

**AGE GENDER AND DIVERSITY BEST PRACTICE COMPILATION  
BUREAU FOR THE AMERICAS  
2012**

## AGDM is a matter of all....

In this ever changing world, a world where the needs and priorities we are faced with increase day on day, the voices of the most vulnerable can often be the most difficult to hear above the thunder of the crowd. With only a whisper, they struggle to express their needs, their dreams, their fears and their hopes. As a member of UNHCR's staff and as Director of the Bureau for the Americas, I am committed to ensuring that all voices in the Americas are heard and are given the necessary attention and protection. I am committed to strengthening each individual voice and to providing them with all necessary tools for their self-reliance and personal development.

AGDM (Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming) is the responsibility of each and every one of us. This is why I have included AGDM as one of the five priorities for operations in the Americas for 2011-2015. Strengthening access to education for refugee and displaced girls and boys; combating forced recruitment of children; providing response to and raising awareness of the protection needs of LGBTI persons, older persons and persons with disabilities and strengthening prevention and response for SGBV survivors; are some of the areas operations will focus on in the coming years.

This compilation highlights some of the accomplishments of UNHCR in the Americas in the area of AGDM and, in my opinion, is a good illustration of the quality work taking place in the region, in partnership with governments and civil society.

I take this opportunity to reiterate my personal commitment and that of the Bureau for the Americas to AGDM. We will continue to work hard to ensure that the voices of our persons of concern are heard.

Marta Juárez  
Director  
Bureau for the Americas



## UNHCR IN THE AMERICAS: Embracing AGDM

UNHCR's goal of ensuring equitable protection of all persons of concern without distinction of gender, age or background passes through the recognition that each person is unique and that they are exposed to different needs, concerns and risks.

The Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) approach is the firm commitment of the organization to ensure that this uniqueness is respected and that it is at the center of decision making. After almost a decade since the AGDM policy was introduced in the organization, UNHCR has identified seven strategic objectives to be pursued and achieved in the next five years<sup>1</sup>.

The general overview analyses will be done according to the seven strategic results, followed by a list of best practices divided by population of concern<sup>2</sup>.

### 1. Strengthened internal leadership and accountability for AGD<sup>3</sup>

Mainstreaming Age, Gender and Diversity has been a priority of the Bureau for the Americas ("Bureau"), since its introduction in 2003. AGDM was included as one of the five strategic priorities<sup>4</sup> of the Bureau for the years 2011-2015, in particular to:

- Promote and ensure that an AGDM approach is entrenched in all activities in the Region;
- Advocate with local, national and regional authorities to raise awareness on AGDM;
- Promote effective protection, prevention, identification and response mechanisms to SGBV victims and survivors, through increased strategic partnerships; and
- Promote the development of specific protection programs that consider the needs of children, adolescents, women, men, afro-descendent, indigenous people, persons with specific needs and LGBTI<sup>5</sup>, within a rights and community-based framework.

Examples of strengthening internal leadership include activities in **Colombia** where UNHCR is mainstreaming AGDM in each field office through a decentralization process, whereby Heads of Sub-Office are accountable for building and leading Multi-Functional Teams ("MFTs") and action plans.

### 2. Integration of AGD in Programming<sup>6</sup>

The design and implementation of protection and comprehensive solutions strategies of all – UNHCR as well as governmental counterparts and partners – must include age, gender and diversity and

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Forward Plan 2011-2016 at [https://intranet.unhcr.org/intranet/unhcr/en/home/protection\\_and\\_operational/community\\_development/age\\_gender\\_diversity.html](https://intranet.unhcr.org/intranet/unhcr/en/home/protection_and_operational/community_development/age_gender_diversity.html)

<sup>2</sup> Diversity has been defined as per the 2011 AGD Policy at [https://intranet.unhcr.org/intranet/unhcr/en/home/protection\\_and\\_operational/community\\_development/age\\_gender\\_diversity.html](https://intranet.unhcr.org/intranet/unhcr/en/home/protection_and_operational/community_development/age_gender_diversity.html)

<sup>3</sup> All staff is accountable for implementing the organization's AGD commitments. Senior managers are accountable for progress in attaining minimum standards and results in a transparent manner through UNHCR's existing accountability framework and through the career management system. Accountability mechanisms towards persons of concern are in place.

