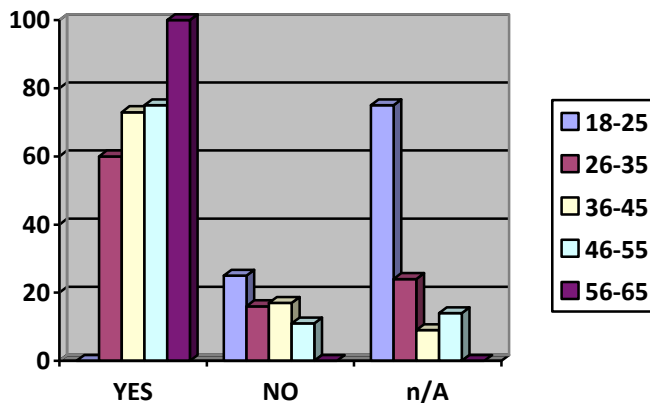


Figure 3. AGDM has led to change in operational culture (% of respondents by age group, n=170)

102. Respondents were asked whether their experience of participatory assessment had changed their own attitudes and assumptions about working with persons of concern. 64% answered positively, and 21% negatively. In the words of one respondent from Sudan who answered positively: *"I used to think that refugees need to be saved and served. During the PA I realised that they have a role to play in determining their destiny, hence their active participation at all levels. They have a wealth of knowledge that if tapped and properly directed can lead to betterment of their lives. I also noticed that POC know their rights and always explained their protection risk along the existing international instruments..."*

103. Those who answered negatively generally felt they already had a positive attitude towards working with persons of concern. 88 percent of respondents who answered felt that PA had partly or to a large extent improved the analysis of protection needs within their operations. These positive results from the questionnaire were reinforced from interviews with HQ and country level staff. PAs have become a key

104. assessment tool in UNHCR, and staff were keen to talk about their PA experience even when the intended focus of the interview was elsewhere.

105. However, these positive findings on attitude change as a result of the introduction of the AGDM Strategy and PA in particular, need to be juxtaposed with other trends and global indicators on declining use of PA in country operations. As will be explored in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7, findings from the AGDM AF and a review of COP-Focus submissions since 2007 indicate a decline in the use of PA, such that in 2008-2009 just over half of all Representatives indicated that PAs had been carried out in their operations in that year, and only half stated that PA results had informed budgetary and programme submissions. The question then becomes if the gains made by the AGDM Strategy in improving staff attitudes and practice on the meaningful participation of persons of concern, can be sustained without revising and revitalising AGDM at the operational level.

106. Despite shortcomings, PAs have given UNHCR staff a renewed sense of purpose, through contact with persons of concern. They repeatedly talked about the importance of reconnecting with persons of concern in a bureaucratic environment where paperwork

and agency meetings seemed to dominate. The importance of this focus to staff renewal and sense of purpose in an increasingly hostile aid environment should not be underestimated.

### **"Systematisation" of refugee input changes attitudes**

107. While some staff felt PAS brought little that is new, many felt it has changed the way they listen to persons of concern. While UNHCR staff regularly consulted with persons of concern before the introduction of AGDM, the AGDM process formalized and systematized consultation and made it a regular part of staff activity. According to one interviewee: *"I used to listen to refugees, but to me, it was just complaining. Women were always complaining that they did not have plastic sheeting. Then one day, in a PA, we were talking with a group of women about their protection problems, and they told us that when they don't have access to plastic sheeting for shelter, they end up having to share shelters with men who are not their husbands, leading to cases of sexual violence. By not giving plastic sheeting, we were encouraging cases of sexual violence against women. Seeing this as an urgent protection issue made the difference."*

108. The evaluation field mission to Colombia showed that the use of PAs has opened up new ways of working with IDPs that UNHCR staff previously would not have considered, including in more informal settings:

109. *"We went as a team to a school where we had heard from the director there were protection problems, we sat down and did focus group discussions with 20 male youth and 15-20 female youth, just casually, to see what differences emerged. The youth told us there were armed groups in the school who are creating conflict among the displaced youth, and presenting a risk to other students. Then we went to Cali and met with other partners and we flagged this issue of violence in the schools. PA showed us what was going on in much more detail, and our partners were amazed at the information we had on the situation."*

### **Extent of participation and feedback from persons of concern**

110. As part of the AGDM Evaluation questionnaire, UNHCR staff and partners were asked to what extent persons of concern were involved in different phases of the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation cycle after PA. Persons of concern are involved to a lesser extent in monitoring and evaluation than they are in planning and implementation of programme and protection activities, and in 30% of cases are not involved in evaluation at all (see Figure 4). Therefore we can see that opportunities for persons of concern to provide vital feed-back on the extent to which protection and services have been improved remains quite limited in many operations.

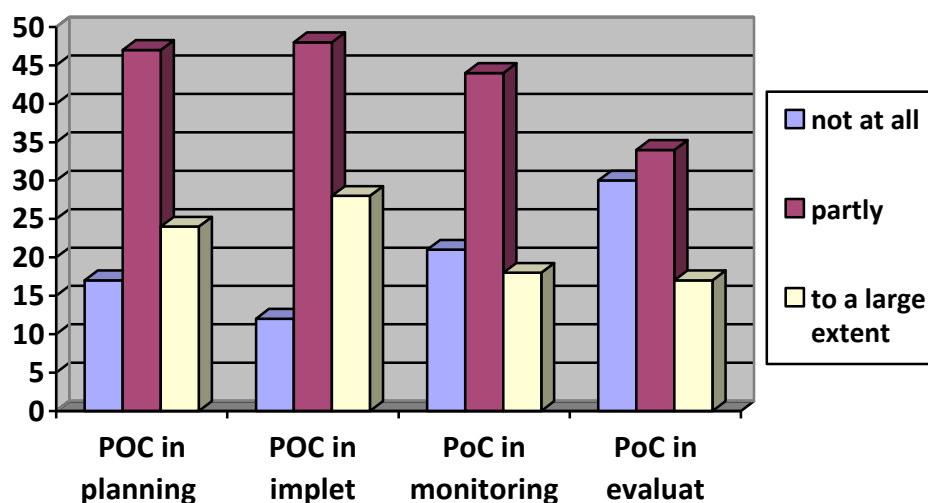


Figure 4. Extent of persons of concern involvement in different phases of the programme cycle

111. One output for 2008 for the AGDM ACTION Plan 2007-2009 was: “IOM/FOM issued with guidance to operations on the establishment of mechanisms for channelling feedback and complaints.” According to the AGDM self-evaluation of this output, a publication “Quick tips for establishment of complaints mechanisms in the context of sexual exploitation and abuse” was drafted. This does not however deal with other forms of complaints.

### Senior Management Leadership

112. The evaluation has identified numerous excellent examples of senior management leadership on AGDM in country and regional operations, including Colombia, Kenya, Tanzania, Nepal, Central Europe, India, Namibia, Luxembourg, South Africa and Ireland, among others. Yet overall, senior management leadership on AGDM has been highly variable in the period under review, and appears to be far too dependent on the personal commitment of individual Country Representatives and Deputy Representatives to AGDM, rather than on a systematic agency-wide approach to mainstreaming.

113. Two field missions as part of this evaluation show clearly two different examples. In UNHCR Colombia, the Country Representative has been highly proactive on AGDM, playing a key role in creating a staffing and office structure, field missions and the development of operational strategies that would favour results in terms of AGDM (See AGDM Evaluation Colombia mission report). In UNHCR Ethiopia, on the other hand, initial enthusiasm for AGDM and PAs was high up until 2007, which an active Deputy Representative left the operation, and since then senior management commitment and interest in AGDM waned and PAs are now carried out by increasingly junior staff at field level, who themselves feel they have to fight to see PA results incorporated into programme/protection planning and budgeting. Basic leadership by UNHCR to ensure that all heads of partner agencies had a shared understanding of the purpose and importance of PA as part of a broader AGDM framework had not been provided,

making the logistics of scheduling and carrying out PAs at field level much more difficult, and their analysis at a senior multi-functional team level an impossibility.

114. Interviews in HQ with UNHCR staff who described their field experiences with PAs, as well as AGDM evaluation questionnaire responses would indicate that this is far from an isolated case. One UNHCR staff member in Bangladesh represents the perceptions of many other responses received: *"There has been adequate support with respect to time and resources but less support when it comes to the seniority of staff participating in the exercise. Most senior staff do not seem to have time to fully participate in the exercise. In most operations it is seen as a Community Services activity."* Among country operations visited, CS staff continue to be tasked to play a key role in pushing forward AGDM, although their level and responsibilities within the organisation do not permit them to do so at a strategic level. They are often tasked as "focal points" for SGBV, individual case management, the development of representative structures for persons of concern, gender, livelihoods, education, special assistance to persons with disabilities and other areas, all related to AGDM.

### **Senior Management Support for Participatory Assessments**

115. Results of the AGDM evaluation questionnaire illustrate that in less than 50% of operations from which responses are received, do staff and partners feel that UNHCR senior management has fully supported PAs. This means that while many positive examples exist, there continues to be a large number of weaker operations that require more significant levels of attention from UNHCR Bureaux, DIPs and DOS to determine why Country Representatives are not providing more comprehensive leadership on AGDM.

116. This finding corresponds quite closely with analysis of completed AFs by Country representatives which indicated that on the question of their leadership of the annual participatory assessment exercise: *"55% [of Representatives] 'fully' complied with, down from 58% in 2008-2009. The primary constraints related to lack of staffing, making it difficult to involve all staff (44%). Staff rotation also presented a constraint due to the need to coach and train. The need for further staff training was also highlighted."<sup>24</sup>*

### **Senior management support for MFTs**

117. Questionnaire responses concerning senior management support for multi-functional teams were more positive: 22% of those who responded said that Senior Management in their operations did not, or only partially supported the work of multi-functional teams on AGDM; 39% said that Senior Management supported this work to a large extent and 38% said that Senior Management fully supported it. However, this

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<sup>24</sup> Groves, L. and A. Landouzy-Sanders (2009) 2008-2009 Global Analysis. UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Targeted Actions. mimeo, p. 24

finding indicates, that despite progress made, there is a some way to go to ensure full senior management support for Multi-functional teams.<sup>25</sup>

### **Devolution of AGD responsibilities to Junior and CS staff**

118. The evaluation finds that the trend of Senior Management at Country level devolving core agency-wide responsibilities to junior UNHCR staff and to CS staff, identified between 2001 and 2003 in the three evaluations on Refugee Women, Children, and Community Services has not yet been corrected by UNHCR in a significant number of country operations. As outlined in detail in Colombia Report , the success of the AGDM strategy in that operation lies to a significant extent with the recognition by the Country Representative of his need for a strong CS team as part of a management "troika" (Programme, Protection and Community Services) with a role in developing the overall operational strategy to ensure that age, gender and diversity issues were viewed as cross-cutting issues to be reflected in all programme and protection strategies.

119. As at HQ, mainstreaming at country level has only been partly successful and responsibility for implementing AGDM still tends to fall on focal points. Greater senior management orientation, oversight and strategic support is needed. It would be it would be important at this point in time to review recommendations from the three evaluations, particularly from the Community Services evaluation, that call for a CS function that plays a more strategic role at the level of operational management as a basis for strengthening performance on cross-cutting issues such as age, gender and diversity, particularly given the AGDM strategy's focus on applying a participatory and community-based approach. Without senior staff that can guide and orient this process, many operations do not have the experience required to ensure that mainstreaming across all organisational functions will take place.

### **Accountability to Persons of Concern**

120. The AGDM process is intended to ensure accountability to populations of concern, in particular through rights and community based approaches, and PAs.

### **UNHCR's Accountability to Persons of Concern**

121. UNHCR has been proactively exploring means for greater accountability to persons of concern, which the evaluation sees corresponds well with the objectives identified for the AGDM Strategy and sets a positive example for other UN agencies that have not yet taken this important step. In 2008-2009 UNHCR participated in a Standing Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) Peer Review on Accountability to Disaster Affected Persons.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> This finding is corroborated by the SGBV evaluation of 2008.

<sup>26</sup> "Information Note on UNHCR's Participation in the SCHR Review Process." <http://www.unhcr.org/4a1e9c6c2.html>

122. As part of the peer review, HAP-I developed a baseline on UNHCR's performance against its certification standards, which have a strong focus on accountability to disaster affected populations. This found that UNHCR was compliant with all standards, except for having a humanitarian accountability framework in place, including all relevant standards, codes, principles and guidelines to which UNHCR is committed.<sup>27</sup>

123. If UNHCR were to become certified by HAP-I this would support accountability to persons of concern and reinforce one of the key dimensions of the AGDM Strategy. However, as shall be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 9, accountability to both UNHCR staff and persons of concern will require specific resources allocated to ensuring its capacity to take action on priority issues identified by persons of concern through participatory processes.

### **The AGDM Accountability Framework**

124. The Accountability Framework (AF) was developed to ensure that UNHCR's mandates related to age, gender and diversity are fulfilled. The AF is now being completed annually by senior HQ staff, including the High Commissioner, Deputy and Assistant High Commissioners, Directors, and Country and Regional Representatives. In the AF, all respondents are asked to self-assess their performance on a three-point scale (fully, partially, not at all), on one or more of the following four areas:

- Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming
- Enhanced protection of women and girls of concern to UNHCR
- Enhanced protection of children of concern, including adolescents
- Response to adult and child survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and work to prevent SGBV.

125. The assessment criteria in the AF are based on UNHCR mandates (e.g. Executive Committee Conclusions). The AF has been completed in 2007 and 2008 and a global analysis is available for both years.

126. The evaluation team discussed the AF with relevant HQ, regional and country level staff, and reviewed 13 representative AFs<sup>28</sup>. Questions concerning the AF were included in the evaluation questionnaire to which there were 24 responses (The AF was also reviewed in the context of other similar accountability initiatives across the UN. Almost all respondents concurred that the AF was a useful exercise and should continue, but there were also a number of concerns raised and suggestions made for its improvement.

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<sup>27</sup> HAP (2008) *Report of a Baseline Analysis: With reference to the HAP 2007 Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management*. Geneva: mimeo. For the HAP-I Standards, go to [http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/hap-2007-standard\(1\).pdf](http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/hap-2007-standard(1).pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Afghanistan, Central Europe, Colombia, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Yemen.



## **In the UN context, the UNHCR Accountability Framework is a cutting edge tool**

127. In the context of the UN's indifferent performance on establishing accountability for gender mainstreaming, the UNHCR AF should be considered a cutting edge instrument. It focuses at an appropriate level, that is processes, and on results that can be achieved by UNHCR offices. It compares well with and uses a similar methodology to the main tool for ensuring gender mainstreaming at the UNCT level, the *UNCT Performance Indicators on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*.<sup>29</sup> The UNHCR Inspector General Office reported positively on the AF (italics added):<sup>30</sup>

"Representatives and senior staff in the Field do not visit refugee camps and settlements for which they are accountable on a sufficiently regular basis, mainly because they are often caught up in heavy reporting requirements, a plethora of intra- and inter-office meetings and the day-to-day demands of external liaison and internal management. Consequently, field-based staff perceive their Branch Offices as both geographically and bureaucratically remote and uninvolved. The Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming, and its reporting requirements provide an ideal mechanism for redressing this. Under the AGDM framework, Representatives are required to form and lead multifunctional teams in undertaking participatory assessments. For some Representatives, it is almost as if such an activity is "time wasting" or perhaps not within their responsibilities. This indicates an underlying attitudinal problem which is transmitted to staff. *Where senior managers have participated and engaged in the process the impact has been significant. They have assumed leadership roles and enabled a strengthened multifunctional team approach.*"

128. Respondents to the evaluation questionnaire were largely positive about the AF. Nineteen respondents (response level for all areas is 24 managers) thought that the AF had helped to clarify their commitments and managerial accountability in relation to AGDM. Eighteen respondents thought that the AF had to a large extent encouraged greater attention to AGDM among staff members, including senior staff. The AF was seen to have increased transparency, facilitated organizational learning, and improved the results of protection and assistance for persons of concern. However, only half of respondents had received feedback on their AF submission.

129. Among other strengths of the AF are:

- UNHCR has been proactive in responding to the recommendations of its

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<sup>29</sup> Central initiatives in relation to accountability and gender equality are the action plan and indicators being developed for the UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/gm/UN\\_system\\_wide\\_P\\_S\\_CEB\\_Statement\\_2006.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/gm/UN_system_wide_P_S_CEB_Statement_2006.pdf) and the UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which set minimum standards for gender mainstreaming for UNCTs, were rolled out in August 2008 and have or are being implemented in about 20 countries <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=222>

<sup>30</sup> Report to the High Commissioner from the Inspector General (2008) "Good Practices and Recurrent Findings from Inspection Missions: A Four-Year Perspective (2004 - 2007)", mimeo.

evaluations and reviews concerning accountability for AGD.

- UNHCR has invested seriously in piloting and has developed an adequate infrastructure to support the AF.
- The AF methodology has been carefully planned and developed; because it is based on existing UNHCR mandates it does not introduce new elements but rather formalizes and synthesizes existing accountability areas. This means that UNHCR staff are being held accountable for appropriate levels of action.
- It targets senior managers. Unless initiatives have proactive senior management support in UN agencies they are unlikely to succeed.
- It is a useful annual reminder to senior managers of UNHCR's commitments.
- It personalizes the commitment to AGD through its phrasing, e.g. *"I have ensured regular meetings with government and other partners..."*.
- It combines gender mainstreaming, age and diversity. While there has been considerable focus on accountability for gender mainstreaming in international agencies, the latter two areas have received less attention.
- The annual reports on compliance are very useful state-of-the-art syntheses, providing a comprehensive review of UNHCR's performance in relation to AGDM. The AF has been successfully adapted for, and is now being used in, advocacy operations.

### **Areas in the Accountability Framework that require strengthening**

130. While the AF can be considered as advanced in comparison to other initiatives in the UN, it requires strengthening in a number of areas. The main issues with the AF are lack of systematic oversight and lack of an institutional structure to ensure its adequate implementation (the latter already covered in Chapter 2). Because of this, while most respondents thought the exercise an important one, several also referred to it in its current state as a bureaucratic or "box-ticking exercise". Some respondents noted that the AF was completed by the AGDM focal point rather than Representatives. Several respondents also noted that they wanted increased accountability and a strengthened AF.

#### *Oversight by senior managers in HQ and Ex Com members*

131. Oversight is the responsibility of senior managers at HQ and is part of their AF, but they are not systematically meeting this responsibility. While oversight of the AF was planned to be located with the AHC (Protection), it appears to have come to rest mainly with CDGECS. Cross-checking of AF responses with UNHCR country teams is carried out by a consultant; this cross-checking has found a high level of accuracy in AF responses. This is not however an adequate level of oversight for such an important accountability tool.

132. There has been proactive oversight in two cases at the Bureaux level, in the case of the Regional Bureaux for Africa and the Americas. However, this level of oversight does not appear to be institutionalized across UNHCR. Lack of oversight has also been raised in the 2007 and 2008 AF syntheses.<sup>31</sup>

133. Because of this inadequate oversight, the evaluation team had concerns over the accuracy of the completed AFs. Of the 13 AFs reviewed by the evaluation team, none included reference to supporting documents such as APRs, as required, meaning that some AFs verge on what has been called the “culture of self-congratulation” in the UN. It should also be noted that there was an increase from 32% “fully” compliant in the pilot AF phase in 2006, to 62% in 2007, which appears unlikely to have been achieved by improved organizational performance. These findings and the cross-referencing carried out by the Regional Bureau for Africa undermine the credibility of the self-reporting nature of the exercise. UNHCR is losing an opportunity to introduce rigorous accountability by a failure of oversight on the part of its senior managers at HQ level.

134. The Executive Committee is also apparently not making adequate use of the AF as an oversight tool. As one respondent noted: “*When the findings of the Accountability Framework synthesis are presented, the Executive Committee just doesn’t show up.*” This was a metaphorical comment, meaning that while they might be present at meetings they don’t press UNHCR senior management on accountability issues. Executive Committee members interviewed for this evaluation noted that they did bring the issue of accountability for AGDM up during meetings, and that it was not their role to micro-manage UNHCR staff. However, it is the opinion of the evaluation team that, as the Executive Committee has been pushing for greater accountability in UNHCR, they should also do more to ensure that the proactive accountability mechanisms that UNHCR have introduced are followed as planned.

#### *Form and Content of the AGDM AF*

- A fifth issue is specific to the length of the AF and the content and phrasing of its questions.<sup>32</sup> Review of the content of the AF is planned for 2010 and the following comments are intended to feed into this review, acknowledging that any changes to the AF need to be made ensuring year on year consistency. Respondents suggested that the AF should be shortened and its questions made more straightforward. There are multiple areas included for one criteria, making it difficult for respondents to respond to the question. For example, criteria A1 on MFTs includes four areas to be covered. Two of these areas might be fully covered and two partially, but the AF format does not easily allow a more disaggregated analysis. A further example is question D3, on prevention and response to SEA. In 2008 responses to this criteria led to many responses regarding SOPs and general SGBV issues not specific to SEA. The

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31 Groves, L. and A. Landouzy-Sanders (2009) 2008-2009 Global Analysis. UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Targeted Actions. mimeo, p. 8 <http://www.unhcr.org/4a8e943f9.html> Groves, L. (2007) 2007 Global Analysis. UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Targeted Actions. mimeo.

32 As of 2009 CDGECs has made the format more user-friendly.

wording of the question, which begins with a focus on partnership and activities covered in SGBV SOPs, may have confused some respondents by drawing attention away from SEA.<sup>33</sup>

- A significant gap is that of asking Country Representatives to account for action taken on behalf of older persons of concern and those with disabilities, both male and female at various ages. As will be seen elsewhere in Chapter 6 of this report, the evaluation finds that these groups are often overlooked in UNHCR programming and targeted actions to address protection gaps. The AF does not request Representatives to account for actions taken with regard to males and females at other points in the age spectrum and others with specific protection needs. While recognising that completing the AF is already a time-consuming process for Country Representatives and other Sr. Managers that is not always appreciated by them, time required to complete the exercise should be weighed against the AFs potential value of including targeted actions that address age and disability as key area in which protection gaps are often unaddressed by UNHCR programmes.
- A sixth issue concerns the rating system in particular the use of the three-point scale.<sup>34</sup> Currently the scale reads not at all = 0%, fully =100%, and partially = 1-99%. So for example criteria C3 for Representatives: “100% of children of concern are registered at birth and parents are provided with birth certificates” would be assessed as “partially” whether 10% or 90% of children were registered. As some 50% of responses are “partially”, it would be useful to divide this rating into two categories, which would give a more nuanced understanding while still enabling longitudinal comparison to earlier years. Although this is much debated, even numbered scales are usually preferable as with odd numbered scales responses tend to pool in the middle of the scale.

### **Global Management Accountability Framework**

135. During the course of the evaluation, great interest was expressed in how the AGDM AF would fit into the new initiative to create a Global Management Accountability Framework (GMAF). Latest versions of the GMAF were reviewed by the evaluation team, who also discussed with relevant staff the interconnections and complementarities between the AF and the GMAF. The GMAF is planned as a consolidated response to address issues of accountability within UNHCR. The GMAF plans to map accountabilities, responsibilities and authorities [ARAs] across the organization, from headquarters, to regional offices, to country offices. Once in place it is intended to link authorities with accountabilities at each level of the organization (country, region and headquarters) and across functions, and to help remedy the current fragmentation of UNHCR’s system of accountability. The next step will be to cascade ARAs down to the level of work units and positions: terms of reference and job

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<sup>33</sup> This was pointed out to the evaluation team by Trude Raizen, intern with CDGECS.

<sup>34</sup> The rating scale for 2009 has been revised following the advice of the evaluation team.

descriptions are planned to follow the same format as the framework and provide a list of ARAs.<sup>35</sup>

136. The evaluation team reviewed the draft ARAs and noted inclusion of responsibility for AGDM at relevant locations in the GMAF.<sup>36</sup> Final conclusions as to whether and how the GMAF incorporates AGDM must wait until more progress has been made on the new tool, but UNHCR should ensure that AGDM is effectively incorporated into the GMAF.

### Recommendations on the AGDM Accountability Framework

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and resources	Responsibility
Despite concerns expressed by staff, almost all supported continued implementation of the AF.	Continue and strengthen the AF as an exercise which focuses on achieving minimum standards (See also Section 2.8).	2010, internal resources.	Cross-agency AGDM Steering Committee
Accountability for AGDM needs to be strengthened.	<p>Senior HQ managers should ensure adequate oversight by reviewing and following up on completed AFs.</p> <p>The Executive Committee should ensure that the AF review process proceeds as planned. Executive Committee members which have Performance Agreements or Institutional Strategies with UNHCR should include specific targets related to the AF tied to UNHCR core funding (e.g. effective operation of cross-agency AGDM Steering Committee; 100% compliance with timely completion of the AF; regular</p>	<p>No additional resources required, ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing, no additional resources required.</p>	<p>High Commissioner, Deputy, and Assistant High Commissioners.</p> <p>Executive Committee members</p>

35 Turk, V. and E. Eyster (2009) "Strengthening UNHCR's System of Accountability". Presented at a conference on Practical Legal Problems of International Organizations: A global administrative law perspective on public/private partnerships, accountability, and Human Rights. Université de Genève, New York University School of Law and Instituto di Ricerche Sulla Pubblica Amministrazione. Geneva, <http://www.iilj.org/GAL/documents/GALch.Turk-Eyster.pdf>

36 The evaluation team was subsequently informed that substantial progress has been made in mainstreaming AGD into the GMAF, with 95 per cent of recommendations on this from another consultant being taken up.

	<p>cross-checking by Bureaux ; ongoing follow-up with Bureaux and reporting on compliance to the Executive Board by HC; strategic planning based on AF synthesis findings).</p> <p>AF results should be cross-checked with other data sources such as Annual Protection Reports and Standards and Indicators Reports.</p> <p>AFs including country submissions should be public documents. If publication of sections of AFs are likely to harm working relations with a government or IP, relevant sections can be removed from the published AF.</p> <p>UNHCR should complete the HAP-I certification process.</p>	<p>Approximately 5 person days per year required.</p> <p>In 2010. No additional resources required.</p> <p>In 2010. No additional resources required.</p>	<p>Bureaux</p> <p>Assistant High Commissioners</p> <p>Assistant High Commissioners</p>
<p>Work on integrating AGD into the GMAF is ongoing.</p>	<p>The AGDM AF should continue as a powerful tool for monitoring operational performance and accountabilities on AGDM.</p>	<p>Review the situation again in 2011, internal resources</p>	<p>AGDM Steering Committee and CDGECS</p>

## 5. Coordination and Partnerships

137. The AGDM Strategy was intended to enhance both internal and external coordination on age, gender and diversity analysis in protection and program responses through strengthened partnerships with NGOs, Governments and ExCom members, and with UN partners within the UN Cluster approach, as well as through a multi-functional team (MFT) approach within the organisation. The MFT approach is considered in greater detail in Chapter 7.

138. The AGDM strategy 2004-2007 focused on improving coordination and partnerships at country and field levels through the establishment of MFTs comprised of UNHCR staff, partners and in a few cases persons of concern. The ACTION Plan 2007-2009 identified new challenges related to coordination and partnership, as follows:

- UNHCR should be more open to learning from experienced partners many of whom have the skills and tools to support AGDM and a community-based approach.
- Promotion of the use of the AGDM strategy in interagency work, particularly in the context of cluster work in situations of internal displacement.
- Bureaux were requested to lobby for increased access to resources for livelihoods through strengthened partnerships with agencies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), FAO and regional counterparts.
- Some governments recommended awareness-raising on the AGDM strategy with EXCOM members to broaden support and understanding.
- Discussions at all levels stressed the importance of Bureau and regional platforms working with country level multifunctional teams in participatory assessments.

139. The AGDM ACTION Plan identified as an expected result: "Interagency protection policies, strategies, programmes and guidance to protect persons of concern reaffirm, adopt and/or support age, gender and diversity mainstreaming and targeted actions for empowerment using a rights and community-based approach." The evaluation finds that while much work has been done to realise this result, there are still a number of weaknesses in the area of lack of comprehensive understanding and application of the AGDM strategy among UNHCR partners.

