Country evaluation of the age and gender mainstreaming pilot project

Egypt

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

Following three independent evaluations on refugee women, refugee children and the role of community services, UNHCR launched an age and gender mainstreaming pilot project in early 2004. This report presents the evaluation of the pilot project in Egypt, where work has taken place in an urban refugee context over a ten month period.

The evaluation took place over three days and aims to be a learning tool, not only exploring impact on attitudes, work practice and accountability but also the value of the methodology and ways in which it could be improved in the context of a roll out. Interviews were held with desk staff, staff in country, people of concern and partners.

The Egypt country operation is based solely in the branch office in Cairo and works with disparate groups of urban refugees spread throughout Cairo. The office is large in terms of staff physically present, however a large proportion of the staff are volunteers and interns. The multi functional team (MFT) has 10 members with representation from each of the programme areas, all members being internal UNHCR staff.

The introduction of the age and gender mainstreaming pilot coincided with a couple of highly significant and connected events at the Cairo office in early 2004. The office implemented the new UNHCR policy with regard to financial disbursements, where financial aid being supplied to all registered people of concern was replaced by a “self reliance” approach, redirecting funds to community development projects and to the most vulnerable. As a part of a management strategy for this radical and controversial shift, the office created a Community Development Unit (CDU) and allocated a number of national, volunteer and intern staff to it under the supervision of a senior international staff member. The deployment of a number of talented and committed staff to the development of community development projects has had a clear and highly positive impact on, for example, relationships with Implementing Partners (IPs), provision of support and skill development opportunities for IPs, relationships with refugee groups, identification and responsiveness to the needs of specific refugee groups, development of relevant programmes, and ultimately, external perceptions of UNHCR by any stakeholders who directly relate to members of the CDU.

The age and gender mainstreaming pilot came along at an opportune time for this unit. It provided them with some clear frameworks and tools to incorporate within their work and planning. It also perhaps offered them an increased legitimacy and authority within their workplace. The very encouraging and exciting outcomes as described above have not been achieved by the age and gender Mainstreaming project, but have certainly been enhanced by it. One of the drawbacks of the current structure in Cairo, from the perspective of the aims of the age and gender mainstreaming pilot, is that the existence of a motivated and well resourced (in terms of human resources by comparison with most other offices) community development unit reduces the perceived imperative for other staff to take up the approach. While
there is a large MFT meeting regularly, members noted that a few staff do the lion’s share of the work of the team and attitudes have been slower to change in some other programme areas. It should be noted, however, that the office did have a reasonable baseline of gender awareness prior to the pilot. Staff who have participated more actively in the age and gender mainstreaming pilot, through the workshop, the MFT, or through any of the MFT’s initiatives, all agreed that it added new dimensions to their understanding and has provided additional tools to enhance their work.

The roles of the CDU and the MFT can be seen as somewhat different, where the CDU is working predominantly externally, with partners and people of concern and building community frameworks, capacity and resources. The MFT is of course concerned with these as well, but is also responsible for, for example, the education, guidance and support of all staff within the office, to ensure that the understanding and approach is mainstreamed into all aspects of UNHCR work. At the moment there seems insufficient clarity as to the difference between the two, and the MFT roles that coincide with the roles of the CDU are those that are most developed and those that diverge, or require more authority and internal change, have been less developed.

The staff who attended the pilot workshop said that they returned energized and inspired. In fact they were so inspired, they developed a workplan with more priority areas than most and proceeded to feel overwhelmed by the amount of work they had set themselves. Staff who did not attend the workshop tended to feel less engaged and clear on the process. Being a large office, the MFT selected was quite large as well, and this has led to some difficulties in managing team processes and developing a coherent and workable plan forward. Along with the effects of staff turnover, for example, this has slowed the process and allowed the MFT to remain somewhat disconnected from the rest of the office.

The MFT would have liked a greater degree of follow up and support from the pilot team, to assist them in solving problems and applying the approach as they went. Initial enthusiasm may well be replaced by frustration and the dropping out of people from the process if insufficient support is provided along the way in developing the team and the skills required.

Overall, the Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot programme has had a certain degree of success in Egypt so far, of which they should be justifiably proud. Many members of the Egypt team were ready and willing to take up the principles and ideas of the approach and to run with them. But the programme has stopped short of being mainstreamed, and further work is needed to clarify the roles of the MFT and to connect them more effectively with the rest of the staff group. In order to achieve this, they will require greater input and involvement at a senior level.

