



Working with Organizations Led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons

A How-to Guide for UNHCR Operations

Division of International Protection and Solutions



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Cover photo: A member of [Solidarity Initiative for Refugees](#) providing women with digital education and online opportunities, such as freelancing and computer programming.

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Introduction:

UNHCR has a long-standing commitment to a people-centred approach, recognizing forcibly displaced and stateless communities as active agents of their own protection, and key contributors to humanitarian efforts. For responses to be accountable, sustainable and effective, it is essential that forcibly displaced and stateless persons, actively participate in the decisions affecting their lives, and engage meaningfully throughout all programme phases (PLAN-GET-SHOW). Strengthening partnerships with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless individuals is a vital step in achieving this goal, recognizing them as equal partners and drivers of change. Collaboration with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons ensures locally driven, contextually relevant, and more resilient responses. Investing in this engagement at all levels is critical to building more inclusive and lasting humanitarian solutions.

This 'How-to Guide' seeks to demonstrate the importance of engaging and partnering with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons and provides practical guidance and field examples for UNHCR and partners at all levels on how to do so.¹

The document was developed by the Division of International Protection and Solutions, in collaboration with the Partnership and Civil Society Unit in the Division of External Relations and UNHCR's Inter-Divisional Task Team on Engagement and Partnership with Organizations led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons. The document benefitted from consultations with the Advisory Board of Organizations Led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons, as well as the regional bureaux.

Organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless people bring diverse skills, resources, and capacities. However, depending on the context, community-based organizations, particularly those led by displaced and stateless persons, may face particular challenges in carrying out their activities. The actions proposed in this document are not one-size-fits-all. Instead, engagement efforts must be contextualized and adapted in a way that recognizes this diversity, addresses specific barriers, and supports the capacities of different organizations.

Background:

The UNHCR [Strategic Directions 2022–2026](#)² commit to including communities in decisions about their future, and engaging them in designing and implementing programmes, building on their capacities and resources. The UNHCR [Policy on AGD](#) calls for effective engagement of people from different age, gender, and diversity (AGD) groups in UNHCR programmes, including women, children, LGBTIQ+ persons, persons with disabilities, minorities, and Indigenous Peoples. Through the [Grand Bargain](#), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR), UNHCR committed to meaningfully engage with local actors and to establish or support equal partnerships, in order to advance the localization of humanitarian action.

¹ This How-to Guide is designed to offer practical advice and actionable tips for operations engaging with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons. This document should be read alongside UNHCR's Guidelines on Localization: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/119014>.

² UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022–2026, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/strategic-directions-2022-2026>.

The GCR States,

“Responses are most effective when they actively and meaningfully engage those they are intended to protect and assist. Relevant actors will, wherever possible, continue to develop and support consultative processes that enable refugees and host community members to assist in designing appropriate, accessible and inclusive responses.”

Meaningful participation through our work

UNHCR defines participation as “the full and equal involvement of all members of the community in decision-making processes and activities that affect their lives, in both public and private spheres.”³ UNHCR has been making intentional efforts to ensure that the participation of people with and for whom UNHCR works is not only a theory but a consistent practice throughout UNHCR operations.⁴ Meaningful participation contributes to building trust with communities and improving the effectiveness of UNHCR responses to displacement and statelessness.

Engagement with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons is only one way in which communities can participate in humanitarian responses. It does not substitute or seek to replace direct and daily interactions with communities and their representatives. Achieving accountability to affected people (AAP) can only be possible when we systematically engage with the wider communities through community-based and AGD approaches.



Leaders of Refugee-Led Organizations (RLO) meet with UNHCR in Manaus, in the state of Amazonas, northern Brazil.
Credit: © UNHCR/Alef Kaf

³ A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations (2008), <https://www.unhcr.org/47f0a6712.pdf>

⁴ Ibid.