140. One identified gap in the AGDM ACTION Plan is a focus on capacity development of government counterparts to mainstream AGDM within their own organisations. As capacity development becomes increasingly important within the UN and the next ACTION Plan is developed, it will be important to ensure that there is an appropriate focus on capacity development of governments. The evaluation examined this issue in some detail in the Central Europe case study (see Annex) and found that

there was considerable potential for hand-over of activities to governments, where governments were motivated to take AGDM on (which was not always the case). Yet in many other country operations, there has been barely any attention paid to the need to raise awareness and effectiveness of government partners on AGDM.

### **External Coordination and Partnerships at Field and Country Level**

141. Survey data, interviews with UNHCR NGO partners and data gathered during field mission all confirm that overall, UNHCR's NGO partners were and continue to be highly supportive of the AGDM strategy. From the outset, AGDM corresponded to a recognised need by NGOs to bring a more participatory approach to UNHCR programming, budgeting and enhanced accountability to persons of concern, and provide for better gap analysis of protection needs at field and country level. Key NGO partners such as the Women's Refugee Commission, Jesuit Refugee Services, Save the Children, Help Age International and others have played a key role in both the development, roll-out and advocacy for the AGDM Strategy.

142. Hence, while NGOs generally applaud UNHCR efforts regarding the design, roll-out and implementation of the AGDM strategy, they also suggest that more needs to be done to ensure that principles of this strategy are better understood and applied by UNHCR itself and all actors in the protection context, particularly in the engagement of male populations of concern in addressing issues of gender equality (see text below).

EXTRACT FROM UNHCR STANDING COMMITTEE, 45th Meeting, 23-25 June 2009

#### **NGO Statement on the Report on International Protection of Women and Girls in Displacement**

"UNHCR's age, gender and diversity mainstreaming initiative has been instrumental in putting the concerns, needs, and capacities of refugee women and girls front and centre in their operations. Refugee women and girls living in camp settings are, in fact, often better served and protected and participating in greater numbers and in new opportunities than they were in their communities of origin. UNHCR has capitalised on the displacement of women and girls to address inherent inequities and has generally done so in a thoughtful, culturally sensitive manner. The NGO community recognises and applauds these efforts.

As always, however, more can and should be done. We, the NGO community, remain concerned that country programmes struggle with operationalising the findings from their participatory assessments with refugee women and girls. We believe that more support and guidance is needed to turn the identified needs, as well as the identified capacities, into policy and programme changes that meaningfully impact the lives of women and girls. We also believe that more needs to be done to engage refugee men and boys in promoting women's inclusion, participation, and gender equality. The real empowerment of women and girls requires the participation, support, and involvement of men and boys as partners in this process..." p. 1



143. NGO and Government partners in country and field operations have highlighted a number of ways in which they felt that the AGDM strategy strengthened refugee/IDP operations, but in some cases, NGO partners have highlighted that UNHCR has not gone far enough, or has lacked commitment in some operations to share full ownership of the AGDM strategy with its partners, which has limited the effectiveness of the strategy to date.

### **AGDM and Participatory Assessment as a basis for Rights-Based Approach**

144. In Colombia, UNHCR partners - both NGO and governmental - emphasized the "revolutionary" nature of the AGDM strategy, not only for dealing with IDP protection, but for Colombian society at large. UNHCR Colombia has focused on integrating AGDM into public policy on IDPs in Colombia at all levels, demonstrating how participatory strategies can be used to influence analysis of the different protection needs of IDP women, men, girls, boys, older persons and persons with disabilities, across ethnic lines, in both rural and urban contexts. While all persons enjoy the same rights, enjoyment of rights is often affected by individual characteristics. The AGDM approach called attention to the fact that age, gender and diversity analysis sheds light on the specific obstacles and barriers that a given individual may face in accessing their rights, and areas where government programmes and services need to be adjusted. In Central Europe there was general support for the AGDM strategy, although some government officials found the approach intrusive and unnecessary.

145. In numerous other country operations, from DRC to Sri Lanka to Kenya and Tanzania, NGO partners signified that the AGDM approach, and particularly the PA, provided an innovative tool and framework for identifying groups at particular risk of discriminatory practices (conscious or more often unconscious) and areas of discrimination within UNHCR operations. As one implementing partner in Tanzania stated:

"AGD approach is beneficial in that it helps in taking care of the needs of all by incorporating them and their concerns in all the operations and programming. It helps in eliminating any form of discrimination"

### **AGDM and Government Programming and Policy Formulation**

146. As outlined in the Report of the AGDM Evaluation Mission to Colombia (see Report in attachment), this rights-based approach has influenced government policy from the highest levels of the rulings of the Constitutional Court, to the smallest IDP affected municipalities in which PAs have been implemented.

147. Government partners in Colombia focused on the fact that traditionally, government planning has been based on sectoral lines, but that AGDM has the potential to revolutionise government planning processes by re-focusing the planning process on gender, age, ethnicity and other factors that can affect citizens ability to access their rights and available government services. Clearly, this scenario poses new challenges for the Colombian state, but also was seen to provide new opportunities.

## **Common Assessment Tool and Analytical Framework**

148. Particularly NGO partners appreciate that UNHCR is taking a more participatory approach to programming, which many NGOs have been advocating for years, and that PAs have been tied to sub-project agreements with partners and in many UNHCR operations, integrated into the COP. They tend to see this as an important step forward, in terms of linking UNHCR budgets to grassroots challenges, rights and needs, which renders the budget more understandable both for UNHCR partners and persons of concern. In the field, Government, NGOs and in some cases UN partners see it as positive that UNHCR is taking the lead to provide a common participatory assessment framework that all partners can use to analyse age, gender and diversity as cross-cutting issues.

149. However, some partners consider that there have been inadequate efforts to build a common sense of ownership over the AGDM Strategy and PAs by all partners. PAs in some cases are launched at the discretion of UNHCR and outputs used mainly for its own information use, rather than being fully shared with partners. Several NGO partners have stated that after the PA is completed, they are not informed about the planning process or discussions that go on to determine the final outcome in terms of operational priorities and budgets. However, in Central Europe and number of other country operations in Europe, both partners were in general appreciative of UNHCR's efforts at co-planning.

150. UNHCR partners identify a number of challenges with the AGDM strategy that UNHCR should seek to address:

### **Need to enhance communications and accountability to all partners and persons of concern**

151. Some NGO partners have stressed that the participatory approach to planning has not yet been fully mainstreamed into UNHCR's operations. Where PAs are carried out as a stand-alone annual exercise, these are an artificial way to interact with persons of concern. It is equally an issue that there is little or no accountability to persons of concern regarding the outcome of the participatory assessments.

152. As one Implementing Partner of UNHCR in Thailand put it: "If they become regular, community led forums, more natural and organic and less artificially imposed, that would be an important step in the process, but also they have to be results-based, and tied to specific goals and indicators which all involved are answerable and work towards in a unified and programmatic way. [Participatory Assessments] have to be more accountable if they are to have any credibility."

153. Similarly, when NGO partners have been party to the PA process, they can feel that they are left to explain to persons of concern the programming decisions that are not transparent to them and have not been made in consultation with them.

**Some partners see UNHCR using PA to “evaluate” their performance – not a very rigorous method**

154. In a few cases identified through field visits, , NGOs and government partners expressed that they felt that UNHCR was using the PA as a form of evaluation of their services and relationships with persons of concern. In these cases, they felt that the PA was not sufficiently rigorous as an evaluation method, and should not be used in this manner.

**NGO and Government Partners suggestions for improving PA as a joint assessment tool**

155. NGOs have provided a number of suggestions on how to strengthen the AGDM Strategy and particularly the PA process as a joint assessment tool, including:

- Better training of NGOs and UNHCR staff on AGDM and the purpose of the PA tool. Since field staff and partners are the only ones trained, but turnover of staff at this level is high, there is a need for on-going training of partners to help them understand the objectives of the AGDM strategy overall, and the role of PA within the programming framework.
- Bringing all partners and persons of concern together for a community-based prioritization process following the PA;
- The PA tool qualitatively identifies a lot of problems of persons of concern, but needs to be supplemented by quantitative information, about the frequency and numbers of persons affected by particular protection problems to support project proposals. The final PA assessment should include both qualitative and quantitative assessment information if it is to be a sound basis for operational planning.
- Developing stronger community feedback mechanisms – currently a major gap, and starting new PAs with an update on what has happened since the previous one.
- Using the community-based approach to support local, indigenous community structures and institutions rather than imposing external models of community-based representation and approaches.
- NGO partners also pointed to the need to both identify the refugees’ current coping mechanisms and to utilize the planning process to capture and build on their current capacities – both of which are currently very weak many UNHCR operations.
- NGO partners noted that the timing of the PAs need to be considered to permit the results to be fully included in their project proposal development, which in some country operations is currently not the case.

- Some NGO staff suggested that PAs can be superficial exercises, and not enough probing is done during the PA to get at the root causes of the issues raised by persons of concern, leading to inappropriate follow-up actions.
- Some NGO representatives also noted that linkages between issues raised in PAs were not always being made, for example, the links between the size of the food rations and need income generating activities, since in some cases persons of concern are required to sell a part of their food ration to buy everything else that is needed by the household, leading in some cases to sexual exploitation and other protection problems.
- NGOs and government partners commented in some cases that the level of commitment from UNHCR to participate in the PA process has been declining and that UNHCR leadership in country operations needs to work effectively to build commitment to the process with other agency heads in the capital.
- NGO and government partners also expressed concerns in some country operations about their lack of involvement in the analysis of the data collected during the PA and the lack of joint action plan development with UNHCR following the systematization and analysis.
- While some NGO partners have good experience with participatory methodologies and could contribute to strengthening UNHCR's PA tool, they were not invited to do so. NGO partners recommended that a more flexible, adaptable basket of participatory approaches be developed by a working group of partners, rather than only relying on the limited experience of participatory methodologies that exist within UNHCR offices. UNHCR should seek to broaden ownership of both the results of PA and the methodologies that are used to generate these results.

156. This evaluation recommends that UNHCR operations invite NGO and Government partners to work with Country offices to develop PA methodologies and Action Planning<sup>37</sup> process based on the best methodologies and practices of each agency, keeping in mind the overarching AGD approach of ensuring that age, gender, ethnicity, disability and other key variables are taken into account through the participatory process. Furthermore, it is recommended that at the international level, key NGO partners be included as members of the AGDM Steering Committee for the coming phase of the AGDM strategy, co-chaired by the Assistant High Commissioners.

157. Further findings and recommendations are that:

- UNHCR should encourage government and NGO partners to develop their own age, gender and diversity protection and mainstreaming policies. According to interviews and discussions in HQ and the field, few NGO and government partners currently have articulated and developed their own age, gender and diversity mainstreaming approaches, which makes the UNHCR approach somewhat foreign to them.

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<sup>37</sup> See UNHCR Colombia for examples of multi-stakeholder Action Plans.

- In the field, NGOs and government partners should also be encouraged to elaborate on the principles inherent in the rights-based and community-based approach central to AGDM. While some NGOs are more advanced than UNHCR in this area, others are not. A shift in thinking from refugee needs to refugee rights must recognize that certain actors – not just host countries and UNHCR, but also humanitarian organizations – have obligations, and thus accountability, to refugees.
- Engage its NGO and government partners on the responsibility to take a full gender equality approach. Efforts for gender equality and the empowerment of women must fundamentally involve boys and men in order to uphold the principle of equality which is balance, equal access and equal participation.
- Similarly, UNHCR should support its NGO and government partners in promoting an age-sensitive approach to protection and empowerment. While many steps have been taken over the past years to ensure enhanced child protection programming, which is still lacking in many operational contexts, two of the most obvious components still missing are attention to the aging population and persons with disabilities. Not only may they need special medical assistance and/or particular protection, but they are equal and essential members of any community who should participate and benefit from the range of services provided such as income generation activities, tailored to their specific capacities.
- While we have focused in this report on accountability of UNHCR to persons of concern, similarly NGO and government partners are often weak in developing their own accountability mechanism to the populations they serve. While some NGOs and government partners take this very seriously, and this is changing slowly with HAP support, others would benefit from good practice examples and models as to how they could reinforce this aspect of their work. Promotion and training should be undertaken with partners and sharing good practices to stress the importance of accountability which entails a full range of systematic improvements, for example, strengthened reporting systems, incorporation into performance reviews, workshops for new and current staff and oversight by senior managers.
- NGO and government partners do not always grasp the concept of and need for AGDM. Better clarity in communicating AGDM and the analysis/dissemination of tools for application is a key recommendation for UNHCR headquarters and also country offices which have better local knowledge of and more regular on-ground interaction on specific projects and programs of partners.

### **Promotion of AGDM within the IASC Cluster Approach**

158. Following the recommendations of the 2005 Humanitarian Response Review, the cluster approach was introduced as a way of addressing gaps and strengthening the

effectiveness of humanitarian response through building partnerships between UN agencies and NGOs active in the field. UNHCR, as lead agency of the Protection Cluster Working Group (PCWG), has been in a good position to introduce the AGDM approach as an inter-agency approach to participatory assessment and subsequent coordination and programming.

159. This has been done to some extent. Based on the recommendations of UNHCR, the Guiding Principles of the PCWG include the "Commitment to promote age, gender and diversity mainstreaming, rights-based and community-based approaches and mental health and psychosocial support"<sup>38</sup>. The PCWG has included in its terms of reference the following regarding AGDM: at the Global level, "the PCWG works to promote age, gender and diversity mainstreaming and rights-based and community-based approaches in its work." In terms of Field Support "the PCWG undertakes support missions to assist field-based protection working groups/country teams with identifying protection gaps and needs and developing appropriate prevention and response strategies, including mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as age, gender and HIV and AIDS. In this regard, priority will be given to those countries where the cluster approach is being implemented."<sup>39</sup>

160. Over the period under review, the global Protection Cluster Working Group has also included the AGDM approach (with reference to the rights and community-based approaches, participatory assessment, and age, gender and diversity analysis) into key inter-agency protection guidelines such as *Inter-agency Handbook for the protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, *IDP Profiling Guidance*, *the IDP Protection Gap Analysis Framework*. Other documents, such as the *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Situations* (2007) clearly take up elements of the AGDM approach, with a strong emphasis on community mobilisation and participation, although it is not clear to what extent these concepts were influenced by UNHCR's AGDM strategy or were developed independently.

161. While UNHCR has succeeded in ensuring that key AGDM messages and tools are referenced in PCWG documents, it is not clear that IASC and PCWG partners have fully understood the AGDM approach, or its role in enhancing humanitarian response. The evaluation team interviewed OCHA and UNICEF staff members who were working to promote AGDM within their agencies, but found that as other UN agencies are more focussed on gender-equality mainstreaming, the full breadth and scope of AGDM is often not easily grasped by them.

162. The UNHCR Gender Equality Advisor has similarly found that it requires some explanation in inter-agency fora to have the AGDM strategy understood by gender equality colleagues. However, once this is done, there is general support for and appreciation of the AGDM approach which appears more comprehensive, complete, and applicable in various field settings than some existing approaches to promote gender equality principles alone.

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<sup>38</sup> IASC PCWG: Strategic Priorities. Part One PCWG Strategic Framework 2009-2011, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Cross-cluster Coordination: Key Things to Know, IASC Cluster/Sector Leadership Training, 8 October 2007 p. 42

163. PAs have been utilised effectively in some country operations as an opportunity for Cluster members to assess together the protection situation across age and gender lines (see the case of Emergency Protection Assessment among Somali IDPs and AGDM Evaluation Reports on Colombia and Ethiopia). In general the results of joint implementation of PAs tend to be highly positive, in providing a shared experience, documentation and improved coordination of humanitarian response, especially on cross-cutting protection issues by age, gender and other forms of diversity.

164. A significant challenge however remains at field and country level that limited human resources may lead a small subset of UN partners to carry out participatory assessments together (in some cases UNHCR-OCHA-NGOs or UNHCR-UNFPA-NGOs for example, in few cases involve all PCWG members). It remains a challenge for UNHCR to engage all relevant Cluster members on PA and share and disseminate PA findings as a basis for full interagency collaboration across age, gender and diversity lines, despite the promise shown by this approach.

165. The proliferation of IASC Clusters and sub-clusters in which age and gender issues are either cross-cutting or the focus of sub-cluster (such as in the case of child-protection), appears not to have facilitated the incorporation of cross-cutting themes into the work of all Clusters. The 2007 Evaluation of the Cluster approach found that efforts to ensure the integration of cross-cutting issues in the Cluster approach were not successful. In the Pakistan earthquake, new entities were established, such as 'human rights', 'gender' or 'disability' under the protection cluster, creating what some referred to as 'over-clusterisation'.<sup>40</sup> As the UNHCR Real Time Evaluation observes, attempts to address cross-cutting issues have led to a 'proliferation of coordinating structures and procedures which appear to absorb an excessive amount of time and energy in the field'.<sup>41</sup> The evaluation further found that *"At the global level, while partners report value in having a forum to develop protection policy, the work of the cluster group has not yet translated into substantially improved support to the field. Further, the clusters subdivision into nine separate issue areas, each with its own focal point,<sup>42</sup> has not increased confidence in the prospects for cohesive coordination, but rather has raised some concerns about the potential for increased fragmentation and bureaucratisation of the cluster at the global level.*

166. This evaluation finds that the UNHCR AGDM Strategy and PA tool provide important analytical frameworks that have demonstrated at field level that they can support the incorporation of cross-cutting issues in to the Cluster Approach, but these are not sufficiently known or promoted at the international level. UNHCR should be working more actively to ensure that its gender, age, and diversity sensitive field assessment approach be adapted and promoted in the IASC context to facilitate intra- and inter-cluster coordination on cross cutting issues which has proven weak up until now.

## **Ex Com Members**

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<sup>40</sup> IASC, 'Real Time Evaluation of the Cluster Approach, Pakistan Earthquake', p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> UNHCR, 'Real-Time Evaluations of UNHCR's Involvement in Operations for Internally Displaced Persons and the Cluster Approach', 29 August 2007, p. 7.

167. Interviews with a group of UNHCR's Executive Committee (Ex Com) members show that there remains work on UNHCR's side to ensure that Ex Com members understand the AGDM strategy, and the value-added that it brings over alternative approaches, such as a more limited gender equality approach or a more specific focus, as in the past, on refugee/IDP women and children only. Ex Com members expressed concern, either that UNHCR's AGDM strategy may be too ambitious, or on the other hand, it is time to say that mainstreaming has taken place and move on to other things. As this evaluation finds that many gaps continue to exist in the AGD mainstreaming process, it is clear that Ex Com members need to be informed about the goals and objectives of the AGD mainstreaming process per se and how UNHCR and Ex Com can effectively monitor its achievements in this area.

168. Some Ex Com members represent countries that are hosting significant refugee and IDP populations. Throughout this evaluation, concerns have been expressed around host government engagement in many operations, it is important that host governments commit themselves to the implementation of AGDM as part of their ongoing work and cooperate fully with UNHCR in the context of humanitarian interventions. This involves States taking responsibility and being accountable for their own compliance with and acceptance of relevant Executive Committee Conclusions relative to age, gender and diversity mainstreaming.

169. Ex Com members are also concerned about how AGDM will fit in with more recent change initiatives that UNHCR has taken on: particularly Results-based Management and its FOCUS software, as well as the Global Accountability Framework. There is concern that "change fatigue" is having a negative impact and will off-set some of the gains brought by AGDM and a multitude of other change initiatives.

170. Overall, the evaluation finds that Ex Com members need to be engaged more effectively to see AGDM as a long-term commitment to ensuring access to protection and rights for all persons of concern. While in the short-term under review, significant gains have been made, AGDM is not just another project, programme or technical fix. If age, gender and diversity mainstreaming is rightly understood, it represents the broad and fundamental principles that guide all organisational policies, procedures and initiatives, and one to which all other organisational change processes should be designed to fit. If this fundamental point is not understood by

171. Ex Com members, then mainstreaming age, gender and diversity considerations into poorly conceived, age, and gender blind structures will be never ending and a waste of organisational resources.

172. UNHCR Ex Com members should be briefed by the High Commissioner regarding the scope and breadth of the AGDM strategy as a fundamental policy approach of the organisation, and how future change processes will fit within its principles, to dispel the idea held by some Ex Com members that AGDM should soon disappear as a UNHCR priority and initiative.



## Donors and Donor Framework Agreements

173. The same observations as above apply to UNHCR Donors, many of whom are also Ex Com members. Donor governments have in general been supportive of the AGDM strategy. For example, in 2007, 2008 and 2009, the US Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration of the U.S. State Department, in its Framework Agreement with UNHCR included as a priority the following emphasis on AGDM:

- D) Age, Gender and Diversity:
- Ensure international standards of protection are met for all persons of concern to UNHCR taking into account their age, gender, or personal background, including through participatory approaches in the design, implementation, and monitoring of programs;
  - Applying age, gender and diversity analysis to all operational activities;
  - Improving gender balance in UNHCR's workforce in the field and at Headquarters within the context of UNHCR's Gender Policy.

Figure 5. From 2007 and 2008 PRM-UNHCR Framework Agreements

174. Furthermore, reviews of 2007-2009 framework agreements indicate specific performance targets for UNHCR regarding implementation of the AGDM strategy. In 2009, for example, the agreement included the following performance targets:

1.3.1 100 per cent of UNHCR operations utilise a participatory age, gender and diversity mainstreaming approach in the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes.

1.3.2 Self-reliance and empowerment of refugees, including community self-management, are enhanced in 100 percent of UNHCR operations enabling refugees increased enjoyment of their civil, social and economic rights, reduced dependence on assistance and enhanced sustainability of any of the three durable solutions. p. 10

175. As it is clear from this evaluation that UNHCR has not yet met many of the targets set in these BPRM agreements over the years, it would be incumbent on donors to ask why and seek solutions to the gaps that have emerged. As will be noted in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 on mainstreaming, skills, capacities and resources, these are largely due to staffing, training and resource issues that UNHCR has not yet been able to address. BPRM should therefore be seeking with UNHCR ways to address the gaps that still exist in its capacity to meet the targets set, including extending additional funds to ensure staffing structures are in place to meet these targets.

176. Another key Framework Agreement that has focused somewhat on AGDM has been the Joint Organisation Strategy 2007-2009 which combines the support of Canada, Denmark and the UK to UNHCR. An evaluation of this strategy carried out in 2009 highlights among its findings that:

177. "The JOS donors have made some modest contributions in the priority areas of AGDM and IDPs. Contributions to other priorities, such as emergency response and durable solutions, are less apparent. This finding speaks to the ability of the JOS to

influence UNHCR in areas other than those related to managerial systems and practices (i.e. AGDM, IDPs, durable solutions, emergency response). UNHCR stakeholders readily acknowledge the contributory role that the UK has played in relation to IDP matters and Canada in relation to AGDM. They characterise this role however, as one of active moral suasion, encouraging and challenging UNHCR.

178. One practical example of a contribution of this arrangement underscores that opportunities will still exist for targeted collaboration and support on AGDM. A specific contribution under the JOS agreement has been the time of a consultant to develop and monitor the AGDM Accountability Framework for AGDM. The evaluation team finds this to have been a very valuable contribution. The consultant in question has played a key role in not only the development of the AF, but also the validation and analysis of AF findings and proposed recommendations and has been a key resource to UNHCR overall on AGDM. It would be hoped that funding for this consultant's role would be sustained under the next phase of the joint funding agreement between Canada, Denmark and the UK. However, the question remains as to how and when UNHCR will see fit to increase its internal capacity and human resources to effectively mainstream these important functions within its own staffing structure at HQ level.

179. It is also seen as a positive step in support of age, gender and diversity mainstreaming that Canada will support a Gender Equality Institutional Assessment of UNHCR in 2010.

180. Overall, the evaluation finds that while many donors are interested in strengthening UNHCRs institutional capacity to carry out AGDM, both in headquarters and field operations, they must also continue to actively follow-up on strategic actions to advance AGDM, such as availability of sex and age disaggregated data and reporting, appropriate staff profiles, staff training and performance assessment, senior management accountability and the application of rights-based, community-based and participatory approaches linked to programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

181. Donors and Ex Com members have a critical and ongoing role to play in using the outputs of the AGDM Strategy, including AF reports, Participatory Assessments and other analyses, not only to hold UNHCR to account for its performance on AGDM but also to provide the additional technical and financial support necessary to meet AGDM objectives.

### Conclusions and Recommendations on Coordination and Partnerships

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and resources</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
NGO and government partners often lack ownership and involvement in the AGDM strategy	UNHCR operations invite NGO and Government partners to work with Country offices to develop PA	In 2010, internal resources	UNHCR Country operations

and PA methodologies. There is a lack of joint action plan development with UNHCR following PA systematization and analysis	methodologies and Action Planning <sup>43</sup> process based on the best methodologies and practices of each agency.		
Few UNHCR NGO and government partners currently have fully articulated and developed their own age, gender and diversity mainstreaming policies and approaches	UNHCR should encourage government and NGO partners to develop their own AGDM policies, including for the engagement of men and boys in gender equality issues	On-going, internal resources	UNHCR Country Operations
NGO and government partners are often weak in developing their own accountability mechanism to the populations they serve	Promotion and training should be undertaken with partners and sharing good practices to stress the importance of accountability on AGDM for all actors	2010, internal resources	UNHCR HQ and Country Operations
NGOs have played a key role at the international and country level in the development and implementation of the AGDM strategy	Key NGO partners be included as members of the AGDM Steering Committee for the coming phase of the AGDM strategy	2010, internal resources	AGDM Steering Committee and INGO partners
UNHCR AGDM Strategy and PA tool provide important analytical frameworks that have demonstrated at field level that they can support the incorporation of cross-cutting issues in to the Cluster	UNHCR should actively promote its AGDM strategy and tools in the IASC Cluster context to facilitate intra- and inter-cluster coordination on cross cutting issues. Given that OCHA is currently seeking to develop a common needs assessment framework	2010, internal resources	IASC-PCWG DIPs CDGES

<sup>43</sup> See UNHCR Colombia for examples of multi-stakeholder Action Plans.

Approach, but these are not sufficiently known or promoted at the international level	for humanitarian interventions, UNHCR should ensure that the PA framework is duly considered as part of this process.		
It is important that Ex Com member States take responsibility both for UNHCR compliance but also for their own compliance with and acceptance of relevant Executive Committee Conclusions in the interest of promoting AGDM	Ex Com members should review with senior managers the scope and implications of the AGDM strategy as a fundamental policy approach of the organisation, and how future change processes will fit within its principles. Ex Com members should recognise that they are also bound by EX Com conclusions relevant to AGDM.	2010, political will, internal resources	Senior managers Ex Com members
The issue of lack of resourcing and staffing is critical to appropriate implementation of AGDM and targeted actions to protect the rights of all persons of concern, regardless of their age, sex or background.	Donors should recognise that required AGDM actions are not cost free and call for staff with adequate capacity and for training. Donors should play an active role in ensuring additional technical and financial support necessary to ensure that minimum standards on AGDM are met.	2010-2015 Priority for donor resources, as available	Donors

The AGDM ACTION Plan could pay greater attention to capacity development of government counterparts.	Include a specific objective on capacity development of government counterparts in the next AGDM ACTION Plan.	During development of the ACTION Plan.  Internal resources.	AGDM Steering Committee and CDGECS
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## 6. Targeted Actions for Empowerment

182. This chapter addresses progress and results in the area of targeted actions for empowerment. Targeted Actions to address protection risks and gaps identified for specific groups through PAs and other analyses are at the heart of what the AGDM Strategy was intended to achieve.

183. According to the AGDM ACTION Plan (2007-2009), staff and stakeholder consultations at the end of the first phase of the AGDM strategy showed:

184. "that while the AGDM strategy had led to the identification and analysis of protection gaps that impact differently on various groups of persons of concern, it had been used less successfully in the development of targeted interventions to remedy the gaps over the longer term.<sup>44</sup> ....Staff requested improved guidance on how to formulate targeted actions to address gaps and support persons of concern to claim and exercise their rights. ....Partners also indicated that UNHCR should improve the establishment of confidential individual case management systems to provide protection to those persons at heightened risk in the community, particularly women and girls.<sup>45</sup>"

185. Based on this analysis, the result set for the period 2007 to 2009 was that: "field operations receive quality technical support from headquarters and multifunctional teams in regional offices to better protect discriminated groups and individuals at heightened risk; these persons are better able to benefit from longer term solutions and to exercise their rights". This result statement in no way refers to or defines what is meant or expected at an operational level by "targeted action".