As to the learning for the roll out of the programme, more attention needs to be paid to the specific circumstances of urban refugee situations, and locally based staff need more time to establish the processes and more involvement at the beginning to own the process. Consolidation of the skills and understanding of the core roles would be eminently facilitated by resources being devoted to follow up.
Introduction

Background to the evaluation

1. Following three independent evaluations on refugee women, refugee children and the role of community services, UNHCR launched a Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot project in early 2004. To date, country assessments followed by capacity building and planning workshops have been conducted in Iran, North Caucasus, Guinea, Zambia, Greece, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, India, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Sierra Leone.

2. The three key elements of the pilot project methodology are: Situation assessment using a participatory approach, integration workshop and the use of multi-functional teams.

3. Each country conducted a mid-term review of the work and it was agreed that a process evaluation would be conducted at the end of the pilot phase\(^1\). Evaluations have taken place in Zambia, Colombia, India, Egypt, Syria\(^2\), Greece, Venezuela and Ecuador. These countries were recommended for the evaluation exercise as they represent diverse situations: camp setting, urban and internal displacement situations. This report presents the findings of the Egypt evaluation, one of the urban contexts.\(^3\)

Evaluation purpose and objectives

4. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the Age and Gender Mainstreaming pilot project and to use this learning to inform the planned rollout of the project in 2005. Four areas of impact are explored. These are analytical approaches; procedures and work processes; leadership; and pilot methodology.

5. This evaluation is a process evaluation and is expected to be a learning tool. It has been designed to be a two way process, whereby the evaluation team and participants in the pilot project come together to explore learning and to build on experience. The evaluation is part of the wider mainstreaming project and as such is one important step in the process. In this way, the evaluation differs from a conventional end of project evaluation, which focuses on measuring impact. The process focus also arises from the practical reason that a key focus of this project is to change attitudes and ways of working. The impact is thus less clear to measure than in a more quantitatively defined initiative.

\(^1\) This evaluation should be read alongside the Mid-Term Reviews which contain additional examples of impact

\(^2\) Meetings were also held with Jordan and Lebanon projects to explore impact and learning. Findings are presented separately as ‘Notes for the File’.

\(^3\) The evaluator would like to thank the Deputy Regional Representative, the leader of the MFT and all staff, partners and people of concern who kindly gave their time to ensuring that this mission was a success.
The objectives of the evaluation are:

To document and explore progress towards age and gender Mainstreaming;

To examine the appropriateness/ effectiveness of the methodology used as a first step towards mainstreaming;

To highlight lessons and recommendations for the roll out of the project.

Methods and approach

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

8. Stakeholders interviewed included:

   UNHCR desk staff in Geneva;

   UNHCR regional/ branch office staff: members and non members of the MFTs and the acting representative;

   Relevant partners: Caritas, Maan, Sudanese Women’s Association;

   Persons of concern: Members of 2 Sudanese and 1 Somali community associations, approximately 13 people in all.

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

10. The Cairo office deals exclusively with urban refugees spread across the city of more than 18 million people. Accessing people of concern in significant and representative numbers is difficult as they are not a homogenous group and do not tend to come together in a coordinated way. There is a growing number of “Community Based Associations” (CBAs) that are attempting to co-ordinate themselves and provide some representation; however their ability to speak for the needs and concerns of a wide range of groups is limited. Additionally, as mentioned, due to the fact that a number of other related initiatives were introduced at the same time as the pilot, it is very difficult to clearly state how much the age and gender mainstreaming pilot was responsible for the gains that were evident.
Findings

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

Analytical approaches

Findings regarding attitude change and the extent to which the age and gender mainstreaming pilot has encouraged the consideration of gender and age differences and inequalities.

12. Many staff noted that they felt they had a strong focus and understanding of gender principles in particular prior to the introduction of the pilot. There seemed to have been some scepticism in the beginning as to whether the pilot would provide any added value. Most people felt, however, that in fact it did provide them with additional tools and a broader understanding. People quoted a number of examples where the process highlighted groups they may not have considered as clearly prior to the programme, and particularly noted that perhaps their understanding of “gender” prior to the pilot focused on women without a detailed exploration on the impact this limited perspective might have had on the refugee communities as a whole.

“We hadn’t considered having (a participatory assessment) in a structured way before; to have it focused on age and gender mainstreaming issues. We all said we’re doing age and gender mainstreaming, what’s new? But it did redirect our energies.”