Key terminology

Community-based Organizations

A Community-based organization (CBO)⁵ is a group of individuals from within a community who come together to accomplish a common goal (or a set of goals) to improve the well-being of that community by providing services and assistance or by advocating for its needs. CBOs are non-profit, grassroots organizations,⁶ whose activities are based primarily on peer and/or community-led contributions such as labour, material and in some cases financial support. CBOs may or may not be legally registered and may have diverse organizational structures and composition, which may include: women-led organizations (WLOs)⁷; refugee-led organizations (RLOs); organizations led by internally displaced or stateless persons; organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs); organizations led by Indigenous Peoples, older persons, youth, people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), etc.

Refugee-led Organization

UNHCR defines a refugee-led organization (RLO)⁸ as, “an organization or group in which persons with direct lived experience of forced displacement play a primary leadership role and whose stated objectives and activities are focused on responding to the needs of refugees and/or related communities.”⁹

See additional definitions in [Annex I](#).



“Comité des Femmes Ressources” a Women Refugee led Organization in Mbera Camp, Mauritania during a field visit with UNHCR colleagues, © UNHCR/Omar Doukali

⁵ Partnering with Refugee-Led Organisations (RLOs), Internal UNHCR Report (DER-PCS); based on definition in Community-Based Organisation Management Handbook series for community-based organisations (2006): <https://www.ngoconnect.net/sites/default/files/resources/Community-Based%20Organization%20Management-%20Handbook%20series%20for%20community-base.pdf>.

⁶ Grass-roots organizations are primarily made up of civilians advocating a cause to spur change at local, national, or international levels. <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/grassroots-organizations-are-just-as-important-as-see-money-for-innovation/>.

⁷ See the dedicated publication on Working with Women-led Organizations, Including Those Led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Women: A How-to Guide for UNHCR Operations (2025)

⁸ See the full definition of RLO on refworld: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/63e658fc4.html> and in the UNHCR glossary: www.unhcr.org/glossary/

⁹ RLOs and other organizations led by displaced and stateless persons operate primarily at local level, however, many may have a regional or global scope, such as those focusing on global advocacy.

Why is it important to engage with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons?

Organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons:

- ➔ Know their communities best and are often those who respond first to the communities' needs and priorities in emergency situations.
- ➔ Have a deep understanding of the capacities, coping strategies and approaches to protection and solutions in their own communities. These may include traditional coping mechanisms, which may have both positive and negative effects. Understanding community protection strategies and encouraging positive coping mechanisms is part of the important role of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- ➔ Have technical expertise in areas beyond their lived experience of displacement and statelessness that contribute to society and their environment (e.g. expertise in thematic areas such as education, health, MHPSS, shelter or livelihood).
- ➔ Enable effective sustainable response as local actors who are embedded in their own communities, connected to their host communities and the host countries' institutions and structures, and are better placed to design contextually appropriate responses.
- ➔ Can act as agents of change, by promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among and between forcibly displaced and stateless persons and host communities.
- ➔ Address some of the gaps that humanitarian actors are not always able to meet. This was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic and can be seen in current conflict situations: communities and CBOs mobilize to respond to the protection, psychosocial, and livelihood needs of their communities, including by identifying groups at risk of exclusion, such as older persons, persons with disabilities, unaccompanied or separated children, and LGBTIQ+ persons.
- ➔ Bring their own network of partners, including local government institutions and other civil society organizations (CSOs).
- ➔ Act as a bridge between humanitarian actors and their communities. They provide information to their communities on where to access services, gather feedback on assistance and services and provide direct support based on their capacity. They also enhance the knowledge of UNHCR and partners on the needs and priorities of the community, and may also indicate to humanitarian actors the situations of vulnerability and marginalization within the communities where they work.
- ➔ Provide information on advocacy strategies and approaches that can be most effective in their context.
- ➔ Contribute to fundraising efforts for their communities, both by raising their own funds and by providing direct information and evidence to support UNHCR and partners' advocacy and fundraising efforts (including channelling funds to these organizations).