186. The objectives related to this results in the AGDM Action Plan focused on providing guidance and technical support for areas such as: women's economic empowerment; children's access to, retention of, and completion of high quality education; protection of children; older persons and persons' with disabilities meaningful participation in decision making bodies; and SGBV.

187. The objectives refer mainly to "*operations receiving needed guidance and technical support*" to address protection risks. As in other parts of the ACTION Plan, these objectives are mainly at the activity level rather than the level of results, and are not tied to UNHCR's Strategic Objectives. UNHCR's needs to know, and therefore to monitor, whether its technical guidance has led to improvements in the protection situation of persons of concern, and whether it has chosen appropriate targeted actions.

188. While appropriate guidance and technical support are essential elements of support to country operations, in practice UNHCR staff frequently cite resources, staffing levels, availability of local partners and other contextual factors as being the most significant obstacles that affect operations' capacity to put in place appropriate

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<sup>44</sup> This was also highlighted in the OIOS report on results based management in UNHCR, 2007.

<sup>45</sup> UNHCR AGDM ACTION Plan 2007-2009, p. 6

targeted actions. In addition, it can be observed in field missions that UNHCR and partners are more able to implement targeted actions when pre-established "responses" and programmes have been well developed. For example, programming around SGBV issues has been thoroughly elaborated and there are a number of experienced NGO partners able to deliver services in this area. Newly emerging protection gaps, where no programming models and resources exist, are much more difficult and demanding for operations to address, and hence often go unresolved.

189. Through the AGDM strategy a number of high quality tools and guidelines have been developed by HQ and disseminated to the field. However, the evaluation finds that technical support, in terms of visits and practical solutions offered by HQ regional offices has been limited due to lack of human and financial resources. While excellent guidelines and policies have been put in place, the agency is limited in its capacity to ensure that these are applied consistently and effectively by all country operations.

190. The issue of adequate technical capacity is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8, but it should be flagged here that operations struggling with deeply entrenched age, gender and cultural issues that translate into rights violations on a large scale in resource poor environments have not received the technical support or financial resources to put in place targeted actions on a scale required to resolve these issues for large numbers of persons of concern, within a rapid timeframe. In practice, country operations have to choose to respond to the protection risks faced by one group over another.

### **Review of selected ACTION Plan Outputs**

191. In relation to these results and objectives set, a large number of outputs were achieved at HQ level and in conjunction with specific country operations and partners. The evaluation team reviewed a number of targeted action related products. While not all can be identified here, some notable achievements of this period, as identified in the AGDM ACTION Plan report of 2009, were:

### **Identification of and Solutions for Persons at Heightened Risk**

#### *Heightened Risk Identification Tool*

192. The Heightened Risk Identification Tool (HRIT) was refined and finalized in 2008. To date there is no comprehensive data available on the extent to which the HRIT is being used at field level and what challenges staff and partners have faced in using this tool. Yet overall, the evaluation finds the HRIT to be potentially an important tool in support of targeted actions to address protection gaps as it provides detailed case information as a complement to protection risks identified in PA, and permits tracking of protection solutions identified for individuals at heightened risk.

*Best Interest Determination Guidelines, Child Protection Systems and Asylum Guidelines*

193. The UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interest of the Child were finalized and sent out to the field in May 2008. The child protection "systems" approach was piloted in four countries (Ecuador, Ethiopia, Nepal, and Yemen) as part of the EC-funded CDGECS/DIPS project on child protection systems. Child Protection Officers (CPOs) were deployed to Ethiopia, Nepal (both from Save the Children Norway), Yemen (from Save the Children Sweden) and Ecuador (the Project Coordinator) for the duration of three months. In Ethiopia, the evaluation mission confirms that the introduction of child protection systems in all camps corresponded to a huge protection gap that had been identified in previous PAs, but the establishment of these systems and services still require a number of years to be established.

194. During this period, HQ also produced draft guidelines on "International Protection: Child Asylum Claims under Article 1 of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees."

195. The evaluation finds that UNHCR should be congratulated for its work on the BID and Asylum Claims Guidelines and also on its efforts to increase funding for child protection programming. Yet at a global level, the overall trends regarding targeted actions for child protection has been on the decline, which should be cause for concern by UNHCR (see discussion below).

*Guidance on community outreach and mobilization strategies and individual case management systems*

196. Based on field missions, interviews in HQ and the AGDM Evaluation survey responses, the evaluation finds it unfortunate that the benefits of the CBA training have not reached more UNHCR staff, particularly at field level, where information on the CBA and how to apply it in specific operational contexts remains quite low. Evidence from evaluation missions from Ethiopia and Colombia indicates that despite serious protection issues being identified in PAs, UNHCR and partners' staff do not feel they have time to do systematic, case-by-case follow-up.

*Women Leading for Livelihoods (WLL)*

197. The Women Leading for Livelihoods (WLL) initiative was launched to promote the economic independence and empowerment of women and girls of concern as a means of reducing protection risks. The evaluation finds the WLL to be a key contribution to efforts to address protection risks to women and girls, as it is clear that in many UNHCR operations, lack of access to gainful employment and income generation are one of the key factors that lead to various forms of sexual exploitation, abuse and other forms of SGBV.

198. AGDM evaluation field missions also indicate that access to income generation and employment is one of the key protection challenges facing both women and men. In



the context of evaluation field mission to Central Europe, Ethiopia and Colombia, it was clear that income generation for refugees and IDPs continues to be a pressing concern, that it is at the root of many other problems and protection risks they face on a day-to-day basis.

#### *UNHCR's Plan to combat HIV/AIDS among SGBV survivors*

199. A CDGECS report on progress on AGDM ACTION Plan indicates that coverage on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS increased from 57% in 2007 to 63% in 2008 while access to HIV voluntary counselling and HIV/AIDS testing increased from 60% in 2007 to 70% in 2008. There is also encouraging progress in anti-retroviral treatment coverage for refugees; 75% of refugees had access to anti retroviral therapy when it is available to surrounding host populations in 2008 compared with 44% in 2007, and 84% of rape survivors reporting within 72 hours had access to post exposure prophylaxis to reduce HIV transmission. In addition, publication of *Guidance on Infant Feeding and HIV in the context of refugees and displaced populations*, provided tools to prevent malnutrition and improve the nutritional status of infants and young children and increase the HIV-free survival of infants. The evaluation field mission to Ethiopia confirmed that access to anti-retroviral therapy was felt to be an important need and was positively seen by refugee groups.

#### **Findings from Country Operations on Targeted Actions**

200. The high level of productivity of CDGECS, other HQ and Training units and partners in developing improved tools and approaches to help field operations better protect groups and individuals at heightened risk met with some success at country operation level.

201. The AGDM Evaluation survey asked whether PAs led to specific targeted actions that have resulted in the improvement of the protection situation for one or more groups of persons of concern. Eleven per cent of respondents answered negatively, 79% positively, and 10% did not respond to this question. Those who answered positively provided various examples. In one example from Georgia:

"A series of PAs provided a unique opportunity which mobilised IDPs themselves to identify priority needs without any predetermined link to a specific project and brought together international and local NGOs as well as local authorities...The results shed the light to real needs of IDPs in protracted displacement. Here is one example of improvement of protection situation for one of the focus groups. One of UNHCR's IPs which was involved in PA organized by UNHCR identified a group of children from so-called marginalised families who were not attending school but were begging on the streets. Most of these children were unwilling to attend school due to the lack of proper clothes and shoes as their parents were unable to provide them adequate financial support. Based on the identified needs of these children, the IP provided to them school uniforms, schoolbooks and kits as well as psycho-social

counselling sessions to children and their parents. As a result, all of these children are currently attending public school." The field mission to Central Europe noted a similar response as a result of PAs in Poland.

202. Other country operations have also noted efforts to implement targeted actions based on PA findings. For example, in Tanzania, UNHCR staff reported that since PA women have been more involved in Food and Water Committees and Youth Committees involve more girls. In Eritrea, PAs resulted in provision of recreation activities for adolescent boys, and additional financial assistance to elderly and disabled refugees.

203. In other cases, the PA resulted in re-arranging operational priorities and budgets in line with the priorities of persons of concern, as in the example below from Sri Lanka: "The Sri Lanka example resulted in a re-focus of operational priorities. E.g. as IDPs defined as priorities Education, Health, Shelter, NFRIs - in this order - budget and policy were adjusted.

204. Finally, a range of examples on effective use of PA and related targeted actions have been used within advocacy-type operations to exert pressure on governments to take action in favour of enhanced protection along age, gender and diversity lines. In Central Europe PAs had identified the issue of lack of attendance by asylum seekers' school age children in Hungary because of lack of funds for bus tickets and school supplies. The relevant legislation was amended so that funds are now provided for these children. Policy makers were more sensitized to AGD issues and this is likely to feed indirectly into changes in legislation. PAs have been successful as advocacy instruments keeping pressure on governments to meet their international commitments, even in cases where the AGDM process was not welcomed. The publication "Being a Refugee" is also a very useful advocacy tool and the Regional Representation should be congratulated on the quality of this report. In Luxembourg, a PA was carried out on the topic of access to employment and education by persons seeking international protection, which generated a large number of findings and recommendations about the need to raise awareness among asylum seekers, employers, government officials and other stakeholders about the asylum process and rights of asylum seekers in the country. These recommendations will form part on an on-going programme of advocacy work by UNHCR and by its civil society partners<sup>46</sup>.

205. In field missions, the evaluation team also noted that UNHCR Country Operations in Colombia, Ethiopia and Central Europe had all implemented measures, be it through direct action at field level or advocacy with Governments, in response to heightened risks of specific groups, based on PA findings. These range from large-scale efforts, such as the electrification of camps in the Somali region to address water and energy needs in Ethiopia and the introduction of Child Protection programmes, to smaller efforts like fixing water taps or the micro protection projects in Colombia (see Chapter 3 for more details).

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<sup>46</sup> Project "Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming" - ACCES A L'EMPLOI ET L'APPRENTISSAGE DES DEMANDEURS DE PROTECTION INTERNATIONALE ET DES BENEFICIAIRES D'ATTESTATIONS DE TOLERANCE, octobre 2007-decembre 2009.

## Global Indicators on Targeted Actions

206. Analysis of responses to the AGDM Accountability Framework (AF) by Country Representatives and COP-FOCUS submissions over the period in review points to a difficulty at HQ level in monitoring country operation performance and global trends regarding targeted actions on behalf of all age, gender and at-risk groups. UNHCR appears to have as yet no comprehensive means of tracking the extent to which protection gaps identified at field level, through the AGDM Strategy, PAs or other means, are effectively translated into targeted actions.

207. At present, CDGECS and others, such as this evaluation, requested to provide analysis on the effectiveness of the AGDM strategy and targeted actions to enhance protection are required to pull together a number of proxy indicators from various sources - from AF responses, COP-FOCUS submissions, Standards and Indicators, ProGres, anecdotal evidence and other reports, some of which do not concur.

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and cost</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Data on targeted actions is not systematically covered	UNHCR should develop an internally consistent framework for monitoring AGDM targeted actions	2010, internal resources	Country operations and Bureaux
One persistent gap identified in analysis of AFs is lack of attention to older groups and people with disabilities. <sup>47</sup>	The AGDM AF should ask representatives to account for targeted action taken to address protection gaps faced by older women and men and women and men with disabilities	2010, internal resources	AGDM Steering Committee

## Identifying New and Emerging Protection Challenges

208. UNHCR's AGDM strategy should serve not only to identify and address protection risks and gaps that are familiar to UNHCR staff and partners, but also a range of new and emerging protection challenges. Yet the evaluation finds that to date, as mentioned above, UNHCR is not always able to effectively and rapidly develop targeted actions in response to these. In two examples from the Ethiopia operation, two emerging protection concerns were not even identified in PAs, which shows the limitation of the tool as it is currently being applied using a focus group methodology in which sensitive or taboo subjects might never emerge.

<sup>47</sup> L. Groves and A. Landouzy-Sanders. 2008-2009 Global Analysis, UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Targeted Actions.

209. In one example from Ethiopia, it was found that a specific group was being discriminated against based on the fact that members were said to possess "the evil eye": the belief was that people having the "evil eye" they had only to look at someone to cause them some harm. This group was subject to various forms of discrimination, including beatings, kidnappings and expulsions from the community. Having detected this unconventional protection risk, UNHCR Ethiopia was investigating how it could protect this group for which no standard responses seem to apply. Yet this is an issue that UNHCR at HQ level, in particular PDES, has begun to investigate, and it may be hoped that some policy guidance and technical support will be soon available.<sup>48</sup>

210. Overall, the evaluation finds that the AGDM Strategy has led, in many operations, to specific targeted actions that address the heightened protection risks of specific groups, based on protection gaps identified through PA findings. UNHCR should be commended for this. At the same time, in no operation we are aware of, was it possible to ensure targeted actions that address the full range of protection gaps and heightened risks identified, as new protection gaps are emerging. The evaluation also finds that UNHCR has met many of its objectives in the AGDM ACTION Plan quoted at the beginning of this Chapter concerning the production of high quality guidance material, although to a lesser extent concerning the provision of technical support.

211. At the global level it would be important to question whether it is possible for country operations in resource poor environments to address the protection needs of all groups and all sectors simultaneously, given human and financial resource limitations on the one hand, and deeply entrenched social and cultural resistance and economic problems on the other. Analysis shows that where special funds and extra technical support have been made available to address specific protection gaps at country operation level, there is a corresponding response in terms of targeted actions. At the same time, there is a need for more support to country operations to assist them, along with partners and persons of concern to prioritise and address the most urgent protection needs with available resources.

212. Overall, the evaluation team finds that concept of "targeted actions for empowerment" is vague and leaves considerable doubt among staff as to whether response measures conform to UNHCR's criteria, and how to present these do demonstrate that actions have been taken.

213. UNHCR staff and partners require clarification as to what constitutes a "targeted action for empowerment" - what is targeted? And how do we measure empowerment? Need these be specific actions on behalf of women? Children? Older persons? May these also include specific actions designed to address the protection needs of men or other groups in some communities? What if the targeted actions do not fall into UNHCR's pre-defined priority interventions? Do they still count? UNHCR staff and partners require more clarification from HQ regarding what this concept means in practice, given the wide range of unequal relations and protection risks that are encountered at field level.

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<sup>48</sup> Schnoebelen, Jill. NEW ISSUES IN REFUGEE RESEARCH, Research Paper No. 169 Witchcraft allegations, refugee protection and human rights: a review of the evidence, p. 43-44

## Key Constraints to operationalising targeted action for empowerment

214. In conclusion, it is worthwhile reviewing the constraints that Country Representatives identify for their inability to be in full compliance with the requirements of the AGDM Accountability Framework. The graph below, taken from the 2008-2009 Global Analysis, *UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Targeted Actions* <sup>49</sup> indicates that from the point of view of Country Representatives, lack of guidance and technical support from Bureau, DIPs and DOS, is cited in only .8% of cases as being among the constraints faced in fully implementing their responsibilities under the AGDM framework, including targeted actions.

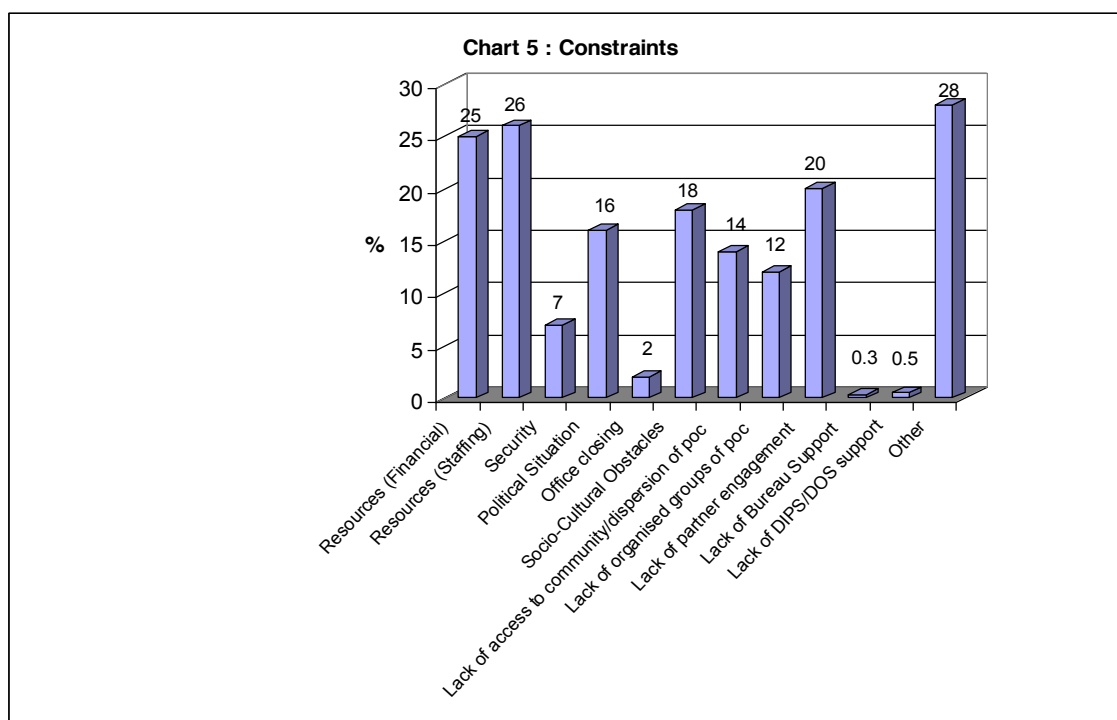


Figure 6. From 2008-2009 Global Analysis, UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Targeted Action, p. 12

215. The most frequently cited factors, according to Representatives, are lack of financial and staff resources, followed by lack of partner engagement and socio-cultural obstacles<sup>50</sup>. Although this is not clear yet, Global Needs Assessment may result in greater prioritization of specific targeted actions.

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and cost	Responsibility
The concept of "targeted actions for empowerment"	UNHCR requires a comprehensive monitoring mechanism for "targeted	2010-2011, as part of the next AGDM	AGDM Steering Committee

<sup>49</sup> L. Groves and A. Landouzy-Sanders. 2008-2009 Global Analysis, UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Targeted Actions.

<p>is vague and leaves considerable doubt among staff as to whether response measures conform to UNHCR's criteria and how to present these do demonstrate that actions have been taken.</p>	<p>actions for empowerment". UNHCR Country Operations, as part of their Focus submissions should be requested to provide an Age, Gender and Diversity Strategy that reflects analysis based on PAs and other information, and articulates what specific targeted actions will be taken to address identified protection gaps, and the priority AGD issues and problems that the operation has chose to focus on and why.</p>	<p>ACTION Plan, Internal resources</p>	<p>and UNHCR Country Operations</p>
<p>Lack of resources and staff have been identified by Representatives as the main constraints to targeted action.</p>	<p>In the next phase of the AGDM ACTION Plan, constraints identified by Country Representatives, MFTs and staff should be specifically addressed, through the GNA process for examples, if UNHCR is to enhance its performance on achieving expected results. At the same time, the AGDM Strategy should be strengthened in helping country operations understand how best to prioritise between competing rights violations and specific needs.</p>	<p>2010-2011</p>	<p>UNHCR Fundraising Section, GNA</p>

## 7. Integration of AGDM into UNHCR's work

216. In this Chapter, we consider the progress made, lessons learned and good practices specifically in relation to AGDM as a "mainstreaming" initiative, and the extent to which "mainstreaming" can be said to have been achieved, and if not what areas require further strengthening.

### Framework for integration of AGDM into UNHCR's Work

217. In the 2007-2009 ACTION Plan, the expected result in terms of integration of age, gender and diversity considerations into UNHCR's work was described as follows:

The delivery of protection to people of concern is strengthened through an inclusive approach to the promotion of rights and gender equality based on the consistent application of age, gender and diversity analysis and the identification of targeted actions as required and regular performance monitoring of field operations by headquarter service divisions and MFTs in regional offices"

218. More specific objectives were identified as follows:

- Age, gender and diversity analysis and targeted action are integrated into all protection policy development, strategies and reporting.
- Bureaux and MFTs in Regional offices monitor AGDM performance in country operation plans and project submissions, in particular the use of participatory assessment findings, adequate age, gender and diversity analysis and appropriate targeted actions based on the Five Commitments to Women, the Five Priorities for girls and boys of concern and with due attention to the specific needs of older persons and persons with disabilities.
- Registration systems, data analysis, and refugee status determination and resettlement procedures are age, gender and diversity sensitive and support the protection of persons with specific needs and individuals at heightened risk.

219. As will be explored below, the increasing complexity of the issues and inter-agency environment and expectations of organisational performance of protection for all within a rights-based approach demand that UNHCR staff and management be better equipped in terms of understanding what AGD mainstreaming involves at the country operations level, AGD analytical skills, networking, community mobilisation and capacity building. Appropriate resources need to be made available, but some initiative should come from UNHCR Country Operations to demonstrate that they are unable to meet the requirements of AGD mainstreaming based on specific identified gaps.

## Assessment of the AGDM strategy in the context of other types of mainstreaming initiatives<sup>51</sup>

220. As part of the evaluation, the evaluation team has drawn on other agencies' experience with gender mainstreaming. The findings of a 2006 study of gender mainstreaming in eight bilateral development agencies and UNDP "*Lessons Learned from Evaluations of Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation*" shows that a significant threat to gender mainstreaming strategies, which are similar in many respects to the AGDM, is the expectation that mainstreaming will take place rapidly, and resources are quickly shifted away to other things. An analysis of UNHCR application of resources to the AGDM mainstreaming process would suggest the same pattern, by which the large budgets available for the roll-out phase quickly evaporated and training and support for implementing the AGDM strategy have dried up.

### **Box 1. Lessons Learned from Evaluations of Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation: Do the findings point in the same direction?**

"The findings in the evaluations all point in the same direction. Work on institutionalising the empowerment of women and gender equality have had low priority, there have been insufficient resources to implement policies and strategies, the focus has shifted to other areas, and there is no systematic reporting of results in this area.<sup>17</sup>"

221. Another finding common to all agencies studied is the assumption that by emphasizing the responsibilities of managers for gender equality results, they often eliminate specialist and technical support posts which do the capacity building required to sustain the gains of the mainstreaming process and provide monitoring. The evaluation team considers that UNHCR is also following this pattern and should learn from the experiences of other agencies in similar mainstreaming efforts to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the gains made to date on AGDM.

222. UNHCR faces similar challenges to all UN organizations attempting to mainstream cross-cutting themes, which are devising practical steps towards mainstreaming, and how the organization will know when the theme is adequately mainstreamed. To meet this challenge UNHCR has developed its AGDM AF, which has been a useful tool for introducing the concept of accountability for AGDM. The AF has also set a very useful baseline of UNHCR performance. UNHCR now needs to articulate, through use of its AF and the next ACTION Plan, specific targets, over a five year period, that it will achieve. Once these targets have been developed, UNHCR should determine the level of resources needed to meet these targets, both human and financial (see next Section for further details).

223. What is also lacking vis-à-vis the AF is an adequate institutional structure to oversee its implementation, which has meant there has been a lack of adequate oversight (see Chapter 4 for further details). A development linked to setting minimum standards is introducing institutional mechanisms at the senior management level for supporting

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<sup>51</sup> This Section draws on Beck, T. (2010) "What next for gender mainstreaming in the UN system?" Concept Note for the 2010 IANWGE meetings, New York, February.



gender mainstreaming. Without representation and political support from across the agency, developing minimum standards may fall back on the gender equality unit and be treated as one more administrative, box-ticking task. UNDP, the World Bank and DFID have been experimenting with new forms of institutional support for gender mainstreaming, and there is already much to learn from their experience in this regard.<sup>52</sup>

224. In the UNHCR case the responsibility for overseeing the AF has rested with the Assistant High Commissioner (Protection), but the responsibility for institutional mainstreaming would normally cover both protection and operational functions, and hence should be overseen by both the Assistant High Commissioners (Protection and Operations).

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and cost</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
UNHCR's AGDM work needs further conceptual guidance	Introduce an AGDM Policy that articulates the vision of an AGD mainstreamed organization, including minimum mainstreaming standards, targets and resources required.	By mid-2011, internal cost	DHC, PDES, CDGECS
AGDM has remained largely the responsibility of CDGECS, and to some extent of DIPS, rather than being becoming an organisational responsibility	Overall responsibility for AGDM should be joint between the Assistant High Commissioners. UNHCR should establish a cross-agency AGDM Steering Committee of senior managers - the two Assistant High Commissioners, and Directors of Regional Bureaux - to oversee both AGDM and the AF. AGDM Steering Committee meetings should take place every three	By end 2010, internal cost	Assistant High Commissioners

<sup>52</sup> UNDP (2008) *Empowered and Equal. Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011*. New York: UNDP; The UNDP Gender Steering and Implementation Committee was established by the Administrator in January 2006. It is the highest decision-making body on gender mainstreaming within UNDP, with responsibility for policy-setting and oversight of all offices. The committee meets five or six times per year to monitor the Gender Action Plan and prepares the annual report to the Executive Board. All regional bureaux have established similar committees to undertake parallel policy-setting and monitoring activities. World Bank (2006) *Gender Equality as Smart Economics: A World Bank Group Gender Action Plan (Fiscal years 2007-10)*. Washington D.C.: World Bank. "Management agreement on the need to establish clearer accountability for implementing the Gender Policy, particularly at the level of country director and above. Management proposes to strengthen accountability at the senior level through Managing Director-chaired reviews of the Bank's annual monitoring reports on implementing the gender policy by the operational vice presidents"; DFID (2007) *Gender Equality Action Plan*. London: DFID. The first annual review of the Action Plan found that: the plan acted as a catalyst for more detailed plans at headquarter and country levels and gave new impetus and greater staff support to existing gender-related work; gender equality issues are now expressly part of corporate performance frameworks; the establishment of the network of senior level Gender Champions led at the level of Director-General that meets every four months to review progress has given very high profile and management ownership to gender issues; that quality of evidence and information including sex-disaggregated data remains a shared international challenge.

<p>shared by senior management with an overall responsibility covering both Protection and Operations.</p>	<p>months, with the responsibility to review progress in mainstreaming and the AF. Based on the UNDP example, senior managers should themselves attend meetings with no deputization permitted, in order to demonstrate institutional commitment to AGDM. The AGDM Steering Committee should report to the High Commissioner, who in turn should report on a yearly basis to the Executive Committee on progress in AGDM and against targets established through the AF. Executive Committee members should include adequate execution of this recommendation in any Performance Agreements with UNHCR.</p>		
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### Extent of AGD Mainstreaming within UNHCR Operations

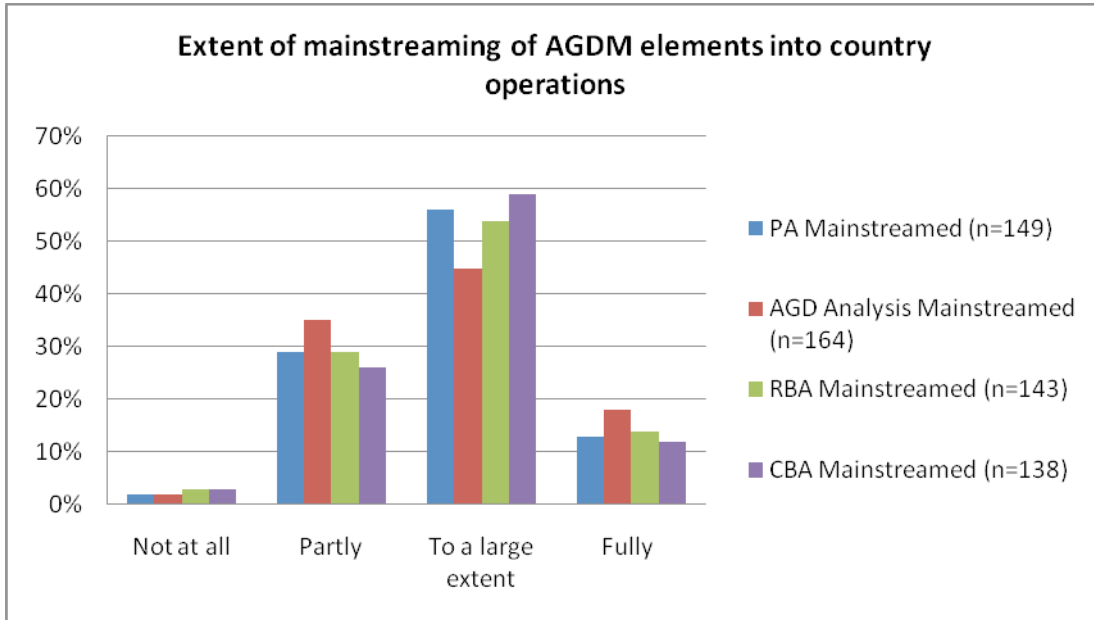
225. Responses to the AGDM Evaluation questionnaire by UNHCR staff and partners shows progress towards overall mainstreaming of PA, AGD Analysis and the applications of rights-based and community-based approaches.

