



UN WOMEN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

GUIDANCE NOTE



MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN COVID-19 RESPONSE IN REFUGEE AND IDP CAMPS





1. BACKGROUND

The situation in refugee and Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in several countries in ESAR, viz. Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan pose challenges for effective management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Basic facilities such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are shared. Social distancing is difficult to practice in some of the overcrowded settlements including slums and informal settlements.

The already dire economic status of many of the displaced will become even more precarious with attention of the donors to COVID-19 prevention and health management needs.

The visible absence of women in camp management structures will deepen the marginalization of women's needs and their influence in decision making.

2. INTERVENTIONS PROPOSED

Relevant multi and country offices are advised to focus on the following:

A) PREVENTION/COMMUNICATION/DECISION MAKING

- Undertake a gender vulnerability assessment of IDP and Refugees camps to the COVID-19 and present at the Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) and camp management structures. Particular attention to be paid to areas for prevention, treatment and mitigation of impact such as information/communication, social distancing, hygiene, livelihoods, health etc.
- Support sensitization of IDP and refugee communities especially those in camps on the COVID-19: the nature of the virus, the means of transmission and the known prevention means. Develop simple to understand messages in medium that is easily understood and accessible by the relevant population.
- Advocate with the relevant UN Agency in charge of the camp, i.e. UNHCR or OCHA to have a designated area for treating and holding female suspected COVID-19 cases with the available in country facilities for treatment and protective gear for female health workers.
- Collaborate with The World Health Organization (WHO) and lead Agency in charge of the camp to empower women and youth leaders with the knowledge on how to identify cases and to refer to the relevant authorities in the camp.
- Support women and youth groups to make masks from locally available materials.
- Advocate for the inclusion of women in camp decision making bodies including for COVID-19 and support their capacity strengthening to understand and effectively advocate for a gender responsive response.
- Support local women's organizations to be part of the response at community level and in camps.

B) WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- Advocate for economic packages of government and aid Agencies for COVID-19 to include IDP and refugee communities.
- Support IDP and refugee populations in border towns, especially those in cross border trade to continue their trade in innovative ways that prevent movement of persons across borders. Certain countries have designated trucks and drivers that transport commercial goods (especially food) across the borders.
- Advocate with donor Agencies and HCTs to increase rations to refugees and IDPs to reduce their engagement in risky behavior to support their daily needs.

C) COORDINATION ON GENDER RESPONSIVE RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS

- Support gender desegregation of data to measure the gendered impact of the pandemic including the development of a tool for collection and reporting on the relevant data and capacity to analyse and use the data to inform the response.
- Work with Gender Thematic Groups (GTG), protection and clusters as well as HCT technical groups to integrate a gender perspective in refugee and IDP camps in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Share best practices and lessons learned from other regions with relevant groups and document good practices and lessons learned from your respective countries and share, in country and in the region.
- Provide gender technical expertise for all coordination groups; using the GTG members, gender experts from government especially the Ministry of Gender and women's civil society organizations.
- Support and promote the representation of women in COVID-19 coordination and management structures.

3. RESOURCES

UN Women recommends that multi and country offices leverage the following funds among other opportunities for resource mobilization:

- **Seed funding for COVID-19 Response**

- Funds up to U\$50,000 per country available for priority countries which include South Sudan and Somalia.

- UN Women Emergency Fund which is available for between US\$2,500 to U\$25,000 to support civil society organizations.

- **Call for Proposals COVID-19 for emergency response.** Eligible countries in East and Southern Africa include Burundi, CAR, Malawi, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

- **Surge capacity** – This includes experts from standby capacity partners viz. The Norwegian Refugee Council, RedR and The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). They are available for 3 to 6 months at the costs of the partner. Can provide Gender in Humanitarian Action Advisor, Gender Based Violence Specialist and Livelihoods expert at different levels.



UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY
AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN.
A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN
AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS
ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE
PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR
NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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