Guiding principles of working with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons

Meaningful Participation: The participation of forcibly displaced and stateless persons improves inclusion and can help address inequalities and discrimination. Meaningful participation is a way of working that crosses all phases of UNHCR programmes, through co-design and consultations with forcibly displaced and stateless persons and their organizations. It is also an objective in itself: UNHCR and its partners should invest in activities that facilitate equitable partnerships, and meaningful participation of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons as the result.

Do No Harm: UNHCR and partners should only work with organizations that adhere to the core humanitarian principle of “do no harm”, which obliges all humanitarian actors to prevent and mitigate any unintended negative impact of their actions on affected people.¹⁰ “Do no harm” also concerns UNHCR and its partners, including organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, respecting informed consent in individual interventions and adopting people- and survivor-centred approaches.

Mutual Trust and Transparency: Building a relationship with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons based on mutual trust is critical to positive collaboration and sustainable outcomes. Trust-building means fostering an environment of transparency, respect, openness and collaboration. To foster a safe and inclusive space for organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, UNHCR and its partners should invest time, develop knowledge, critically assess power dynamics, and break down existing biases i.e. actively identify, challenge, and dismantle the prejudices, stereotypes, and assumptions that influence how forcibly displaced and stateless persons—and the organizations they lead—are perceived and treated.

Capacity Sharing: By strengthening the capacity of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, but also by learning from their lived experience and knowledge, UNHCR and its partners can better respond to the needs of forcibly displaced and stateless persons. All activities should account for and plan for two-way learning transfers.

Prioritizing protection: UNHCR and its partners, including organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, must ensure their efforts remain rooted in protection principles and avoid unintentionally shifting focus away from difficult protection challenges in pursuit of quick outcomes. Simply engaging forcibly displaced and stateless persons does not inherently lead to better protection for them. All interventions should be guided by thorough protection needs and risk assessments from the outset.

Non-Discrimination: UNHCR and all partner organizations, including those led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, should promote inclusion and non-discrimination. UNHCR should support organizations led by and for people of diverse ages, genders, and other characteristics that are often marginalized, while at the same time carefully evaluating the safety of engagement for these organizations (e.g. in contexts where organizations led by LGBTIQ+ persons or minority-led organizations led by specific groups may be challenged by discriminatory laws or practices).

Partnership: Organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons are supported to engage in forms of direct partnership in UNHCR responses, particularly through the UNHCR [Grant Agreements](#), funded partnerships, and other feasible operational avenues.

¹⁰ UNHCR Code of Conduct: <https://intranet.unhcr.org/en/about/ethics-office/code-of-conduct.html>

Code of Conduct for Grant Agreements: <https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/programme-partnerhub/resources/code-conduct-template-en-fr-es>

Important considerations:

💡 Organizations and/or networks led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons may be unable to register in a country and might work under the umbrella of another registered local organization.

- Be aware and make note of this during any mapping exercise.

💡 Organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons have their own priorities, which may or may not align with those of other forcibly displaced persons, UNHCR or other stakeholders in the location.

- Engage in dialogue to understand the priorities they have identified, respect their autonomy, share and prioritize the needs to be addressed, seek common ground, and avoid imposing activities upon them.

💡 Organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons may rely heavily on people in the community as employees or volunteers.

- Support their initiatives without drawing on their most capable human resources to bolster your own staffing, as this can undermine their leadership, weaken their internal structures and disrupt their ability to effectively serve their communities.

💡 Organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons may not be familiar with working with UNHCR.