226. When asked for their perceptions about the extent of mainstreaming of AGDM approaches (Figure 7.1), only 2% of respondents said that these elements of the ADGM strategy have not been mainstreamed at all. According to respondents, many operations have only partly been able to mainstream them (PA only partly mainstreamed according to 29% of respondents, AGD Analysis only partly mainstreamed according to 34% of respondents, RBA only partly mainstreamed according to 29% of respondents, and CBA only partly mainstreamed according to 26% of respondents). The majority of respondents felt that all elements had been mainstreamed to a large extent or fully into the work of their UNHCR operations.<sup>53</sup>

227. Overall, this can be considered to be a positive finding signifying that a good deal of progress has been made towards achieving the objectives of the AGDM Strategy. However it should focus attention on the fact that in less than 20% of operations, do respondents feel that these elements of the AGDM strategy have been fully mainstreamed. As a benchmark for the next phase of the AGDM Strategy, it would

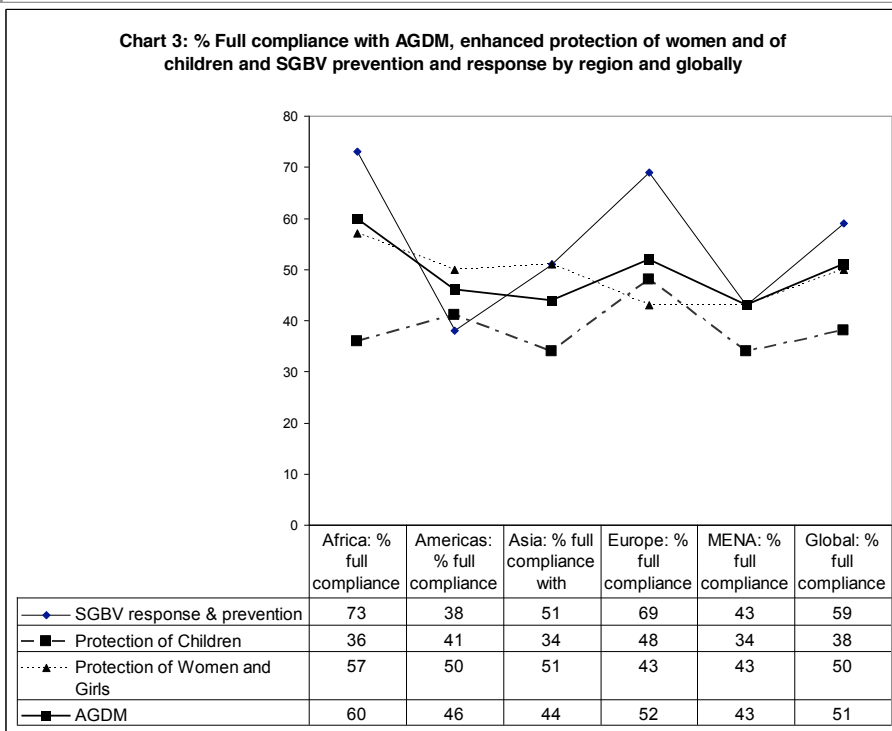
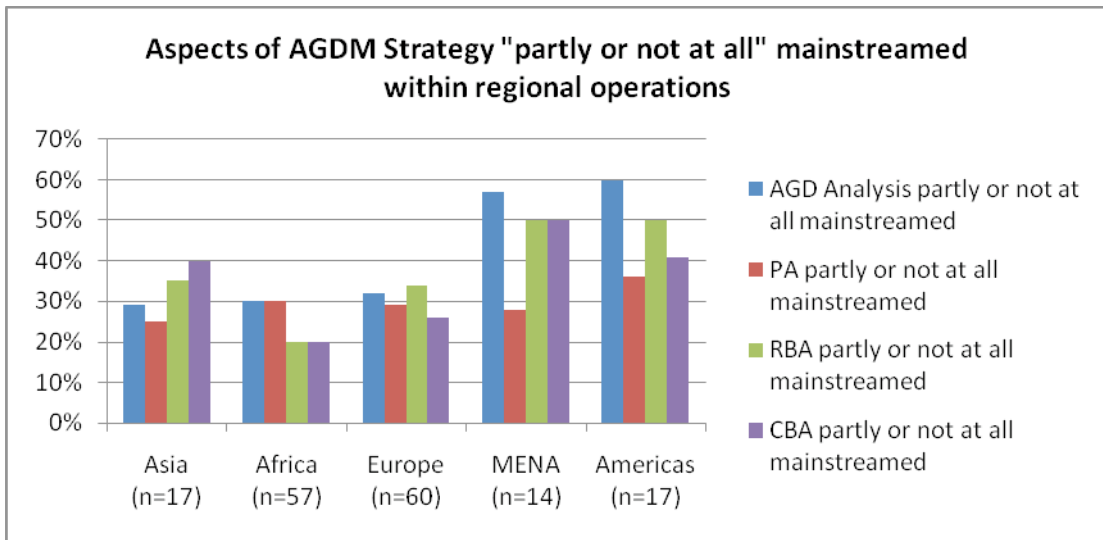
<sup>53</sup>The questionnaire question was: "To what extent have Age, Gender and Diversity analysis been effectively mainstreamed in your current operational context?"

important for UNHCR to focus on the obstacles and constraints to mainstreaming in the 30 to 35% of operations in which AGDM has not been successful.



### Geographic regions that require increased support on AGDM

228. An analysis by region of AGDM evaluation questionnaire responses may indicate a trend, but the results below are by no means fully representative, due to the small number of respondents from some regions, particularly MENA and Latin America. However, they are provided here because they correspond to a large extent with findings of the Global Analysis of responses to the AF for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. Both sets of data suggest that MENA and Latin American country operations have greater difficulties in mainstreaming and complying with various aspects of the AGDM strategy.



229. According to the AF analysis, Representatives from each region identified a different combination of constraints in their AF responses for 2008-2009. "Constraints differed substantially by region, suggesting that the support needs of regional operations may be quite distinct. In comparing AF responses over two years, the analysis finds there has been a shift in the weighting given to different constraints from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009 in all regions, except Africa.

- Africa: Lack of financial resources (25%), lack of staffing (26%) and lack of partner engagement (20%)
- Asia: Political situation (35%, up from 28% in 2007-2008) and socio cultural obstacles (21%)

- Europe: Lack of partner engagement (27%), socio cultural obstacles (22%) and lack of financial resources (27%). This differs from 2007-2008 where the biggest obstacles were socio cultural obstacles (27%) and lack of staffing (23%).
- MENA: Political situation (31%, up from 28% in 2007-2008) and lack of access to community
- Americas: Lack of staffing (43%), lack of financial resources (43%, significantly up from 34% in 2007-2008), lack of access to communities of concern/ dispersal of persons of concern (25%, down from 39% in 2007-2008) of concern (29%).<sup>54</sup>

230. Qualitative analysis of the AGDM evaluation questionnaires sheds further light on the obstacles encountered within the two regions.

#### MENA

231. Several UNHCR operations within the MENA region indicate that particular challenges exist in applying the AGDM Strategy within mainly protracted urban contexts. This challenge was highlighted both in Lebanon and in Cairo.

232. Within the Yemen operation, UNHCR and partners identified a number of challenges to mainstreaming PA and AGDM into the operation. According to one UNHCR partner, the terminology used within the AGDM framework is too complicated and culturally specific *"There is no clear and simple translation of the policy into the languages whose speakers need most to understand and consider elements of AGDM"*. Simply put, language and cultural differences made it hard for partners to convey to persons of concern the nature and intention of the PA exercise. Furthermore, the lack of follow-up and incorporation of issues raised in PAs into operational plans and strategies added to frustration: *"As the disadvantaged groups are "hungry" for justice, they tend to expect very rapid responses to the problems and needs they raise during analysis. The fact is that, this does not happen creating a huge frustration"*

233. UNHCR staff shared the partner's frustration with PA from a management perspective: *"The assessment that I witnessed was carried out almost as more of a formality than anything else. I'm not confident that it provided an accurate measure of protection issues due to the limited community participation caused by the rushed nature of planning, as well as the insufficient orientation given to IPs. As with many activities in this setting, IPs were given short notice of the assessment, limiting their ability to effectively plan and allocate staffing in a way that would ensure meaningful participation."*

234. In Lebanon, UNHCR staff highlighted that the AGDM Strategy had introduced a number of positive elements: *"The AGDM strategy succeeded in bringing together UNHCR's various units, particularly community services and protection, to jointly deal with individual and community issues and propose action plans. The strategy also*

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<sup>54</sup> L. Groves and A. Landouzy-Sanders. 2008-2009 Global Analysis, UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Targeted Actions.

increased dialogue and communication with NGOs and refugees as true partners. The AGDM strategy provided a more systematic way of consulting with refugees of different ages, sex and background, analyzing their protection concerns, identifying their capacities, while feeding into programming. In Lebanon, Protection and Community Services work closely together on daily basis whether related to registration, individual case management, child protection, women protection, etc. NGOs and refugees have also noted UNHCR Lebanon's increased coordination and consultation. AGDM in Lebanon also moved the operation towards the right direction through making small changes that had a positive impact on women, men, boys and girls".

235. Despite these gains, the AGDM strategy in Lebanon had not "evolved" and, as has been identified in other cases in this report, this is due to lack of commitment by senior management: *"The AGDM strategy was not fully taken up by management and therefore has been more led at the unit levels, especially Community Services. It also failed to develop 5 years after its launch as a pilot onwards. Conducting the PA and then having to cut back on programmes due to decreased funding. This could lead to refugees losing trust in UNHCR."*

236. The Cairo operation had also seen specific advances from the AGDM Strategy, but according to staff and as we have seen in a number of other country operations, has failed to fully incorporate AGDM at a strategic and policy level, and in developing appropriate partnerships and relations with the host government: *" Individual documentation for women, children aged 12 years onward and minors have enabled an expanded social, medical and financial assistance spectrum including for refugees and PoCs suffering from chronic illnesses, persons with disabilities, elder persons of all age, gender and nationalities. The Operation otherwise failed within a long protracted urban refugee context in:*

- Moving from an assistance-oriented response , to development and rights geared responses
- Building on the spirit of the Convention Plus approach to trigger and scale up far more impacting and lasting outcomes related to the MDGs goals through tapping on Humanitarian and development funding
- Building strategic partnerships with Development and Funds UN agencies by enacting related global MOUs for mainstreaming refugees and PoCs in the country addressed assistance and development frameworks including MDGs targets
- Re-addressing UNHCR agreement with the host country which remained unchanged ever since 1956 whilst many UN Treaties and Conventions were developed and signed by the host country beside the 1951 Refugee Convention and the OAU refugee convention, as the CRC, DEVAW, CEDAW, Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ICCPR , Declaration on Social Economic and Cultural Rights etc. to ensure that rights are mainstreamed for all"

## *Latin America*

237. In Latin America, all questionnaire responses confirm that staffing levels pose a significant challenge to implementation of the AGDM strategy in several country operations. UNHCR staff in Argentina stated that: "*Benefits of AGDM is that by including all segments of the beneficiary population in the conception, implementation and evaluation of projects, we have better chances to succeed in identifying and addressing the problems/lacunae.*" However, the disadvantages in this context were seen as "*AGDM it is a time consuming and complicated operation to orchestrate, especially in an urban context. Where I have worked so far, staffing and budgetary constraints did not allow full use of the AGDM strategy*".

238. In Mexico a UNHCR Partner identified that despite the: "possibility of having a greater impact, better identification of needs and rights of diverse groups and capacities and resources of those groups" the operation experiences limitations on personnel and resources to give required in-depth attention to each population group identified.

239. While it is clear that Latin America has many particularly strong UNHCR operations, staffing and resources available to more fully implement AGDM are seen to be a serious constraint in many operations. The sense of limitations may also reflect higher expectations within the Latin American region vis-a-vis what could be done if resources were available, since this is a region with a strong capacity among civil society organisations and government partners.

240. An observation made by the evaluation team is that despite persistent reporting by countries within the region that full implementation of the AGDM Strategy has posed a challenge, the role of Regional CS staff who would have an important role to play in supporting AGDM within the countries of these regions has either been seriously under resourced, as in the case of MENA, or had its post cut altogether as in the case of Latin America. This would indicate a lack of congruency between UNHCR's stated objectives on AGDM and its resource allocation in support of the same.

241. The analysis shows that each region, and specific countries within each region, require different forms of support to achieve organisational objectives on AGDM. The Regional Bureaux and Regional service centers, with technical input from CDGECS, and in collaboration with country operations, should develop region specific AGDM Action Plans, based an analysis of existing management and staff capacities on AGDM, and incorporating triangulation of PA results, Standards and Indicators, registration data and protection gap analysis.

## **Use of Participatory Assessments and AGD Analysis**

### **PAs have led to attitude change and enhanced programme and protection**

242. Chapter 3 reviewed PAs from the perspective of persons of concern. The current Section carries out a similar review, but from the perspective of UNHCR staff and partners.

243. The UNHCR tool for Participatory Assessment, as well as the manual on the Community Based Approach are excellent and well-prepared documents that together provide a good introduction to UNHCR staff regarding participatory assessment and community mobilisation. In particular, the evaluation team congratulates UNHCR for the section in the PA tool on the Ethics of Participation, which calls attention to the fact that given the inherent power and resource discrepancy between UNHCR and partners on the one hand, and persons of concern on the other, participatory processes need to be planned and carried out in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of participants.

244. As we have seen in previous sections of this report, PAs have provided an important starting point for establishing more cooperative, direct, collaborative and in some cases accountable relationships with persons of concern. The PA tool in itself, ensuring the participation of persons of concern by age, gender and aspects of diversity, has been permitted UNHCR staff and partners to have an unprecedented level of understanding about the specific ways in which different groups experience, within their context, protection or the lack thereof. It has also promoted a flourishing of publications by UNHCR operations that place the direct experience and priorities of concerns of persons of concern in the hands of UNHCR policy makers and the public domain.

245. The experience of participation in PAs has, for many UNHCR staff and partners, led to a profound change in attitude and expectations, leading to viewing persons of concern in a new light. Fifty per cent of questionnaire survey respondents felt that PAs have improved programme and protection responses to a large extent, and 32% felt that PAs have partially improved programme and protection responses. Only 4% of respondents believed that PA has not changed program and protection responses. Of 170 respondents, 76% responded that PAs have led to specific targeted actions that have resulted in improvements in the protection situation for one or more groups of persons

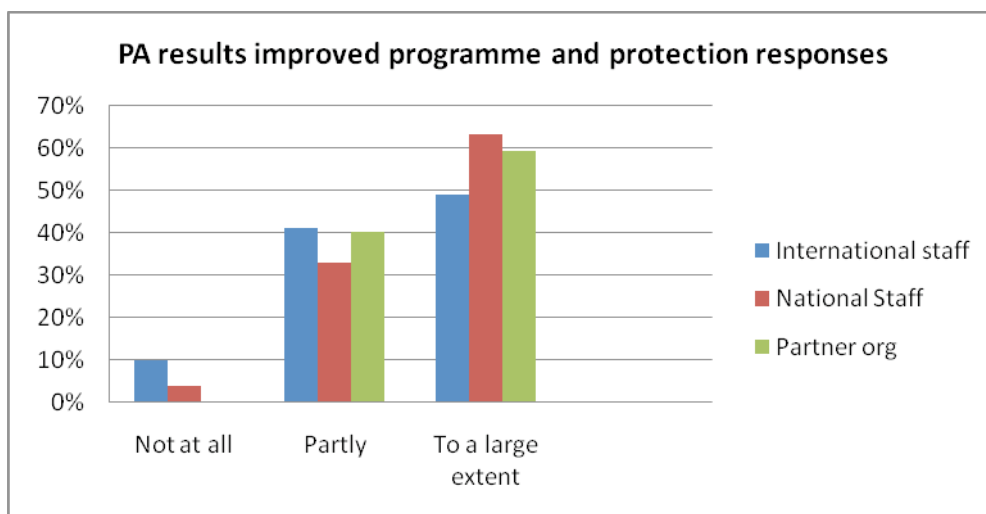
**Good Practice: Chad - Protection and SGBV Problem Improved by Lowering Bride price**

According to UNHCR staff, Participatory Assessment techniques were applied to understand and then address the problem of youth suicide and SGBV in refugee camps in Chad. PA was carried out with all community members in groups: adolescent boys, girls, mothers, fathers, elders, as well as the police, to understand what was causing young men and women to take their own lives. It was discovered that the bride-price set by the elders was causing a number of problems - young men who were not able to afford the bride-price of the girls they wanted to marry were resorting either to suicide, out of despair, or to rape as a means of lowering the bride-price of the girl they wanted to marry. Girls were also resorting to suicide, when the boys they wanted to marry could not afford the bride price. As a result of the PA findings that were shared with all participants, the community elders agreed to reduce the bride price. This action simultaneously ended the incidence of youth suicide and significantly reduced the incidence of SGBV.

of concern. Only 9% report that in their operations PA have not led to such targeted actions.

246. The graph below indicates that overall, national and partner staff tended to feel slightly more positive about the role that PAs played in improving programme and protection results, many of these working in contexts in which they are the ones actually carrying out the PAs with persons of concern.





247. However, there is also cause for concern. PAs have become synonymous with the ADGM strategy, rather than being one part of this. Lessons learned from the use of the PA also indicate that the PA tool and approach laid out in UNHCR's *"The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations"*, indicate that it is time for UNHCR to move beyond institutionalizing participatory "assessment" per se, towards an understanding of "assessment" as only the first stage in the programming cycle. While this is a fundamental principle underlying the AGDM ACTION Plan, this has yet to translated into action at the operational level.

248. The next step is to refocus on the objectives of the exercise, which was to ensure not only that persons of concern participate in assessing protection gaps, but that they are part of the design, prioritisation, monitoring and evaluation of measures to address these gaps. As seen earlier, the inability of operations to do so is the single biggest frustration of all parties, including persons of concern, partners and UNHCR staff asked with carrying out PAs. A revised PA tool must provide guidance on how operations should approach participation of persons of concern throughout the programme cycle and in prioritisation of measures to address programme and protection gaps.

249. As identified in Chapter 3 and elsewhere in this report, when PA is practiced repeatedly and "religiously", based only programming instructions from HQ, without a vision or resources or staff capacities allocated to creating fuller collaboration and partnerships with communities in displacement, the results with time turn negative, with persons of concern feeling angry and frustrated at the lack of results and more systematic inclusion in finding solutions.

250. The fact that 50% or so of UNHCR operations have reduced or stopped the use of the PA signifies their inability to develop the required strategic understanding and develop innovative ways to use participatory approaches, or that they perceive that the objective has already been met. Based on telephone and face-to-face interviews with UNHCR staff and partners, the evaluation team believes that the former is the case, with numerous staff indicating that in some operations, the use of PA, unaccompanied by additional resources, staff, government by-in and/or senior management commitment,

have become too conflictive or demanding. This is corroborated by findings of the 2008 SGBV evaluation.<sup>55</sup>

251. In several country operations, participatory processes frequently generate conflict in cases where there are simply no resources available to address the priority protection concerns identified. UNHCR staff and partners at field level generally bear the brunt of this conflict. In the AGDM Evaluation mission to Ethiopia, for example, staff felt exhausted and burnt out in having to deal on the one hand with frustrated refugees and on the other hand with UNHCR's inability to provide adequate resources to provide a meaningful response.

252. While the PA process in Ethiopia generated numerous issues which did not require additional resources to address, there were others that did require budgets to accomplish, and these are much more contentious. When it comes to making sure that the results of PA are reflected in UNHCR and IP budgets and planning documents, field staff expressed frustration that they need to fight for this. In the words of one UNHCR staff person:

"I have had to fight every step of the way for things identified in PA to be included in the budget. I had to fight to have things like group resettlement, urgently needed plastic sheeting, NFIs that had not been distributed for years but that refugees are supposed to receive. When things have been identified in PA once, twice, three times, eventually we cannot keep ignoring them. That is, if you like, a good side of PA, it does not let us forget what the refugees' priorities are. This year, I told them (UNHCR managers), 'I am not going back to do the PA again until you give the refugees some plastic sheeting', after a hail storm had destroyed their housing".

### **Limited information about the PA findings in Country Planning**

253. On the question of whether the country planning has incorporated the results of participatory assessments, an analysis of AF responses indicates that full compliance rate has decreased from 51.4% to 48% since 2007. Analysis by the evaluation team of a set of 10 earlier COP submissions (2005-2008) indicates highly variable degree of linkage between PA and the COP. Some operations have elected to give a good amount of detail on the linkages as a rationale for planned activities (among others Kenya and Tanzania), but others have opted to provide scant if any information. There was in the past no standard format or consistent reporting that would permit a clear analysis across operations. More recent analysis of information of FOCUS submissions corresponds to the results of the AGDM AF analysis: approximately 50 % of submissions indicate that they have undertaken participatory assessments and their results are somehow reflected in the country planning. However, under the current FOCUS structure, insufficient information is available regarding the precise linkage and utilisation of PA results and

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<sup>55</sup> UNHCR SGBV Evaluation, 2008, p. 26-27

POC capacities and country operations plans and budgets (see RBM/FOCUS analysis below).

### **Mitigation of Negative Consequences associated with PAs**

254. As identified in the Ethiopia mission (see attachment), some UNHCR staff have become reluctant to continue to carry out PAs, as there are scarcely enough resources to maintain basic assistance and services to refugees, and they have to personally struggle to ensure that some PA outcomes and priorities are taken up in the COP. If the same PA needs to be repeated with the same population, year after year, this would indicate that exercise has not served to achieve the objective intended of building refugee capacities to engage in viable partnership with UNHCR and partners, hence the reasons for this need to be addressed. Depending on the local context, its opportunities and constraints, UNHCR operations should be able to draw on a "basket of participatory approaches" that respect the principles of an age, gender and diversity approach, but represent innovative approaches built on the skills and knowledge of all partners. Innovative approaches to ensuring participation in all phases of the programme cycle should be the measure of success for UNHCR operations, rather than routine carrying out of PAs as currently designed.

255. At a global level, as a basis for generating targeted action and operational plans and budgets, analysis of the AGDM AF responses for 2007 and 2008 indicates that carrying out PAs has seen a decline in full compliance at the global level, from 58.3 % to 54.7 %. Of those who responded to the AGDM evaluation questionnaire, 77% indicated that there are conditions under which PA can have negative consequences. The primary negative consequences identified by staff and partners include:

- Raised expectations of immediate results
- Lack of feedback on the outcomes, follow-up and timeframe
- Lack of resources with which to address specific protection problems identified, either in the form of financial resources or local partners with the required experience and capacities
- Lack of use of persons of concern's own capacities to address protection problems

256. Field missions, interviews and analysis of AGDM evaluation questionnaires all point to the need to enhance staff and partners' skills and capacities to mitigate the potentially negative consequences of participatory processes that are ill-planned, and/or carried out by inexperienced and unskilled staff.

257. The evaluation team also reviewed the operation of PAs in all operational environment in which UNHCR operates - advocacy, IDPs, camp-based, urban, repatriation and reintegration, and statelessness. Results of UNHCR's performance in these different contexts is presented in Annex 10. In conclusion, the evaluation finds that there is no operational context in which the AGDM Strategy and the PA tool or a

participatory approach related to it have not been both feasible and potentially beneficial to enhancing UNHCR's protection role and programming, provided that they are well adapted to the local context and that these form part of an overall operational strategy to improve access to protection and assistance by all segments of the population, including coordination with other actors.

258. UNHCR Colombia has adapted the PA Systematization form as found in the UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations into an Action Plan framework. The Action Plan has proven to be a powerful tool for community mobilisation, advocacy and building rights awareness among IDP groups. The Action Plan framework used by UNHCR Colombia is as follows:

<b>Example of Action Planning form used by UNHCR Colombia</b>				
<b>Protection Risks</b>	<b>Rights Violated</b>	<b>Actions Required</b>	<b>Actors, Resources, Responsibilities, Timeframe</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Citing words of IDPs themselves	Identifying all the rights violated in the context of the particular protection problem	Actions required to restore rights and ensure protection (has community participated in defining the solutions?)	POCs Community groups State agencies, UNHCR and or NGOs (should include actions to be carried out by the community itself!)	How will we know when the problem has been solved?

### **Key Findings and Recommendations on PA Tool**

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and resources</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
UNHCR is not completing PAs as planned; findings of assessments are not being systemically discussed with persons of concern, or being used for planning and prioritisation purposes.	UNHCR should revise the PA process to ensure that it is iterative and based on participatory action planning involving regular discussions with persons of concern about PA findings, intended follow-up, and prioritization where available resources will not meet all requirements. UNHCR	Ongoing, internal resources	CDGECS

<p>The breakdown of age groups which are given as an example within the PA tool should be revised. The age group 40+</p>	<p>should examine the Colombia experience for replication, in particular development of Action Plans as a follow-up to PAs. This plan should be a joint plan, owned by all actors, including the community of concern, and include budgets, timelines and responsibility for follow-up.</p> <p>Where UNHCR staff and partners do not have the required skills or experience to effectively facilitate participatory processes, an external facilitator be brought in to do capacity building and ensure high quality facilitation of participatory processes.</p> <p>UNHCR should ensure that PA results that provide qualitative information on protection gaps are triangulated with quantitative data (e.g. from ProGres, Standards and Indicators, APRs and other sources) regarding actual incidents and populations affected by these.</p> <p>UNHCR should solicit the input of Help Age International to define appropriate age categories that UNHCR operations should</p>		
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<p>does not help UNHCR make important distinctions between older persons of concern (60-79) and the oldest persons of concern (80+) who may be at risk of different protection problems that need to be taken into account.</p>	<p>identify to ensure appropriate coverage of older persons of concern.</p>		
<p>Staff and partner interviews and questionnaires suggest that the issue of inflated expectations needs to be addressed through better preparation and orientation of PA facilitators.</p>	<p>Future revisions of the PA tool should provide direct guidance to PA facilitators on how to frame and explain the PA exercise and how to orient discussions in a manner that does not create false expectations. One method for doing so is to focus discussion more squarely on the side of capacities of persons of concern, and their role in mobilizing community resources.</p> <p>PAs must be accompanied by a communications strategy, shared with all participants, that explains how, when and where PA findings and follow-up activities and actions will be shared with persons of concern.</p>	<p>2010, internal resources</p>	<p>CDGECS</p>
<p>The annual PA exercise, as described in the tool, is not a substitute for other forms of regular contact with persons of concern. When PAs are organized</p>	<p>The use of the PA tool must be placed in the context of more regular and on-going opportunities for contact between UNHCR staff, partners and persons of concern.</p>	<p>2010, internal resources</p>	<p>AGDM Steering Committee</p>

<p>within a context in which POCs do not have sufficient regular opportunities to discuss their problems and individual cases with UNHCR and partners' staff, then expectations of PAs are naturally raised.</p>			
<p>As part of its monitoring of the AGDM strategy, UNHCR needs to have information regarding how PAs and participatory planning are conducted and how AGD analysis is incorporated into overall country operation plans and strategies. This requires an explicit strategic reflection at the operational level to ensure that age, gender and diversity issues are being addressed within the operation and how.</p>	<p>Future revisions of FOCUS should render explicit how POC participation is incorporated not only into programme planning, but the full programming cycle.</p> <p>It is recommended that FOCUS submissions include a clearly articulated country level AGDM Strategy that explains, based on PA findings and other analysis, how the country operation will specifically address age, gender and diversity mainstreaming within the operation</p>	<p>2010, internal resources</p>	<p>ODM and all country operations</p>

## Multi-functional teams

### Multi-functional teams at Country Operation level

259. Multifunctional teams (MFTs) have been the main approach used to increase coordination on age, gender and diversity issues between UNHCR functions and between UNHCR, government and NGO partners in the field. AGDM Evaluation questionnaire results (Figure ?) illustrate that according to respondents who chose to answer these questions (n=126), a significant majority of MFTs tend to be involved in the key steps associated with the planning of participatory assessments, analysing the results, developing programme and protection based responses. Fewer MFTs are fully involved in monitoring and evaluation of results of participatory assessments and the program and protection measures that result.