<sup>4</sup> The 2011-2015 Bureau Priorities are: 1. Maintain the quality of protection in the Americas; 2. Promote the adoption of protection-sensitive policies in the context of mixed migration movements; 3. Assess trends and patterns of violence, displacement and protection gaps caused by new forms of violence; 4. Strengthen AGDM approach in all protection and operational aspects; 5. Develop and achieve comprehensive solutions for persons of concern.

<sup>5</sup> Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex

<sup>6</sup> All advocacy, protection and service delivery provided by UNHCR is based on age, gender and diversity analysis to ensure that all persons of concern have equitable access. Additional services or targeted actions are in place to address specific needs and are, in and of themselves, age, gender and diversity sensitive. These are locally relevant and are visible, measurable and budgeted for in Country Operation Plans and Special Appeals.



take into account the different needs, resources and vulnerabilities of the different groups of concern.

In this context, Participatory Assessments (“PA”)<sup>7</sup> are regularly undertaken in the different operations, to ensure that the voices of all persons of concern are taken into account. These have enabled the operations to create a trusted relationship with the persons of concern and to help authorities to better address concerns and allocate resources.

As examples, in **Panama**, UNHCR used the findings from the joint PA exercise to support the Government to strengthen prevention and response mechanisms and to follow-up on its implementation. In **Colombia**, the findings from the PA helped the Ministry for Social Protection to develop national guidelines for the prevention and attention to forced displacement that takes into account the different needs, concerns and risks of men, women, girls, and boys, without distinction of age or background. In **Brazil**, the presence of local authorities and members of the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) in PA exercises enabled key government stakeholders to gain a nuanced understanding of the needs of persons of concern (“PoC”) from an AGD perspective, and take direct action to address them through ensuring their access to relevant public services and policies.

Community Projects in border areas, particularly in **Panama, Venezuela, Colombia** and **Ecuador**, provide a positive and constructive environment for building a meaningful partnership with persons of concern. Regular visits to the communities have created a strong trust relation between UNHCR and persons of concern and allowed for a fluid exchange of information, better understanding of the community needs, better management of expectations and better protection delivery.

### 3. Expanded Capacity and Knowledge for Enhanced AGD Impact<sup>8</sup>

UNHCR in the Region dedicates efforts to build capacities of partners and governmental counterparts on AGDM principles and on the rights and community based approach.

Workshops and trainings targeting law enforcement officials, judges, lawyers and service providers are regularly held in all the operations. Capacity building trainings and workshops are also regularly held with persons of concern, particularly with women, girls and children to give them skills and tools to know what their rights are and how to claim them before the appropriate institutions. Workshops and capacity building initiatives for strengthening community based protective mechanisms are also widely spread practices in all the operations.

In **Colombia** UNHCR, the National Counselling for The Equity of women, Ministry For Social Protection, Presidential Program “Colombia Joven” and the Colombian Institution for Family Welfare (the national institutions responsible respectively for the protection of women, children older persons, persons with disabilities and youth) developed - through participatory methodologies - National Guidelines for the prevention an attention of Forced Displacement with a gender, age and disability focus. The guidelines have been used as training material for public functionaries and communities and as reference for local and national policies.

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<sup>7</sup> The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations, 2006

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR staff and partners have the skills and knowledge to deliver on UNHCR’s commitments, as set out in the 2011 Age, Gender and Diversity Policy.



#### 4. AGD shortcomings addressed in Resource Allocation and Expenditure<sup>9</sup>

The Bureau is implementing the AGDM Bureau Forward Plan<sup>10</sup> to support operations in the enhancement of AGDM and to ensure that operations in the Americas reflect the organizational and the Bureau priorities and that operation budgets are AGD sensitive. The AGDM Bureau Forward Plan aims at addressing shortcomings and strengthening existing efforts in AGDM.

