

Information Sheet

Safe from the Start project *A BPRM/UNHCR Partnership to prevent and respond to* *Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Emergencies*

Background

Conflicts and natural disasters, without exception, create conditions where women, men, girls and boys are vulnerable to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). UNHCR has increasingly prioritized SGBV prevention and response—through continued refinements to and integration of the Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach, the High Commissioner’s Special Projects in support of UNHCR’s Updated SGBV Strategy,¹ the inclusion of specific SGBV indicators in UNHCR’s Global Strategic Objectives, and the Dialogues with Refugee Women. Yet critical programming gaps remain, particularly at the onset of emergencies when SGBV prevention and response programming struggles to compete with other life-saving activities and priorities. SGBV programme mainstreaming at the onset of an emergency is a life-saving intervention to respond to the unique circumstances of UNHCR’s persons of concern in different contexts as humanitarian crises unfold.

Safe from the Start – project goals

As UNHCR has faced a continuous cycle of new refugee emergencies over the past few years, the U.S. government’s Safe from the Start initiative² is both timely and welcome. With support from the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM), UNHCR aims to further consolidate progress made to prevent and respond to SGBV in its operations globally, to promote multi-sectoral risk mitigation strategies, and to ensure SGBV prevention and response programme mainstreaming at the onset of an emergency as a live-saving intervention. The project will be implemented over the period of three years (2014-2016) in order to achieve strategic impact and holistic results delivery, with a longer-term goal of realizing behavioural change addressing the root causes of SGBV.

¹ UNHCR, *Action against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: An Updated Strategy*, June 2011, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e01ffeb2.html>

² U.S. Department of State, Secretary Kerry Announces New Initiative to Address Gender-Based Violence in Global Humanitarian Emergencies, 23 September 2013, available at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/09/214552.htm>

Safe from the Start – expected strategic results and planned activities

In line with BPRM's Safe from the Start initiative, as well as other SGBV initiatives such as the United Kingdom's Call to Action,³ the project is designed to fill immediate gaps in technical expertise in current emergencies, develop sound metrics to measure impact over three years, promote innovation in project design, and transform UNHCR's internal capacity to prevent and respond to SGBV through mandatory training for all staff and targeted training for senior protection and programme staff.

The project will be managed by a Senior Programme Coordinator, and its progress, results and impact will be closely monitored and analysed by a Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist.

(i) ***Recruitment / deployment of six Senior Protection Officers (SGBV) in emergency operations to fill immediate gaps in technical expertise***

UNHCR will create six roving senior (P-4) level Protection Officer (SGBV) positions with a view to achieving the following strategic results.

- UNHCR is able to effectively respond to SGBV at the onset of an emergency;
- SGBV prevention and response programming is prioritized and properly programmed from the outset of an emergency;
- Solid SGBV procedures and prevention and response programmes established by these Senior Protection Officers (SGBV) are handed over to the protection team on the ground and mainstreamed into mid- to long-term planning; and
- UNHCR's capacity in SGBV prevention and response is augmented, complementing the four existing Senior Regional SGBV positions (Dakar, Nairobi, Panama, Amman).

While the four existing regional SGBV positions have regional coverage in providing support to the implementation of guidance and policies from mid- to longer-term strategic perspectives without specific focus on emergencies, the new positions primarily focus on setting up systems at the onset of an emergency in a specific country for a limited period of time. Once a solid SGBV prevention and response mechanism is in place, the Senior Protection Officers (SGBV) will be deployed to other emergency / priority operations. In **Year One**, UNHCR will initiate deployments to address current large-scale emergencies (and any new emergencies); In **Year Two and Three**, building upon previous experience, UNHCR is expected to have enhanced mechanisms to better respond to future humanitarian crises.

³ U.K. Department for International Development, Greening: girls and women must be kept safe in emergencies, 13 November 2013, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/greening-girls-and-women-must-be-kept-safe-in-emergencies>

(ii) *Development of sound assessment tools and methodologies to strengthen the evidence-based child protection and SGBV prevention and response interventions*

BPRM's Safe from the Start initiative, under the Objective "Enhancing Training, Capacity-building and Research," rightly notes the lack of quantifiable impact assessment data and tools to inform SGBV prevention and response programme design in humanitarian emergencies. There is a lack of accurate information on SGBV in refugee settings, in particular where measurement is often based on the self-reporting of incidents by UNHCR's persons of concern who may be reluctant to disclose this type of information due to various reasons including: stigma, cultural norms viewing some forms of SGBV as acceptable, fears of reprisal. The difficulty of measuring SGBV and related issues is compounded when collecting information about SGBV in relation to children who are more vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. Another key gap for evidence-based SGBV and child protection programming is the current lack of rigorous methods and tools to measure the outcomes and impact associated with SGBV and child protection programming in humanitarian settings.