260. This is generally a positive finding, showing that in many operations from which we have questionnaire responses, MFTs are functioning. At the same time, it points to the fact that in about 10% of cases from which we have questionnaire responses, MFTs are not operating at all. Such cases would merit deeper examination and require more support from Headquarters and regional offices.

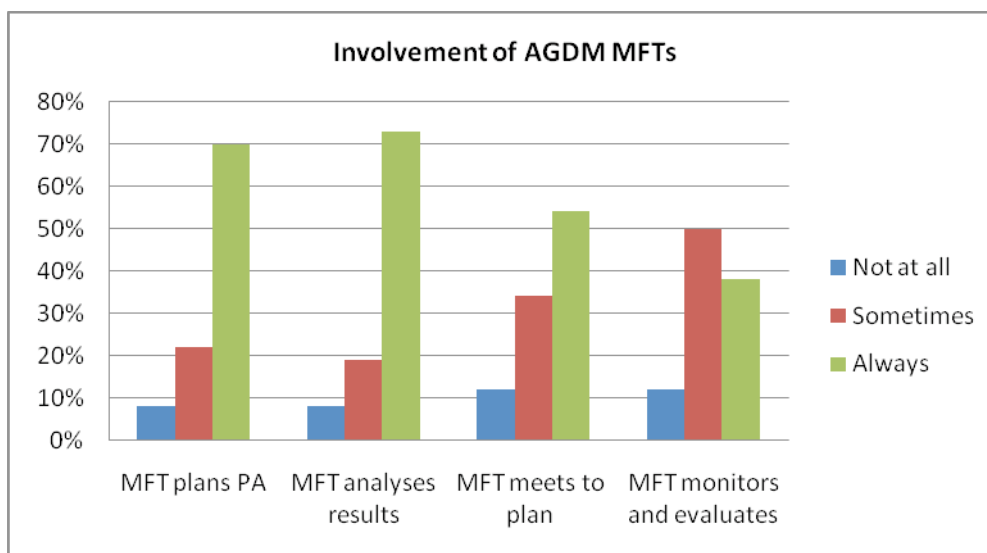


Figure 7. Evaluation Questionnaire responses to questions on whether Multifunctional teams are involved in the full programme cycle based on participatory assessments

261. Furthermore, respondents responded positively concerning MFTs role in enhancing UNHCR's work. When asked if Multifunctional Teamwork has improved the quality of UNHCR's program and protection responses within their operations, 66% of respondents said it had to a large extent, 31% said it had somewhat, and only 3% said that it has not improved these things at all.

### Composition, Seniority and Roles of MFTs

262. Despite these positive findings, as described in Chapter 4, follow-up interviews and field missions indicate that while MFTs are active, often they are made up of junior staff who have been allocated the responsibility, as "AGDM Focal Points" from UNCHR and partners to complete the PA.

263. Representatives, Deputy Representatives, Sr. Programme and Protection staff and Heads of Sub-Offices who were encouraged to lead the PAs as part of the roll out of the AGDM Strategy, have in many country operations not participated. Junior staff that are tasked with the implementation, analysis and response to PA, often lack the experience in facilitation, analysis and development of protection responses and strategies. Most importantly they are most often not part of the Management Committee of the country operation and cannot bring the results of PA to bear on key operational planning decisions. Such was the case of UNHCR Ethiopia, as well as other country operations from which evaluation questionnaires were received.



*Challenge of too many "thematic" priorities*

264. An analysis of evaluation questionnaire responses shows some of the mechanisms by which managerial support/commitment to AGDM, which is perceived as one thematic area among many, is fragmented or broken down. According to one UNHCR staff member, this is not due lack of good will by Sr. Managers, but is due to the fact that Sr. Managers themselves have too many thematic priorities and lack internal coordination. Sr. managers do not always understand that AGDM as an analytical and programming approach cross-cuts all other protection issues, and hence is always relevant, although the specific strategies may vary from one operation to another. As a result, they tend to overburden staff and give mixed messages about organisational priorities, without focusing on the age, gender and diversity aspects of specific priority areas:

"I have seen very few managers or staff sitting idle around, or managers who do not support or encourage staff sufficiently. It is often the other way around, where supervisor I encourages implementation of theme I, supervisor II requires immediate action re theme II, IOM/FOM III obliges staff to attend to item III urgently, and very senior manager IV wishes to have IV implemented. And in front of the UNHCR Office you need to deal with a riot created by frustrated refugees whose food ration had been cut due to lack of resources."

*Improved coordination and collaboration through MFTs*

265. When asked if MFTs had encouraged greater collaboration and coordination between UNCHR's Programme, Protection and CS staff, the response was relatively positive, with 48% saying that collaboration and coordination had improved to a large extent, 26% saying partly improved, and 3% not at all improved (23% did not respond). Yet in respondents' comments, it is clear that many staff and partners feel that in practice AGDM continues to be seen as the domain and responsibility of Community Services, more than other functions. One staff member in DRC reflected the opinion of many who felt that the Community Services function is still largely seen as "responsible" for AGDM, although not given the strategic position by which to ensure mainstreaming in other UNHCR functions: *"We have not really arrived at that result. We continue to believe that the MFT is the business of Community Services alone, or at most Programme in some locations."*

**Key Findings and Recommendations on MFTs**

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and cost</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Senior managers are not leading MFTs as planned	The AGDM accountability framework should be extended to senior operational staff.	2010-2011, internal	AGDM Steering Committee

## **Bureaux and Regional MFTs**

266. The experience of the AGDM roll out as demonstrated by the AGDM roll-out evaluations showed that when desk officers participated directly in PAs there was more effective follow up. Participation by regional and bureau staff was seen as a means to improve advocacy vis-à-vis daily operational challenges and better prepare them to support country/regional operation plans and the annual resource allocation process. To date, it appears that few desk officers have participated in PAs, and some of the Regional CS/Women and Children's Advisors had not had the time, resources or invitation from operations to participate in PA in the countries within their region.

267. A notable exception has been the then Sr. Community Services Officer for Southern Africa who has been actively engaged in operations within her region, and has the opportunity to make a positive contribution to these. Overall, as highlighted elsewhere in this report, the evaluation has identified that lack of capacity, staffing and resources, UNHCR at the regional and Bureaux level has not provided the types of technical support on AGDM at country operation level necessary to ensure consistent results across countries and regions.

268. Through telephone and face-to-face interviews, it appears that some UNHCR staff at country operations level have serious doubts about the actual contributions that Regional MFTs can make to assisting with the challenges they face at the country operation level, due to the fact that regional officers, for example "Women and Children's Advisors" and Sr. Community Services Officers are not technical specialists, but rather come from the same generalist stock as other UNHCR officers. This perception of lack of technical specialisation on AGDM will be taken up in greater detail in Chapter 8, but the lack of confidence in the technical support capacity of HQ and Regional offices should be highlighted here as a constraint to the mainstreaming process. Some UNHCR country operations would prefer to engage highly specialised consultants and partners, rather than invite Regional UNHCR staff to visit and provide technical support. Recommendations in this area are included in Chapter 8.

## **A Community-based Approach?**

269. One of the weaker elements of the AGDM strategy is the lack of capacity to implement a community-based approach. A community-based approach is an important element of addressing resource issues, as it can be effective in helping to rationalise the use of scarce financial resources, through community mobilisation to provide in-kind contributions or labour to supplement available resources.

270. A number of staff have expressed difficulty with this area in which they require greater capacity. According to one staff member working in a camp-based setting: *"I didn't think that a Community-based approach could be used here. I thought that was for other countries where people are in their communities. Refugees have left their communities to come to the camps. What is their community now?"*

271. The evaluation team explained that their current community is, for better or worse, that of the refugee camp, and within this community, there is a capacity to work in partnership with UNHCR to address not all, but some of the problems that they face.

272. Other staff understand the approach, but have not yet been able to put it in place:

“ We are able to use a community-based approach to some extent. We can count on community support in helping in some situations of persons with specific needs; women's associations have been helping in hosting SGBV survivors and providing support; families foster children without parents, there are many solutions that PA can identify but the discussions in the focus groups need to be pushed towards the strengths and assets of the communities.”

273. It should not be overlooked that at times, UNHCR's implementing partners may not have vested interest in fully taking up a community-based approach and empowering refugees to take action on their own behalf. In the context of a meeting with a camp coordination committee in Ethiopia, one partner commented that they had trained 200 women to develop “hanging gardens” which involved planting seeds in slits cut in empty WFP food bags filled with earth as a basis for improved household food security. Many more women wanted to join the “program”. We asked what they had told these women. *“We told them that we would include it in our next project submission”*. We discussed why the IP had not encouraged the women to speak to those who had already been trained and get them to teach them how to do it themselves, rather than put them off of their own food production for another year, until a new contract had been given by UNHCR.

### **Registration systems and data analysis, RSD and Resettlement**

274. Registration, data management, RSD and Resettlement procedures in different operations demonstrate that there continues to be gaps in understanding and application of policies and guidelines from the point of view of AGDM. In the context of the AGDM evaluation mission to Ethiopia, it was clear that most staff saw AGDM as synonymous with the annual PA, rather than an organisational strategy that cross-cuts all core UNHCR functions.

275. Only a handful of staff recognised that AGDM implied changes for the way that refugee registration, RSD, and resettlement activities were carried out. One weakness identified was ensuring that women were able to decide for themselves regarding resettlement opportunities, in a context in which social pressure by male leaders to decline resettlement was very strong.

276. A registration staff in Ethiopia raised the issue that the ProGRES database still continues to emit the refugee ration card in the name of the male head of household, despite UNHCR policies that say that food distribution should be collected by women. Apparently there are UNHCR policies that have not yet been incorporated into updates in the ProGRES database.

277. At the same time, there were positive developments such as the Continuous Registration Exercise being carried out in the Somali camps at the time of the evaluation visit. This provided updated registration information, and the opportunity to identify at the household level emerging protection concerns. Continuous registration exercises in protracted refugee situations potentially provides an excellent complement to the PA, as it permits a detailed assessment in quantitative terms of special protection problems faced by persons of concern and new arrivals who have not previously been registered, and identifies cases of heightened vulnerability among both non-registered and registered refugees.

278. The AGDM ACTION Plan set a target to increase annual resettlement places assigned to women at risk at 15% by 2009. Overall, the evaluation finds that there has been an increase in the use of "women at risk" as a resettlement criterion, but the target has not been achieved, with the figure currently at 7%.<sup>56</sup>

279. For various technical reasons, the women-at-risk criterion may be underestimated in the ProGres database, since in 2008, only one resettlement criterion could be used to identify cases, and secondary criteria, such as women-at-risk, would have been excluded. But it was also a finding from our field mission to Ethiopia that this criterion was not being used at all, given the level of effort that the operation was putting into group resettlement in two large camps.

280. Regarding the use of resettlement as a durable solution for persons with disabilities, overall the evaluation finds that there is insufficient data to reach specific conclusions, except that there have been some positive examples of the use of resettlement as a durable solution for persons with disabilities in Kenya, Tanzania and Nepal. UNHCR has not made it a priority to collect and record data about persons with disabilities across all operations in the ProGres database.

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and cost</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
The women-at-risk criterion may be underestimated in the ProGres database	The ProGres database should be adapted to include the women-at-risk criterion whenever it is relevant to the resettlement case.	2010, internal	UNHCR Registration/ProGres unit
The AGDM ACTION Plan target to increase annual resettlement places assigned to women at risk at 15% has not been	COs doing resettlement require more guidance from HQ as to whether or not women-at-risk criterion should be used and require more capacity on gender-sensitive interviewing techniques, even in the context of group resettlement.	2010-2011	UNHCR Resettlement and Training Sections

<sup>56</sup> 2008 AGDM Action Plan report from CDGECs.

achieved			
UNHCR has not made it a priority to collect and record data about persons with disabilities across all operations in the ProGres database.	The ProGres database should include information about persons of concern with disabilities, disaggregated by age and gender.	2010-2011, internal resources	UNHCR Registration/ ProGres unit

### Results Based Management (RBM)

281. UNHCR has committed to strengthening its RBM systems. In line with other UN organizations, this has involved:

- Attempting to place strategic planning on a more results based footing. A results framework was issued in December 2008 with instructions and guidelines for UNHCR's offices and headquarters on reporting in 2008, implementation in 2009, and planning for 2010-2011, describing the results the organization is working to achieve.<sup>57</sup> Six Global Strategic Objectives have been developed for the organization as a whole, including corresponding expected accomplishments and performance targets. One of the Global Strategic Objectives performance targets is: "100 per cent of UNHCR operations use a participatory age, gender and diversity mainstreaming approach in the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes." This Objectives could act as a vision statement for UNHCR's proposed AGDM strategy.
- Clarifying accountabilities and responsibilities
- Developing improved software - called FOCUS - to link results and resources. The Focus software was piloted in 2008, with roll-out workshops in 30 locations with 44 trainers covering around 1,200 staff in about 115 countries, and including HQ. The Focus client is intended: "to allow users to capture their assessment of the situation of each population of concern in terms of prioritized needs, to plan an operation that responds to these needs, and then to use the plan and its targets as the basis for managing the operation and for viewing and reporting on the progress being achieved, in a way that is consistent across operations. Global Focus allows users to compare the situation of populations of concern to UNHCR around the world, and to analyze the impact and effectiveness of the resources UNHCR is investing in the country, regional and Headquarters operations that respond to these needs."<sup>58</sup> Focus uses a "tree" RBM hierarchy with cascading results, common to many systems currently being introduced across the UN.

<sup>57</sup> UNHCR (2009) *Global Needs Assessment*. Standing Committee 45th Meeting, EC/60/SC/CRP.14 , 29 May

<sup>58</sup> UNHCR (2009) *Focus User Guide 1.3*. Organizational Development and Management, February.

282. The evaluation team held discussions with UNHCR staff at the HQ and country levels about the likely impact of strengthening the RBM process in UNHCR on AGDM, and reviewed relevant background documents.

283. The UNHCR section responsible for RBM - the Office for Organizational Development and Management - has made some efforts to include AGD issues in new RBM tools, guidance and resources. This has included strategic planning documents, FOCUS software and guidance, and Standards and Indicators. Draft *Planning Guidance* (December 2008 version) was particularly strong on AGDM.

284. Nevertheless, some staff both at HQ and country level expressed concerns that strengthening of RBM and the introduction of FOCUS were bureaucratic tendencies which were likely to lessen attention to AGDM; the generalizing effects of Focus were perceived as not allowing adequate attention to the specificities of populations of concern which AGDM was intended to promote. HQ staff noted that it was not possible to determine from FOCUS the extent to which country level planning was based on PA, and that indicators are not always disaggregated by sex and age. A further concern expressed was the extent to which planning guidance emphasized the importance of AGDM as a cross-cutting work theme UNHCR, and not only the responsibility of CDGECS.

285. One Country Office put it as follows concerning FOCUS:

Where can we show why we are doing what we are doing? This question can only be answered in the gap analysis which is very far down the tree. We will need to be doing a lot of explaining at this level or no one will be able to understand from outside the relationship between our strategy and actions... For example, in these categories of Focus, reference to women and children is found mainly under 'assistance with basic needs'. In an IDP context, this is not really what we are focused on, but rather capacity building and advocacy. In this sense it is almost impossible to show the logic of our operation using Focus.

286. A second Country Office also expressed reservations:

Focus offers pre-established objectives and outcomes like a venue from which you chose and pick what is most applicable to your situation, there is a risk that people do not think analytically any longer...but rather apply something ready-made. Focus does foresee narratives for the description of outputs, but it is up to the individual staff how comprehensively, or not...this is done... the set-up of Focus does not particularly invite people to describe a problem and subsequently/consequently formulate the objective/solution.

287. UNHCR needs to address these concerns and pay particular attention to AGDM as Focus is further developed.

288. As UNHCR is now implementing its new RBM system, it is too early to say whether there will be an adequate reflection of AGDM in this.<sup>59</sup> A cautionary note should be sounded by other UN agency experience of attention to cross-cutting issues during the introduction or strengthening of RBM. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, and the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, have both carried out reviews of the effects on UN agencies of gender mainstreaming during the introduction or strengthening of RBM. The former carried out a pan-UN review including 14 case studies (of which UNHCR was one), from 2001-2003. The latter reviewed accountability for gender mainstreaming in 2006.<sup>60</sup>

289. The common experience of the UN is that RBM is treated as a “technical” issue mainly related to establishing the “correct” kind of results chain, and tying results to resources. Significant attention has been paid to establishing the different levels of the results chain and how these levels relate to each other. Subsequently UN RBM guides are largely silent on cross-cutting issues, including gender, age and diversity. The introduction of results “trees”, such as in Focus, has meant that it has been challenging for agencies to capture themes such as gender equality. A common finding is that agency coding systems systematically under-represent their contributions to cross-cutting themes.

290. UNHCR needs to pay particular attention and be proactive in ensuring that new RBM technology promotes AGDM. There is evidence, for example in the draft *Planning Guidance* (December 2008 version) that UNHCR is being proactive in ensuring that AGDM continues under the new RBM regime, but vigilance will be required on an ongoing basis.

### Key Findings and Recommendations on RBM

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and cost	Responsibility
While there is a high level of commitment to AGDM in RBM processes, past experience in the UN has shown that, unless agencies proactively focus on AGDM issues, then these will be under-represented in agency planning, programming and reporting. There is evidence to suggest that	As part of the work of the proposed Steering Committee, UNHCR needs to review formally the reflection of AGDM as it strengthens its RBM approach.	Every six months  AGDM Steering Committee	Internal resources

<sup>59</sup> The evaluation’s mandate is restricted to assessing the likely impact of the introduction of RBM on AGDM; the evaluation team was not requested to make an overall assessment of RBM in UNHCR.

<sup>60</sup> UNDG (2006) Review of UNDG Members' Accountability Mechanisms for Gender Equality <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=222>; IANWGE (2003) Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in Programme Budget Processes Within the United Nations System. Final Report and Synthesis, mimeo.

UNHCR is being proactive in ensuring AGDM continues under the new RBM regime.			
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### Global Needs Assessment

291. As pointed out by UNHCR respondents, PA is the main needs assessment mechanism for the agency at present. PAs are to be used as part of the evidence base for the Global Needs Assessment (GNA), which is designed to map overall needs of populations of concern more comprehensively, and to present the plans, activities, and level of resources required to meet these needs. The GNA was piloted in eight countries in 2008, introduced globally in the first quarter of 2009, and will form the basis for planning at the regional and country levels. Country offices are now required to develop two kinds of assessment, a comprehensive assessment of needs, and a prioritized set of needs with a plan to meet those needs, with a corresponding budget in each case.

292. Respondents noted that PAs will remain a key element in the GNA, and be combined with other assessment tools to provide the global picture of needs required.<sup>61</sup> The UNHCR Draft *Planning Guidance* (December 2008 version) is clear that AGDM and PAs will continue to be a central feature in needs assessment as UNHCR rolls out its GNA.

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<sup>61</sup> See UNHCR (2009) *Global Needs Assessment*. Standing Committee 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting, EC/60/SC/CRP.14 29 May, which delineates the following needs assessment mechanisms: Practical Guide to the Systematic Use for Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations (February 2006); Protection Gaps: Framework for Analysis: Enhancing Protection for Refugees, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2008); Statelessness: An Analytical Framework for Prevention, Reduction and Protection (2008). See also Protection and Early Recovery Cluster Working Groups, Protection of Conflict-induced IDPS; Assessment for Action (2008)



## 8. Organisational Capacity Building

293. UNHCR's Community Services evaluation concluded concerning staff capacity:

"Low-level national staff who receive little systematic training in how to do social and situation analysis and lack comparative experience of other refugee settings, may simply overlook or be unsure how to address the range of social problems that invariably emerge in protracted refugee situations. These staff require far better training and tools, as well as guidance from more senior professional CS staff to ensure that they are capable and required through job descriptions and work plans, to carry out systematic situation analyses that will form the basis for the assistance programme and protection objectives. As well, CS and other staff typically need to spend much more time in the refugee camps and settlements in order to know what steps to take to address abuses of leadership or other delicate political situations. If UNHCR staff are to help transform refugee committees into viable and trusted political institutions, staff need to be capable of generating an analysis of the local social and political situation."<sup>62</sup>

294. This reference establishes the scale of the task which UNHCR faced in the mid-2000s when the AGDM strategy was being developed. The challenge was to provide staff with the capacity to transform UNHCR into a participatory agency where planning is based needs of persons of concern. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the serious scandals that erupted at the turn of the century and the low level of starting capacity, UNHCR has not as yet been transformed in terms of its organisational capacity, although there have been some positive developments. Given sufficient investment it will be possible for UNHCR to keep progressing towards an organisation that can adequately mainstream AGD.

295. The AGDM ACTION Plan defined the following result for the area of organisational capacity building, supported by three objectives:

296. The Result set for this element of the ACTION Plan was "Increased staff confidence and skills in dialoguing with people of concern, age, gender and diversity analysis and a rights and community-based approach to ensure operations build on the capacities and skills of people of concern and thus, facilitate accurate protection analysis and sustainable solutions.

297. Objectives set for the ACTION Plan were:

- Improved attitudes and skills of staff in managing expectations and dialogue and information shared on lessons learned.

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<sup>62</sup> CASA Consulting (2003): The Community Services Function in UNHCR. An independent evaluation. Montreal: CASA Consulting.

- A rights and community-based approach is strengthened in UNHCR learning programmes, including the WEM and trainings provide staff with age, gender and diversity analysis skills and capacity to design targeted actions to empower and protect people.
- Skilled community services and protection staff are assigned to field locations close to the people of concern through an effective protection workforce management strategy.

298. The evaluation questionnaire survey focused on the Result statement above in several of its questions. However, without a systematic baseline against which to measure progress, it is only possible to approximate the current state of UNHCR organisational capacity, as opposed to measuring progress. This is an important issue that has already been flagged in relation to the AF. Unless UNHCR is able to measure its own and partners' capacity vis-a-vis AGDM, then it cannot determine if it has an adequate staffing levels, competencies and profiles to fulfil its AGDM mandate, and decisions about staffing will be somewhat ad hoc.

299. It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to carry out an intensive review of UNHCR training vis-à-vis AGDM, but, as well as coverage in the questionnaire, general issues concerning organisational capacity were reviewed during field visits, HQ interviews, along with results from the AGDM self-evaluation by CDGECS.

## **Levels of organisational capacity**

### **HQ and Regional levels**

300. Lack of AGDM capacity was identified at HQ. The key challenges in extending ownership and responsibility according to a number of UNHCR staff and partners, were:

- Lack of staff with AGD analytical capacity in the Bureaux to support the field as to the extent to which AGD analysis forms a basis for their annual (or now bi-annual) budgets, and the extent to which budgets should be informed by participatory assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Lack of capacity and of resources for regional CS and Women/Children Advisors in Regional Hubs to provide sustained and meaningful support to field operations on the substantive aspects of the AGDM strategy, and how to overcome the challenges often encountered in implementing the new approaches in the field. According to regional CS/Women and Children Advisors interviewed, despite the challenges faced by the field, resources available for them to travel to countries in their region to provide support have been cut back extensively, and one such Regional post has been eliminated. Conversely, in 2008 the Americas Bureau asked the regional community services advisor to facilitate a workshop on how to improve performance on

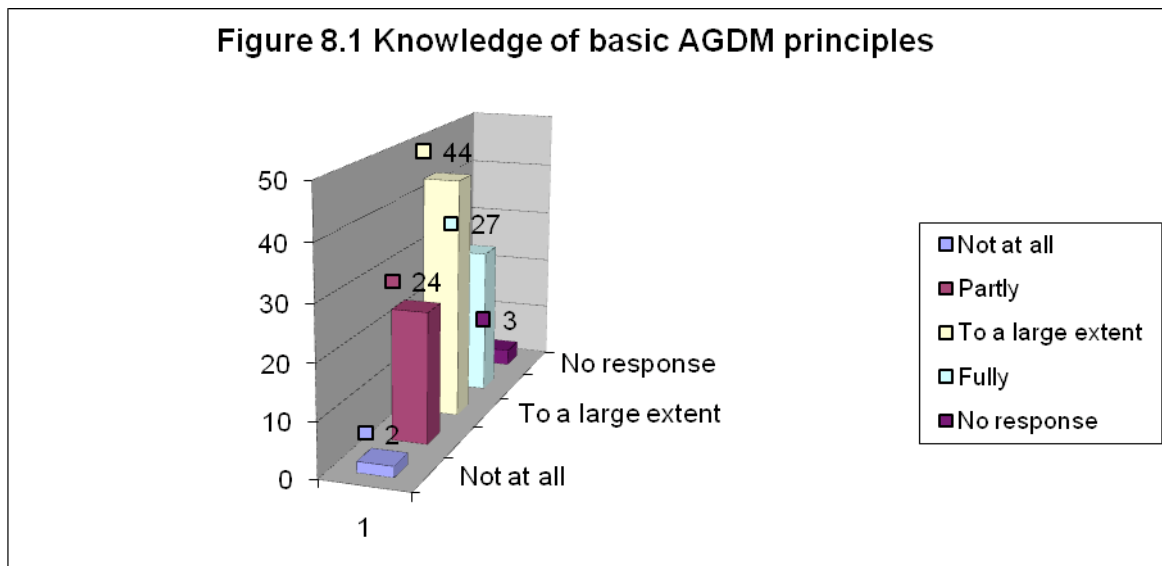
AGDM, which was greatly appreciated by both Representatives and the Bureau.

301. Competing pressures from other organisational change processes that have followed in close succession have also reduced staff investment in and attention span for AGDM over time.

302. The evaluation team found that AGD has been effectively mainstreamed into UNHCR programming and training manuals and guidance, and specific guides for AGDM that are of good quality have also been produced, for example the Operational Manual and *A Community Based Approach in UNHCR Operations* (2008). However, this guidance alone and the training provided to date, limited as it has been due to inadequate resourcing, has been insufficient vis-à-vis the adequate implementation of AGDM. The fact that staff turn-over in many UNHCR operations is quite high means that without substantial investment in on-going staff induction and orientation training on AGDM, past gains from the roll-out period will quickly evaporate.

### Country level

303. Questionnaire respondents at country level were asked if they felt they understood the differences between a PA, community based and rights based approach, and their relation to the overarching AGDM strategy. Questionnaire results, presented in Figure 8.1, illustrate that 71 per cent of respondents thought they had a sound knowledge of basic AGDM principles.<sup>63</sup>



<sup>63</sup> Question 2d: Do you feel you understand the differences between a Participatory Approach, a Community-based Approach and a Rights-based approach and their relationship to the AGDM strategy?

