



UNHCR Turkey
Gender and Children Team - 5 Years On:
*Accomplishments, Broader Applications
and Recommendations*

a report by the
Women's Commission
for Refugee Women and Children

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Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
122 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10168-1289
tel. 212.551.3088
fax. 212.551.3180
wcrwc@womenscommission.org
www.womenscommission.org

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Mission Statement

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children works to improve the lives and defend the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children and adolescents. We advocate for their inclusion and participation in programs of humanitarian assistance and protection. We provide technical expertise and policy advice to donors and organizations that work with refugees and the displaced. We make recommendations to policy makers based on rigorous research and information gathered on fact-finding missions. We join with refugee women, children and adolescents to ensure that their voices are heard from the community level to the highest levels of governments and international organizations. We do this in the conviction that their empowerment is the surest route to the greater well-being of all forcibly displaced people.

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Dale Buscher, Director, Protection and Participation Program, and Ramina Johal, Senior Coordinator, Protection and Participation Program, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, researched and authored this report. It was edited by Diana Quick, Director of Communications, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

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Introduction

UNHCR Turkey instituted a Gender and Children Team approach to enhance its work with refugee women and children in 2000. In the Women's Commission's 2002 report *UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women and Guidelines on Their Protection: An Assessment of 10 Years of Implementation*, the Women's Commission recommended that UNHCR Turkey's multi-sectoral Gender and Children Team approach be adopted in other country operations, as a means of enhancing UNHCR's work with and protection of refugee women and children. The report suggested the multi-sectoral approach as an effective means of bringing together protection, program, community services and other sectors for a more comprehensive understanding of gender issues that arise. The report also recommended bolstering gender focal points as a complement to the multi-sectoral approach. The multi-functional team approach was subsequently incorporated as part of UNHCR's age and gender mainstreaming pilot project in 2004 and is part of the methodology for UNHCR's global age, gender and diversity global rollout (2005 – 2007). The multi-functional team approach has replaced the focal point system.

Concern, however, has been raised regarding the longer-term sustainability and leadership of the team approach as well as the impact of its work on mainstreaming age and gender in policies and practice, with partners, and on direct services to refugee. In order to inform and strengthen UNHCR's global age, gender and diversity rollout, the Women's Commission returned to Turkey in October 2005 to document the leadership, sustainability, lessons and impact of the Gender and Children Team five years on – the findings of which are detailed in this report.

Methodology

Information presented in this report is based on responses to questionnaires from previous UNHCR Turkey staff involved in the genesis of the Gender and Children Team; a review of existing documents on the UNHCR Turkey operation (Country Operations Plan, Global Appeal, Global Report, Gender and Children Team work plan); a field mission to Turkey (Istanbul, Van and Ankara) from Oct. 3 - 11, 2005; interviews with current UNHCR Turkey staff in those locations; meetings with UNHCR's NGO implementing and operational partners (Istanbul and Van); focus group meetings with refugee women and youth (Van); meetings with government (Ministry of Interior and the Gendarme - who police and monitor protection in satellite cities and border areas); a meeting with the UN Gender Theme Group; and participation in UNHCR's Gender and Children Team's October meeting.

Limitations to the approach included time constraints – which precluded scheduling pre- and post-briefings at UNHCR Geneva for face-to-face interviews with former UNHCR Turkey staff now posted to UNHCR headquarters. This information was subsequently gathered via questionnaires and telephone interviews. Time constraints also prohibited a trip to one of the satellite cities as was proposed in the scope of work. Security concerns precluded a trip to the border area to assess police/gendarme treatment of new asylum seekers and their level of knowledge regarding the particular concerns of women and children asylum seekers. Other limitations included staff turnover at both UNHCR and NGO offices – thereby restricting participants' knowledge of the Gender and Children Team as it evolved and developed over time; bureaucratic hurdles that interfered with planned visits to the Foreigners' Department and the Child Police Facility in Istanbul; and few opportunities, due to scheduling, to solicit more refugee input – other than the meetings held with refugees in Van.

Origins of the Gender and Children Team (GCT)

The initial impetus for the establishment of the Gender and Children Team in Turkey was a report undertaken by a UNHCR intern who conducted a survey of the office's handling of gender issues in UNHCR Branch Office - Ankara. The intern's report was quite critical and found several lapses in coordination and service delivery. Subsequently, the Gender and Children Team (GCT) in Turkey was established by the then-Representative and Regional Gender Advisor, and began as an internal UNHCR process. Initially the GCT was tasked with drawing up clear guidelines for the handling of specific situations, such as incidents of sexual and gender-based violence. This work was supplemented by the creation of an inter-unit "special cases" team charged with resolving individual emergency cases as and when they arose.

The GCT's terms of reference were later tightened up to focus more on the shaping of policy through the adaptation and supplementing of global guidelines to the Turkish context, the development (but not implementation) of a dissemination and training program, the drawing up of clear targets and indicators, and the review of progress accomplished. Part of its value was seen as being an exercise in developing broad "ownership" of policy priorities within a country operation. In the second year of the functioning of the GCT, nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners were invited to join. More recently, the GCT has shifted focus to more operational issues, such as implementation of developed policies and procedures.

Turkey Context

The work of the Gender and Children Team in Turkey is partially shaped by the unique context – Turkey's geographic limitation to the 1967 Protocol of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the resultant UNHCR Turkey operation's focus on RSD (Refugee Status Determination) and resettlement. The refugee caseload, which is 99% urban, is composed of Iranians (who make up the vast majority, many of them fast-tracked Baha'i) and Iraqis (many of whom are "stuck" – as most resettlement country governments are no longer accepting them, coupled with the lack of safe return options). Smaller, less visible African and Chechen caseloads are also present.

The 2004 UNHCR Global Report,¹ breaks down the 7,000 population of concern to UNHCR in Turkey as follows: 2,000 refugees from Iran; 1,700 asylum seekers from Iran; 1,400 asylum seekers from Iraq; 500 refugees from Bosnia; 500 refugees from various countries; 400 asylum seekers from various countries; 300 asylum seekers from Afghanistan; and 200 asylum seekers from Somalia. Upon applying/registering for asylum, non-European asylum seekers are assigned to a satellite city to reside until they are resettled (although many do continue to reside in Istanbul and Ankara without government permission).

Also unique to the Turkey context, at present, is the country's European Union (EU) accession process. The hope for full EU membership has resulted in more open, transparent and receptive government attitudes, including in the key areas of asylum reform and NGO registration, which has provided UNHCR and NGOs with new opportunities for influencing both government policy and practice. In addition, there is heightened attention to and awareness of trafficking by the government and Turkish public. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has a substantial national campaign and is coordinating closely with national and UN authorities (trafficking is currently a working sub-group of the GCT).

As of writing this report, Turkey had not yet participated in UNHCR's age, gender and diversity mainstreaming global rollout.

¹ Published June 2005.

Key Findings

Summary

The work of the GCT, five years after its initiation, has evolved and been sustained under the direct leadership of the UNHCR Representative. Within UNHCR, the GCT brought together people from the various sectors of the office, such as protection, program, registration, resettlement and management, in order to identify and address gender and children's issues/problem areas – and thus encouraged a holistic approach to solutions and responses. It also educated each sector about these problems, such that they eventually learnt to recognize gender and age issues in their own domain as well as elsewhere. Coming together as a team allowed many members to learn from each other, about the work of each section as well as about the impact of gender and age on different issues. The team was not only concerned with process however, and considerable strides were made at the policy, guidance, training and general mainstreaming level as the team insisted on the achievement of visible progress and outputs. As a result, protection concerns were and are detected at an earlier stage, gender-sensitive interview techniques were developed and improved, and the recognition rate on gender-based persecution increased (even resettlement countries highlighted the increase in submissions of gender-based claims).