- Support and empower these organizations to engage with and understand the work of UNHCR and humanitarian actors, including through awareness-raising and orientation efforts.
- Promote and enable their participation in coordination mechanisms (Clusters, Sector Working Groups).¹¹
- Inform them about UNHCR and humanitarian partners' policies and approaches to working with partners.¹²



Nansen Award winner Abdullahi Mire founded the Refugee Youth Education Hub (RYEH) and held its first book drive, which successfully raised more than 20,000 books. ©UNHCR/Anthony Karumba

¹¹ Localization in UNHCR-led coordination structures - a checklist: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99054>

¹² Programme Handbook (accessible to UNHCR staff only): <https://intranet.unhcr.org/en/protection-programme/programme-hub/programme-cycle.html>

How to build meaningful participation and partnership with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons in country and field operations

- Improve your knowledge of the local context and establish mechanisms through which UNHCR can engage systematically and regularly with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons. This may be done through a mechanism for dialogue, such as standing meetings, inclusion in local sectoral coordination forums and/or by supporting or establishing a new advisory board or group/network of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
 - » Encourage all relevant civil society organizations and NGOs working in your context to participate in and contribute to the mapping of community-based organizations, particularly those led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons (see box below).

Consider the following information needs when mapping CBOs:

- Activities carried out by the organization and services provided.
 - Focus areas/ specific groups of people targeted by the organization, if any (i.e. women, disability inclusion, aging, LGBTIQ+ persons, etc.).
 - Geographical area(s) in which the organization works.
 - Governance structure of the organization.
 - Focal point and contact information for the organization.
 - Existing partners of the organization (i.e. government, consortia, or existing/past partnerships with UNHCR) and
 - Capacities of the organization and challenges faced.
-
- Establish a safe space (including but not limited to physical spaces) for interactions with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
 - » Ensure a safe and inclusive environment for staff from organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons of all ages, genders, diverse characteristics and levels of experience, and provide alternative methods for engagement when necessary.
 - » Resource permitting, jointly identify gaps in the meaningful engagement of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons and identify possible interventions by UNHCR and partners to address those gaps, for inclusion in your operation's annual plans.
 - » Engage with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons in coordination meetings (Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), Protection and other Clusters, etc.)¹³
 - » When feasible, facilitate joint meetings with the relevant authorities.

¹³ Localization in UNHCR-led coordination structures - a checklist: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99054>

Tool: UNHCR mapping tool for CBOs and organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons

In 2022, UNHCR launched a [global mapping tool](#), through which organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, as well as other community-based organizations, can self-identify and provide information about their work, including the populations they work for and their leadership structure. The results of this mapping tool can be viewed in an internal dashboard and provide a database for global and regional analysis of the challenges and opportunities of engagement with such organizations.¹⁴

- When mapping organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, apply an AGD lens. Specifically, prioritize identifying organizations that are led by or focus on particular AGD groups, such as: women-led organizations¹⁵, organizations led by persons with disabilities and organizations led by LGBTIQ+ persons.
- Learn more about and acknowledge the existing capacity and expertise of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons (i.e. as fundraisers, negotiators, facilitators of trainings, as co-designers of programmes, etc.).
- Obtain an understanding of how these organizations operate, how they work with other stakeholders and how they communicate with community members.
- Seek out and consider community members' perceptions of the organization. Engage organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons as stakeholders during the assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of your programmes.
 - » Consult with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons when developing strategies and programmes, including during context analysis, needs assessments and programme design.
 - » Where possible and relevant, include organizations led by forcibly displaced and Stateless persons, along with other partners, in your operation's Multi-Functional Team (MFT), and advocate for UNHCR partners to apply the same in equivalent structures in their organizations.
 - » Engage members of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons in assessments and M&E, supporting their initiative to propose solutions based on their own capacities and resources.
- Share the results and/or analysis of assessments and M&E with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, so that they can use them for planning as relevant. Foster or establish partnerships with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
 - » Where two organizations have equal capacity and added value in a given area, consider partnering with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons wherever possible.
 - » Inform organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons about potential partnership arrangements with UNHCR or other United Nations entities (e.g. access to the United Nations Partners' Portal), as well as INGOs or government or development partners. If necessary, provide these organizations with guidance and technical assistance on these partnership requirements.
 - » Link organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons to funding opportunities, whether through UNHCR, within the United Nations system or by facilitating connections with

¹⁴ The global mapping tool for CBOs can be accessed through the data portal [here](#) and the mapping tool directly [here](#).