13. While there appeared to be a general understanding and appreciation of the relevance of these principles to their work, there was still a pervasive assumption within the office that these issues are predominantly the domain of community services staff and of less relevance to other areas. Even though the MFT is large and includes membership from across programmes, community services staff shoulder the greatest burden in implementing the workplan.

14. Staff reported gaining a broader perspective regarding the challenges faced by different groups. For example, they identified that youth and the aged had been less well addressed in their planning prior to the pilot. They outlined a number of initiatives undertaken since the pilot that either would not have happened, or were enhanced as a result of the efforts of the MFT. For example, late last year, they ran a sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) workshop with refugees that utilized a highly participative approach and was successful in its outcomes, as evidenced by the continued participation of many workshop participants.

15. As noted above, one of the main areas of impact has been heightened awareness of the complexities of issues across different groups and an ability to articulate these. Attitudes are also coloured to some extent by a frustration with the lack of responsiveness of UNHCR policy in the area of urban refugees.

16. There appeared to be a reasonable understanding of ‘participatory approaches’, ‘community development’ and the ‘rights-based approach’, however staff were struggling with how to apply these principles in the context of an urban refugee setting, as described above.

Procedures and work processes

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

17. The establishment of the CDU was a means of managing the changes brought about through the withdrawal of financial assistance to a number of registered refugees and the redirection of much of the funds into community development and “self reliance” approaches. The age and gender mainstreaming pilot came not long afterwards, and as has been noted, has dovetailed effectively into the work of the CDU. This evaluation has found that the age and gender mainstreaming approach has been well received and influential in the work of the CDU in particular in this office, and has therefore enhanced their work. It was an ideal time to introduce the pilot and to embed the approach in the fabric of the newly forming unit. On the other hand, it should also be highlighted that without the CDU, the commitment and expertise existing in that unit, and their collaboration with protection and programme staff, the age and gender mainstreaming pilot may not have had nearly as much success.

18. The change of financial disbursement policy and establishment of the CDU had a critical impact upon the nature of the work of UNHCR’s main IPs and the relationship between them. Elements of the age and gender mainstreaming pilot have formed a part of the support and education framework provided by UNHCR to their main IP to ensure the development of skills and new structures to implement programmes. For example, the SGBV workshop was a central tool in the establishment of greater identification, collaboration and response regarding such cases.

19. **Strengths and weaknesses of the Multi Functional Team.** The team is large and they reported that this caused some problems in coordinating their activities and ensuring that all members were clear regarding their role. People did indicate that despite the numbers on the team, just a few members who are more highly motivated and clear about their roles and the applicability of the model carry out the bulk of the work.

“The team is a good idea on paper, but in the end the perception is that there are people who are landed with particular roles. Are we working as a team? We’re still stuck in a focal person system.” MFT member
“We think we’re gender aware, but we still behave in ways where we dump people on specific staff. We’re aware there are gaps we’ve neglected.” MFT member

20. In a recent internal review of the age and gender mainstreaming pilot, several team members noted that the strength of the MFT “mainly resides in the diversity of its composition, leading to more cooperation between units, as well as working towards the development of an organized network for partners”. Again, one of the main weaknesses was seen to be the size of the team, leading to inefficiency and uneven workload distribution.

21. People tended to think that the workplan had been overly ambitious, and seemed to feel somewhat overwhelmed by the number of goals they had set for themselves. It has been revised somewhat along the way, but there also seems some reluctance to pare it down too far. In part this may be due to the existence of the well staffed CDU. The age and gender mainstreaming programme is so integrally linked with the work of the CDU that there may be some greater capacity for the staff of this unit to envisage being able to achieve more as it is aligned with their core tasks.

22. Use of situation analysis in operation and impact on daily work: The participatory assessment undertaken during the pilot was found useful and the MFT felt that it helped to redirect their efforts. People commented, however, that it would not be possible to find the time to complete a participatory assessment on a regular basis. It was suggested that in their particular circumstances they would need a staff member devoted full time to such a task. The problem of organizing people of concern to participate in such an assessment was raised a number of times.

“It’s difficult doing a proper situation analysis. You can organize meetings but it’s very limited. They’re not organized, how representative are the groups? Others don’t feel they represent each other. You can create more problems unintentionally.”

23. Most people reported that aspects with regard to gender were often incorporated fairly routinely into work practices prior to the pilot, but that these were limited to women and often ran into problems as a result of their limited focus. It was felt that the pilot encouraged them to consider a broader range of groups and to identify the needs, for example, of unemployed men, youth and the aged. Ten months down the track, however, staff still felt that they were yet to adequately address the needs of the elderly and adolescents.