#### 5. Enhanced Leadership externally for AGD<sup>11</sup>

In the Americas, UNHCR is devoting efforts to mainstream AGD not only inside the organization, but also ensuring that this strategy is implemented by partners and governmental counterparts.

The 2004 Mexico Plan of Action<sup>12</sup> continues to be the Regional Framework for protection and for comprehensive solutions, promoting local integration and self-reliance and the strategic use of resettlement as a protection tool that enhances solidarity in the Region.

Under this framework, persons of concern must be included in national programs; must have access to basic services; and must effectively enjoy their rights. To achieve this, UNHCR works with national governments ("*Fronteras Solidarias*" – borders of solidarity) with local governments ("*Ciudades Solidarias*" – cities of solidarity), with civil society, academy, private sector and persons of concern themselves.

As examples of linking persons of concern with national authorities, in the **United States of America (USA)**, the Refugee Congress 13 took place in August 2011 with the participation of 60 refugees, including men, women, and children of different backgrounds, representing 6 decades of protection in the USA and coming from 50 different states. The profiles of this group illustrated very well the diversity of situations, the humanitarian tradition of this country and the imperative to keep protection space open<sup>14</sup>.

#### 6. Enhanced and Expanded Partnerships to Strengthen AGDM<sup>15</sup>

The Cities of Solidarity program provides an ideal framework to promote interaction with persons of concern not only by UNHCR but most importantly by the service providers. The current cities of solidarities in the Region are: Buenos Aires, Rosario, Mendoza, Cordoba and San Luis (Argentina); Serafina Correa (Brazil), San Felipe and La Calera (Chile), Desamparados (Costa Rica); Quito and Lago Agrio (Ecuador); Montevideo (Uruguay).

Most of the operations have Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) which allow for strategic and effective partnerships and referral systems, avoiding duplications, particularly in the prevention and response to SGBV (**Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Venezuela,**) and child protection (**Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Venezuela**).

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<sup>9</sup> UNHCR comprehensively elaborates the resources necessary to ensure that the AGD Forward Plan and Policy can be implemented. It will advocate for AGD resource allocation by national government. It will use existing resources and where shortcomings are identified it will actively seek additional resourcing. Specific needs identified through applying the AGD principles are prioritized in plans and when designing office/staffing structures.

<sup>10</sup> Bureau for the Americas AGDM Forward Plan, November 2011.

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR advocates for and uses its voice to promote and champion gender equality, respect for diversity and the equitable enjoyment of rights by all persons of concern throughout its work with national governments, implementing partners and other UN agencies

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=biblioteca/pdf/3453>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOWFqG/b.7633825/k.72BE/Refugee\\_Congress\\_Brings\\_Together\\_Notable\\_Refugees\\_From\\_Around\\_the\\_USA.htm](http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOWFqG/b.7633825/k.72BE/Refugee_Congress_Brings_Together_Notable_Refugees_From_Around_the_USA.htm)

<sup>14</sup> More information is available at [http://www.unhcrwashington.org/site/c.ckLQI5NP1gJ2G/b.7519897/k.9DB8/Refugee\\_Congress.html](http://www.unhcrwashington.org/site/c.ckLQI5NP1gJ2G/b.7519897/k.9DB8/Refugee_Congress.html)

<sup>15</sup> UNHCR has developed strategic and effective partnerships to support the organization in meeting its AGD commitments



## 7. Strengthened Monitoring and Evaluation of AGD and its Impact<sup>16</sup>

The Region is particularly active in undertaking analyses, evaluations, lessons-learned, and studies to ensure that UNHCR and partners' protection and comprehensive solutions are Age, Gender and Diversity sensitive and are implemented within a community and rights based approach. Efforts to measure local integration of children were especially visible in **Costa Rica**, with a study on the local integration of children<sup>17</sup> and in **Ecuador** with an analysis of local integration of urban refugees in **Ecuador**<sup>18</sup>.