¹⁵ See the dedicated publication on Working with Women-led Organizations, Including Those Led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Women: A How-to Guide for UNHCR Operations (2025)

local donor representation, including by disseminating information, encouraging participation in information and capacity development sessions about these funds, supporting organizations in submitting funding proposals and advocating on behalf of organizations before the stakeholders managing the grants. This applies to:

- funding opportunities within UNHCR, such as the [Refugee-led innovation fund](#);
- United Nations thematic funds, such as the [UN Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund](#) or [United Nations country-based pooled funds](#);
- funding opportunities made available by local State embassies¹⁶, foundations¹⁷ and refugee-led organizations or networks.¹⁸

What is the Refugee-led Innovation Fund?

UNHCR's [Refugee-led Innovation Fund](#), provides a holistic support mechanism to organisations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, combining financial resources, mentoring and other expertise directly to organizations led by people who experience forced displacement.

- The Fund supports innovation initiated by all organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- Applicants are asked to apply as a team, usually as part of an existing organization.
- The Fund accepts applications from both registered and unregistered organizations.
- Additional attention is given to ensuring that LGBTIQ+ persons, women-led organizations (WLOs), organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and other under-represented organizations receive the necessary support and encouragement to apply to the Fund.
- Recipients of the Fund receive financial resources (up to \$45,000), and holistic support and mentorship.

Read more [here](#).



¹⁶ Examples include the [Canada Fund for Local Initiatives](#).

¹⁷ Examples of foundations that support organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons include the [Robert Bosch Stiftung](#) and [Open Society Foundations](#).

¹⁸ [Resourcing Refugee Leadership Initiative](#) (RRLI); Global Refugee Youth Network (GRYN) grants



Halgan is one of two women refugee-led organizations in Dadaab, Kenya that combat gender-based violence and support young women and girls. Credit: © UNHCR/Mohamed Maalim

- » When partnering with organizations led by forcibly displaced or stateless persons—as with all UNHCR partners—conduct thorough due diligence. Ensure that these organizations are properly vetted to avoid collaboration with any entity facing allegations of fraud or integrity concerns. Recognize that some organizations may need additional support or resources to meet compliance requirements.
- » Identify and make efforts to address barriers to partnership faced by organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- » If legal or financial registration or lack of resources is identified as an obstacle to partnership agreements with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, explore ways to address this obstacle, such as:
 - Facilitating legal support and advice (i.e. through linkages with pro bono legal services) to assist organizations become legally registered;
 - Advocating before the authorities, where appropriate, for the removal of barriers to legal registration for organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- » During the UNHCR planning phase (“Plan for results”) of programming, set aside funds to be allocated to: grant agreements with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons; to other forms of engagement (such as participatory assessments conducted alongside these organizations); to capacity development events; to mapping exercises.
- » Review your partnerships and consider the extent to which the operation directly or indirectly (under other partners) involves organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, the possible reasons, challenges and opportunities.¹⁹