“The workplan helped us to identify core opportunities. It definitely affected my mindset in trying to be proactive; in for example, the possibility of using earmarked funds.” MFT member

24. Staff changes and absences had impacted upon the team at times and had slowed down the progress of the MFT. This, along with the size of the team and the variations in level of commitment has contributed to the team being quite slow to develop itself to a more integrated point of operation. As a consequence, the team has spent more time developing its internal processes and has yet to attend as fully to

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5 Participatory assessment refers to the element of situation analysis that involves participatory discussions with refugee communities
some of its external roles, such as colleague education and addressing the potential role of IPs within the MFT.

“Not too many people are aware of what the MFT are working on. Tackling problems led it to having a low profile. Recently things have gelled more and their profile is improving.”

25. Members of the MFT expressed frustration at the continued difficulty in establishing a strong link between age and gender mainstreaming and protection practices. They felt that more traditional views of the role of protection still predominate, where the age and gender mainstreaming approach can tend to be marginalized as a community services issue.

26. As a separate UNHCR initiative, SGBV has been on the agenda of the CDU and protection units of UNHCR Cairo before the introduction of the MFT. Most of the staff members actively involved in SGBV became members of the MFT, allowing SGBV to become a strong and active theme of the work of the MFT. They ran a workshop for IPs earlier last year and then later in the year, as mentioned above, they ran a workshop for people of concern, putting together a collaborative effort with local community groups. People felt these initiatives had been successful and had had some impact. This was supported by the evident enthusiasm of a number of participants of the latter programme, who spoke of their concern to get the message out more widely.

27. The MFT said that the time pressures in establishing the team and providing reports on their progress had made it difficult for them to consider gaining the active participation of implementing partners in the MFT. While IPs were not on the MFT, they work closely with UNHCR staff, and in particular members of the CDU, in what clearly appeared to be respectful and productive relationships that have been especially strengthened over the past year.

28. Senior staff outside of the MFT noted that the influence of the age and gender mainstreaming programme “has permeated” into a number of initiatives, such as the SGBV programmes, a working group for children, external training, education, and had resulted in some clearer procedures and improved outcomes.

“We have some clearer procedures. (The MFT) are producing living documents” Heads of Units.

29. Some other staff were unclear as to the role of the team and said that they would like to be more informed about their activities and goals. Despite this, however, other staff had noted positive achievements and outcomes of the team, including increased coordination across programme areas.

“Members of all units (are on the BID committee) to determine the best interests of the child. In the past only the resettlement unit had to deal with it. The MFT has contributed substantially.” Resettlement team

30. IPs noted significant and positive changes in the way they perceive UNHCR over the past year. These changes can be linked with the establishment of the CDU, who, while working in collaboration with protection and programme have achieved
a higher external profile. The approach of the CDU can be seen, to some degree, to be resourced by the age and gender mainstreaming approach. They noticed things such as increased collaboration between UNHCR and IPs, improved relationships with refugees at a grassroots level, increased access to training for IPs; however they saw all of these improvements as being linked to the CDU and not as consistent across the BO. but working very closely with

31. It was commented that there had also been some changes in the way the office structures and approaches the reception of asylum seekers. The reception area has become “more welcoming” to address the needs and experience of different groups. There has been a children’s supervisor employed to care for the needs of both women and children, and interpreters and security guards are given training in how to work with women and children. The person noting these changes wasn’t sure to what extent these changes had been directly driven by the age and gender mainstreaming pilot, however, she did feel that “everybody’s giving it a lot of attention and consideration. It’s not just a policy paper you don’t read.”

32. Resourcing was seen as an issue for the effective implementation of age and gender mainstreaming initiatives. The number of registered people of concern to the Cairo office has escalated dramatically in the past few years without a commensurate increase in funding.

33. It was reported that all UNHCR Cairo staff members have gender and age mainstreaming included in the 2004 CMS. This does not include UNVs and interns, as they are not regular UNHCR staff and are not under the CMS structure; however it should be noted that these staff also make up much of the staff body. One person commented that ultimately people will give priority to what is on their own CMS plan, and if age and gender mainstreaming objectives are not yet there this may reduce motivation to attend to these issues. Another staff member noted that while many of her colleagues talk a lot about these principles, they forget to incorporate them in a fundamental way to their own planning processes.