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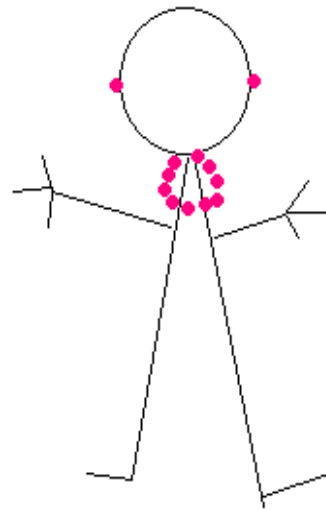
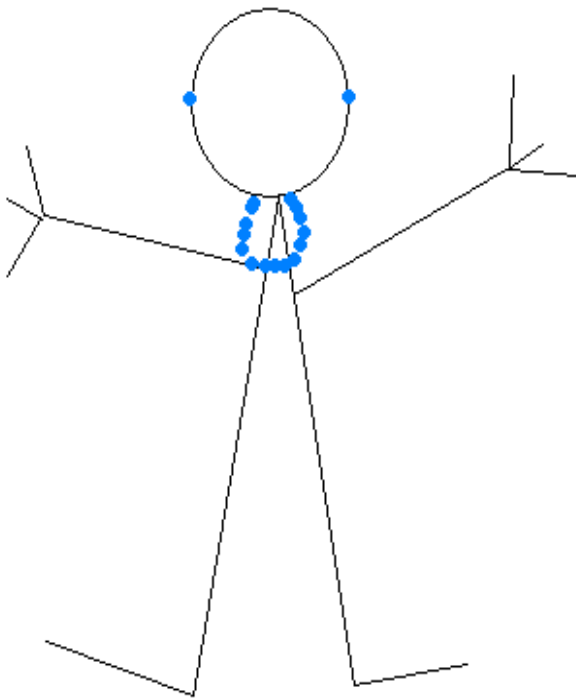
<sup>16</sup> Quality evidence and information on AGD impact and processes used for attaining impact is available and used.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=biblioteca/pdf/6910>

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=t3/fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Ecuador/2011/Refugiados\\_urbanos\\_en\\_Ecuador](http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=t3/fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Ecuador/2011/Refugiados_urbanos_en_Ecuador)



# WOMEN AND GIRLS



The Americas Region continues to actively pursue gender equality in its protection and comprehensive solutions activities as well as in the advocacy with governmental counterparts and key stakeholders.

**Colombia** and **Ecuador** are two of the ten world pilot countries chosen to draft and implement a **multi-year, comprehensive SGBV prevention and response strategy**<sup>19</sup>. Other operations - **Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica** and **Haiti** - will draft their strategy in 2012.

**Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela** have drafted or are in the process of drafting **SOPs to prevent and respond to SGBV**, together with their implementing partners, governmental counterparts and key stakeholders (See Box 1 for more information).