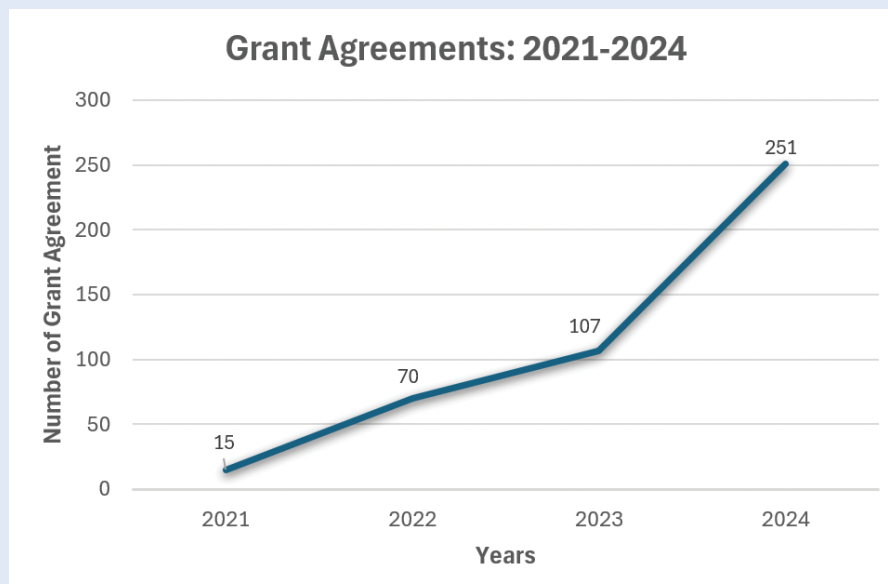
¹⁹ Programme Handbook (accessible to UNHCR staff only): <https://intranet.unhcr.org/en/protection-programme/programme-hub/programme-cycle.html>

Grant Agreement

Since 2021 UNHCR implements a [Grant Agreement](#) mechanism for organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons. This funding approach was developed to enable UNHCR operations to engage organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, and their host communities, as partners. Grant Agreements provide a simplified process for such organizations to access funding, supporting them to implement their projects, strengthen their capacity, and overcome common barriers to partnership.

By December 2024, over 440 Grant Agreements have been signed across all seven regions, since the launch of the pilot in operations, delivering a total of \$2,198,645.91 in funding to organizations led by, or working with, forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

See the [Grant Agreement package](#) for more details about establishing Grant Agreements. Learn more about how the Grant Agreement was used in [Uganda](#) and [Peru](#).



- Facilitate capacity-sharing initiatives and technical assistance for/with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, in collaboration with partners.
 - » If required, facilitate capacity-development initiatives, including on leadership and organizational capacity, project design, advocacy, fundraising, the UNHCR programme cycle, protection principles and other topics.
 - » Where necessary and appropriate, provide organizations with equipment e.g. lending laptops to attend virtual training or providing internet access, data bundles or other forms of facilitate their participation.
 - » Exchange tools, guidance and other resources with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons. Make sure to use their preferred channels for these exchanges.

Information repository

In 2022, the UNHCR Task Team on Engagement and Partnership with Organizations led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons, as well as an Interim Advisory Group, launched an [information repository](#) for organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons that offers a global platform for these organizations to share and seek good practices and other resources.

- » Invite organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons to training sessions or workshops for UNHCR and its partners, which are focused on the local context and protection needs. Engage them as participants, hosts, co-organizers, co-designers or (co)facilitators e.g. to share promising practices from their work.
- » Map and promote capacity-sharing opportunities that facilitate multi-layered support to address the challenges experienced by organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- » Support and facilitate the networking of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons with other organizations and stakeholders to enable exchange, collaboration, and continual or ad-hoc support.
- Promote collaboration with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons and advocate jointly, or on their behalf, for them to be able to legally register their organizations.
- Document and share promising practices and lessons learned.

PartecipAzione: empowering organizations led by refugees and asylum-seekers

In 2017, UNHCR Italy and INTERSOS implemented a capacity-sharing and empowerment programme for refugee-led organizations entitled [PartecipAzione](#), which promotes the protection and active participation of refugees in economic, social and cultural life. Five standard training modules have been developed, including a tailored regional module with local actors in each region. By the end of 2022, 259 refugees affiliated with 146 RLOs and CBOs had participated in these training sessions.