Building on the research cooperation between UNHCR and Columbia University's Child Protection in Crisis (CPC) Network on the development of an impact assessment methodology for child protection in refugee settings, the project aims to achieve the following strategic results.

- A practical, rigorous, field-tested methodology is developed to measure the impact of SGBV and child protection programming in humanitarian settings;
- An evidence-based impact assessment of UNHCR's interventions to protect children from violence, in particular SGBV, is conducted; and
- Lessons learned on the impact of SGBV and child protection programmes will inform future UNHCR's and its partners' SGBV and child protection interventions.

In **Year One**, methodological approach and tools will be refined (based on the pilot assessment conducted in Rwanda in December 2013) and field-tested during baseline assessments in two field locations; In **Year One-Two**, data analysis, baseline assessment report production, refinement and dissemination of measurement tools will be made; In **Year Three**, end line/impact assessments will be conducted in two locations culminating in a final assessment report.

(iii) *Launching an innovation challenge to the field: multi-sectoral SGBV prevention programming*

UNHCR will elicit from its country operations the development of creative responses to SGBV

prevention and response programming in order to:

- Develop institutional best practices in multi-sectoral SGBV prevention programming;
- Encourage UNHCR operations to explore approaches that go beyond the way humanitarian agencies currently “do business”; and
- Strengthen and monitor the impact of the multi-sectoral approach to tackle widespread but often hidden phenomena such as survival sex, SGBV linked to household energy and lighting, and SGBV perpetrated against girls and boys.

In **Year One**, UNHCR will launch two pilot initiatives to provide viable examples to country operations: the first pilot will be in Egypt where the graduation model livelihood programme⁴ will be implemented targeting 500 at-risk refugees (75% Syrian refugees). The second pilot will be in Uganda where community-based protection and community-based SGBV prevention will be strengthened in the context of the South Sudanese refugee influx: planned activities include community policing / neighbourhood watch groups; capacity building of police / law enforcement agencies; and SGBV prevention targeting among youth. In **Year Two**, proposals from country operations will be awarded funds to implement their activities, with priority given to those that operationalize UNHCR’s new livelihood and domestic energy strategies.⁵

(iv) ***Training and Capacity Building***

UNHCR will implement three distinct learning initiatives to achieve lasting institutional change in the way the Organization addresses SGBV in emergencies:

- **Development of mandatory SGBV e-learning modules:** UNHCR aims to make the SGBV e-learning mandatory for all staff in order to cement a common understanding of SGBV risks and responses - with a particular focus on emergencies – and raise awareness of the tools and frameworks available to underscore the accountability of all staff to ensure all possible steps are taken to prevent SGBV in different contexts. In **Year One**, UNHCR will conduct a thorough review of the existing SGBV e-learning modules with a view to developing the mandate modules: translation of the modules (into French, Arabic and Spanish) will be initiated. In **Year Two**, UNHCR will launch the mandatory SGBV e-learning modules.
- **Final review and global roll-out of UNHCR SGBV Prevention and Response**

⁴ The model’s effectiveness and impact have been demonstrated by intensive quantitative research conducted by institutions such as the MIT’s Poverty Lab (J-Pal) and the Yale-based Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA). More information is available at: <http://graduation.cgap.org/about/>

⁵ UNHCR Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018 available at: www.unhcr.org/livelihoodsstrategy; UNHCR Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) 2014-2018 available at: www.unhcr.org/energystrategy

Facilitator's Guide: In partnership with HIAS, UNHCR will carry out a final review of the SGBV Prevention and Response Facilitator's Guide in order to roll it out globally. It is expected that the Facilitator's Guide will provide UNHCR and partner staff with practical and flexible tools to conduct trainings on SGBV prevention and response to a wide target audience. In **Year One**, the Facilitator's Guide will be field tested in four locations (Chad, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda) whose feedback will be incorporated in the final version. In **Year One and Two**, the Facilitator's Guide will be rolled-out globally and translated into French and Arabic. In **Year Three**, an impact assessment of the Facilitator's Guide will be conducted.

- **Development of an Operationalizing Protection Learning Initiative:** UNHCR seeks to launch a pioneering three-year capacity building programme for its staff which will bridge the gap between protection and programming in order to strengthen protection management through strategy development, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation in country operations. The emphasis of this learning initiative will be on training UNHCR Programme Staff on the importance of mainstreaming protection of persons of concern into multi-sectoral programme planning while training Protection Staff on programme development, management and monitoring and evaluation. In **Year One**, a gap analysis of operational capacity will be conducted to inform content and methodology for the learning initiative. Following the content development in **Year One**, the learning initiative will be tested and officially launched in **Year Two**. In **Year Three**, the evaluation of the learning initiative will be conducted.