The impact of the GCT within UNHCR has been to bring considerable visibility to the refugee situation and needs, particularly that of refugee women and children, visibility that was enhanced through using a gender lens. The GCT has sensitized colleagues and informed their work. Attention to domestic violence, for example, likely led to supporting a women's shelter in Van. Additionally, government training programs were both established and enriched.

The GCT has also had a significant impact on governmental and nongovernmental partners as well as on both policy and practice with regards to interviewing, documentation and services for refugee women and children. The GCT has a clear, developed work plan that guides its activities. The GCT meetings also provide an important forum for networking amongst NGOs and are a venue that allows for the active participation of UNHCR, government and NGOs where dialogue is open, frank and solutions-oriented. In fact, the strength of the GCT is the involvement of NGOs and government. Of significance is the fact that UNHCR staff, particularly national staff, NGO staff and government partner staff all report that involvement and participation in the GCT has changed their attitudes, awareness and sensitivity regarding gender and children's issues. Equally significant is the fact that the GCT has reportedly re-energized the UNHCR Branch Office and improved dialogue and cooperation with NGO partners.

A primary area to address in order to strengthen the work of the GCT is to ensure that refugee voices, ideas and priorities influence the work plan and priorities of the GCT. Additional areas for strengthening the impact include more focus on the "multiplier" effect – ensuring that information discussed at the GCT meetings is widely shared throughout UNHCR and NGO operations and reflects issues beyond Ankara, with follow-up reporting on how the work of the GCT has changed approaches and services; and, developing an ongoing communication strategy with GCT members for information sharing and work in-between the regular GCT meetings in order to maintain momentum and enhance results.

In addition, further consideration should be given to the fact that the GCT ceased to function for about one year during the Iraq emergency, rather than adjust its operations to respond to the changing environment. Since the UNHCR global rollout establishes the multifunctional team as a key mechanism to mainstream gender, age and diversity, it is important to ensure sufficient flexibility for the team to

respond to such changes in the operating environment—which may require prioritizing or modifying existing work plans and commitments.

Major Findings

1. GCT Work Plan

The GCT drafts a comprehensive work plan detailing activities, trainings and priorities. The plan is then merged with the UNHCR office's broader action plan with tasks delegated throughout the office. The current work plan focuses on four themes that are tied to the office's protection objectives and reflect the refugee context in Turkey: 1) Reception/Registration, 2) Decision Procedure and Basic Protection, 3) Durable Solutions² and 4) Awareness and Partnership Issues.³ The work plan is targeted, measurable and reported on during the GCT meetings. Follow-up between meetings, however, on agreed to tasks is sporadic and the completion of assignments can be lengthy with little adherence to timelines. Further, the work plan appears to be a top down process, driven largely by UNHCR and based on UNHCR staff members' understanding of the needs and priorities and without refugee input in the development and prioritization of work plan goals.

Activities on the plan currently being worked on to address protection gaps include:

- Asylum Seekers Welcome Project, which will include developing informational leaflets on the RSD process, Turkish laws, refugee rights and available services targeting women and children/parents of children asylum seekers for distribution at borders and airports;
- Identifying NGOs that can provide information and assistance to refugees in the satellite cities and conducting joint monitoring missions with NGOs to the satellite cities;
- Developing a pool of interpreters for use by UNHCR, Government and NGOs (to build the pool of female interpreters for female asylum seekers and refugees and both male and female interpreters for less available languages);
- Training police officers at the Foreigners Section on child-friendly interviewing techniques; and,
- Identifying and training a pool of trustees/guardians for unaccompanied minors and separated children.

The 11-page work plan is detailed with responsible agencies indicated for many of the tasks. In fact, the work plan may be overly elaborate with too many goals under a single theme. There are, for example, 11 goals under Theme #1 Reception and Registration. Given the multiplicity of actors engaged in the GCT, it may be more constructive to do annual work plans with fewer goals per year so that concentrated energy can be sustained to complete the necessary activities in order to meet the goals. This may address the major concern raised regarding the GCT work plan – that there are problems with implementation and forward movement is too slow.

² Resettlement, Local Integration and Voluntary Repatriation.

³ Support to the Government Plan of Action for the EU Acquis in Asylum and Migration include goals, problems identified, solutions/proposed strategy and outputs for both 2005 and 2006.

2. Development of Protection Tools, Guidelines and Procedures

The majority of UNHCR, NGO and governmental staff clearly articulated that the Gender and Children Team approach and work has influenced at least some of what they do. Interviewees expressed a more in-depth understanding of women and children's issues and policies, which has reportedly resulted in increased sensitivity. The guidelines and procedures developed by the GCT are known and are, for the most part, being applied by staff and partners.

The GCT has been instrumental in translating key UNHCR policies into practice which are grounded in and sensitive to the local context. Procedures, policies and guidelines developed through or as a result of the work of the GCT over the years include:

- **Protocols:** instructions to staff, including guards and interpreters, on identifying gender-related vulnerability, whom to contact, external resources and steps to be taken (including, when appropriate, convening the Inter-unit Committee on Special Cases which seeks solutions for individuals who have experienced domestic violence, sexual violence or are separated children).
- **Refugee Women's Legal Manual** – developed to assist social and legal counselors in providing information to refugee women on their rights in the country of asylum.⁴
- **Legal Framework Relating to Refugee Children and Other Children of Concern to UNHCR in Countries of Eastern Europe and Turkey** – a research document which covers the six thematic areas of birth registration, access to education, citizenship, access to refugee status determination, guardianship and custody, and protection from sexual abuse. The aim of the research was to provide a comprehensive legal framework on the relevant areas and to give concrete recommendations to improve existing legislation affecting the lives of refugee children.
- **Gender and child-sensitive RSD procedures**, which include separate interviews for women, the availability of female legal officers and interpreters, expedited procedures for vulnerable cases, and in-house training on gender-related persecution claims, in order to improve the quality and fairness of the RSD system.
- **In-house Guidelines on Domestic and Sexual Violence against Women and Children**, which provide practical and culturally sensitive information on forms of violence and psycho-social or legal responses that may be adopted, considering both UNHCR's policy and guidelines and the legal situation in Turkey.
- **Standard Operating Procedures on SGBV** drafted and distributed to all partners and GCT participants, including a systematic referral procedure and a database for monitoring follow-up on cases as well as trends.
- **Standard Operating Procedures, incident reports and referral mechanisms for separated minors** developed and shared with all partners to ensure identification, referral, and service provision.
- **Indicators for gender and age mainstreaming** were drafted to measure progress and a **framework for cooperation with the government on the reception of minors** was developed. The framework includes minimizing registration time for unaccompanied minors and shelter in the SHCEK (the Government of Turkey's social service and child protection branch) shelters rather than prolonged, unsupervised stays at hotels as had been the practice.

However GCT members – particularly UNHCR staff with expertise in gender and protection – expressed concerns about the consistency of putting these guidelines and procedures into practice. They expressed a

⁴ The Legal Manual addresses specific gender-related rights and issues, such as domestic violence, sexual violence, honor crimes, reproductive rights, as well as some of the major legal issues and procedures relating to marriage and divorce.

need for more training to UNHCR and NGO non-GCT members on gender sensitivity more broadly, as well as more consistent follow-up on usage of the policies and procedures developed.

3. Training

Training provided to UNHCR staff, NGO partners and, particularly, to government counterparts has been a strength of the GCT. For several years, training has been conducted at multiple levels targeting the Ministry of Interior, the police and the gendarme. It is facilitated by both UNHCR and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC).⁵ According to the 2004 UNHCR Global Report, UNHCR provided refugee protection training (including women and children's rights) to 880 Turkish officials in 26 seminars and workshops, focusing in particular on the core team of officials at the Ministry of Interior who are responsible for framing Turkey's new asylum system.