All of the organizations that have taken part in this programme, since its inception in 2017, reported having expanded their activities and skills within one year of completion of the funding and training period: 69 per cent had submitted applications in response to calls for proposals; 87 per cent had developed partnerships with civil society organizations; 82 per cent had increased their communication and media visibility and 53 had taken part in decision-making meetings with institutions.²⁰

²⁰ AGD Promising Practice in Italy: <http://unhcr.org/media/partecipazione-empowering-organizations-led-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-and-community-based>. PartecipAzione factsheet: https://www.partecipazionerifugiati.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Factsheet-2022_eng.pdf

In Regional Bureaux

- Establish safe, inclusive and accessible spaces for interactions with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- Coordinate, encourage and harmonize the continuous mapping of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the region.
- Encourage operations to apply the same due diligence to organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons as they would with any other partner.
- Engage organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons according to the context of each region. This could be achieved by working with networks of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, or a reference/consultative group of such organizations.
- Encourage operations to engage with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons during situational analysis and strategic planning.
- Include organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons in external engagement processes, including with donors, and bring visibility to their work.
- Encourage and support country operations to establish partnerships, including through [Grant Agreements](#), with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, where the capacity of those organizations so allows.
- Allocate resources to facilitate work with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, both at regional and at country operations levels, including for events on capacity development, networking etc.
- Encourage country operations to prioritize organizations led by women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, when identifying partners.
- Map and alert country operations on funding opportunities (e.g. dedicated funds from UNHCR or from donors) and support country operations in linking organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons to these opportunities.
- Promote the UNHCR [Refugee-led Innovation Fund](#), which provides financial resources and support to organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- Support the meaningful participation of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons in regional events, including through logistical support and dedicated resources.²¹
- Identify champions of meaningful participation in UNHCR regional bureaux senior positions (e.g. Regional Bureaux Directors, Senior External Engagement team) or in partner organizations.



Refugee led organizations, participate at Cartagena+40 High-level event for the adoption of the Chile Declaration and plan of Action, © UNHCR/Eugenia Paz

²¹ Guidance for stakeholders in including forcibly displaced and stateless persons in their delegations: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/sites/default/files/2025-08/Guidance%20for%20Stakeholders%20Including%20Displaced%20and%20Stateless%20Persons%20in%20their%20Delegations%20-%20GRF%20Progress%20Review%202025.pdf>

Headquarter Entities

- Foster avenues for meaningful participation and maintain institutionalized modalities of interaction and cooperation with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, e.g. by engaging with the [Task Team](#) on Engagement and Partnership with Organizations led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons and the [Advisory Board](#).
- Establish safe, inclusive and welcoming spaces in your interactions with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons at global level.
- Develop and promote global and standardized tools to support regions and country operations in harmonizing their engagement with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons and ensuring complementarity among regional initiatives.
- Promote equal partnerships with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons and expand ongoing engagement with these organizations.
- Encourage and support regional bureaux and/or country operations to reach out, consult, and establish context- specific forms of partnerships with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons by:
 - » Providing relevant tools and resources through online platforms such as global communities of practice, Intranet, external webpages and other existing channels;
 - » Facilitating linkages of regional bureaux and country operations with relevant HQ focal points to receive technical support on partnership agreements, Grant Agreements or other arrangements;
 - » Establishing connections and disseminating information about organizations, networks and other platforms that provide capacity-building support for project development, funding applications, external communication, etc.;
 - » Disseminating information through the regional bureaux concerning global funding opportunities.
- Advocate for mechanisms to continue increasing resources and funds toward organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons as part of the localization efforts.
- Develop and disseminate guidance and training, including those developed at Inter-agency level, to support regional bureaux and UNHCR country operations in enhancing their work with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- Establish, support and collaborate with reference groups of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons to advise entities at global level. Existing examples include:
 - » The [Refugee Advisory Group \(RAG\) to the Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways \(CRCP\)](#)
 - » The [Advisory Board to the Task Team on Engagement and Partnership with Organizations led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons](#);
 - » The [Global IDP Advisory Group](#).