34. There was concern that the Country Operation Plan and virtually all other UNHCR planning and reporting tools do not, in their present format, adequately provide for proper analysis and reporting of age and gender mainstreaming.

“They deal, for example, with refugee women, refugee children and the elderly as special and vulnerable groups and are not fully integrated into all thematic and programming issues”

“Unless this is done quickly, we’ll forget.”

Management leadership

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

35. There was a clear belief that the programme had strong support from their leadership, and people said that they had not felt at a disadvantage when the representative left, as the deputy took over with the same supportive stance towards
them. The role of head of the MFT has been delegated to the senior admin/programme officer and the chair of the MFT is a national UN Volunteer. It did appear that while support is clear and positive at senior management levels, there did not seem to be a high level of active involvement, and carriage of the work is delegated down the line, in particular to the CDU. MFT members felt that perhaps they had allowed this to occur to too great an extent and had caused the MFT to be less in tune with a wider perspective.

“A certain part of our work is lobbying; in those activities we have needed more support from senior management. We never discussed exactly how to implement things we needed the rep to do. We work on the small stuff first (but) these things get in the way of the bigger picture.”

Pilot methodology and delivery

Findings regarding the extent to which the age and gender mainstreaming pilot was delivered effectively and appropriately, highlighting areas of learning and for improvement.

36. The MFT expressed concern at the speed with which the pilot was introduced and the impact that the pressure of deadlines had upon the effectiveness of their initial implementation. The deadline for the workplan prevented them, they felt, from sufficiently including IPs and people of concern in its development.

“If the idea is really to involve the community, we need time. But we were rushed.”

37. Staff felt there was insufficient consultation in the establishment of the programme.

“It wasn’t discussed with us in the field; it was thrown at us. It was not a process that took its time or had enough consultation.”

38. The name “age and gender mainstreaming” caused some concern amongst the MFT, as people commented that it is a difficult term and concept to translate into the relevant languages. They felt that there had not been enough guidance from HQ as to “how to relate it to reality”.

39. Other forms of help and guidance from HQ were also felt to be lacking. They would have liked more help in overcoming the obstacles to conducting a participatory assessment that is adapted to their unique circumstances, but “they weren’t given much help.” As a result, they felt that “the theory and practice don’t match” when applying the tool in an urban refugee city setting, where gathering information is particularly difficult, painstaking and time consuming.

40. In addition, they would have liked more follow-up and assistance from HQ to tackle specific problems as they arose. For example;

“Geneva needs to give us guidance in how to work with non-traditional groups who are vulnerable. For example, working with adolescent boys, or how to find and work with sex workers. How to
get people to talk about it; what is our level of involvement? It’s hard to find concrete information.”

41. The issue of staff turnover was raised as a concern. Both with regard to training staff to take a lead role in the programme, and the training that the MFT is expected to undertake across its own domain, the resources required to keep up to date with a changing staff group was felt to be problematic.

“Training could be never-ending.”

42. The MFT staff who had not attended the initial workshop said that they felt at a disadvantage in trying to join the process.

“It was hard to get some things clear. I felt a bit left out compared with the people who went to the workshop.”

43. People in this office consistently felt that the approach is not sufficiently sensitive to the context of urban refugees, particularly in a large city such as Cairo. They described how difficult it is to implement and maintain a community development approach when refugees are extremely heterogeneous, spread across the city, are difficult to access, are not organized into cohesive groups and therefore cannot represent each other. Much of their work is therefore highly individually based, responding to needs as they present.
Learning and recommendations

Learning

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

MFTs

- There have been both advantages and disadvantages in linking the age and gender mainstreaming pilot programme with the CDU. While the approach provided the unit with useful frameworks and tools, the responsibility for carriage of the age and gender mainstreaming programme has tended to be left with the CDU, in effect not sufficiently achieving the aim of “mainstreaming”. Many aspects of age and gender mainstreaming work are enhanced significantly, however, by the well resourced community development section and by staff who have particular expertise and skill in either gender or community development work.

- Sustainability and momentum of the project will be an ongoing issue with staff turnover and the reliance upon a large number of underpaid and therefore more transient staff.

- Additional strategies may need to be developed to assist MFTs to effect change in larger offices.

- The MFT must have sufficient authority to lead what is a change initiative within the workplace with regard to attitudes and practices.

- MFTs require a greater degree of ongoing support and mentoring to assist them to apply the approach to new situations and problems as they arise.