### Box 1: Government led initiative

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>Venezuela</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | The Committee for Co-ordination and Follow-Up on Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Zulia (which includes all public institutions and non-governmental organizations from this State working on SGBV issues, at a municipal, regional, national and international level), UN Women and a local NGO “mujeres en positivo”).  |
| <b>What?</b>                              | Coordinate and follow up on Sexual and Gender Based Violence.<br><br>The Committee is active in three thematic areas: protection, prevention and integral assistance to SGBV victims and survivors. In particular, the Committee works on raising awareness on sexual and gender based violence and its prevention; strengthening existing protection networks; empowering SGBV survivors and potential victims; facilitating exchange of information; building capacities at the institutional level; and ensuring effective and efficient attention to individual cases through a system of referrals and direct assistance.   |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | Because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a good example of a coordinated response;</li> <li>• It is a government led initiative (sustainability and ownership);</li> <li>• All the key stakeholders responsible for preventing and responding to SGBV are present in one coordinated forum.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <b>Facebook:</b> Comite " VIOLENCIA SEXUAL Y BASADA EN GENERO" DEL ZULIA<br><a href="http://www.abrebrecha.com/articulos697.php?id=93755">http://www.abrebrecha.com/articulos697.php?id=93755</a><br><a href="http://palabrademujer.wordpress.com/2010/09/30/venezuela-estado-zulia-tiene-comite-para-prevenir-y-atender-violencia-de-genero/">http://palabrademujer.wordpress.com/2010/09/30/venezuela-estado-zulia-tiene-comite-para-prevenir-y-atender-violencia-de-genero/</a><br><a href="http://www.adital.com.br/site/noticia_imp.asp?cod=51323&amp;lang=ES">http://www.adital.com.br/site/noticia_imp.asp?cod=51323&amp;lang=ES</a><br><a href="http://www.tno.com.ve/noticia_completa.php?noticia=ACNUR+recorre+ambulatorios+promoviendo+la+prevenci%C3%B3n+de+la+violencia+sexual+y+basada+en+g%C3%A9nero+">http://www.tno.com.ve/noticia_completa.php?noticia=ACNUR+recorre+ambulatorios+promoviendo+la+prevenci%C3%B3n+de+la+violencia+sexual+y+basada+en+g%C3%A9nero+</a><br><a href="http://www.onu.org.ve/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=view&amp;id=250&amp;Itemid=2">http://www.onu.org.ve/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=view&amp;id=250&amp;Itemid=2</a><br><a href="http://eltiempo.com.ve/venezuela/organismo/acnur-realiza-charlas-sobre-la-prevencion-de-la-violencia-sexual/11381">http://eltiempo.com.ve/venezuela/organismo/acnur-realiza-charlas-sobre-la-prevencion-de-la-violencia-sexual/11381</a> |

<sup>19</sup> Action Against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: An Updated Strategy, June 2011





<http://reliefweb.int/node/382447>

Successful advocacy efforts have resulted in the improvement of **resettlement** programs for women-at-risk in **Argentina** (facilitation of integration process); in **Brazil** (where the government applies a fast track procedure); in **Paraguay** (where the “women-at-risk program” will start in 2012 through a twinning project with the United States of America) and in **Uruguay**.

Other successful **advocacy initiatives** resulting in the better enjoyment of rights or access to services by women should be noted in **Bolivia** (See Box 2 for further details); **Canada** (priority is given to women head of household after separation from the husband during RSD hearings); and **Colombia** (national guidelines for a gender-sensitive approach for the prevention and response to forced displacement and development of a gender policy).

### Box 2: Advocacy for gender-sensitive claims

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|------------------|--|
| <b>Where?</b>    | <b>Bolivia</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b> | Pastoral de Movilidad Humana (PMH)   |
| <b>What?</b>     | <p>UNHCR and its Implementing Partner developed and implemented SOPs to prevent and respond to SGBV against refugee and asylum-seeker women. UNHCR also advocated before the National Refugee Commission for the adoption of adequate procedural safeguards concerning the treatment of asylum claims presented by women. UNHCR regularly monitored the treatment provided to female asylum seekers and lobbied for the implementation of adequate procedural safeguards (separate interviews, availability of female interpreters, relevant country of origin information (“COI”), etc.).</p> <p>In addition, in coordination with its Implementing Partner, UNHCR published an information guide, for refugee women and asylum seekers that compiles information on women rights, SGBV and the available resources in the main areas of residence of the refugee population. Sensitization workshops on women’s rights and SGBV were coordinated by the Implementing Partner with refugee women and asylum seekers in larger cities: La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz</p> |
| <b>Why?</b>      | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It ensures gender-sensitive procedural safeguards: separate interview, female interpreters, relevant COI, etc.</li></ul>   |



Where can I find more information?

<http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=t3/fileadmin/Documentos/Publicaciones/2012/8440>

With regards to SGBV response mechanisms, in **Costa Rica**, the House of Rights<sup>20</sup> continues to successfully provide local women and women of concern with a comprehensive response (see Box 3). In **Colombia**, the MFT led by UNHCR held several Participatory assessments with more the 500 IDP or at risk women in 4 municipalities in Arauca, for the design of local action plans. Those plans have been assumed by women as their main advocacy tool and by the department as a main input for the current departmental development plan. In **Ecuador** and **Haiti**, the safe house initiative also provides a comprehensive response to SGBV survivors (see Box 4 and 5).

