

Age, gender and diversity

According to IDMC's data, women living in protracted displacement slightly outnumber men, and given the difficulty in accessing female IDPs in many situations it is likely that their number is underestimated. In Burundi and Colombia, data disaggregated by sex shows that women make up a significant majority of IDPs. Women and children also tend to flee first and remain displaced for longer. Men tend to stay longer in their areas of origin, either as fighters or to protect their family's property and assets. They also often return earlier to assess the situation and start to rebuild their homes and re-establish their livelihoods.

❖ **Age, gender and diversity (AGD)**

An AGD approach to protection is based on the assumption that "all human populations are made up of individuals, each of whom possesses a unique profile and capacities. In humanitarian response, it is important to take these differences into account, not only because they may give rise to specific protection risks, but also because they can often be leveraged to improve the situation of those affected" - global protection cluster.

All IDPs, regardless of their age or gender, should have a role in making decisions about their protection and wellbeing. In order to fully understand their protection risks and ensure they are involved in the pursuit of durable solutions, it is crucial to set up mechanisms for their consultation and participation.

IDPs' right to participate in decision-making about matters that directly affect their lives is recognised by human rights instruments including the Guiding Principles and the Kampala Convention. As such, women and men, young and old and people from different walks of life should all take part from the outset in defining problems, programmes and solutions.

❖ **Recognising resilience and promoting participation**

Activities to support the pursuit of durable solutions should recognise people's resilience and their own ability to protect themselves. Involvement in identifying protection issues and planning, implementing and monitoring responses also helps a community to restore its dignity, self-esteem sense of empowerment in shaping its future. This requires a solid understanding of the entire community affected by displacement, and the gender roles and other relationships and power dynamics within it.

IDPs' effective consultation and engagement in decision-making processes can be guaranteed through participatory assessments. These involve discussions – including all relevant responders - with women, men, girls and boys to analyse their protection risks and identify their needs. They are also a tool that supports a community-based approach to rights and the pursuit of durable solutions. The information collected during participatory assessments should be complemented by an analysis of existing information.

Participatory assessments should form the basis for planning interventions and strategies to support IDPs' achievement of durable solutions.

❖ Women and girls

It is generally acknowledged that female IDPs face specific barriers in exercising their rights, but there is little reliable disaggregated data on their needs and vulnerabilities in protracted displacement. Analysis shows, however, that displaced women's and girls' protracted exposure to risks imposed by displacement may result in increased hardships over time. They face a range of complex protection issues both in camps and outside them, and given the upheaval of conflict and crisis they have experienced, they tend to be extremely vulnerable. They are often marginalised and unable to make decisions freely about their lives and communities. Also, the progressive impoverishment that protracted or repeated displacement often brings about may ultimately increase risks and create new situations of potential abuse, such as bonded labour, survival sex and trafficking.

The stigma attached to gender-based violence (GBV), the consistent under-reporting of cases and inadequate service provision for those affected make it impossible to draw an accurate picture of its prevalence and dynamics.

→ **GBV** has serious consequences for economic, human and social development, and the trauma caused adds to women's fear of stigmatisation and marginalisation. Coupled with perpetrators' impunity, it compromises their prospects of achieving durable solutions. In northern Mali, the fact that alleged perpetrators of sexual violence in 2013 are still at large and unpunished has made female IDPs wary of returning. It has also undermined their confidence that the state can facilitate conditions for them to bring their displacement to a sustainable end.

→ **Tenure insecurity** is a major obstacle to the achievement of durable solutions, and a particular challenge for female IDPs. Women's HLP rights are all too often violated not only by parties to a conflict, but also by their own families and communities. In Liberia, family members have sold women's land and property, occupied it with impunity or allocated it to male heads of households in their absence.

Despite national laws to protect them, displaced women are often unable to assert their HLP rights when they return to their places of origin, either because they do not have official documents in their name, or because inheritance, marital property and dispute resolution mechanisms are handled by customary or religious authorities that favour men. Given that HLP rights are closely linked to other elements of durable solutions such as livelihoods, safety, security and an adequate standard of living, failure to uphold them constitutes a serious impediment to women's and other vulnerable groups' prospects achieving a sustainable end to their displacement. Access to justice and remedies for displaced women who suffer gender-based human rights abuses is also key.

→ **Data disaggregated by sex and age (SADD) needs to be collected and analysed** both at the country level and in the specific settings where interventions are envisaged. This needs to take place during all stages of displacement to inform humanitarian and development programmes that create a protective environment for women and facilitate their pursuit of durable solutions. Without such data, the prospect of establishing a comprehensive, rights-based framework for response from the onset of a crisis through to longer-term development planning is greatly compromised.