The GCT has also led to UNHCR and IOM sharing training expertise and participating in each other's training fora. The government partners expressed considerable satisfaction with the training opportunities and noted its impact on their staff, services and sensitivities. At times, the trainings are also being replicated internally, targeting new recruits and additional staff members of said organizations, an ideal outgrowth of the GCT in promoting institutionalization and ownership among partners

The longer-term effectiveness of the training is impacted, however, by staff turnover and rotation amongst the police and gendarme – although it should be noted that rotation can also be positive if trained staff apply their knowledge in new assignments. Nevertheless, training that relies heavily on outside trainers is difficult to sustain over time. More emphasis should therefore be placed on implementing a training of trainers approach, with government partners taking over the training of their new and rotating staff members. Such training should combine the AGDM (UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming initiative) tools and methodology (gender and age analysis rather than just focusing on women and children; and the use of participatory approaches) as a means to enhance the GCT goals.

National UNHCR staff and NGO staff report considerable learning and awareness raising as a result of the training provided by UNHCR, particularly on sexual and gender-based violence. Action for the Rights of Children (ARC) training, however, has reportedly not been provided and should be scheduled.

In addition to the ongoing trainings with police and gendarme, UNHCR is planning to conduct a two-day training on refugee rights with one NGO or community representative from each of the satellite cities who could then go back and train other colleagues and eventual service providers. This training would enhance outreach to refugee populations, assist in addressing some of the known access and service gaps in the satellite cities and help to identify issues for GCT attention.

4. UNHCR Partners

a. Government of Turkey

Staff from both the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and SHCEK (the Government of Turkey's social service and child protection branch) actively participate in the GCT. MOI, who has been participating longer, has been clearly impacted by their participation. The meetings are taken seriously by female officers who attend, and information presented and discussed is reported back to senior level staff. MOI participants, for example, have become so sensitized to children's and gender issues that they now advocate to

⁵ ICMC is a major UNHCR partner and a member of the GCT.

UNHCR for special consideration for vulnerable refugees they encounter. Further, sensitivity to gender and children's issues are spelled out in the government's National Action Plan for the Adoption of the EU Acquis⁶ in the Field of Asylum and Migration (specifically in Sections 3.2.8, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6.1, and, most notably in section 4.9.3). In addition, as reported by UNHCR eligibility staff, awareness of gender issues is now visible in the government's RSD assessments.

The MOI participants fully engage in the GCT meetings with both UNHCR and NGOs. They respond to questions, suggestions and criticisms. Staff from SHCEK are more recent participants on the GCT and the impact of their participation is yet to be fully felt. The agency, however, is now providing shelter for unaccompanied refugee minors. It was also unclear to what extent SHCEK's comparatively reduced engagement in the GCT meeting dialogue was due to lack of understanding or interest in the issues, language barriers regarding materials distributed or other.

The GCT forum has, without doubt, built bridges between government officials and NGOs and provided a venue for raising real problems and proposing solutions. Concerns, however, were expressed about ensuring that rhetoric is in fact put into practice and that agreements reached with MOI at GCT meetings radiate out to the satellite cities.

Most likely as result of the UNHCR training provided, the gendarme, whom asylum seekers generally encounter first upon entering the country at border areas, report that while they used to view all asylum seekers the same, they now recognize vulnerable groups and have made an effort to recruit and use female staff to work with female asylum seekers. The Ministry of Interior also reports that they are directing female staff into the asylum section and assigning them to work with vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees. Gender CD-ROMs have been developed with modules for gendarme that are regularly used by the gendarme for their own trainings and copies of the CD-ROM are distributed to their new staff.

As noted above, MOI has inserted relevant language on vulnerable asylum seekers into its EU Acquis action plan. MOI also reports improvements in their interviewing techniques with all interviews with women and children either conducted directly or supervised by specifically trained colleagues. Further, MOI reports expanded cooperation with nongovernmental organizations and an increased understanding of the key assistance roles NGOs can assume vis-à-vis refugees and asylum seekers. MOI also reported that cooperation with SHCEK for the provision of shelter and services for separated children, was a direct result of the GCT, as was their instruction to satellite cities that all refugee children were to be provided education free of charge. Additionally, of note, at the GCT meeting observed, MOI participants raised refugees and refugee rights education targeting Turkish citizens as a need.

b. Nongovernmental Organizations

The majority of NGO partners, especially those who participate directly in the GCT meetings,⁷ expressed their support for the GCT and reiterated how it has influenced and impacted their work. The GCT was described by one NGO as, "an excellent forum for communication." Another NGO stated that as a result as the GCT, "on gender issues, we're all talking the same language." Another NGO, however, commented, "Dialogue at the GCT is really good, practice is different."

⁶ The EU Acquis is the body of common rights and obligations that bind all the Member States together within the EU. These rights and obligations flow from EU law: Treaties, Community legislation and case law (European Community part of the treaty), acts adopted under the intergovernmental parts of the treaty, and international agreements and conventions concluded by the Community and the Member States.

⁷ Nongovernmental partners on the GCT include the major UNHCR operational partners (ICMC, CARITAS, HRDF, ASAM), one Ankara and Istanbul-based human rights group and two women's rights groups – one based in Van and another in Ankara/Istanbul.

The NGO GCT members found the networking opportunities with other NGOs that have resulted from participation at the GCT meetings to be a key benefit. They also appreciate the direct dialogue with government partners at the meetings. Additionally, the GCT meetings seem to have positively impacted relationships between NGOs and UNHCR and further strengthened channels of communication. However, the benefits are overwhelmingly experienced by Ankara-based NGOs or their Ankara operations as compared to those based in Istanbul and elsewhere who may be unable to attend on a regular basis. The GCT has recognized gaps in engaging local organizations and its work plan includes drafting a list of local agencies across Turkey (including in the satellite cities).

Based on the GCT model, and in part in response to the lack of forum on the GCT regarding protection concerns for Istanbul partners, the Istanbul-based NGOs have recently started their own NGO forum, which will include a focus on gender and children's issues. It is not clear what the link will be to the GCT beyond promoting a "common voice" on Istanbul concerns by the NGO community, which, in itself, is a positive development. NGOs are reportedly more aware of gender issues and are sending in SGBV incident report forms to UNHCR on a regular basis. The NGOs would, however, like some feedback from UNHCR on the follow-up undertaken on the incident reports filed.

Concerns and suggestions raised by NGO participants include the desire to have the GCT meetings focus strictly on implementation of the work plan and less on presentations; that the meetings become even more action- and solutions-oriented; that working sub-groups be established to take some of the work plan's items forward in a more timely fashion (there was considerable concern expressed that the agenda for the GCT meetings remains largely the same from meeting to meeting with considerable repetition and little forward movement); that alternative fora be considered for addressing other coordination and individual case issues; and, that the GCT meetings be rotated between sites – Ankara, Van and Istanbul – to allow for greater NGO participation and attention to issues beyond Ankara.

Many NGO GCT participants do not, however, share the GCT discussions and learnings more broadly or on a systematic basis within their own organizations, thereby limiting the organizational impact and outreach beyond Ankara. There does not seem to be an understanding of the catalytic role they can and should be playing with their own organizations. NGOs do, however, report including gender training when training their own target groups – police and Turkish lawyers. One NGO also reported mainstreaming gender within their own office where, instead of having a focal point, all staff have been made responsible. It was also noted, specifically by pro bono and consultant lawyers, how useful the manuals on refugee women and children developed by the GCT have been in addressing specific case issues that arise.