- More strategies are required to ensure that the work of MFTs is not consistently relegated to community services and seen as not directly linked with protection and programming for example.

Pilot programme methodology

- The issue of urban refugee situations needs to be addressed more specifically in the design of the programme, and in particular in the participatory assessment tool, to reassure staff working in these environments of its relevance and applicability to their unique circumstances.

- Sufficient places need to be made available in the training to increase the number of staff with the direct skills and knowledge of the programme.

- The facilitators of the workshop should try to ensure that MFT members take realistic and achievable workplans back to their workplace, to try to...
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diminish the demotivating effect of becoming overwhelmed by good intentions.

- MFT members may require more time to establish the programme firmly and comprehensively at the ground level, particularly in larger offices, where internal coordination will be time-consuming, and may prevent the next stage of involvement of IPs.

- Consultation prior to the running of the Age and Gender Mainstreaming programme is essential to involve staff, increase ownership, and to tailor the programme to local circumstances.

Other

- Change in UNHCR policy can have an enormous impact upon IPs and people of concern and sufficient attention needs to be paid to the resourcing of both UNHCR and others to manage and meet the change.

Recommendations

45. The key recommendations for the future development of the age and gender mainstreaming initiative in Egypt are as follows (and some of these are based upon the MFT’s own recent review):

- The age and gender mainstreaming programme should continue in Egypt, with some adjustments to allow this office to capitalize on the encouraging work they are already doing, to develop the role of the MFT to take more internal leadership and to expand the roles of IPs.

- To improve efficiency, accountability and cohesiveness, the MFT should be reduced to approximately five UNHCR members.

- Implementing and operational partners and refugee communities should be involved in the development and implementation of age and gender mainstreaming activities through focus group discussions and regular meetings, with efforts made to have some representation on the MFT itself.

- MFT members report on a regular basis to their respective units on the age and gender mainstreaming process and take responsibility for providing the MFT with feedback from their unit. Regular reporting from the MFT should occur to all staff as frequently as possible.

- The roles and functions of the MFT need to be more clearly delineated from those of the CDU, with changes made to the MFT workplan that address the internal development functions of the MFT.

- There needs to be a reclarification of the role of the representative and other senior staff, with a renegotiation of levels of active involvement and authority needed to achieve goals.

- The difficulties in applying the participatory assessment tool need to be addressed as soon as possible, with a plan developed as to how to utilize this tool in this setting.
The age and gender mainstreaming objectives need to be placed in the CMS of each staff member, as mentioned in the most recent review.

46. The key recommendations for the proposed wider roll out of the initiative

- On the basis of the evidence of positive changes with regard to knowledge and some of the activities, it is recommended that the roll out go ahead, with adjustments to the methodology to address lessons learned.
- UNHCR staff working in urban refugee situations need specific assistance in the application of the participatory assessment tool to their situations.
- Structures need to be put in place to ensure sufficient time is allowed prior to the workshop to establish systems and procedures.
- Attention needs to be paid to the achievability of workplans that are taken back to the workplace.
- Involvement of both locally based staff and IPs from the planning stages is key to ensuring local ownership and tailoring to specific local conditions.
- Some form of preliminary assessment as to local conditions, staffing issues, political and policy issues, attitudes and other potential obstacles to the programme may need to be made in order to put strategies in place to overcome them.
- The particular circumstances of urban refugee caseloads may need to be taken more into account in the design of the approach.
- Strengthening the approach for briefing senior staff is needed to consolidate support for the programme after the initial set up is complete.
- Some system for ongoing support and mentoring of the MFTs is needed to assist them to develop as a team, to maintain their focus, to increase accountability and to ensure that new skills are embedded and learning occurs in the application of the approach to new situations.
- The roll out may be more effective if done in a phased way over a period of time to facilitate consolidation of learning and establishment of the local structures.
- Congruence between the expectations of the age and gender mainstreaming programme with regard to reporting and the format of the country operation plans should be considered.
- Resources for incorporating and briefing new MFT members are needed.

**Overall conclusion**

47. The age and gender mainstreaming pilot programme found its niche in Egypt with the recently-founded CDU. While it has been put to extremely productive use by this unit, it now needs to be differentiated more from the work of the CDU, to ensure a wider participation across the UNHCR office and a broader application of
the principles. Wider strategies will need to be formulated in preparation for the roll out of the programme to overcome the many obstacles to consistent, committed and effective ongoing mainstreaming of gender and age principles.