

Leaving no one behind: understanding a gender, age and diversity approach to pledges and good practices

CICG, Tuesday 25 June 2019, 09:00-10:00

SUMMARY NOTES

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The panelist noted that a mainstreamed AGD approach contributes to more efficiency. Failure to account for AGD leads to huge gaps in information, and can affect access to services, and increase inequality. It is important to understand the interactions between age, gender and diversity (rather than to address these different categories in isolation) and consider how AGD affects who has a “voice”. Girls in particular are made invisible in many refugee responses or donor strategic plans. Silencing often happens by putting girls together under a broad category of children or addressing them in the category of women. It is therefore essential to see women and girls as agents, to showcase and commit to promote the leadership of women and girls, and to provide the necessary skills for girls and women to understand their rights. The importance of avoiding “tokenistic” approaches was also emphasized. It was also noted that a multi-stakeholder approach, as emphasized by the GCR, supports a better understanding of the key issues affecting different AGD groups. Finally, it was emphasized that an AGD approach should not exclude men and boys, should encourage equal opportunities for refugee response.

Apajok Biar, South Sudan Voices of Salvation/ Gender Audit Team

The Gender Audit Team ensures that voices of women and girls can be heard in discussions around the GCR and now in the context of preparations for the GRF. Women need a seat at the table and it is important to consider whose voices are missing from the room. The importance of changing the narrative from “engaging” refugees to refugees “leading” was emphasized. For example, refugees need to be engaged in high-level discussions as organisers, panelists, and participants. The need to recognise the informal and formal skills of women and girls was also highlighted. It was recommended that States and other stakeholders make pledges towards an online platform, which would support sharing of good practices on gender equality. Finally, the importance of ensuring that refugees are genuinely included in processes was highlighted. Some key questions to ask to facilitate this process are: How have you supported refugee engagement? Are refugees connected to their community? Have you compensated refugees for their time? What makes a refugee less of an expert than others? The panelist concluded with a recommendation for refugee participation in the co-sponsorship groups to support the consideration of AGD approaches into the development of pledges and contributions.

Rose Achayo Obol, Board of Directors, National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda

The panelist noted that the Global Refugee Forum represents an important opportunity to ensure that the GCR benefits all refugees including persons with disabilities. Partnerships are key to ensuring meaningful and effective participation of refugees in the GRF. Financing and implementation is also necessary to realise the commitments made by States. More efforts should be directed towards strengthening the capacity of humanitarian actors vis-a-vis AGD inclusion, and to ensuring that individual needs are recognized and captured. It was also emphasized that more efforts need to be put in place to operationalize AGD Policies. Furthermore, it was suggested that the disaggregated data needs to more effectively capture information on age and disability, as there is often a more prominent focus on gender to the detriment of other categories.

Comments from the floor

There were several comments from refugees in attendance. They referenced the importance of ensuring meaningful inclusion and noted the need for targeted support for refugees to enable them to achieve self-reliance. The need to bring in the private sector to support pledges and commitments was also highlighted. The importance of enabling refugee women to contribute to long-term change was raised, with suggestions made for provisions to be put in place for refugee women to have access to staffing positions in UNHCR or to represent their governments (in the context of resettled refugees) in high-level discussions.

Australia noted the importance of resettlement as a solution. They are committed to an AGD approach and are looking for concrete examples on how AGD can be mainstreamed into pledges and contributions. They note that it would be useful to have a mechanism where informal refugee groups can support co-sponsorship groups to ensure AGD perspective.

Good Neighbours' International (INGO, Korea) noted the importance of involving men and boys in gender mainstreaming. Need to take into account existing leadership and systems to raise awareness among the community of the importance of gender mainstreaming.