Outreach to the more nascent or grassroots NGOs is also a challenge worth consideration by the GCT. Local capacity and benefits to local groups resulting from engagement with the GCT should be explored as a means to enhance the community-level impact of the GCT's work. Constraints currently inhibiting local NGOs' attendance at GCT meetings include language (documents are generally produced in English) and travel funds.

c. Refugees

In the early days of the existence of the GCT, UNHCR held separate meetings with refugee representatives— although how connected this was to the actual work of the GCT is unclear. Also, even before the GCT was established, UNHCR met with female refugee representatives to gather country of origin information from the perspective of women as well as to gather information about their living situation in the country of asylum. Refugee representation has, however, proven to be difficult to sustain.

The refugee population receiving UNHCR's attention in Turkey turns over quite rapidly due to resettlement being the only durable solution available for most non-European refugees. According to UNHCR, earlier refugee representative or leadership structures are no longer in place. Further, the refugee population is urban and scattered over some 12 geographically disbursed satellite cities. As such, at present, refugees do not participate or have input into the functioning of the GCT. As a result, the GCT discusses and address the major protection issues as perceived by UNHCR staff and/or reported by NGO partners. There is, for example, considerable focus by the GCT on gender-sensitive RSD procedures, while some of the larger protection concerns, particularly those faced by the African and Chechen refugee populations, may be overlooked.

Regular communication with refugees has been recognized by the GCT as one of their primary constraints and is a component of the GCT work plan. Communication is being addressed somewhat through field missions to the satellite cities (accompanied by NGOs), through NGO partners activities and the plan to identify and partner with additional national and local NGOs based in the satellite cities. Nonetheless, current interaction with refugees is severely inadequate vis-à-vis shaping the GCT agenda and more often than not is carried out on an individual or case/family basis (and RSD focused) rather than consulting with various age and gender groupings on broader protection concerns. Refugees may, at times, be informed about policies and procedures but are seldom listened to and consulted. One national staff member noted that this has resulted in the development of a "victimization" mentality amongst staff when discussing refugee women and children rather than viewing them as a part of the solution with unique strengths and talents to contribute. Little attention, too, appears to have been paid regarding relations between refugees and host communities and means of developing interaction, trust and a receptive host environment.

It is important to note that Turkey has not yet participated in UNHCR's AGDM process, which emphasizes community engagement in assessing and addressing protection issues and centering program and policy decisions on the needs of refugees as articulated by diverse members of the community. Nevertheless, the question of how to best engage refugees on an ongoing basis through a structure like the GCT is worth consideration for Turkey – given what seems to have been a decline in consultation and engagement with refugees since 2001 and stronger emphasis on government partners, particularly at the policy level.

5. Coordination

The GCT meeting, held in Ankara on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, is the sole coordination mechanism UNHCR employs to bring together governmental and nongovernmental implementing and operational partners. The meeting clearly serves the major coordination functions – information sharing, networking, providing updates on activities and programs, joint planning and problem-solving. The GCT attempts to fulfill these broad coordination functions using a lens on women and children, which appears to impact both perceptions and practice.

Questions, however, remain as to whether the GCT as the primary or only coordination mechanism takes on too much and deals with too many general issues in lieu of more substantive depth and focus on specific concerns relating to gender and children. The fine balance between complete "mainstreaming" versus focused attention on the complexity and detail of an issue needs to be carefully considered. Mainstreaming is only truly possible when all parties have fully integrated and internalized the information and changed their attitudes and perceptions accordingly. When this is not the case, a fully mainstreamed approach can mean watering down an issue to the lowest common denominator and attention to gender and children can become superficial or insubstantive.

It is also important to highlight that a separate Inter-unit Committee on Special Cases also exist within the UNHCR office for addressing the specific needs of individual, vulnerable cases, including separated children. Thus, the two teams, the GCT and the Inter-unit Committee on Special Cases, support and complement each other's work – allowing for better implementation of guidelines and the development of new approaches to vulnerable cases. The Inter-unit Committee, though, does not include the direct participation of NGO or government partners. NGOs in Istanbul stated that there is a need for a forum to look at individual cases and urgent problems (with the NGOs participating).

UNHCR also works with the UN Gender Theme Group – which includes UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA and IOM. The Gender Theme Group, which promotes gender mainstreaming at the national level, has been influenced by UNHCR's GCT work and several Theme Group members have, at different times, participated in or reported at GCT meetings. The work of the two groups, the UN Theme Group and the GCT, do inform and influence each other as it is difficult to promote gender sensitivity amongst the refugees and host government at a level different from that being promoted in the country at-large with its own citizens. UNHCR has also tried to use the UN Gender Theme Group to promote refugee/asylee concerns, for example, by prompting UNICEF to include refugees in their girls' education campaign, advocating for IOM to include refugee considerations in their police training and counter-trafficking activities, and including satellite cities in a proposed agency-wide program on women's rights.

With regards to mainstreaming age, issues concerning refugee girls (example above on education) can be raised at the UN Gender Theme Group. It is not clear, however, to what extent the GCT is influencing other structures to promote children's concerns more broadly, or whether such structures and fora exist in Turkey.

6. Sustainability

The GCT in Turkey has continued for five years – except for one year of non-function during the time leading up to and following the Iraqi crisis. Given the goal of the GCT – as a coordination mechanism and to focus on women and children's issues in UNHCR and partner operations – the fact that it *ceased* to operate during the Iraq crisis is significant. Reasons given by UNHCR Turkey for the cessation were that staff time and office priority quickly and overwhelmingly shifted to emergency preparedness. This points to a need for greater analysis and recommendations on how the GCT (or multi-functional teams, more broadly) can be sufficiently flexible to respond to shifts in the refugee context, as well as continue to reach commitments in a pre-established work plan. For example, establishing a subgroup on emergency response; prioritizing one or two elements of the GCT work plan that can be adapted to the emergency; or inviting another partner agency to chair the GCT. It is unclear to what extent UNHCR Turkey infused women and children's issues in the emergency preparedness phase, and what impact that had on operations.

Besides the above exception, the GCT in Turkey has continued despite a complete turnover of all UNHCR international staff members involved in the start up and initial years of the GCT. The sustainability of the GCT has, in part, been a direct result of the involvement and buy-in of the UNHCR national staff participants as well as the leadership of the current representative who clearly saw benefits of continuing with the team and its approach. Some of the NGO partner staff involved have also changed over the years. As such, it might be helpful to revisit the original impetus for the establishment of the GCT and to formulate its broader goal, for example, “the equal participation and protection of all refugees – women, men, girls and boys” – in order to achieve greater clarity amongst participants about the vision and longer term direction of the GCT.

Concerns were expressed that the GCT is too UNHCR Representative dependent for its continued functioning and that her eventual rotation may impact the team's sustainability. Concern was also expressed that United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) or shorter-term staff play key roles in the sustainability of the team rather than more senior, longer-term UNHCR staff members. Suggestions were made by both UNHCR and NGO staff to develop turnover plans and a time frame for such so that the departure of the Representative does not result in a sudden disruption of the team and its activities.

With regards to broader sustainability, the Regional Gender Advisors, previous and current, have played and continue to play a role in replicating gender trainings and sharing lessons from the Turkey GCT model to other countries under their coverage. For example, a training of trainers was conducted with staff within the region during the tenure of the initial Regional Gender Advisor based in Ankara. The training included setting up GCTs within their own country operations and drafting action plans. At present, however, it is unclear of whether and how these efforts have been sustained.

7. Leadership

Intrinsically connected to sustainability is the issue of leadership of the GCT. At present, the UNHCR Representative provides strong, continual leadership to the GCT and is the driving force behind its work. More junior and short-term staff assist her with these efforts. It does not appear that the NGO or government partners take lead roles nor does such appear to be an expectation. Initial resistance expressed by some national male staff members appears to have been overcome as a result of the importance given to the work of the GCT and the profile and leadership provided by the Representative.