What is the Advisory Board of Organizations Led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons?

The UNHCR Advisory Board of Organizations led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons²² was established in 2022 as an advisory body to UNHCR. It provides strategic and policy advice grounded in the lived experiences of forcibly displaced and stateless persons, and plays an important role in amplifying the perspectives and expertise of organizations led by them. It highlights gaps and good practices of engagement and partnerships with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

The Advisory Board consist of 16 member organizations, selected through a transparent selection process for a tenure of two-year.

- Support multi-stakeholder coalitions of like-minded actors to advance the participation agenda.
- Identify champions of meaningful participation in senior positions, i.e. at the Director Level of UNHCR.
- Expand opportunities to facilitate the recruitment of people with lived experiences of displacement and statelessness as UNHCR staff, including to senior positions and as [Refugee United Nations Volunteers \(RUNVs\)](#).
- Engage organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons in global platforms, consultations and events, and contribute to the extent possible to supporting their participation, including through financial and logistical support and dedicated briefings on upcoming global events and opportunities for collaboration.
- Advocate for the participation of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the Global Refugee Forum preparations, pledge formulation and implementation and follow up on pledges supporting meaningful participation.²³



Representative of the RLO MonyQadow, participating at the 2024 UNHCR Global Consultations with NGOs

²² <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/compact-action/participation-engagement-organizations-led-forcibly-displaced-and-stateless-persons>.

²³ See the Global Compact on Refugees Pledges & Contributions Dashboard: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/channel/pledges-contributions>.

Resources

- External UNHCR webpage on meaningful participation and engagement of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/compact-action/participation-engagement-organizations-led-forcibly-displaced-and-stateless-persons>.
- Information Repository for Organizations led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless People: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/repository-organisations-led-by-forcibly-displaced-and-stateless>.
- UNHCR Programme Handbook: <https://intranet.unhcr.org/en/protection-programme/programme-hub/programme-cycle.html>
- UNHCR Grant Agreement: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-grant-agreements-organizations-led-displaced-and-stateless-persons-briefing-note>
- Partnership guidance (UNHCR Internal guidance): <https://intranet.unhcr.org/en/protection-programme/programme-hub/programme-cycle/plan/partnership-engagement.html>.
- [Promising practices](#) that advance the UNHCR AGD Policy, and the meaningful participation of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.
- Refugee-led Innovation Fund: <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/refugee-led-innovation-fund/>.

ANNEX I: Other Definitions

What is a women-led organization?

Local women-led organization (WLO):²⁴ an organization with a humanitarian mandate and/or mission that is (1) governed or directed by women; or (2) whose leadership is principally made up of women, demonstrated by 50 per cent or more occupying senior leadership positions.

What is an organization of persons with disabilities?

Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) are representative organizations of persons with disabilities, majority-governed and led by persons with disabilities for persons with disabilities. If local OPDs are not present at a location, regional, national and global OPDs can be located through national and/or global alliances.²⁵

What is an organization led by LGBTIQ+ persons?

There is no single universally recognized or official definition for LGBTIQ+ organizations. They may be described as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or civil society organizations that work to promote and protect the rights and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer individuals, as well as addressing issues related to their equality, well-being, and inclusion.



Quinta Ola created the Chamas en Acción programme which develops the skills and capacities of Venezuelan and Peruvian girls to prevent, identify and report gender-based violence. ©UNHCR/Sebastian Castañeda

²⁴ IASC Guidance on Engagement, Participation and Decision-Making by Women-Led Organizations in Humanitarian Action: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-gender-and-humanitarian-action/iasc-guidance-engagement-participation-and-decision-making-women-led-organizations-humanitarian>

²⁵ Definition provided by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the General Comment Number 7 to the CRPD OHCHR | General comment No.7 on Article 4.3 and 33.3 – the participation of persons with disabilities in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention.