### Box 3: Comprehensive Response to SGBV

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| <b>Where?</b>                             | Costa Rica   |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | Municipality of Desamparados, ACAI, Aprode, Caritas' Centre for Labour Rights, the Ministry of Justice's mediation service and the UN inter-agency programme for Youth, Labour and Migration.  |
| <b>What?</b>                              | The House of Rights ensures an integrated response to women victims or survivors of SGBV by integrating microcredit schemes; access to labour market schemes and labour rights; psychosocial support; legal counseling and women support groups. During 2010 and 2011, all stakeholders have conducted focal group sessions with women and young girls on SGBV and linked it to livelihoods related initiatives, including micro-credit. |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | Because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is an example of successful coordination with local authorities and key partners;</li> <li>• Women's needs and concerns are at the centre of decision making through regular focus group discussions with them;</li> <li>• The response also integrates self-reliance initiatives, including micro-credit.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://www.acnur.org/livelihoods">http://www.acnur.org/livelihoods</a>  |

<sup>20</sup> The House of Rights resulted from an agreement between UNHCR and the Municipality of Desamparados in 2007.



## Box 4 and Box 5: Creating Safe Spaces

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| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>Ecuador</b>  |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | National Network of Safe Houses for victims of gender based violence (Casa María Amor – Cuenca, Casa Matilde – Quito, Hogar de Nazareth – Guayaquil, Casa Amiga – Lago Agrio, Casa Paula – Coca).   |
| <b>What?</b>                              | The National Network of Safe Houses consists of five safe houses in the cities of Cuenca, Quito, Guayaquil, Lago Agrio and Coca, providing services and protection to SGBV survivors. With UNHCR, the response capacity of this network has been strengthened, particularly with regards to psychosocial support, legal assistance and intake capacity. UNHCR has also provided technical support to the coordinating committee of the network, which has led to improved communication channels, referral mechanisms between the safe houses, as well as documentation and information management.   |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | Because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It offers a safe and secure space for refugees SGBV’s survivors;</li> <li>• The network has allowed for the swift relocation of survivors from one city to another giving them a real chance to break out of the vicious cycle of violence they have been living in.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://www.pastoralsocialcuenca.org/index.php/proyectos/mariaamor">http://www.pastoralsocialcuenca.org/index.php/proyectos/mariaamor</a><br><a href="http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Ecuador/2012/EI_trabajo_de_ACNUR_en_Sucumbios_y_Orellana_2012.pdf?view=1">http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Ecuador/2012/EI_trabajo_de_ACNUR_en_Sucumbios_y_Orellana_2012.pdf?view=1</a><br><a href="http://www.ayuda-t.org.ec/index.php?option=com_instituciones&amp;id=30&amp;view=institucion&amp;swc=1&amp;Itemid=55">http://www.ayuda-t.org.ec/index.php?option=com_instituciones&amp;id=30&amp;view=institucion&amp;swc=1&amp;Itemid=55</a> |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Where?</b>    | <b>Haiti</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b> | KOFAVIV (Komision Fanm Vitktim pou Viktim), Digital Democracy, French Red Cross, l’Espoir des Femmes Haitiennes.   |
| <b>What?</b>     | The UNHCR Safe House Program was set up end of June 2011 after the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti where more than two years later internal displacement remains a significant problem with 550,560 individuals still living in camps in and around Port-au-Prince and elsewhere in the country. The programme’s main objectives are to create: 1) solidarity schemes; 2) Health and empowerment for women; 3) legal, medical, and psycho-social support; 4) livelihoods and business plan development; 5) education grants for children; 6) long-term housing with financial support for one year; 7) case management; 8) call center 24/7; and 9) data collection tool. |
|                  | UNHCR currently has two safe houses, one in Porte-au-Prince and one in the Province, targeting IDP women in camps victims/survivors of SGBV, who . Survivors are referred  |