It is worth noting that the Representative also bears influence on the GCT as “gatekeeper.” For example, although the Representative clearly sees the GCT as a collaborative forum and seeks ownership of all members, on arrival at the post she felt a need to make the work plan more focused on actions and outcomes and thereby made some changes to previous member agreements. The Representative also leads the GCT meetings and gives guidance and expertise to the process. Given the AGDM approach calls for strong leadership by the Representative in the multi-functional teams, it is vital that their role as “gatekeeper” be monitored and supported by Headquarters – as a means to ensure the quality of impact on the lives of refugees.

8. GCT Priorities, Composition and Meetings

The GCT itself has evolved over time. In the early years of the GCT, much emphasis was put on developing appropriate gender- and child-sensitive policies and procedures. More recently, the focus has shifted more towards implementation. Initially, too, the GCT was composed solely of UNHCR staff members representing various units within UNHCR's country operation. Membership gradually expanded, however, to include both NGO and government partners. Missions to satellite cities are also changing towards being conducted by multi-functional teams which recently began to invite the participation of NGOs.

The actual agendas of the GCT meetings appear to be developed and driven by UNHCR with little input from NGO or government members. The agendas can include too many items leading to lengthy meetings with curtailed opportunities for in-depth discussion. The meetings themselves are extremely inclusive with a large number of participants. The size of the meetings, though, inhibits substantive work taking place during the meetings themselves and working sub-groups should be considered to assist in pushing agenda items forward to completion. Suggestions were also made to keep the GCT meetings focused on the GCT work plan and to leave presentations and other peripheral agenda items for other fora.

The composition of the GCT, including various levels of UNHCR staff (both international and national), NGO implementing and operational partners and government and participants from Ankara, Istanbul and Van, is commendable. The GCT has created a viable network that did not exist previously. Its resulting large size, though, does impact its effectiveness and the efficiency of moving forward on the meetings' agenda and the team's work plan. It appears that agenda items are often continued from one meeting to the next without substantial movement.

UNHCR seeks to bring staff from Van and Istanbul for one or two days for the GCT, and currently supports the travel and accommodation of a local NGO based in Van. Other NGOs have expressed difficulty in paying for transportation (flights or overnight buses) which limits their regular participation. Developing mechanisms for refugee participation would likewise require further thinking on transportation support.

The GCT also appears to function largely as a meeting forum, which results in change in both policy and practice but with little continuity or follow-up taking place between the meetings. The meeting risks becoming the multi-functional team rather than a forum for continuing team discussions and progress. UNHCR and NGO staff who are not participants of the GCT also report that they are not kept informed by their colleagues about the work of the GCT.

While the GCT has mentioned, at times, according to participants interviewed, the High Commissioner's Five Commitments to Refugee Women, integration of the five commitments into the GCT work plan is not apparent (except for individual registration). And while a reporting and tracking system has been developed for SGBV cases and training has been provided to UNHCR, NGO and government staff, it does not appear that prevention programs such as awareness raising within the refugee communities has been a priority. The GCT work plan does integrate two of UNHCR's five global concerns for refugee children in its goals, notably those addressing separated children and education, in particular for girls – two of the other priorities which may be of relevance in the Turkish context – the special needs of adolescents and protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and violence – do not appear to be adequately addressed in the work plan.

Language also presents some challenges. It is commendable that UNHCR provides translation at the GCT, and it is important that translation time be factored into the GCT agenda. However, materials produced by the GCT impetus (see list in section 2: Development of Protection Tools, Guidelines and Procedures) are primarily in English. Their translation into Turkish could enhance participation by GCT members in meetings and wider distribution within their agencies.

9. Accountability

The original objective of the GCT was to integrate or mainstream gender and children in the UNHCR office's policies, project design and procedures. The GCT work plan is merged into the office's broader action plan with tasks delegated throughout the office. This approach not only promotes mainstreaming but also accountability, as progress is then monitored automatically by unit heads and an operations steering committee. The team, at least initially, was required to submit a mid-year progress report and a year end evaluation report to the Representative, noting achievements. Gender mainstreaming objectives are also included in staff members' annual performance analysis reviews (PAR). Individual UNHCR staff members also noted self-imposed accountability to the team based on each person's ownership of the ideas and work plan and the collective responsibility to achieve the work plan objectives.

A team of consultants also worked with UNHCR Turkey to develop indicators for the mainstreaming of age and gender in the country operation. The tracking of indicators and how they are or are not being met provides an additional means of measuring accountability. The indicators developed include demographic indicators, risk group indicators, service output indicators, risk/enabling indicators and overall standard indicators. Although comprehensive, the indicators developed are too numerous (192 in total), overly cumbersome to use and repetitive. Ideally, indicators should be directly linked to the objectives and outputs of the GCT work plan and each indicator should be intrinsic to the mainstreaming of age and gender in the operation. The service output indicators come closest to the mark in this regard and could be re-drafted to form the basis of a simpler, more focused list of measurable indicators.

10. Gaps and Possible Future Work of the GCT

While the GCT has an elaborated work plan which includes school attendance of refugee children and girls, in particular, as a goal, it appears that the reasons for the low rate of school attendance (48%) have not been analyzed and are not being prioritized. Refugee adolescents, in general, appear to be a relatively neglected population and the GCT focus on gender and children may not adequately take into account the differing impact of protection risks and interventions on age groupings (particularly youth and the elderly). A focus group held with refugee youth, for example, highlighted concerns about access to reproductive health services and the problem of early marriage within the community – neither of which issue is addressed on the GCT work plan.

Additionally, while there is a GCT sub-group on trafficking, it appears that more work needs to be done with both the International Organization for Migration and the Government of Turkey vis-à-vis awareness of possible gender persecution claims amongst victims of trafficking as well as potential broader asylum claims. The nexus between displacement and vulnerability to trafficking appears little understood by these partners even when victims originate from refugee- and IDP-producing countries like Somalia and Uganda. It was reported that particularly in Istanbul, refugees and asylum seekers resort to prostitution, for example, as a survival strategy and that refugee prostitutes are exposed to more risks and mistreatment than Turkish prostitutes. While this does not indicate that they were victims of trafficking, it does raise concern about potential victimization and vulnerability to being trafficked. Further, while refugee child labor exploitation is a known and recognized problem, little seems to be being done by UNHCR and its partners to address the issue. (ILO, however, does have a related street children's program which is not refugee focused.)

Recommendations

To AGDM Rollout and UNHCR Headquarters

- The GCT in Turkey demonstrates that a team approach is effective but can be hampered by its large and flexible membership which affects accountability. The size and composition of multi-functional teams may require further guidance as inclusive, flexible models (NGOs, government, multiple UNHCR staff from various offices) may impede action. The team should be viewed as a means or a methodology, not as a product or an end. The focus on impact should be continually stressed – impact on attitudinal change, change in policy and service provision to refugees and larger organizational change.
- Senior management leadership of the multi-functional team is vital to its success. Sustainability of the team in view of staff rotation and the resulting changes in leadership require planning and

preparation. Co-leadership, with a senior national staff member or a senior NGO team member, could ensure continuity and, hence, longer-term sustainability. Further clarification should also be provided on monitoring mechanisms of the leadership of the multi-functional teams and, when this is the Representative, how the respective Bureau provides the necessary guidance and support to the Representative, specifically on the age, gender and diversity mainstreaming process.