304. The introduction of AGDM itself was seen by a majority of questionnaire respondents to have increased their capacity. AGDM was viewed as having supported capacity to take a rights based approach with all persons of concern, and move towards solving the issues raised in the Community Services evaluation quoted at the beginning of this Chapter. Fifty one per cent of respondents thought that the strategy had enhanced their ability to take a rights based approach to a large extent, while a further 31 per cent felt that their ability had been partly enhanced. Similar levels were noted by respondents in terms of whether PAs helped improve the analysis of protection needs.<sup>64</sup>

305. There was a similar level of response concerning the AGDM strategy's contributions to taking a community based approach. Forty one per cent of respondents thought that their ability to do this had been enhanced to a large extent, with a further 41 per cent feeling that their ability had been partly enhanced.<sup>65</sup> Similarly with the case of the AF, 13 of 24 respondents thought that this had facilitated organisational learning to a large extent, with a further three respondents answering that organisational learning had been fully facilitated by the AF.

306. While the introduction of the AGDM strategy has supported the capacity of UNHCR, questionnaire responses and field visits identified major gaps in capacity. Respondents were asked if they had received AGDM training<sup>66</sup>, with 67 per cent responding negatively and 30 per cent responding positively, suggesting that for the majority of respondents additional training was needed. Evidence from the field studies corroborated this finding, as after the initial AGDM training there was limited follow-up, and staff and counterparts expressed a need for training. Several staff in the Ethiopia operation said that they had received no formal training in the AGDM approach, as did few of UNHCR partners. As a result, many UNHCR and IP staff did not appear to understand the larger goal of AGDM. Instead, the AGDM strategy was viewed as an annual participatory assessment that comprised asking refugees what their needs and problems were. In Central Europe staff were planning a refresher on AGDM as there had been no training since the AGDM roll-out.

307. Specific areas for additional training were highlighted in the responses received to the AGDM evaluation questionnaire. In particular, staff and partners focused on the need for additional training in:

- Gender and age analysis
- Working with specific groups, such as children, older persons and persons with disabilities
- Community mobilisation

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<sup>64</sup> Question 3d Have the results of PAs helped improve the analysis of protection needs of all persons of concern within your operation?

<sup>65</sup> Question 5a. To what extent has UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming strategy enhanced your ability to identify and support community strengths, solutions and self-protection mechanisms?

<sup>66</sup> Question 2e: Have you ever received training on any aspect of the AGDM strategy (AGD analysis, participatory approach, rights-based approach, community-based approach, multifunctional teamwork etc)?

- Participatory techniques
- Facilitation skills
- Management skills based on an AGDM approach

308. However, with proactive leadership and a strong CS Unit empowered to ensure AGDM as a cross-cutting approach, UNHCR's office in Colombia has demonstrated that it is possible to develop adequate capacity for AGDM. This is illustrated in the Good Practice Box on hiring and training in the Colombia Office.

309. The need for training can be seen from the questionnaire responses to the

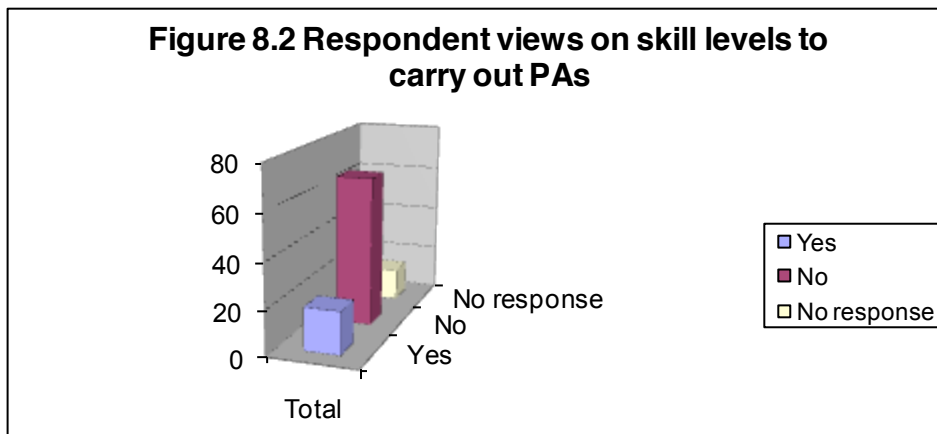
**Good practice: hiring and training in the UNHCR Colombia Office**  
 UNHCR Colombia is a large and complex operation that has adopted a sound policy of hiring national staff and consultants with specialized skills in line with the diversity of its field operations. This is at the expense of hiring more international staff, which seems fully justified, given the high level of Colombian national expertise. This strategy has the added benefit that national staff do not rotate, and skills built within the operation are more likely to be retained. One consequence of this, however, is that staff may be more limited in their language skills (limited knowledge of English), and may not have had the opportunity to participate in many international UNHCR meetings or activities.

A particularly innovative measure of staff capacity building was a survey carried out to identify capacity building needs of UNHCR on SGBV. Such an approach brings clarity to what capacities, attitudes, practices and information need to be strengthened and how to achieve this. In addition to this, all UNHCR Colombia staff receive training in AGDM as

questions concerning respondents views on their skill levels to carry out PAs.<sup>67</sup> As noted above, PAs need to be well managed, and facilitators well trained and oriented as to what the intended objectives of the exercise are, and how to achieve those objectives. Experience in UNHCR operations shows that PA facilitation skills are not something that all UNHCR or IP staff have, and more experienced facilitators are needed to mentor and train new and inexperienced staff. As can be seen in Figure 8.2, only 19 per cent of respondents thought they had the relevant skills. The evaluation team found that one of the weaker elements of the AGDM strategy in Ethiopia was the lack of capacity to implement a community-based approach. Some staff did not understand that such a concept might apply in this refugee setting. This evidence suggests that there is a major training gap that needs to be filled.

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<sup>67</sup> 3m Do you feel that you have the skills, tools and resources required to carry out Participatory Assessments and ensure the participation of all groups of persons of concern?



310. Increased UNHCR capacity in AGDM will also likely lead to the credibility of the organisation as a whole, in the same way that lack of such capacity will damage its credibility. According to many UNHCR staff consulted, the AGDM strategy in Colombia has had an important impact on UNHCR's credibility in the eyes of donors, its capacity to define projects and do advocacy based on good and detailed field information and hence its capacity to raise funds. According to one Programme staff member:

311. UNHCR has the best field presence of any international organisation in Colombia and thanks to the AGDM approach, applied across the operation, it has helped us to build the credibility of the operation...Using the AGDM approach, we actually now have detailed information about the protection problems of IDP women, children, youth - any group that donors want to support, we have that information from the field - and we are in a position to influence public policies, as well as identify good projects based on the real protection needs of all IDP groups.

312. In just a few years, UNHCR Colombia has succeeded in raising its annual budget from \$5 million US to \$24 million US, and much of this is seen to be linked to the increased information, better analysis and more strategic approach that the AGDM approach has helped to create.

313. This additional budget has been invested in national expert staff and consultants with specialized skills, and has significantly increased the quality and capacity of UNHCR staff on AGDM UNHCR Colombia. Staff awareness about AGD issues generally appears to be strong, and the office in its hiring practices tends to try for gender balance, even in functions that are not typically occupied by women. As one respondent noted: *"UNHCR Colombia is one of the only UNHCR operations where you will find women driver!"*

314. The staffing situation in Colombia can be compared with that in Central Europe and Ethiopia. In the former several UNHCR staff noted that current staffing levels do not lend themselves to the relatively labour intensive AGDM process. The PAs for example take about three weeks of staff time for organisational purposes - this does not include time taken for the actual MFT and PA work. In Ethiopia the staffing structure

does not favour effective implementation of an AGDM approach. At Country Office level Community Services is poorly staffed, and falls under Protection, with a P3 Community Services Officer who is a key "focal point" on AGDM, and a UNV. In the field, CS field staff are working under Programme. Respondents noted that such a structure does not help facilitate coordination between CS staff in Country Office and the field. The Office itself recognizes that more senior CS/livelihoods staff, with a background in AGD issues is essential if the operation is to achieve adequate AGDM. The consequence of inadequate staffing reveals itself in lower quality PAs and frustration of both persons of concern and UNHCR staff.

315. At the Country Operation level, one of the most effective means of achieving AGDM objectives is through a strong CS professional staff or Unit with a responsibility for mainstreaming age, gender and diversity considerations throughout the operation and building the capacity of all UNCHR staff and partners on AGDM. More capacity at the national level should be the objective, as it would effectively and significantly reduce the technical support required from HQ and Regional Centers.

### **Key Conclusions and Recommendations on organisational capacity**

316. While we cannot conclude as to whether staff capacity has improved, we can conclude that the AGDM ACTION Plan result on organisational capacity has been met to a certain extent, but UNHCR needs to be more systematic in its focus on AGDM. While a majority of staff felt they grasped AGDM principles, staff do not have feel they have adequate capacity to carry out PAs. While the evaluation could not undertake an extensive review of staffing patterns, there are indications from the questionnaire responses and field missions that UNHCR is not investing adequately in staff capacity. As one Implementing Partner noted: "Please UNHCR, make this something that your organisation really does in a meaningful way, abandon the top down approach and tie PA to job performance appraisals and take other steps to make your staff take this seriously. For me a more community based, participatory approach is the single most important thing UNHCR can do to improve its performance, but at present, at least where I am standing, it is a long way from achieving this."

317. Recommendations on capacity development (note recommendations on staffing are provided under Section 8.4)

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and cost</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
At the Country Operation level, one of the most effective means of achieving AGDM objectives is through a	It is recommended that Country Operations revise the model of having mainly junior CS staff under either protection or programme functions, and aim rather for CS officers at a professional and managerial level, whose role it would be to guide participatory processes, facilitate	Reallocation of existing posts	UNHCR HQ, Bureaux and Country Operations.

<p>strong CS Unit with a responsibility for mainstreaming age, gender and diversity considerations throughout the operation and building the capacity of all UNCHR staff and partners on AGDM. More capacity at the national level would require less technical support from HQ.</p>	<p>AGD analysis, develop strategies to achieve AGD objectives and build the capacity of staff and partners at the country level to understand and implement AGD principles and good practice.</p>		
<p>UNHCR staff at Country Office level do not fully understand the AGDM strategy and concepts, and require further capacity development in implementing AGDM</p> <p>UNHCR staff do not in general have adequate capacity to implement the AGDM strategy</p>	<p>Prepare on-line training material which can be self-administered on the AGDM strategy and concepts, based on the “Untangling the Concepts” workshops.</p> <p>Set up a mentoring programme at HQ, in Regional and Country Offices, where staff with AGDM experience are paired with staff who need capacity development</p>	<p>On-line material to be prepared by spring 2011</p> <p>Internal Resources or US\$30,000 consultancy</p> <p>In place by spring 2011</p> <p>Internal Resources</p>	<p>Global Learning Centre</p> <p>Division of International Protection Pillar 2</p>



## Competencies and job descriptions

318. As incentives are an important factor in organizational mainstreaming, the evaluation team reviewed the latest UNHCR Competency Framework<sup>68</sup> and interviewed the Division of Human Resources Management (DHRM) and other relevant staff. The current Competency Framework was launched in 2008 as part of the change management process. It is made up of four areas - values, core competencies, managerial competencies, and cross-functional competencies. Each competency has a corresponding definition with specific behavioral indicators.

319. The AGDM *Action Plan* included as an output for 2008:

- UNHCR's revised competency framework incorporates indicators on attitudes and age, gender and diversity analysis.
- Such indicators have been included in the Competency Framework in a number of places. For example, under the category "Values" and the competency "Respect for diversity", behavioral indicators are:
- Supports gender equality and equal rights for all, including gender equality among staff.
- Develops skills in age, gender and diversity analysis as applicable to the area of work.

320. Similarly, under the category "Cross-Functional" the following indicator is included:

- Establishes a helping relationship which respects the individual, whilst aiming at understanding the perspective of other parties and acknowledging cultural, age, gender and diversity differences.

321. Overall, AGD is well represented in the Competency Framework and this should support future mainstreaming. Staff are also assessed against the objectives in their individual workplans, and if these workplans include reference to AGDM staff will be assessed against these.

322. The main concern of the evaluation team is the Competency Framework format. Staff are assessed on aggregate rather than individual indicators. Because indicators related to AGD are included within a wider set of indicators, disaggregated data will not be available on AGD. UNHCR cannot therefore determine staff capacity or performance on AGDM through its Competency Framework. This will make it difficult to determine if UNHCR has an adequate staffing level to fulfill its current AGDM *Action Plan*, and also makes the development of the next *Action Plan* more challenging.

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<sup>68</sup> UNHCR (2008) *UNHCR Competency Framework*. Geneva, Division of Resources Management, December.

323. The draft standards for the Chief Executives Board *System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*<sup>69</sup> which will set standards for all UN agencies includes the following:

324. Some UN agencies, e.g. ILO and UNDP<sup>70</sup>, have made a commitment to developing a specific competency on gender mainstreaming in their action plans, and in its next revision of the Competency Framework UNHCR may wish to consider the same thing for AGDM.

### Key Findings and Recommendations on AGDM Competencies

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and resources	Responsibility
<p>UNHCR's staffing profile is not yet adequate to support AGDM.</p> <p>UNHCR does not have the means to assess capacity of staff in AGDM through its Competency Framework</p>	<p>Review global staffing and partner capacity, identify any gaps and develop strategies to fill these gaps. Capacity can be determined through a questionnaire based on the questionnaire for this evaluation.</p>	<p>By end 2010</p> <p>Internal resources</p>	DHRM
<p>There is increased focus in UN agencies on developing a separate competency for gender mainstreaming. This enables tracking of staff capacity.</p>	<p>In the next revisions of its Competency Framework UNHCR should develop a separate competency for AGDM.</p>	<p>Timing dependent on Competency Framework revisions</p> <p>Internal resources</p>	DHRM

<sup>69</sup> OSAGI (2009) "Development of an Action Plan for the UN system-wide policy and strategy on gender mainstreaming. Discussion Paper. Prepared for the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, Eighth Session. New York, 24-26 February 2009." mimeo.

<sup>70</sup> ILO (2006) *ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-09* includes "Competency in gender mainstreaming, at appropriate level, is developed for all ILO staff." UNDP (2008) *Empowered but Equal. Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011* includes: "A key result area on gender equality in the Results and Competency Assessment of all senior managers is approved and instituted."

## 9. Non-Negotiable Standards of Assistance

325. Of all the areas of the AGDM strategy, the one that has received the least attention has been that of Non-Negotiable Standards of Assistance. Dating back to 2007 Stakeholder consultations on the AGDM Strategy, the lack of financial resources to follow up on participatory assessments was presented as the major concern of participants.

326. The 2006 budget cuts were persistently highlighted as having been a serious obstacle to following up on priorities identified during participatory assessments and building trust with the community. Indeed, as the outset of this evaluation, some UNHCR partners highlighted that it was a risk to carry out this evaluation without putting into context how gains made on AGDM need to be viewed in the context of the serious budget cuts that have affected both staffing levels and the resources available to put in place targeted actions to address protection gaps faced by particular groups.

327. As noted by many questionnaire respondents, budget cuts often impact disproportionately on areas crucial to the protection of women, children and persons with specific needs, leaving them exposed to a variety of protection risks, particularly for persons who are already at heightened risk. As we have seen already in this evaluation, particularly groups, such as persons with disabilities, tend to systematically fall through the cracks when it comes to putting in place adequate measures to ensure that they have equal access to protection and assistance measures, often because they represent a small percentage of the population of concern, or because no qualified/experienced partners are available or because the cost of addressing their needs is seen to be too high. The lack of any prioritization through the PA exercise has exacerbated this situation.

328. One measure proposed as part of the AGDM strategy to address this issue was to adopt a system whereby basic priority items or activities are labelled as 'non-negotiable' so that country offices would have the responsibility to automatically fund these first. Those opting not to do so would be required to provide a justification for their decision. However, to the knowledge of the evaluators, no specific detailed list of 'non-negotiables' was ever defined.

329. PAs have consistently highlighted how gaps in the area of basic access to food, water, clothing, shelter, access to livelihoods and education often result in more serious risks to physical safety - through the tendency to leave the "protection" of camps, through survival sex and other forms of exploitation. This reality is further complicated in repatriation contexts where support, in particular for livelihoods and education, is often reduced too quickly. Assistance standards, in both camp-based and urban settings, need to be revisited globally and additional measures are required to protect specific groups in the context of repatriation.

330. In the AGDM ACTION Plan, the result statement on Non-Negotiable Standards of assistance was formulated as follows: "Women and girls, unaccompanied and separated children and groups with specific needs or individuals at heightened risk are guaranteed assistance and support for livelihoods to ensure their protection even in times of funding constraints or in the context of repatriation."

331. Objectives set were:

- Activities relating to the prevention of and response to SGBV, delivery of sanitary materials to women and girls, education as a tool of protection, support to unaccompanied and separated girls and boys, older persons, persons with disabilities, women at heightened risk and any person deemed to be at heightened risk are prioritised and classified as 'non-negotiable'.
- Private funding obtained to guarantee the uninterrupted provision of sanitary materials to women and girls in reproductive age.

#### **Appropriateness of UNHCR's results and objectives on Non-Negotiable Standards of Assistance**

332. The evaluation team finds that both the specific objectives set for this result of the AGDM ACTION Plan are somewhat contrary to the spirit and purpose of the AGDM Strategy as whole, and also raise fundamental questions about its coherence to date.

333. It could be asked, for example, to what extent the provision of sanitary materials itself contributes towards the AGDM strategy's overarching concerns for gender equality? Is this based on the priorities specifically identified by women themselves in all operational contexts? In resource poor environments, is this always and universally a protection priority as seen by women of concern? Or would they prefer a roof over their head, some plastic sheeting or a pair of shoes?

334. If guaranteed adequate assistance and support for livelihoods, women and men would be empowered to make choices for themselves regarding the management of resources. It seems oddly paternalistic for UNHCR to determine that this particular item should be provided to women of concern, without ensuring that it is truly one of their own priority concerns and in line with their aspirations for gender equality. At the same time this single item of assistance has consumed an enormous amount of effort on the part of UNHCR staff and partners, to determine what type of sanitary materials are preferred and how to supply these. In several operations reviewed as part of this evaluation, the provision of sanitary materials is triumphantly described one of the crowning achievements of the AGDM strategy, which again requires us to ask whether this type of directive to the field is helpful overall in terms of ensuring the dignity and empowerment of women, and the overall objective of gender equality.

335. The concept of non-negotiable standards of assistance is a key area for UNHCR to ensure, however it is recommended that this be done in line with the spirit of empowerment and a rights-based approach that would see persons of concern more actively involved, along age, gender and diversity lines, in determining how scarce

resources are to be used to ensure their best protection. UNHCR already has some positive experiences in the provision of cash allowances which provide persons of concern with the dignity to make personal choices regarding their own priorities, which appears to be even more important in a context in which persons of concern may be deprived of many of the rights and responsibilities which they held prior to their displacement.

### **Challenges of priority setting**

336. In many operations, staff have described the challenge they face in defining appropriate priorities in line with the resource limitations. UNHCR must provide staff with more guidance as to how they are to do this in line with organizational realities and resources, and within the context of an overall AGDM Strategy. One staff member described the feeling shared by many others in saying:

"After many years with UNHCR I am occasionally doubtful about how to ensure AGDM is included in the planning cycle and ad hoc changes in budget allocation [based on AGDM] . We are not lacking the tools, but the managerial structures and often the resources. Furthermore we have no open and frank discussion on protection priorities when money is lacking. How do we balance the prevention of refoulement, for example, with AGDM strategy, with ensuring basic security in asylum country, and capacity building obligations towards Governments? We are running and trying to do everything, nothing in a solid way, without sufficient resources. Approximately a third of my time as protection staff is filling in forms, answering queries, drafting reports etc. instead of doing the actual the work which has an external impact."

### **Resources exist, but are tied to Donor and other Priorities**

337. Lack of resources were a commonly sited problem for the failures of PA and the animosity that had been created with person of concern. On the one hand, this reflects the fact that UNHCR and IP staff tended to view the PA as only tied to financial resources and not as a tool to think creatively about involving the refugee community to solve some of their own problems. On the other hand, in many operations resources are extremely limited, and the unmet basic rights and needs are enormous.

338. Part of the problem seen in several operations is that many donor-funded projects are extremely restricted and funds cannot be used to address basic causes of some of the phenomena they are intended to address. In UNHCR Ethiopia, for example, concern was expressed by some UNHCR staff that donors needed to be sensitized to the challenges of the operation, and that the highly restricted and detailed earmarking of project funds for some activities, like SGBV and FGM, do not ultimately help address the causes of these phenomena, and tie the hands of UNHCR and partners from doing so at the field level. Many SGBV workshops have been offered year after year, for example, but in a context where refugees need to sell their meagre food rations to buy clothes, shoes, school uniforms and any other incidentals, sexual exploitation is one form of

SGBV that is a likely consequence of lack of economic alternatives, and more training will not remedy the situation.

339. A significant level of frustration was expressed by UNHCR staff, partners and refugees about the hypocrisy involved in talking about refugees having a voice in prioritising.

"Refugees are not stupid. They can see that their priorities are not taken seriously in the budgeting process. They know for example how much is allocated towards sanitary materials, they know that 2 million dollars is allocated to SGBV programming or has been earmarked by donors to combat female genital mutilation. They know these are not their priorities, and when it come to their priorities, there are never any resources".

340. Furthermore, even within UNHCR, pockets of funding do exist but appear to come and go based on annual thematic priorities that are not stabilised or rationalised in terms the size of the population of concern or the specific constraints imposed by the local context. As one staff member said:

"I am increasingly doubtful whether a rights-based approach is implementable if this is not linked to clear funding commitments. In Turkey refugees are not permitted to work, have little access to social support. Hence, in order to have a dignified life UNHCR need to ensure basic assistance and you could link this to all kind of rights. However, what can we do without sufficient money if refugee figures tripled in five years, but the support budget was reduced by USD 1 million? The Office received some extra money (USD 50,000) out of the HC Fund which was ADGM focussed. We created massively vulnerability which we than inadequately addressed. At the end we linked rights to outputs. We are getting better and better on paper, and worse and worse in what we can provide."

341. It was also noted as part of the AGDM evaluation that sometimes, inadvertently, UNHCR partner NGOs may also contribute to disempowering relationships with persons of concern through their own reliance on UNHCR and donor funding for their activities.

### **Participatory Assessment and its link to Fundraising**

342. As highlighted in Chapter 8, AGDM is not only a cost factor, but also has a close relationship to resourcing and fundraising for UNHCR operations. In several country operations reviewed as part of this evaluation, staff see a positive link between PA and fundraising: PAs provide the type of detailed, contextual, and participatory information that permits UNHCR operations to better "tell the story" of the daily lives of persons of concern, from their own perspectives. According to one staff member:

"If fully utilized, PA results and analysis could contribute a lot in

drafting our sub agreements and our COP, and quotes and stories can be used for fundraising”

343. In Ethiopia, Shire Sub-Office staff had developed more than 10 one-page proposals for donors who come through on visits, and Programme staff in Addis have taken these proposals and worked to elaborate on four of them. It is seen as extremely time-consuming for existing staff to take on this local fundraising role, but until UNHCR HQ is able to address the significant unmet needs that exist within the operation, they feel compelled to try. In the Colombia operation, the operation has successfully increased its budget from US\$ 5 million to US\$ 24 million in just a few years, which it sees as strongly linked to the credibility it has gained with the government, NGO partners and international donors through its successful application of the AGDM strategy, and PAs in particular.

### Key Findings and Recommendations on Non-Negotiable Standards of Assistance

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and cost</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Non-negotiable standards of assistance have not been implemented as planned. UNHCR country level staff are unable to carry out necessary protection activities because of lack of funds.	UNHCR staff, particularly in resource poor country operations, need support and capacity building to assist them in developing viable proposals that will enable them to address significant and growing protection gaps.	Ongoing, internal resources	UNHCR Fundraising Section
Donor earmarking cuts UNHCR’s flexibility in responding to the priorities of persons of concern	UNHCR must work more effectively with donor governments, UN agencies, development and other organisations to inform them of the risks of highly variable funding to UNHCR operations and strict earmarking of project funds.	Ongoing, internal funding	UNHCR Fundraising Section, , Donors
Evidence clearly shows that protection	It is recommended that a formal dialogue with donors take place to	Internal Funding	UNHCR Donors, Fundraising

<p>risks to women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and other at-risk groups go up as access to basic needs and the means of survival (culturally appropriate foods, water, shelter, etc.) decreases.</p>	<p>address the issue of Non-Negotiable Standards of Assistance. UNHCR's existing standards and indicators, as well as other international standards for humanitarian assistance, such as the SPHERE standards, should be systematically used as a basis for determining the funding needs of country operations.</p>		<p>Section and Assistant High Commissioner</p>
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## 10. Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

344. As specified in the Evaluation ToRs, some conclusions can be drawn from this report in terms of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Evaluation Criteria, which set out the broad principles for the evaluation process for DAC members: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact<sup>71</sup>, and sustainability.

### Relevance

345. The evaluation finds that the AGDM strategy is highly relevant to UNHCR as an agency that aims to put the diverse needs and priorities at the heart of its operations. Conceptually AGDM was well thought out and planned; however, given past commitments to gender mainstreaming in UNHCR, the likely consequences of such a strategy in an agency in need of revising its work practices could have been foreseen – lack of capacity and investment, and senior management support. Nevertheless, UNHCR has made a good start on a long and difficult process. The AGDM strategy at the conceptual level encompasses, and goes beyond the gender mainstreaming strategies of other UN organisations. UNHCR has also gone further than most UN agencies in pursuing its commitment to senior management accountability and accountability to persons of concern.

### Efficiency

346. As seen in the body of the report, for relatively limited resources, UNHCR has received relatively good results to date. In this sense, AGDM offers excellent value for money, and the evaluation team found that if operationalized fully AGDM is the most efficient approach for UNHCR in the sense that alternatives are unlikely to offer equal value. However, more commitment and sustained resources allocated up front to the institutionalisation of AGDM within the organisation would have been produced greater efficiency. At this point in time, without additional resources and leadership to ensure that age, gender and diversity issues are fully mainstreamed within and across all functions of the organisation, the gains made to date will quickly be lost. Increasing the sense of shared ownership by NGO, Government and other UN agencies of the AGDM strategy will further help to rationalise UNHCR investment in this approach.

### Effectiveness

347. Numerous sections of the report highlight that many of the key objectives of the AGDM Strategy since 2004 have been met in some operations, but in others there remain serious weaknesses. This inconsistent performance in meeting AGDM objectives requires a revised strategy for the coming period, providing more focused attention to

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<sup>71</sup> The evaluation team agreed to examine interim results rather than impact.

those country operations and regions which are struggling due to limited staff capacity, lack of effective partner organisations and/or inadequate resourcing of the operation.

### **Interim results**

348. The evaluation finds that interim results to date have been positive at the policy, advocacy, and operational levels. Staff attitudes towards working directly with persons of concern and accountability for AGDM have improved in many operations. Persons of concern who have been engaged in PA processes have seen the benefit of the process, but consider that more needs to be done to ensure participation in UNHCR's and partner's full project and programme cycle. A number of successful targeted actions have been put in place as a result of AGDM. Overall, for the resources put towards this initiative, it is impressive to note that in many country operations, programme and protection measures have improved as a result of introduction of the AGDM strategy.

### **Sustainability**

349. Sustainability appears to be the greatest weakness of the AGDM Strategy to date. As we have seen in the body of this report, while the AGDM strategy was prioritised to some extent during roll-out period 2004-2007, budgets available for follow-up training with staff at the field and country levels, particularly training of newly recruited staff and extending an understanding of the strategy to UNHCR's NGO, Government, Donor and UN partners, have not been sustained. The mainstreaming process also appears to have become stalled, due to excessive reliance on DIPS and in particular CDGECs as a technical support section for moving forward the AGD mainstreaming strategy. Without the formation of an AGDM Steering Committee at the highest level of the organisation, whose role is to ensure that Protection, Operational Management, Human Resources, Training and all other sections are taking up their specific roles in the mainstreaming process, the AGDM strategy will not be sustainable.

