



UNHCR's Standards and Policies pertaining to Gender-Equality of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Women

Council of Europe Drafting Committee on Migrant Women (GEC-MIG)

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UNHCR's Gender Policy Framework

- 2018: [Age, Gender and Diversity Policy](#) including the „**five updated commitments to refugee women**“
- 2020: [UNHCR Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation, and Response to Gender-based Violence](#)
- 2012: [Guidelines on international protection on gender-related persecution](#) (with links to the guidelines on [trafficking](#) and sexual orientation and gender-identity - [SOGI](#)).

Global Compacts for Refugees / Migration

- Importantly, measures aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering migrant and refugee women and girls; ending all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking in persons, exploitation and sexual abuse, and harmful practices have also been included in the
 - Global Compact for Refugees (paras 13, 74, 75)
 - Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Overarching considerations to guide the drafting

- **Age, gender and other diversity considerations** to be considered in conjunction (intersectionality) – with particular consideration for unaccompanied girls, survivors of GBV, trafficking and torture, women and girls with disabilities, older women and LGBTIQ+ persons.
- **Women and girls with specific needs may also require targeted actions** (to be considered under the thematic areas).
- While refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls are at increased risk, they are also a **tremendous resource for their communities** and the communities in the country of asylum. Their capacities, contributions and skills should be taken into account in the recommendations.
- Ensuring **active and meaningful participation - also in the drafting process.**

Adequate reception conditions for women and girls (including accommodation)

- **Ensuring adequate accommodation** for female asylum-seekers and refugees, including families (dedicated facilities);
- Enhancing **identification and referral of women and girls** with specific needs;
- **Specific needs of LGBTIQ+ women and girls** (protection from violence and threats in reception centers, including dedicated accommodation, psychosocial support etc.)
- **Specific needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking girls** (early identification, referral to national child protection systems, assignment of guardian etc.).

For reference: [The Way Forward for UAM in Europe](#) and [Safer and Stronger \(from the UK\)](#).

Gender-sensitive asylum procedures

- Ensuring a **gender-sensitive application of the 1951 Convention**: Continued efforts in awareness raising, training and sensitization of national asylum authorities on **gender-based asylum claims** (such as claims based on sexual violence, family/domestic violence, coerced family planning, female genital mutilation, etc.);
- Addressing particular challenges in the context of **claims related to sexual orientation and gender identity** (burden of proof, evidence, interviewing techniques etc.)

For reference: [UNHCR Guidelines on international protection related to gender-related persecution, trafficking and SOGI.](#)

Equal access to services

- **Ensuring access to health services**, including access to female GPs, reproductive health services, GBV response services, and mental health and psychosocial support services;
- Inclusion in, and equal access to, **social protection schemes** available in country;
- **Language classes** an essential part of any integration programme;
- **Addressing barriers to access for refugee and migrant women and girls**, such as the lack of interpreters, lack of cultural sensitivity and awareness among service providers, and gaps in the provision or accessibility of information to women and girls.

Education

- **Removing barriers to access to education** for refugee and asylum-seeking girls in national school systems (through language support, catch up classes, psychosocial support, teacher training etc.)
- **Addressing gaps in academic attainment among girls**, which may result in higher drop-out rates and reduced likelihood of enrolling in higher education (caused by a complex mix of causes).
- Working towards **more granular, harmonized and qualitative data** on education for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in all States, which would allow governments and civil society to develop more effective and targeted strategies towards improving their situation.

For reference: [Advocacy brief on Access to Education for Migrant and Refugee Children](#)

Economic opportunities

- Interventions for integration and economic inclusion should be **accompanied by affordable childcare measures** (incl. for training);
- Interventions should be **culturally appropriate** and take into consideration informal rules and social norms of communities. This may include targeted initiatives for women and girls which can also provide a safe space.
- Strengthening women's and girls' **access to financial products** is fundamental to empower them and facilitate their participation in the economic ecosystem.
- The participation rate of women in the job market is lower for men, and they are disproportionately overqualified for the work done. To strengthen equal access, **address underemployment/overqualification** through targeted measures, including skills validation, upskilling, job matching, etc.

Meaningful participation and leadership

- Ensuring the participation of refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls in **policy discussions at local, national and regional level;**
- Refugee and migrant women and girls should be **consulted and involved in the design of any reception and integration measures;**
- Events, trainings and forums representing refugees and asylum-seekers should aim for **active and meaningful participation;**
- Enhancing **support to women-led and community-based organizations,** including through opportunities for visibility, capacity building, networking and funding, as well as structured and intentional dialogue.

Prevention and response to gender-based violence

- **Addressing the root causes of GBV** through effective behavior and social norms change, including through long-term approaches, which are informed by and accountable to women and girls;
- Mobilizing **migrant and refugee communities in support of gender equality**, addressing topics such as domestic violence, female genital mutilation and human trafficking;
- **Addressing barriers to GBV response services** for refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls (such as interpretation, lack of information, cultural sensitivity and awareness, training of service providers, etc.).

For reference: [UNHCR GBV Policy](#)

Conclusion

- UNHCR supports and appreciates the drafting process led by the drafting committee (GEC-MIC) and has already put forward suggestions to the draft Preamble and operative paragraph.
- UNHCR will be glad to continue participation in the GEC-MIC and support with more concrete language or examples as appropriate.

Many thanks for your attention

- Observations & Questions?