- Part of the impetus behind the creation of the GCT in Turkey was to develop a method to improve policy ownership at the country operations level. It was not just about improving sensitivity and services to refugee women and children. This complementary objective appears to have been lost in the global replication of the multi-functional team approach.
- UNHCR Headquarters, the Division of Operational Support (DOS) and the respective Bureaux, should provide further guidance to multi-functional teams on ensuring that their work plans clearly link to their Country Operations Plan (COP) and to their protection objectives. The work plan should directly assist in the implementation of the COP objectives and not be work undertaken in parallel.
- The goal of the multi-functional team as proposed by UNHCR⁸ should be shortened to “the promotion of gender equality and the equal rights and equal access of all refugees regardless of age, sex or membership in a particular social group.” Participatory assessment, the team approach, its role as a catalyst and leadership thereof are tools or methods employed to reach this and not portions of the goal itself. This more concise goal would assist the field, for example, the GCT in Turkey, in being clearer about their own objectives and long-term vision.
- UNHCR Headquarters, DOS, Bureaux and Regional Gender Advisors, should regularly monitor the country level teams and solicit their further training and support needs. Mechanisms should be developed to allow for easy learning and cross-fertilization between teams and countries.
- UNHCR Headquarters should develop a strategy for capturing the impact the multi-functional team approach is having on policies, practices and, most importantly, on the refugees themselves, throughout UNHCR’s operations. Lessons and good practices focused on impact should be collected and shared on a range of refugee contexts (e.g., RSD/urban caseload; large refugee camps; differing office/operation size; government and partner attitude and capacity, etc.).
- The multi-functional team approach, as correctly tied to UNHCR’s program planning cycle, is, by default, UNHCR-centric. Guidance should be provided by UNHCR Headquarters (DOS, Bureaux) on how to make the process more NGO inclusive and NGO relevant. The advantages for NGO partners to be fully engaged should be clearly stated and circulated such as, for example, the impact on sub-agreements, partner expectations, improvement of refugee services and the shared responsibility for the enhanced protection of all refugees.
- The sustainability of the multi-functional teams requires the meaningful participation and ownership of key UNHCR national staff members who will be responsible for the team’s continuity despite international staff rotation. The national staff must be viewed and treated as full multi-functional team members with decision-making responsibility rather than just implementation responsibility.

8 UNHCR, *Facilitator’s Guide for Workshop on Participatory Assessment in Operations: Age, gender and diversity analysis*, 2005. Page 97.

- The role and involvement of the Regional Gender Advisors in guiding and supporting the multi-functional teams is unclear and requires greater specificity. While the dissolution of gender focal points has allowed for greater ownership amongst all multi-functional team members, this has created difficulties in interaction between Regional Gender Advisors and multi-functional teams as there is no longer a single point of field-based contact.
- The longer-term vision of *fully mainstreaming* age, gender and diversity needs to be thought through carefully with guidance to the field supplied according to this vision. Mainstreaming, in an ideal world, suggests that mechanisms such as multi-functional teams and regional gender advisors would no longer be needed as mainstreaming would be part and parcel of everyone's daily work – in all their activities and responsibilities. It would be unrealistic to think, however, that mainstreaming could happen so quickly as to make these teams redundant or unnecessary in the short or medium term.

To UNHCR Turkey

- As there are no refugee representatives, at present, in Turkey and the turn-over of refugees (many only stay for one year before being resettled) precludes investing in refugee leadership structures, UNHCR with its NGO partners should conduct participatory assessments, specifically regular focus group sessions with refugees, divided by age, gender and, when appropriate, ethnicity when going on field missions to the satellite cities to solicit refugee input, ideas and to hear their protection concerns in order to bring into the GCT the largely lacking refugee voice. The participatory assessment exercises should focus on listening and should allow the refugees to set the agenda.
- GCT staff should inform themselves about UNHCR's age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy and tools as these could strengthen their current team approach and ensure a level of consistency with UNHCR's global approach on the issue. For example, care should be taken to ensure that the GCT does not focus exclusively on refugee women and children but also recognizes the specific needs of refugee men, the elderly, adolescents and minority groups. Additionally, identifying power relations within the various refugee communities, including who has access to services and who is marginalized, could influence the focus and work of the GCT in enhancing equal access for all and the rights of all refugees regardless of age and gender.
- Plans should be put in place to not only sustain but utilize the GCT should another emergency arise (like the forward planning for the Iraq crisis). The GCT should be instrumental in shaping plans in such a scenario to ensure gender sensitivity in all operational planning and ensure that the protection concerns of women, children and other marginalized groups are addressed in the preparations.
- Members of the GCT should have an objective for their GCT work in their Career Management System (CMS) so that they are allowed to dedicate time accordingly and without supervisors' reservations to their work on GCT issues.
- Analysis should be undertaken to ensure that the GCT work plan is, in fact, appropriately identifying and addressing root causes for the protection concerns it elaborates. More in-depth assessment of underlying causes for protection risks would allow for better identification of the appropriate interventions and solutions.

- Attention needs to be devoted to establishing mechanisms for influencing and engaging UNHCR staff who are not part of the GCT as some staff expressed little understanding of the GCT's work and objectives and non-GCT members, reportedly, rarely have access to information on GCT activities.
- Establish working sub-groups within the GCT membership for assigning tasks for work to be followed up on and completed outside the full GCT meetings. Assigned tasks and outputs can then be reported back to the full GCT for approval.
- Consideration should be given to doing annual GCT work plans with fewer goals per year so that concentrated energy can be sustained to complete the necessary activities in order to meet the goals. The development of annual work plans with target dates and assigned responsible agencies or units should also be a collaborative UNHCR/Government/NGO exercise.
- Attention should be placed on the working of the GCT between team meetings with additional avenues for information sharing, follow-up, dialogue and the sharing of key resources on an ongoing basis. Email exchanges, web blogs, the development of an active listserv and/or establishing Internet-based communities of practice could assist with the further development, involvement and motivation of GCT members. GCT members should be fully cognizant that membership is more than meeting attendance and should benefit through the sharing of knowledge resources on a regular basis. The benefit of participation in the GCT meetings, both for their refugee clients and for their own professional development, should be clear.
- The terms of reference for the GCT should be reviewed vis-à-vis the "role of multi-functional teams" as developed by UNHCR Geneva as several roles identified in the latter are noticeably absent from the work of the GCT in Turkey, for example, the promotion of regular implementation of participatory assessment in planning.
- The GCT should eventually include NGO members from the satellite cities as these NGOs are identified and engaged in service provision to refugees. Rotation of the GCT meetings to other locales, such as Istanbul and Van, should also be considered, at least once annually, as a means of engaging additional NGO and governmental partners and to ensure outreach beyond capital city-level officials.
- The GCT work plan should be directly tied to the Country Operation Plan and the GCT membership should be included in the office's annual participatory planning process leading up to the development of the Country Operation Plan.
- Gender, GBV and refugee law trainings provided to governmental and nongovernmental partners should focus on a "training of trainers approach" to prepare the participating staff of the target organizations to replicate the trainings and continue without additional outside support and expertise.
- The drafting of the agenda for GCT meetings should be an inclusive process with UNHCR, NGO and government participants all allowed to contribute and comment so that the agenda does not appear to be UNHCR-driven.
- The GCT meeting agenda should include discussions on organizational impact and follow-up on how information is being discussed and disseminated more broadly within UNHCR Turkey and within NGOs to non-GCT participants. Discussion at the GCT meetings about how the GCT is influencing NGOs' own policies and practices, for example, would encourage participants to

become aware of their responsibilities for information sharing and their role as catalysts in the promotion of organizational change.