## Summary of overall findings and recommendations

### Policy and AGDM Action Plan

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and cost	Responsibility
<p>UNHCR's AGDM work needs further conceptual guidance.</p>	<p>UNHCR should develop a policy setting out its vision and strategy for AGDM.</p>	<p>By mid-2011, internal cost</p>	<p>DHC, PDES, CDGECs<sup>72</sup></p>
<p>UNHCR needs to develop measures of institutional mainstreaming (such as the minimum standards recommended) before it can determine its optimal organizational structure vis-à-vis AGDM. There is quite a way to go before UNHCR could be considered to have mainstreamed AGD.</p>	<p>UNHCR should commission an organizational review, to determine the optimum organizational arrangement for AGDM and support the development of minimum standards for organizational mainstreaming.</p>	<p>Fall 2010, US\$50,000</p>	<p>Assistant High Commissioners</p>
<p>UNHCR's AGDM function is not currently on an adequate RBM basis.</p>	<p>UNHCR should ensure support from in-house RBM specialists when drafting the next AGDM ACTION Plan. UNHCR may also want to consider hiring a consultant for this purpose if adequate internal resources are not available.</p> <p>The next ACTION Plan should include minimum mainstreaming standards, targets and resources required.</p>	<p>Period of development of the next AGDM Action Plan, internal</p>	<p>CDGECs</p>

<sup>72</sup> Reference to CDGECs includes its equivalent in any organizational restructuring.

### Institutional mainstreaming of age, gender and diversity

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and cost	Responsibility
<p>AGDM has remained largely the responsibility of CDGECs, rather than being becoming an organisational responsibility.</p>	<p>Overall responsibility for AGDM should be moved to the Offices of the Assistant High Commissioners. UNHCR should establish a cross-agency AGDM Steering Committee of senior managers – the two Assistant High Commissioners, and Directors of Regional Bureaux – to oversee both AGDM and the AF. AGDM Steering Committee meetings should take place every three months, with the responsibility to review progress in mainstreaming and the AF. Based on the UNDP example, senior managers should themselves attend meetings with no deputization permitted, in order to demonstrate institutional commitment to AGDM. The AGDM Steering Committee should report to the High Commissioner, who in turn should report on a yearly basis to the Executive Committee on progress in AGDM, and against targets established through the AF. Executive Committee members should include adequate execution of this recommendation in any Performance Agreements with UNHCR.</p>	<p>By end 2010, internal cost</p>	<p>Assistant High Commissioners  Executive Committee</p>
<p>While there is a high level of commitment to AGDM in RBM processes, past experience in the UN has shown that, unless</p>	<p>As part of the work of the proposed Steering Committee, UNHCR needs to review formally the reflection of AGDM as it strengthens its RBM approach.</p>	<p>Every six months, internal resources</p>	<p>AGDM Steering Committee</p>

agencies proactively focus on AGDM issues, then these will be under-represented in agency planning, programming and reporting.			
The AGDM ACTION Plan could pay greater attention to capacity development of government counterparts.	Include a specific objective on capacity development of government counterparts in the next AGDM ACTION Plan.	During development of the ACTION Plan. Internal resources.	CDGECs

### The AGDM Accountability Framework

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Timeline and resources</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Despite concerns expressed by staff, almost all supported continued implementation of the AF.	Continue and strengthen the AF as an exercise which focuses on achieving minimum standards.	2010, internal resources	Cross-agency AGDM Steering Committee
Accountability for and oversight of AGDM needs to be strengthened.	Senior HQ managers should ensure adequate oversight by reviewing and following up on completed AFs.  The Executive Committee should ensure that the AF review process proceeds as planned. Executive Committee members which have Performance Agreements or Institutional Strategies with UNHCR should include specific targets related to the AF tied to UNHCR core funding (e.g. effective operation of cross-agency AGDM Steering Committee; 100% compliance with timely completion of the AF; regular cross-checking by Bureaux ; ongoing	No additional resources required, ongoing.  Ongoing, no additional resources required.	High Commissioner, Deputy, and Assistant High Commissioners.  Executive Committee members

	<p>follow-up with Bureaux and reporting on compliance to the Executive Board by HC; strategic planning based on AF synthesis findings).</p> <p>AF results should be cross-checked with other data sources such as Annual Protection Reports and Standards and Indicators Reports.</p> <p>AFs including country submissions should be public documents. If publication of sections of AFs are likely to harm working relations with a government or IP, relevant sections can be removed from the published AF.</p> <p>UNHCR should complete the HAP-I certification process.</p>	<p>Approximately 5 person days per year required.</p> <p>By 2010. No additional resources required.</p> <p>By 2010. No additional resources required.</p>	<p>Bureaux</p> <p>Assistant High Commissioners</p> <p>Assistant High Commissioners</p>
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**Participatory assessments and multi-functional teams**

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and resources	Responsibility
<p>UNHCR is not completing PAs as planned; findings of assessments are not being systematically discussed with persons of concern, or being systematically used for planning purposes.</p>	<p>UNHCR should revise the PA process to ensure that it is iterative and based on participatory action planning involving regular discussions with persons of concern about PA findings, intended follow-up, and prioritization where available resources will not meet all requirements. UNHCR should examine the Colombia experience for</p>	<p>Ongoing, internal resources</p>	<p>CDGECs and Country Operations</p>

<p>The breakdown of age groups which are given as an example within the PA tool should be revised. The age group 40+ does not help UNHCR make important distinctions between older persons of concern (60-79) and the oldest persons of concern (80+) who may be at risk</p>	<p>replication, in particular development of Action Plans as a follow-up to PAs. Action Plans should be joint plans, owned by all actors, including the community of concern, and include budgets, timelines and responsibility for follow-up.</p> <p>The next AGDM Action Plan should include better support to country operations to use participatory strategies to prioritise the most urgent protection gaps for specific groups and how these will be addressed that should be articulated in a country level AGDM Strategy.</p> <p>Where UNHCR staff and partners do not have the required skills or experience to effectively facilitate participatory processes, an external facilitator should be brought in to do capacity building and ensure high quality participatory processes.</p> <p>UNHCR should ensure that PA results that provide qualitative information on protection gaps are triangulated with quantitative data (e.g. from Progres, Standards and Indicators, APRs and other sources) regarding actual incidents and populations affected by these.</p> <p>UNHCR should solicit the input of Help Age International to define appropriate age categories.</p>		
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<p>of different protection problems that need to be taken into account.</p> <p>Staff and partner interviews and questionnaires suggest that the issue of inflated expectations needs to be addressed through better preparation and orientation of PA facilitators.</p>	<p>Future revisions of the PA tool should provide guidance to PA facilitators on how to frame and explain the PA exercise and how to orient discussions to avoid false expectations. One method is to focus discussion on the capacities of persons of concern, and their role in mobilizing community resources.</p> <p>PAs must be accompanied by a communications strategy, shared with all participants, that explains how, when and where PA findings and follow-up activities and actions will be shared with persons of concern.</p>	<p>2010, internal resources</p>	<p>CDGECS</p>
<p>The annual PA exercise, as described in the tool, is not a substitute for other forms of regular contact with persons of concern. When PAs are organized within a context in which POCs do not have sufficient regular opportunities to discuss their problems and individual cases with UNHCR and partners' staff, then expectations of PAs are naturally raised.</p> <p>As part of its monitoring of the</p>	<p>The use of the PA tool must be placed in the context of more regular and on-going opportunities for contact between UNHCR staff, partners and persons of concern.</p>	<p>2010, internal resources</p>	<p>AGDM Steering Committee</p>
<p>Future revisions of the</p>	<p>Future revisions of FOCUS should make</p>	<p>2010, internal resources</p>	<p>ODM</p>



AGDM strategy, UNHCR needs to have information regarding how PAs and participatory planning are conducted and how this information is incorporated into overall country operation plans and strategies.	explicit how POC participation is incorporated not only into programme planning, but the full programming cycle.		
Senior managers are not leading MFTs as planned	The AGDM accountability framework should be extended to senior operational staff.	2010-2011, internal	AGDM Steering Committee

### Recommendations on data gathering and analysis

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and cost	Responsibility
Data on targeted actions is not systematically covered	UNHCR should develop an internally consistent framework for monitoring AGDM targeted actions	2010, internal resources	AGDM Steering Committee, CDGECS
One persistent gap identified in analysis of AFs is lack of attention to older groups and people with disabilities.	The AGDM AF should ask representatives to account for targeted action taken to address protection gaps faced by older women and men, and women and men with disabilities	2010, internal resources	AGDM Steering Committee
The women-at-risk criterion may be underestimated in the ProGres database	The ProGres database should be adapted to include the women-at-risk criterion whenever it is relevant to the resettlement case.	2010-2011, internal resources	UNHCR registration and resettlement sections
UNHCR has not made it a priority to collect and record data about persons with disabilities across all operations in the ProGres database.	The ProGres database should include information about persons of concern with disabilities, disaggregated by age and gender.	2010-2011, internal resources	UNHCR registration section

## Resources

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and cost	Responsibility
Lack of resources and staff have been identified by Representatives as the main constraints to targeted action.	UNHCR should seek to increase staffing required, particularly senior CS staff to help provide strategic orientation and training at the management level to implement the AGDM strategy.	2010-2014	UNHCR Senior Management, ExCom members and Donors
Non-negotiable standards of assistance have not been implemented as planned. UNHCR country level staff are unable to carry out necessary protection activities because of lack of funds.	UNHCR staff, particularly in resource poor country operations, need support and capacity building to assist them in developing viable proposals that will enable them to address significant and growing protection gaps.	Ongoing, internal resources	UNHCR Senior Management, Fundraising and Donor Relations
Donor earmarking cuts UNHCR's flexibility in responding to the priorities of persons of concern	UNHCR must work more effectively with donor governments, UN agencies, development and other organisations to inform them of the risks of highly variable funding to UNHCR operations and strict earmarking of project funds.	Ongoing, internal funding	UNHCR Fundraising and Donor Relations

## Annual resettlement places assigned to women

The AGDM ACTION Plan target to increase annual resettlement places assigned to women at risk at 15% has not been achieved.	COs doing resettlement require more guidance from HQ as to whether or not women-at-risk criterion should be used and require more capacity on gender-sensitive interviewing techniques, even in the context of group resettlement.	On-going, internal resources	UNHCR Registration and Resettlement Sections
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## Staff capacity

Finding	Recommendation	Timeline and resources	Responsibility
<p>UNHCR Country Office staff do not fully understand the AGDM strategy and concepts, and require further capacity development in implementing AGDM.</p> <p>UNHCR staff do not in general have adequate capacity to implement the AGDM strategy</p>	<p>Prepare on-line training material which can be self-administered on the AGDM strategy and concepts, based on the “Untangling the Concepts” workshops.</p> <p>Set up a mentoring programme at HQ, in Regional and Country Offices, where staff with AGDM experience are paired with staff who need capacity development</p>	<p>On-line material to be prepared by spring 2011 Internal Resources or US\$30,000 consultancy</p> <p>In place by spring 2011</p> <p>Internal Resources</p>	<p>Global Learning Centre</p> <p>CDGECs</p>
<p>UNHCR’s staffing profile may not be adequate to support AGDM.</p> <p>UNHCR does not have the means to assess capacity of staff in AGDM through its Competency Framework</p>	<p>Review global staffing and partner capacity, identify any gaps and develop strategies to fill these gaps. Capacity can be determined through a questionnaire based on the questionnaire for this evaluation.</p> <p>UNHCR should review recommendations of the 2002 Community Service evaluation that suggested a strategic role for CS staff in providing training and orientation to country operations on cross-cutting issues such as AGDM.</p>	<p>By end 2010</p> <p>Internal resources</p>	<p>DHRM</p> <p>AGDM Steering Committee, DHRM, Bureaux and Country operation</p>
<p>At the Country Operation level, one of the most effective means of achieving AGDM objectives is through a strong CS Unit with a responsibility for mainstreaming</p>	<p>It is recommended that Country Operations revise the model of having mainly junior CS staff under either protection or programme functions, and aim rather for CS officers at a professional and managerial level, whose</p>	<p>Reallocation of existing posts</p>	<p>UNHCR HQ, Bureaux and Country Operations.</p>

<p>age, gender and diversity considerations throughout the operation and building the capacity of all UNCHR staff and partners on AGDM. More capacity at the national level would require less technical support from HQ.</p>	<p>role it would be to guide participatory processes, facilitate AGD analysis, develop strategies to achieve AGD objectives and build the capacity of staff and partners at the country level to understand and implement AGD principles and good practice.</p>		
<p>There is increased focus in UN agencies on developing a separate competency for gender mainstreaming. This enables tracking of staff capacity.</p>	<p>In the next revisions of its Competency Framework UNHCR should develop a separate competency for AGDM.</p>	<p>Timing dependent on Competency Framework revisions</p> <p>Internal resources</p>	<p>DHRM</p>

## **Annex 1. Evaluation Terms of Reference**

### Provisional Terms of Reference

#### Evaluation of UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy (2004-2009)

##### 1. Introduction

In response to the findings of three independent evaluations on refugee women, refugee children and the role of community services function carried out in 2001-2002, UNHCR introduced the strategy of age and gender mainstreaming in early 2004, adding the Accountability Framework in May 2007. The roll out of the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) framework and its sub-elements was completed by the end of 2007.

Mainstreaming age, gender and diversity means that the participation of refugee girls, boys, women and men of all ages and backgrounds, and analysis of their situation and protection needs are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all UNHCR policies and operations, using a rights and community-based approach.

The overall goals of UNHCR's AGDM strategy are "to ensure gender equality and the enjoyment by persons of concern of their rights, regardless of age, gender or background"<sup>73</sup>. In addition to a number of actions taken at Headquarters level including mainstreaming Age, Gender and Diversity into training, tools, reporting and monitoring, the AGDM strategy involves at least the following components for field operations:

- Promoting a multifunctional team approach under the leadership of the head of every UNHCR office to bring together the expertise and skills of all staff and partners;
- Undertaking regular participatory assessments with persons of concern to analyse their protection risks, concerns, priorities, capacities and proposed solutions, and evaluating the outcomes in partnership with them;
- Putting persons of concern at the heart of operational planning by ensuring that findings from participatory assessments are analysed from an AGDM perspective, and that they form the basis of protection strategies and programming for solutions;
- Identifying where targeted actions are required to address inequalities and support empowerment and protection of discriminated groups;
- mainstreaming age, gender and diversity analysis into all activities, including policy development, capacity building and in the design and delivery of programme assistance and sharing lessons learned;

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<sup>73</sup> UNHCR. Report on Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming, 42<sup>nd</sup> Standing Committee Meeting of EXCOM, 2 June 2008, p.2.

- Holding staff accountable for mainstreaming and targeted action through an AGDM accountability framework.

As the first phase of the implementation of the AGDM strategy has been completed and UNHCR is entering into a new phase for furthering its implementation and ensuring that the mainstreaming of the strategy are more broadly embedded throughout the organization, it is considered timely to review the implementation to date. This is with a view to identifying lessons learned, interim results, good practices, remaining gaps, and also developing a set of strategies and action plan for the next phase. The Community Development, Gender Equality & Children Section (CDGECS) in cooperation with the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) have therefore initiated an evaluation process.

## 2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the AGDM evaluation is to:

- Review and assess the design and delivery of the AGDM strategy to date, taking into account its rationale, objectives, opportunities, and constraints.
- Identify lessons learned, good practices and constraints regarding AGDM in refugee, and to a lesser extent in IDP contexts.
- Identify the interim results, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, connectedness and likelihood of sustainability of the AGDM strategy, vis-à-vis the results statements set out in the "ACTION Plan to support UNHCR's Global Strategic Objective on Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming 2007 - 2009"<sup>74</sup> -
- for the protection of persons of concern;
- for advancing UNHCR's relevant policy priorities (i.e. on Refugee Children and Refugee Women, SGBV, Global Objectives, Agenda for Protection, etc) through its programming activities;
- for developing intended attitudes, skills, procedures, work-processes, management and leadership within UNHCR operations;
- for enhancing collaboration and coordination for protection with NGO, UN and Government partners.

Identification of interim results will be framed within the main purpose of the evaluation, which is lessons learning.

Provide recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the AGDM strategy, follow-up, capacity building and monitoring in the future.

Feed into AGDM ACTION Plan 2010-2012 so as to enhance UNHCR's ability to meet this aspect of its Global Strategic Objectives.

## 3. Evaluation Approach

The following features will characterize the ADGM Evaluation:

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<sup>74</sup> The evaluation will refer to the ALNAP Guide on using the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: [http://www.alnap.org/publications/eha\\_dac/index.htm](http://www.alnap.org/publications/eha_dac/index.htm)

It will draw on a number of methods, be evidence-based, impartial and seek to build consensus concerning the strengths, weaknesses, and interim results of the AGDM strategy, as well as the way forward for AGDM within UNHCR.

It will be participatory in its approach, including persons of concern, UNHCR staff, partners (NGO, UN and Government) to the largest degree possible in line time and resources available. In-country research support (e.g. through Country Offices, IPs, or research or local consultants) may be required for facilitating ongoing participation of persons of concern through the evaluation process.

It will incorporate age, gender and diversity analysis throughout its implementation.

It will take an organizational learning and utilisation-focused approach so that maximum knowledge is retained within UNHCR, and evaluation findings will be of maximum usefulness to key user groups.

#### 4. Coverage

The evaluation will be global in scope. It will take the form of a participatory learning exercise with methods and approach developed accordingly.

It will draw on available data and documentation from Headquarters (HQ), regional and country levels. It will include information and analysis collected from field missions to country operations on all continents. It will consider the design, implementation, and results of the AGDM strategy in both camp and urban contexts. The evaluation will also address the implementation, applicability and challenges presented by the AGDM strategy in relation to advocacy operations, returnees and asylum seekers, as well as IDP situations. The evaluation will consider the implementation of the AGDM strategy at Headquarters, Regional, Country Operation, Sub-office and Field levels.

It will ensure participation of persons of concern (women, men, old, young, disadvantaged and minority groups) throughout the evaluation process<sup>75</sup>, as well as the participation of UNHCR NGO, UN, Donor and Host Government Partners. (See Proposed Methodology, in Appendix 1)

#### 5. Themes and Evaluation Questions arising from Consultations on AGDM Evaluation Approach and Methodology

In line with UNHCR's "Evaluation Policy" (2002)<sup>76</sup>, and within time and resource constraints, the evaluation will use a utilization-focused approach. This will include discussion as to the most appropriate methodologies and formulation of

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<sup>75</sup> UNHCR's Evaluation Policy (2002) notes that:

"UNHCR's stakeholders, including refugees [should] whenever possible, participate in the identification, planning, implementation and utilization of evaluation projects."  
<http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/3d99a0f74.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> "UNHCR will strive to enhance the impact of the evaluation function by pursuing what is known professionally as a 'utilization-focused' approach to evaluation."  
<http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/3d99a0f74.pdf>

recommendations with key users such as the Steering Committee. The broad framework of a utilization-focused approach is set out in Appendix 3.

As part of the participatory and consultative nature of the AGDM Evaluation, between September 28 and October 23 2008, some 35 UNHCR staff and NGO partners, all among the primary users of the evaluation, were asked to give input into the key questions to be addressed. The following themes and research questions arose from these consultations:

#### A. Interim Results of AGDM for the Protection of Persons of Concern

For most persons consulted, the achievement of direct results (positive and/or negative) for persons of concern should be a key focus of the evaluation. The evaluation should also analyse how these results were achieved. To what extent have they seen improvement in their protection situation? To what extent have their concerns raised in Participatory Assessments been addressed? Do they see a value in this process? Would they participate in such exercises again? Have these assessments led to changes brought about by UNHCR, NGO partners and/or the displaced community itself? Do they have any suggestions for how to improve the Participatory Assessment, analytical and programming process? Do women, men, boy, girls, or any specific sub-groups have different reactions/responses to these questions? (See Sample Interview Schedule in Proposed Methodology below).

#### B. Impact on Attitudes, Analysis, Skills, Leadership and UNHCR work methods

What do staff understand of the AGDM Strategy? Do they understand the objectives, key concepts and their role within an AGDM framework? Has AGDM reinforced positive attitudes about working directly with persons of concern or the opposite?

Do Multifunctional Teams (MFTs) exist? How are they working? Are they actively involved in Participatory Assessment process? Analysis of the findings? Formulation of responses in terms of projects, programmes and allocation of resources? Monitoring and evaluation of results? What are the challenges and constraints? What are good practices? What are the positive and/or negative results of MFT approach?

Is Participatory Assessment (PA) being carried out, when, where, by whom and with what frequency? What kind of feedback on outcomes of PA process is given to participants, including persons of concern, NGO, UN and government partners? What are the challenges and obstacles? What are the positive and/or negative impacts in relation to persons of concern? Is PA a useful exercise for identifying priority protection concerns? Is it helpful as a basis for mobilizing persons of concern around their own self-protection? Is it equally relevant to camp, urban, returnee, and advocacy operations? How effective is it to identifying the protection priorities of key sub-groups? Boy and girls children? Women and men? For elderly and adolescents? For persons with disabilities and disadvantaged groups? Is it being applied in IDP, in a modified form in IDP operations and to what effect?



To what extent are tools and frameworks being adapted to different settings? Are other planning tools, frameworks and training needed? What are the limits of PA, and where are other planning and assessment tools required? Has structuring PA as a formal requirement of all operations, with all the reporting requirements involved, defeated the objective of encouraging staff to spend more time in the field “talking to persons of concern”? Is the AGDM approach sufficiently flexible? What is the scope for staff to adapt the tools and processes when necessary and what are some good practices in adapting the tools and processes from various country operations? How does staff see improving existing AGDM tools, methods and strategies?

How effectively are UNHCR staff, partners and MFTs able to translate the results of PA into specific programme and protection activities and targeted actions? What are the obstacles and constraints?

How effective is the AGDM Accountability Framework for helping Senior Management and UNHCR take required action towards the mainstreaming of age, gender and diversity into protection and programme activities? How reliable are the results, when cross checked with other sources of information (i.e. APRs and Standards and Indicators?)

### C. Effectiveness of AGD “Mainstreaming”

To what extent has Age, Gender and Diversity analysis, tools and methods have been successfully mainstreamed into key UNHCR policies, procedures, training and planning tools, accountability and staff appraisal processes? Mainstreaming should be considered in the context of the following:

Global Accountability Framework (currently under development)

Humanitarian Reform Process

Protection Gap Analysis Frameworks and Tools (for refugees, IDPs and stateless persons)

PIDS generic and special protection training and facilitators’ guides, and Operational Management Training.

Global Needs Assessment

Focus programming software

Programming Instructions, Standards and Indicators, COP and APR

etc.

Is the AGDM Action Plan being followed up by Bureaux and other UNHCR sections in HQ? Are all levels and functions of UNHCR involved and playing their respective roles to ensure that that AGDM strategy is being effectively mainstreamed, including Field, Sub-Office, Country Office, Regional platforms, HQ? Bureaux? DIPS? DOS? etc.? What are the obstacles and constraints? What lessons learned and good practices exist?

Are these processes sufficient to ensure AGD Mainstreaming in UNHCR work processes and operations? What more is needed? What benchmarks and indicators exist for measuring the extent of “mainstreaming”? Are these adequate? How do these compare

with similar age and gender mainstreaming processes currently underway within other UN agencies?

#### D. Relationship of AGDM to Staffing, Resources, Advocacy and Fundraising

How has an environment of staff and budget cuts affected staff attitudes towards and ability to implement the AGDM Strategy? What happens when field and country operations successfully implement the ADGM strategy but resources are not provided by HQ? Is Participatory Assessment an effective tool for identifying unmet needs for the Global Needs Assessment? Do unmet needs identified feed into UNHCR's advocacy work at HQ with donors? What are the obstacles and constraints? What are good practices?

What are the costs and benefits associated with MFTs, Participatory Assessment and analysis and Accountability Framework as they are currently being implemented? What are possible alternatives? Does staff feel free to express negative experiences in the current climate of cuts to staffing or to make the case for alternative approaches?

Relative to other initiatives, are the funds and staff time that have been put towards the AGDM initiative adequate to achieve objectives set? Are the outputs and outcomes in line with spending?

#### E. AGDM in the wider environment of non-UNHCR partners, Governments, UN Agencies

Is UNHCR's approach to AGDM shared and valued outside UNHCR? Is it useful and adaptable with a "Protection Cluster Approach" to IDP Protection? What are the opportunities and constraints?

How is AGDM perceived by partners internationally and in the field? What is UNHCR's experience at involving key partners with special expertise related to age, gender and diversity issues, analysis, programming, monitoring and evaluation? (UNICEF, Save the Children, UNIFEM, UNFPA, etc.) What can UNHCR learn about age, gender and diversity mainstreaming from the experiences of partner organizations?

Is AGDM being successfully shared, communicated and built upon by implementing and operational partners in the field? Is UNHCR learning from good practices, tools and experiences of partner organizations at all levels to enhance its AGDM strategy? How are results of Participatory Assessment being integrated into partner activities at field, sub-office, country, HQ and Advocacy levels with donors?

#### 6. Methodology

See Proposed Methodology, in Appendix 1

#### 7. Limitations

Given the breadth and complexity of UNHCR's AGDM Strategy, the following limitations should help to focus the evaluation. (See Proposed Methodology, in Appendix 1)

While a key component of the AGDM strategy, PDES completed a detailed evaluation of UNHCR's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in situations of forced displacement in October 2008. This recent evaluation should be reflected in, but not duplicated in the AGDM Evaluation.

UNHCR's presence, role and responsibility in refugee situations is different from that in IDP situations. The evaluation will focus primarily on AGDM in refugee operations (including if possible returnee situations), and to a lesser extent, using an adapted methodology, consider the broad applicability of UNHCR's approach to AGDM within the context of a "protection cluster" approach in IDP situations.

The Evaluation should be carried out with respect for the multiple demands placed on UNHCR and partners' staff, persons of concern, and other stakeholders. While methodological rigor is required, field visits, questionnaires and telephone interviews should be kept as brief and focused as possible.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

The evaluation will be undertaken in line with UNHCR's evaluation policy, which, *inter alia*, requires evaluations undertaken by the organization to adopt a disaggregated and participatory approach in relation to populations of concern. A copy of the policy can be found on the UNHCR website, at

<http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/3d99a0f74.pdf>

A. PDES and CDGECS: The evaluation process will be managed by UNHCR's Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) with the assistance of the Community Services, Gender Equality and Children's Section (CDGECS).

PDES and CDGECS will ensure that the evaluation team has access to relevant documents and personnel, adequate budget, adequate office space and online computers in Geneva and during field visits, and will assist in the organization of field missions.

PDES and CDGECS will organize research support for accessing and bibliography key documents, accessing financial data, logistics of field missions and visits to Geneva, and basic data analysis.

PDES will be responsible for convening and chairing the Steering Committee.

PDES may engage expert commentators to review a final draft of the evaluation report.

B. Evaluation Steering Committee: The Steering Committee will be comprised of Geneva-based representatives of evaluation users: UNHCR (including representatives of DIPS, DOS and Bureaux), Executive Committee members, other UN agencies (including UNICEF and UNIFEM), UNHCR Donors and relevant NGO partners. Independent experts may also be invited to sit on the committee. The Steering Committee will: advise on the Terms of Reference for the evaluation;

meet with the Evaluation team in the course of their work and to monitor progress;  
review the team's draft report;  
ensure that the findings and recommendations of the evaluation are effectively disseminated and utilized.

C. Evaluation Team: A team of at least two consultants will be indentified to lead the AGDM Evaluation (See Profile of Evaluation Consultants, below).

Evaluation team members will be required to sign the UNHCR Code of Conduct, to familiarize themselves with relevant UNHCR policies, training, and procedures, and to respect UNHCR's confidentiality requirements.

The team will responsible for following the AGDM Evaluation methodology, or modifying it based on an iterative approach, security circumstances in the field, or resources made available by PDES and CDGECS.

It is responsible for ensuring a rigorous, participatory, gender-sensitive and rights-based approach to data collection and analysis.

It will retain full editorial control and responsibility for the content of the final report and other outputs.

It will help select any staff from UNHCR or local partner organisations who may participate in evaluation field missions, data collection and its analysis.

It will remain available to UNHCR to ensure that information gathered and recommendations of the evaluation are successfully incorporated into the formulation of the AGDM ACTION Plan 2010-2012.