- A transitional leadership plan should be developed to ensure sustained leadership of the GCT following the eventual rotation of the current UNHCR Representative. The leadership plan should include a transitional period of overlap with the leadership functions, perhaps, being delegated to a senior national staff member. Co-leadership with an NGO GCT member is also recommended to ensure joint UNHCR-NGO ownership.
- A feedback mechanism should be developed by UNHCR, which adheres to confidentiality principles, for communicating back to NGO partners on incident reports submitted. This feedback encourages NGOs to continue submitting the forms and relieves them of the burden of continual follow-up.
- The gender mainstreaming indicator system (GMIS) should be revised and simplified with assurances that each indicator is directly linked to the objectives and outputs of the GCT work plan. The demographic indicators should be removed as much of this information should be available on the ProGres data management system. Other indicators on the GMIS are virtually impossible to complete – the number and percentage of females at risk for honor killings, for example. SGBV indicators, as an additional example, could be greatly simplified under the headings of prevention and response with prevention indicators including – the number of SGBV trainings conducted with government, NGOs, UNHCR staff and refugees and the number of participants at each. SGBV response indicators should focus on the number of incident reports filed, services provided for each case filed and legal action taken. To be effective, indicators must be directly relevant to the goal, be easy to use and provide the concise data necessary to inform program decisions, policies and practices.

To NGOs

- NGO GCT members need to put more focus on sharing information from the GCT meetings with the staff members of their own agencies and put more attention on analyzing how their policies and services should be adapted to ensure the mainstreaming of gender and children's issues.
- The NGO Forum in Istanbul should be clearly linked to the workings of the GCT and should be a venue for informing the GCT on challenges and obstacles in operationalizing developed policies and agreed to procedures.
- NGO GCT members should view the presence of the government partners at the GCT meetings as an opportunity for follow-up and ongoing dialogue – one-to-one outside the formal GCT meeting itself – and not rely just on the GCT meeting as the sole venue for such discussion.

To the Government of Turkey

- The Government of Turkey should continue to be an active participant in the GCT and inform the GCT how involvement therein is impacting its work and practice, including in the satellite cities.
- The Government of Turkey should request that its National Action Plan be discussed at a GCT meeting to assist, if necessary, in strengthening the Plan (Turkish National Action Plan for the Adoption of the EU Acquis in the Field of Asylum and Migration) on gender and children's

issues. The Government of Turkey should also strive to have the GCT work plan directly linked with the objectives and implementation of its own National Action Plan.

- NGOs expressed confusion about SHCEK and the services it provides for unaccompanied refugee minors. Clear informational leaflets should be developed by SHCEK detailing services and contact information for the NGOs. The government should also ensure that mechanisms are in place for the regular monitoring of the unaccompanied minors in its care.

Conclusion

Promoting gender and age mainstreaming within an organization is a complex and difficult task that requires changing attitudes, behavior, policy and practice. Organizational change is *a process* that requires multiple strategies and interventions. The GCT Team approach used in Turkey and replicated through UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming initiative is a valuable and successful model for working towards organizational change – change that allows for more sensitive and effective services to refugees and the better protection of refugee women and children. It does, however, take time to see results – in Turkey, as an example, it took one to two years to make substantive progress. This time requirement for substantive personal, behavioral and organizational change needs to be recognized in UNHCR's age, gender and diversity mainstreaming process.

The team and leadership of UNHCR – Turkey in maintaining and strengthening the team approach and using a gender lens for all their work and efforts is both commendable and effective. The GCT can continue to be improved and a significant opportunity was lost when the GCT ceased functioning during the emergency preparedness leading up to the war in Iraq – when the team could have been instrumental in influencing discussions and plans to ensure all the principles and practices they had been promoting were adhered to. Nonetheless, the GCT has and is accomplishing much. Most significantly, it is changing the attitudes and practices of its participants, thereby improving the quality of protection provided, especially for refugee women and children.

ANNEX I

List of Interviews

Fuat Ozdogru, Senior Field Assistant, UNHCR Istanbul
Carolyn Ennis, Eligibility Officer, UNHCR Ankara
Elina Siderova, Counter Trafficking Project Assistant, International Organization for Migration, Istanbul
Tracey Maulfair, Protection Officer, UNHCR Van
Burcu Yavuz, Eligibility Assistant, UNHCR Van
Erol Arduc, Protection Assistant, UNHCR Van
Suraj Sharma, Interpreter, UNHCR Van
TEGV (Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı) staff, TEGV, Van
Women's Counseling Center staff, Van
Gesche Karrenbrock, Representative, UNHCR Ankara
Anna Mikkonen, Associate Durable Solutions Officer, UNHCR Ankara
Nese Kilincoglu, Eligibility Assistant, UNHCR Ankara
Sultan Ozturk, Eligibility Assistant, UNHCR Ankara
Ceyda Oskay, Repatriation Clerk
Dr. Ilhan Tomanbay, Chairman, Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM)
Gul Atmaca, ASAM
Zeynep Tugrul, External Affairs Officer, ASAM
Metin Corabatir, External Affairs Officer, UNHCR Ankara
Eduardo Yrezabal, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR Ankara
Kadir Ay, Deputy Head of Department of Foreigners Border Asylum, Ministry of Interior, Government of Turkey
Mustafa Ozturk, Ms. Gulbahar, and Ms. Saren, Ministry of Interior
Cengiz Yildirim, Colonel, Head of Department, Gendarmerie General Command, Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime Department, Government of Turkey
Captain Ilker, Gendarmerie
Tulin Turkcan, Caritas - Turkey, Istanbul
Hasan Kemal Elban, contract lawyer, UNHCR Istanbul
Serra Akkaya, Psychotherapist, Human Resource Development Foundation (HRDF), Istanbul
Rana Dayioglu, Project Coordinator, Social Services Program, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), Istanbul
Helen Bartlett, Legal Officer, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Istanbul
Amy Slotek, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Istanbul

List of Meetings

Refugee Youth, Oct. 4, Van, Turkey
Refugee Women, Oct. 4, Van, Turkey
Gender and Children Team briefing, Oct. 6, UNHCR Ankara
UN Gender Theme Group meeting, October 6 (UN Gender Consultant, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF and IOM in attendance)
UNHCR Gender and Children Team meeting, October 7 (UNHCR Istanbul, Van and Ankara in attendance as well as SHCEK (Government of Turkey's Social Services and Child Protection Agency), Government of Turkey's General Directorate of Security, ICMC, ASAM, Caritas-Turkey, Women's Counseling Center/Van, Turkish Red Crescent, IOM, representatives from the Embassies of Canada and the Netherlands.

Questionnaire Responses from former UNHCR Turkey staff

Fahrunnisa Akbatur, Protection Officer, UNHCR Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan

Larry Bottinick, Department of International Protection, UNHCR Geneva

Rosa da Costa, UNHCR Consultant

Eva Demant, Head of Resettlement Section, UNHCR Geneva (by phone)

Hussain Khan, Head of Secretariat and Inter-Organization Services, UNHCR Geneva

Seda Kuzucu, Associate Resettlement Officer, Mae Sot, Thailand

ANNEX II

Acronyms

ARC	Action for the Rights of Children
ASAM	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
COP	Country Operation Plan - UNHCR
DOS	Division of Operational Support - UNHCR
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GCT	Gender and Children Team
GMIS	Gender Mainstreaming Indicator System
HRDF	Human Resources Development Foundation
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MOI	Ministry of Interior – Government of Turkey
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
SHCEK	Social Services and Child Protection Institution – Government of Turkey
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
UNV	United Nations Volunteer

ANNEX III

Scope of Work – Turkey Multi-Function Team Approach

Visit by Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

Background

UNHCR Turkey initiated a cross-sectoral team approach in 2001 to address gender and children's concerns three years prior to the "multi-functional team" approach being promoted as a means of mainstreaming gender, age and diversity throughout UNHCR's operations in 2004/2005. The Women's Commission, in its evaluation report of May 2002, *UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women and Guidelines on Their Protection: An Assessment of Ten Years of Implementation*, recommended that UNHCR strengthen multi-sectoral approaches in its work as a means to enhance the protection of women and girls. The model used by UNHCR's Turkey office, through the establishment of a Gender and Children Team, and documented by the Women's Commission in 2001, brings protection, program, community services and other sectors in a given field office together at regular intervals as a means to enhance attention and sensitivity to gender and children.