## 9. Profile of Evaluation Consultants

An evaluation team hired to carry out the AGDM Evaluation should have at least the following:

- Proven experience in evaluation, particularly agency-wide evaluations
- Strong skills in age, gender and diversity analysis
- Experience analysing protection in the context displacement, IDP and refugee contexts
- Good knowledge of participatory approaches and assessment techniques, community development and mobilization processes
- Experience of organizational development and culture change processes, including institutional gender mainstreaming processes
- Excellent written and spoken English (other languages, such as French and Spanish an important asset)
- an arms-length relationship to UNHCR

## 10. Timeframe

The evaluation will commence March 10, 2009 and be completed by December 15, 2009. Preliminary findings of the evaluation should be presented to the UNHCR Executive Committee meeting in October 2009. See Tentative Evaluation Schedule below.

## 11. Outputs

The primary output will be an evaluation report, the findings and recommendations of which will form the basis for the establishment of a three-year UNHCR AGDM Strategy.

Other outputs include:

- A collection of good practices and lessons learned from implementation of the AGDM strategy, including Participatory Assessment, ADGM Analysis and Programming, Multi-Functional teams, Accountability Framework and other elements of the strategy.
- Perspectives from persons of concern regarding their experience of Participatory Assessment and related interactions with UNHCR and partner staff.
- The documentation of innovative ways that ADGM approaches, tools, methods, frameworks and training documents have been adapted based on local needs, resources.
- Final evaluation report with recommendations for each level of UNHCR – including HQ, Regional, Country Office, Sub-Office and Field
- A country report based on each field visit (two in the case of Colombia, which includes the Participatory Evaluation Report)
- Recommendations to assist in the development of the next phase of the AGDM Strategic, Capacity Building, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

## **Annex 2. List of AGDM Evaluation Steering Committee Members**

### **Executive Committee Members:**

United States of America  
Canada  
Norway  
Sweden  
Yemen  
Kenya  
Ethiopia  
Tanzania

### **Non-Governmental Institutions:**

Refugee Women's Commission  
Save the Children  
HAP International

### **UNHCR FOCAL POINTS**

Tammie Sharpe - Bureau for Africa  
Nivene Albert - Department of Operational Services (now Department of Program Support and Management)  
Yasmin Keith-Krelik - Bureau for Asia and the Pacific  
Ninette Kelley - Organizational Development and Management  
Ruven Menikdiwela - Department of International Protection  
Naoko Obi - CDGECS (DIP)  
Annalisa Montecalvo - Middle East and North Africa (MENA)  
Kaori Saito - Division of Human Resources and Management  
Davide Torzilli - Bureau for the Americas  
Andreas Wissner - Bureau for Europe

### **Chair/ Secretariat**

Jeff Crisp - Head, Policy Development and Evaluation Service  
Esther Kiragu - Evaluation Manager, PDES

### **Annex 3. Partial list of HQ and telephone interviews**

Erika Feller – Assistant High Commissioner (Protection)  
Janet Lim – Assistant High Commissioner (Operations), (was at the time the Bureau Director for Asia and the Pacific)  
Judy-Cheng Hopkins – Assistant High Commissioner (Operations) at the time  
George Okoth-Obbo – Director of Department of International Protection Services at the time (and currently the Director of Africa Bureau)  
Daisy Dell – Director of Department of External Relations  
Volker Turk – Director, Organizational Development and Management, (currently the Director, Department of International Protection)  
Eddie Gedalof – Ombudsman  
Carol Batchelor – Director, Ethics Office  
Arnaud Akodjenou – Director, Department of Operations Support, (currently the Inspector General)  
Jean Francois Durieux – Deputy Director DOS, (now Director)  
Hendrik Nordentof – Deputy Director, DOS  
Ruven Menikdiwella – Deputy Director, DIPS  
Marta Juarez – Director, Bureau for the Americas  
Pirko Kouroula – Director, Bureau for Europe  
Terry Morel – Deputy Director, Bureau for Asia and the Pacific  
Eva Demant – Deputy Director, Bureau for the Americas  
Atle Solberg – Senior Advisor, Protection Cluster  
Gry Tina Tinde – Special Advisor the High Commissioner (Gender)  
Elizabeth Eyster – Senior Change Management Officer (GMAF)  
Andrew Mayne – Senior Change Management Advisor (FOCUS)  
Kaori Saito – Policy Advisor, DHRM  
Kimberly Roberson – Chief, Field Information and Coordination Service  
Khassoum Diallo – Senior Statistician, FICCS  
Shelley Gonah – Senior Registration Officer, FICCS  
Samuel le Billan – Senior Registration Officer, FICCS  
Jennifer Ashton – Senior Resettlement Coordinator, DIPS  
Naoko Obi – Chief, CDGECS  
Luisa Cremonese – Senior Coordinator, (Woman & Gender)  
Wella Kouyou – Senior Coordinator, Community Services  
Joanina Karugaba – Technical Expert, SGBV Prevention and Response  
Tammie Sharpe – Senior Policy Officer, Africa Bureau  
Ron Pouwels - Senior Advisor on Refugee Children, CDGECS  
Ro Ms. Nivene Albert, Executive Assistant, Office of the Director, DOS n Powels  
Mr. Mark Manley, Head, Statelessness Unit  
Mr. Bornwell Kantande, Senior Operations Officer, DOS Training Unit

### **Regional/ Country Operations**

Ms. Lynn Ngugi – Senior Regional Global Advisor, (Women & Children), based in Nairobi - Ngugi@unhcr.org; telephone, +254 20422 2630 (covering Eastern and Horn of

Africa)

Ms. Karuna David, - Senior Regional Community Services Officer, Nepal,  
Davidk@unhcr.org; telephone, + 0097714412521 (covering Asia)

Ms. Tiziana Clerico – Senior Regional Community Services Officer, San Jose, Costa Rica,  
clerico@unhcr.org, telephone: 00506253 1007 (covering Americas)

Mr. Yousif Ahmed Adam – Senior Regional Community Services Officer, based in  
Beirut, Lebanon, adamy@unhcr.org, telephone: 9611802460 Ext.1341 (covering MENA  
region, except Iraqi operation)

Ms. Zahra Mirghani, Senior Community Services Officer, Damascus, Syria,  
mirghani@unhcr.org, telephone: 0096311 3735940



**Annex 4. Report on Evaluation Mission to Central Europe (see attachment)**

**Annex 5. Report on AGDM Evaluation Mission to Colombia (see attachment)**

**Annex 6. Participatory Evaluation of the use of PAs in Four IDP Communities in Colombia (see attachment)**

**Annex 7. Report on the AGDM Evaluation Mission to Ethiopia (see attachment)**

**Annex 8. AGDM Evaluation Questionnaire (see attachment)**

## Annex 9. Selected Good Practices identified through the course of the AGDM

### **Good Practice1 : Refugee Engagement and bridging the gap between Participatory Assessments and programming in Nepal**

During the PA carried out in February 2009 in preparation for the development of the Country Operations Plan, substance abuse was identified as a recurrent issue. Consequently, with the support of the Senior Regional Community Services Officer, and with a view to addressing this complex issue, the Office in Damak decided to carry out additional PAs devoted to the subject of substance abuse. In April of 2009, forty two PAs were conducted, with 600 randomly selected people of concern over two weeks with seven groups from various ethnic backgrounds (minors 13-18, adults, elderly, Armed Police Force, camp management, and the host community) followed by analysis with partners over three days.<sup>1</sup> These PAs explored the perceptions of the community on substances abused, impact on the community and potential solutions, including rehabilitation facilities.

**Results achieved:** The PAs found that issues for men and women were similar, but substance abuse differed by age, with younger kids sniffing glue, young adults using cannabis, and adults using alcohol. Substance abuse was found to cause domestic violence, neglect of children, school dropout and an unsafe environment in the camp. It was found that those who are addicted, including children, work outside the camp in order to buy illegal substances, and face increased protection risks. PA groups suggested the development of an Action Plan to deal with the issue, including the formation of a Task Force in the camps. There was considerable discussion on the participation in the Task Force and its role. This led to formation of a Substance Abuse Task Force with 63 members, 45 per cent of whom are women.

The Action Plan included community counselling, community support, and the development of rehabilitation facilities for women, as none existed in the area. Other activities included increased patrolling by the Armed Police Force where substances are commonly abused, and awareness raising through hiring an Information Education Consultant which would develop appropriate materials for the diverse groups in this population and, in particular, reach out to marginalized members of the community.

### **Evaluation**

### **Good Practice 2: Chad - Protection and SGBV Problem Improved by Lowering Bride price**

According to UNHCR staff, Participatory Assessment techniques were applied to understand and then address the problem of youth suicide and SGBV in refugee camps in Chad. PA was carried out with all community members in groups: adolescent boys, girls, mothers, fathers, elders, as well as the police, to understand what was causing young men and women to take their own lives. It was discovered that the bride-price set by the elders was causing a number of problems - young men who were not able to afford the bride-price of the girls they wanted to marry were resorting either to suicide, out of despair, or to rape as a means of lowering the bride-price of the girl they wanted to marry. Girls were also resorting to suicide, when the boys they wanted to marry could not afford the bride price. As a result of the PA findings that were shared with all participants, the community elders agreed to reduce the bride price. This action simultaneously ended the incidence of youth suicide and significantly reduced the incidence of SGBV.

### **Good Practice 3: In UNHCR Colombia, gender is not just about women**

A good practice in UNHCR Colombia is work begun on “masculinities” in the context of violence against women, and in the context of special activities involving IDP youth. In two meetings the evaluation team held with UNHCR and partners working on the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence in Bogota and Mocoa, there were representatives of men’s groups who spoke of the importance of their work with UNHCR on strategies to examine sexual and gender-based violence from a male perspective.

UNHCR Colombia’s CS Unit has put a good deal of thought into the subject, and has written a position paper entitled “UNHCR and MASCULINITY: Why include masculinity in our gender work? (2008)”. This paper explains:

“UNHCR’s work on masculinity is framed within the differential mainstreaming strategy of the operation, mainly within a gender focus. The conceptual and philosophical basis of this strategy is that without the inclusion of a differential focus, it is not possible to provide adequate protection or distinguish the needs of different groups of persons of concern to be able to re-establish rights that have been violated. The differential (AGD) focus allows us to actions in favour of those subjects who manifest the greatest degree of vulnerability...From a conceptual point of view, UNHCR Colombia considers gender as a relational category” p.2-3.

In a context in which there has been a tendency to equate the concept of “gender” with projects and programmes for women only, it is extremely important to be reminded by UNHCR Colombia that gender is a “relational” concept – that there are two genders and that inequalities, rights violations and protection risks should never be assumed or pre-judged but be the subject of investigation and analysis. The importance of reflecting on and analysing “masculinities” and the nature of gender dynamics does not only apply to SGBV, but should be applied by UNHCR across the board, on all protection issues, if the concept of gender is to have any meaning.

## **Annex 10. Specific issues in mainstreaming PA in different operational contexts**

### *Advocacy*

An early concern voiced about the AGDM Strategy, and still expressed by some UNHCR staff is that the AGDM Strategy, and in particular participatory assessment, are more applicable for camp-based settings where there is easy access to persons of concern. The evaluation finds evidence to the contrary. In Western Europe, Central Europe, Latin America and advocacy operations, the AGDM Strategy has encouraged a number of important exchanges between persons of concern and national governments and civil society organisations, facilitated by UNHCR.

Several country operations have suggested that they do not have a major role to play in AGDM, due to the fact that their contact with persons of concern is "minimal". As one staff member based in the UK describes:

"In former postings mainstreaming ensured or at least strengthened that day to day operations took due (or better account) of AGD related issues. For example, UNHCR Turkey introduced specific registration mechanism for arriving asylum-seekers/refugees to identify vulnerable individuals, ensure fast-tracking or appropriate support (e.g. adequate accommodation for UAMs). Partnership arrangements with NGO focussing on gay/lesbian refugees were made. In the United Kingdom, various quality initiatives have been made in close cooperation with the UK Border Agency with the purpose to ensure bid interest status determination for child asylum seekers. [But] in the UK, participatory approach and community-based approach was partly neglected due to size of office and strong advocacy focus of the operations. Cooperation and communication with Governments/NGOs/Academia is very close, but occasionally Offices are indeed out of touch with refugee communities and do not ensure participatory inclusion in policy formulation and planning."

Yet in all cases that the evaluation is aware of in which participatory assessments or beneficiary consultations were organised in advocacy operations along age, gender and diversity lines, the results in terms of promoting action on the part of UNHCR partners and re-shaping UNHCR's own advocacy work have been impressive. It could further be considered that the AGDM strategy in advocacy operations is even easier than in some camp-based situations, as UNHCR does not have the responsibility itself to respond to protection gaps identified, but rather to facilitate a dialogue between POCs, governments and partners to highlight areas that would better address current protection needs and rights.

As might be expected, each operation needs to adapt the AGDM strategy to what is feasible in the local context: In Luxembourg, for example, the PA methodology developed involved three sources of information:

- an analysis of characteristics of the population of concern
- a written questionnaire sent to all persons of concern for which contact information existed, and
- 11 focus group discussions with different groups of persons of concern.

As indicated in Chapter 6, the results of this consultative process, both in written form and face-to-face, has resulted in a number of new actions and initiatives on behalf of both UNHCR and its partners. A further good practice case is shared below by UNHCR Ireland.

#### **Good Practice: UNHCR Ireland meeting with Asylum Seekers and Refugees in May-June 2006**

Together key actors involved in asylum and refugee issues in Ireland met with focus groups of asylum seekers and refugees based on age, gender or other diversifying factors to get their views on the protection problems and hear their potential solutions to these problems. Some of the concrete outputs and activities undertaken were either directly the result, or inspired by the information gathered. In the area of refugee integration, for persons who have refugee status or leave to remain, the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) planned a number of initiatives and activities for 2007 and beyond, which included:

- access to language training through Integrating Ireland Language & Training;
- commissioning of a study of language provision to identify potential gaps;
- organisation of Refugee Forums for refugees, statutory bodies and NGOs to give opportunity for dialogue and debate;
- and funding of a project aiming at building capacity of ethnic minority organisations.

The government has also funded The National Action Plan Against Racism, and foresees, with the suggested new Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill, improved registration cards, which can serve as an ID for non-EU nationals. Finally, RIA continues to work closely with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) on issues of recognition in Ireland of qualifications acquired abroad. Part of this cooperation is to ensure more awareness among non-Irish nationals of what NQAI is doing.

Both the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) and the Refugee Legal Service (RLS) took note of many of the points raised by asylum seekers and ORAC has been working on an “easy” to read version of their leaflet, to ensure easily understandable dissemination of information about the asylum process. Inter-agency seminars around the country were also foreseen in order to provide local support groups and service providers with correct information about asylum policies and practice. On a specific gender related topic, both ORAC and RLS became aware of the need to stress to all female asylum applicants that they can request female interpreters and interviewing staff and procedures have been changed to ensure this.

In relation to points raised with regard to the asylum system, the agencies have had to take into consideration that amendments to the current asylum legislation is underway. The Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform launched the draft Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill in September 2006 and this bill, which is still pending, introduces substantial changes to the asylum process. Such changes also give opportunities to take into consideration some of the points raised by participants in the AGDM exercise. The introduction of this bill, once adopted, will include significant training to all case workers in the asylum process and foresees a quality assurance mechanism to be put in place.

UNHCR’s Office in Dublin has also benefited from the dialogue and has re-focused some of its existing training and advocacy activities in line with the concerns raised by asylum seekers. Efforts in relation to family reunification issues have been and continue to be a priority and UNHCR’s comments to the draft bill were made keeping in mind concerns raised by the asylum seekers and refugees during the AGDM discussions.

## *IDPs*

Similar arguments have been made regarding IDP contexts, which have in common characteristics to advocacy operations in that persons in displacement continue to enjoy the protection of their own governments, and hence UNHCR's role is that of support, facilitation and coordination. The evaluation has reviewed the use of the PA tool in several IDP contexts, including Colombia and Sri Lanka. As we have seen from the extensive report on the UNHCR Colombia operation, the use of PA has been well incorporated into UNHCR operations as a key tool for building inter-agency collaboration and "micro-public policies" at field level. Although a time- and labour intensive aspect of UNHCR's work, these have resulted in heightened engagement of government and non-governmental institutions, including other UN agencies, within IDP communities and populations.

On the other hand, according to UNHCR staff in Sri Lanka, while PAs carried out within IDP camps have had numerous benefits, including the chief benefit of helping agencies to systematize and deal with concerns and priorities of persons of concern, action on results has been limited due to government due to government resistance:

*"From April to July, 2009, we carried out 55 PAs in 21 emergency camps; over 800 IDPs participated: girls, adolescent girls, boys, adolescent boys, women and men in different groups. The results were compiled in two reports that UNHCR shared with the Government, other UN agencies, and humanitarian counterparts, with the objective of coordinating responses in line with the priorities and demands of the IDPs. However, the position of the Government did not permit (and to date does not permit) practical interventions within the camps. On the other hand advocacy work has also been limited given the security concerns put forward by the GoSL".*

This would suggest that the attitude and policies of governments in IDP situations play a much stronger role in determining the outcomes in terms of improved protection than does UNHCR's use of PA or not. At the same time, PA results, especially when fully shared by other humanitarian actors and UN agencies, can bring pressure and strengthen the collective capacity to advocate on behalf of IDP protection priorities.

**Lessons learned: Participatory Assessment as part of IDP Profiling in an Emergency Context in Galkayo, Somalia, March 2007**

The Interagency IDP Profiling exercise represents an important opportunity to collect accurate and usable data on IDPs in Somalia to feed into immediate as well as long term assistance planning. The IDP Profiling questionnaire although extensive is a static tool. The results are thorough in terms of data collection, but require interpretation and provide limited space for IDPs to actively participate in identifying strategies and responses. The UNHCR Emergency Response Team (ERT) team in Galkayo therefore proposed to complement the IDP Profiling methodology of household interviews with a participatory approach, using focus group meetings through an age, gender and diversity perspective. By combining the IDP profiling with participatory assessments where priority needs and solutions are jointly identified with the communities of concern, future interventions would better target the needs as well as create an improved sense of ownership among the IDPs... There are approximately 12 IDP sites in Galkayo with an estimated population of 4000 IDP families. The assessments consisted of focus group discussions using age, gender and diversity criteria, general observations and semi structured interviews with different actors. It covered 72 focus groups in 12 IDP sites in North and South Galkayo. Each focus group consisted of an average of 8 persons resulting in that approximately 576 persons participated in the focus groups.

**Challenges faced by this effort at IDP profiling in an emergency context were:**

- Difficulty in building an inter-agency Multifunctional team to do the PA given limits on the amount of time agencies could spend in the field.
- Dealing with Gate-keeping NGOs and the need to form and train a new team not linked to local power structures
- Non-inclusion of local authorities in the exercise due to their strong political influence and hear directly from IDPs, which unfortunately might affect buy-in from the authorities on plans and activities as they did not participate in the focus group meetings.
- Security concerns reinforced the decision to establish and train a new team of 8 individuals from organizations from the south in order to do be able to do the exercise in South Galkayo.
- Lack of time: The PA-exercise being one of two components within the IDP Profiling it needed to be followed up with household interviews within a certain time frame. This created a need to follow up with additional focus group discussions in particular for groups with specific needs that were not clearly identified or on specific topics such as reconciliation between host population and IDPs. The lack of time also means that children below the age of 14 were not covered, something that should be followed up.

**Lessons learned:** The Participatory assessment is a flexible tool as a simple format is being used that is easy to analyse and draw conclusions from. This way the outcome of the participatory assessments could be presented as initial findings as the assessment was being rolled out. This was highly appreciated by agencies in the different clusters as it meant that they could incorporate the results into their programming much faster instead of having to wait for the IDP questionnaires to be processed and filed. However there is a need to find a way on how to incorporate or add the outcome of the participatory assessment so that the information is being kept in conjunction with the IDP questionnaire database and provided as a joint result to agencies. There is a need to find creative ways on how to “package” the information in order to ensure that agencies can access the information from the IDP Profiling database.

Adapted from report by Galkayo ERT mission, UNHCR 2007

### *Camp-based*

As highlighted in the report of the AGDM evaluation mission to Ethiopia, as well as in AGDM evaluation questionnaires, refugees' attitudes to Participatory Assessment are largely dependent the following factors:

- how long they have been they have been in the camp
- how many times they have been PA'd
- the extent to which they feel that they are involved in PA follow-up
- the extent to which they can associate specific results with their involvement
- and the extent to which they understand what they may expect as short, medium and longer term results of the process.

A finding from discussions with refugee associations and leaders in the Ethiopian camps is that longer-term camp populations that have been deprived basic rights, such as access to employment and freedom of movement, and inducted into a culture of "institutional disempowerment" and dependency over many years, tend to be more negative about PA than are newly arriving refugees. New arrivals are ready to participate actively and take responsibility for community co-management if given the chance.

Thus it is not the camp or other setting, as much as the fact that a history of interactions which deprive dignity and participation of persons of concern that makes many protracted situations extremely difficult to introduce participatory and community-based approaches into. Protracted situations, be they camps or otherwise, are thus the most challenging environments into which staff can be asked to implement PAs, and they require special skills and technical support to turn bad relationships between persons of concern and UNHCR and other humanitarian actors around.

### *Urban*

Urban contexts also appear to among the most challenging for staff and partners to carry out PAs. In these contexts, staff cite numerous constraints, including difficulties of transportation and communication and lack of access to these populations. As indicated above, in Latin America and in the MENA regions, the challenge of working in the urban context given current staffing levels and has been pointed out by several UNHCR staff and partners. This being said, a number of UNHCR operations have succeeded carrying out PAs and in building strong partners with persons of concern despite these constraints. In other sections of this report, we have identified a number of good practices in this regard within UNHCR Ireland, Nepal, Malaysia, Luxembourg, Colombia, and in Central Europe, in which operations have succeeded, despite the constraints posed by the urban context, in enhancing engagement of persons of concern in defining protection priorities and as a basis for advocacy with government and other partners.



A particular case in point, described below, is the "Nairobi Initiative" which was based on a strong commitment on the part of the Deputy Representative and UNHCR staff at the time of the AGDM roll-out in that country to ensure to build effective partnerships with urban refugees. The operation took the initiative to fire-wall some resources as a basis for responding to the priority concerns of the urban refugee community, with projects defined and implemented by them.

**Good Practice: AGDM in Nairobi evolved into the "Nairobi Initiative"**

In 2005, the UNHCR Branch Office Nairobi started to re-examine its urban refugee program, which was facing a number of challenges. It also carried out participatory assessments as a basis for gathering information about the of refugees in the capital, making it impossible to devise a protection strategy to address refugees' most serious concerns. One step was to carry out a survey of NGOs working with refugees in Nairobi. To gather PoC perspectives, UNHCR launched a series of workshops and meetings which it called the "Nairobi Initiative". In 2006-2007, the office built on the relationships established based on prior participatory assessments and developed an urban refugee program based on core principles of outreach, transparency, refugee participation based on the AGDM Strategy, community development, and effective management of data and information. Working in close partnership with the government, NGOs and refugee communities have since then been the cornerstone of UNHCR's urban program.

*Selection of good practices:* Despite the challenges in the Kenyan context, there are a number of good practices and creative solutions that UNHCR Kenya identified and put in place through the strengthened relationship with PoC partners and communities living in the urban area , for example:

- **Multi-Sector-Assistance Program:** UNHCR established a multi-sector assistance program for urban refugees (URAP) with a strong education component to reduce the number of implementing partners and follow the principle of "management in one hand".
- **Remedial classes:** UNHCR offers through partners a variety of language classes for newly arrived refugees, particularly from Somalia and Ethiopia, to facilitate integration into local education systems.
- **Role models:** UNHCR and partners choose and support "role models" among refugee communities to strengthen extra-curricular and recreational activities and organize sport, dance and theatre competitions at school and community level. Some groups have thus achieved to represent their communities in competitions at the national level.
- **Adult Education Centers:** UNHCR cooperates closely with national Adult Education Centers and therefore supports participation of refugees in basic literacy and numeracy programs close to their living quarters.
- **Student ID:** Some public schools have issued student IDs for refugee children to address the lack of proper documentation, a practice that has increased protection of children outside schools from authorities and security agents.
- **Collaboration with Madrasa schools:** Training of religious leaders (Maalims) to advocate for refugee children's access to both religious and formal education.

Adapted from UNHCR, Refugee Education in Urban Settings, Operational Solutions and Transition Section (OSTS), Division for Programme Support and Management (DPSM), December 2009 p. 17-18

### *Repatriation and Reintegration*

The evaluation had planned to visit Afghanistan to assess the results and issues surrounding UNHCR's AGDM strategy in its largest returnee operation, but as stated in Chapter 1, this was not possible due to the security situation at the time of the scheduled

mission. However, desk officers at HQ signified that this has indeed been a challenging operation, due to the on-going conflict and the fact that UNHCR staff have highly limited access to persons of concern. Social norms also limit access of male UNHCR staff and partners to women returnees who are highly vulnerable to rights abuses. At the same time, the desk has highlighted that an AGDM approach, while extremely challenging, is to some extent being implemented by UNHCR, principally through the role played by key partners in creating networks of returnee women to help support and monitor the situation.

Another returnee situation reviewed has been that in the DRC. UNHCR Staff in the DRC are positive about the results of the AGDM strategy, and particularly the use of participatory assessment in mobilising returnee communities, especially women, to play an active role and provide leadership on community priorities:

" The women between 18 and 40 were found to be better able to understand the AGDM and PA approach and to take charge of their situations. In the AGDM strategy, we find that the women are able to take action and put in place activities that have positive results and significant impact. The changes are real since the implementation of the AGDM strategy. For example, the activities implemented from the outset were those that represented the priorities of the returnees according to their capacities and the results were often positive. The community understands its role within a participatory framework in the realisation of certain activities on behalf of persons with special needs (older persons and persons with disabilities). The community has helped to manufacture bricks for members with special needs, etc."

#### *Statelessness*

To the information of the evaluation team, there have been few attempts to use the PA tool in the context of stateless populations. One good practice that has come to attention is the PA carried out in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2007-2008, which appears to have provided a better understanding to UNHCR of the concerns and priorities of persons of concern (see Text box below).

### **Participatory Assessments with Stateless Persons in the Kyrgyz Republic**

*Following a number of surveys conducted in 2007-2008, which identified over 13,000 stateless persons, in the summer of 2009 UNHCR started engaging also stateless persons in PAs. The surveys had covered many questions related to the legal, social and economic situation of stateless persons, including their access to property rights, to the right of having a nationality and personal status, to employment, education, medical and other social services. The objective of the PAs was to review and deepen this understanding by engaging separate age, gender and ethnic groups of stateless persons into an inter-active dialogue on their particular situation and needs.*

*Age, gender and ethnically segregated focus group discussions were chosen as the most suitable methodology. Due to a sometimes limited numbers of participants some age groups were merged. Focus group discussions took place on 20 July in Issyk-Ata and Sokuluk Districts of Chui Province in the North of Kyrgyzstan and on 7 and 10 August in Aravan and Kara-Suu Districts of Osh Province in the South of Kyrgyzstan.*

*Available documents and reasons for lack thereof, family relations, employment, access to medical services, social benefits and education were the topics that stateless persons chose as most relevant for these discussions. The following summarizes the general as well as the age/gender/ethnic specific outcomes of these PAs.*

**All age, gender and ethnic groups** considered the lack of valid identity documents as their main problem, because it prevents them from traveling and obtaining marriage or birth certificates. They also have no access to lawful employment and cannot register their immovable property such as land and houses. In addition, they are barred from participating in elections and their access to medical services is restricted. The PAs also revealed that especially women and children suffer from lacking citizenship or personal status, further increasing their vulnerability in their families and communities.

**Recommendation:** Where UNHCR staff and partners do not have the required skills or experience to effectively facilitate participatory processes, it would be recommended that an external facilitator be brought in to do capacity building and ensure high quality facilitation of participatory processes. In most countries, there exist specialised facilitators of participatory processes who might also make recommendations for appropriate local methodologies based on the objectives for the exercise as established with all participants. UNHCR staff and partners should in any case continue as participants in the process, even if they do not have the required facilitation skills.