Four years on, it is deemed helpful to re-visit the genesis of the multi-functional team approach, document what led to this individual country initiative as well as the process of its development and sustainability, its current roles and leadership thereof, and to document lessons learnt which may have implications for the global age, gender and diversity mainstreaming rollout. Such documentation is envisioned to complement the much larger and more thorough evaluation of eight age and gender mainstreaming pilot countries carried out by UNHCR (with participation of the Women's Commission) and the subsequent "UNHCR's Age and Gender Mainstreaming Pilot Project 2004: Synthesis Report." This current project will contribute by considering one aspect, the multi-functional team approach, and its impact and sustainability over time (something that was not able to be thoroughly assessed in the aforementioned evaluations due to the short time periods before multi-functional team construction and the evaluation).

While the Turkey model was, in many ways, unique – largely focused on RSD and resettlement, it is felt that many lessons can be learned through documentation of the process and subsequent impact of the methodology. The proposed documentation would include, for example, addressing the following questions: How has the team approach been sustained? How have national staff been included? How have implementing and operational partners been included? How has the approach impacted refugee services and refugees' participation and perceptions? How is the team led or coordinated and what impact has this had on the team's work and sustainability? How have more recent approaches within UNHCR – the community-based approach, participatory assessment and age, gender and diversity mainstreaming – been incorporated into the work of the team? How has the AGDM pilot process, implemented elsewhere but widely shared, informed and impacted UNHCR Turkey's team approach? What roles have and do the Bureau and the Regional Advisor play in advancing/guiding the work of the team? How has the mandate of the multi-function teams been understood? How does the team continue when staff rotate? What has been the impact of participation on national staff members? What training strategy was adopted for formation and development of the multi-functional team? What are the current training needs both within UNHCR and among partners and refugees? To what extent were the Regional Advisors able to replicate the team approach further – beyond Ankara and beyond Turkey? Was participatory assessment in some form used in 2001? Has it been incorporated since? If so, what has the impact been? How do former team members apply that experience elsewhere – in their current positions?

UNHCR, based partially on the Turkey model, is currently introducing a “multi-functional team approach” as part of its global strategy to mainstream age, gender and diversity. The Women’s Commission, now partnering with UNHCR to advance the global strategy, proposes that documentation and analysis of the Turkey experience—four years after the initial visits—would enhance understanding on how to apply the Turkey model to maximize impact and attention to age, gender and diversity. Documenting how the team approach fares in the long term will facilitate understanding the complexities around team sustainability (one of the challenges identified by UNHCR based on its evaluation of pilot initiatives in the age and gender mainstreaming strategy). Further, it is hoped that the findings will inform and strengthen UNHCR’s Age, Gender and Diversity global rollout process over all, through the identification of challenges to sustainability and good practice in the achievement of such. Finally, through collaboration with WCCDES/DOS (UNHCR’s Division of Operational Support’s Women, Children, Community Development and Education Section) and drawing from the expertise of Women’s Commission staff, it is hoped that the mission and subsequent recommendations, along with the eight pilot country evaluations and synthesis evaluation of the age and gender mainstreaming pilot, will be useful to the UNHCR Turkey office in considering application of the global strategy in its operations.

Purpose

To document the process, sustainability, leadership and impact of Turkey’s Gender and Children Team approach in advancing refugee protection and the integration, age and gender concerns throughout the country operation.

To identify lessons and approaches from the Turkey model for broader application in the UNHCR age, gender and diversity mainstreaming work.

Proposed Itinerary (pending travel time)

Turkey: Ankara, Van, Istanbul, Kayseri (or other satellite city) 2 days per location.

Geneva (2-3 days meetings and debrief with UNHCR).

Activities

1. Draft framework for documentation and preliminary questionnaire. Share with UNHCR (DOS, Bureau) for feedback.
2. Send preliminary questions and meet with UNHCR staff in Geneva as related to the Turkey experience.
3. Request background documents and send advance questions to UNHCR Turkey as related to the history and performance of the Gender and Children Team and links to UNHCR’s new age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy.
4. Interview UNHCR staff, implementing partners, including government, and refugees in Ankara and other sites visited by the 2001 mission (e.g., Van, Istanbul, Kayseri/other satellite location).
5. Informal debrief in Geneva on return from Turkey.
Bureau
WCCDES/DOS
Persons interviewed

6. Distribute report for internal use to UNHCR and donors, documenting the Turkey experience and the applicable learnings thereof.

Methodology

- A. Pre-visit questionnaire to prep interviews with current and former UNHCR Ankara staff.
- B. Individual interviews and focus groups with UNHCR current and former UNHCR Ankara staff (international and national – Geneva and Ankara).
- C. Interviews of multi-functional team members and the leadership/management of the multi-functional team.
- D. Telephone interviews with former UNHCR – Ankara staff posted elsewhere.
- E. Observation of a Gender/Child Team meeting in Ankara, if possible.
- F. Field visits to Istanbul, Van and one satellite city.
- G. Structured interviews and focus groups with implementing and operational partners.
- H. Focus groups with refugee women, men, girls and boys.
- I. Document findings in a short paper on lessons learned and possible applications.

ANNEX III

Questionnaire – former UNHCR Turkey Staff on Gender & Child Teams

*The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children is partnering with UNHCR on their Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming project through assisting with the implementation and evaluation of the pilot countries, and the global rollout during 2005 – 2006. As part of the partnership, the Women's Commission is also undertaking complementary research and field visits to further inform the project in order to strengthen it and broaden its impact. One piece of the complementary research is to document the Gender and Children Team (GCT) established by UNHCR Ankara, which served as a model to the current multi-functional teams being established by UNHCR for the mainstreaming efforts. We will be considering **leadership**, **sustainability** and **impact** of the GCT approach utilized in Turkey.*

In order to get an accurate picture of the process that led to the establishment of the GCT and its impact, we ask each of you who had a role, and were interviewed by the Women's Commission in 2001, to complete this questionnaire. The document subsequently produced will, we believe, enhance UNHCR's newly created multi-functional teams worldwide.

Please return by 31 October 2005 to Dale Buscher and Ramina Johal at daleb@womenscommission.org and Ramina@womenscommission.org.

Thank you!

1. What was your portfolio in relation to the GCT, and when were you posted in Turkey?
2. What was the impetus that led to the creation of the GCT in Turkey? And has the establishment of the GCT addressed this initial purpose?
3. Who led or guided the work of the GCT? What role did the Representative play? How were decisions made?
4. What impact did the work of the GCT have on refugee women and children? UNHCR operations?

5. How were international and national NGO and government partners involved?
6. How were refugees involved and consulted in the process?
7. What role did the Regional Gender Advisor play? Did the Regional Advisor use the approach or the learning from Turkey GCT in other country operations under his/her coverage?
8. Why do you think the GCT approach was successful?
9. What were its limitations? (Please include reference to what you might have learned subsequent to the Turkey posting.)
10. How were plans for sustainability of the team and accountability of members, staff or others put in place?
11. How were UNHCR national staff involved/included?
12. What, if any, was the impact of staff rotation on the sustainability of the team and its work?

13. How have you applied the learnings and experience from the Turkey team approach, the gender and child sensitive practices established and the refugee-centered model developed in your subsequent positions?

14. What other insights or comments would you like to provide?

Name: (optional) _____

Current Position: _____

Date: _____

Would you like to be contacted by phone in order to provide more in depth input? _____

If so, please provide your work phone number: _____

THANK YOU