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| <p><b>Why?</b></p> <p><b>Where can I find more information?</b></p> | <p>by partners present on the ground (UNPOL, IOM, IP KOFVIV) and their risk assessed by a UNHCR panel. The SGBV survivors can remain in the safe house up to three months while receiving comprehensive assistance and receiving support for recovery and re-building their lives.</p> <p>Because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes health services available to women;</li> <li>• Creates safe environments for SGBV survivors and their families;</li> <li>• Provides legal support;</li> <li>• Builds on survivors' skills enhancing livelihoods opportunities;</li> <li>• Offers long-term solutions and responses; and</li> <li>• Responds to an urgent need of housing alternatives exists for immediate relocation of SGBV victims/survivors in particular for those who are under serious threat in IDP camps.</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://kofaviv.org">http://kofaviv.org</a></p> |
|---|---|

Capacity building, awareness raising, and training on SGBV prevention and access to services, targeting women and girls, were carried out throughout the Region in : **Bolivia** (women's rights and SGBV); **Brazil** (a theatre play was enacted, in partnership with a local NGO, to raise awareness about SGBV and HIV prevention amongst asylum seekers and refugees living in a slum in Rio de Janeiro); **Colombia** (local initiatives for the protection of women against SGBV, strengthening participatory networking groups like "*Red de mujeres promotoras para prevenir la violencia sexual y de género*" in Cucuta and an awareness raising video (see Box 6); **Costa Rica** (a health fair was organized to provide services for migrant sex workers); **Dominican Republic** (strengthening community-based detection, prevention and protection mechanisms); **Ecuador** (trainings were conducted community centre where women meet and receive information); **Mexico** (self-defence courses for refugee women, social activities for women), **Panama** (Panamanian Red Cross conducted workshops on SGBV to empower survivors, strengthen community-based detection and prevention mechanisms. Separate workshops were provided for adults and adolescents) and **Peru** (women's rights and SGBV trainings).

### Box 6: Awareness Raising Material

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| <p><b>Where?</b></p>    | <p><b>Colombia</b></p>   |
| <p><b>With Who?</b></p> | <p>Jointly intervention with UNFPA. Permanent coordination with local communities, authorities and ethnic organizations.</p>   |
| <p><b>What?</b></p>     | <p>The office produced the cartoon video "My body, my territory" (Mi cuerpo, Mi territorio) to raise awareness on SGBV prevention and response mechanisms to inform the IDP population of their rights and protection mechanisms. The video portrays several cases of SGBV, among indigenous communities, as a cause and consequence of displacement, and a consequence of armed conflict, and establishes what response mechanisms are and should be offered. It also informs IDP's of their rights and</p> |



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|   | highlights the importance of sensibilization and awareness campaigns and prevention mechanisms to avoid situations of SGBV.  |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates awareness and informs on SGBV and the rights of victims and survivors;</li> <li>• Provides a child friendly format with specific examples to ensure that children are also aware of their rights;</li> <li>• Disseminates the protection pathways for cases of sexual violence in accordance with existing regulations and promotes the referral mechanisms and response for ethnic communities;</li> <li>• Contributes in providing institutions, authorities, organizations, and communities with a child sensitive educational tool adaptable to all communities and population;</li> <li>• Provides indigenous authorities and community councils a pedagogical tool to facilitate the approach to this issue with different population groups including children to promote the design and implementation of prevention and protection strategies; and</li> <li>• Provides to UNHCR field offices a working tool for the implementation of SGBV strategy in ethnic communities</li> </ul> |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hJTQUmJull">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hJTQUmJull</a>  |

Similar capacity building and training initiatives targeting law enforcement officers, the judiciary system, border officers and service providers were carried out in **Canada, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela**. In **Panama**, a Capacity Building Plan focusing on Gender, SGBV, HIV and LGBTI Protection was created as part of the national awareness campaign and sensibilization programs developed in 2011. The workshops targeted various public institutions and benefited from the participation of the National Institute of Women (INAMU), a public institution responsible for the development of public policies designed to empower and protect women.

Advocacy efforts have also resulted in the amendment or the promulgation of new laws and policies more favourable to women, such as in: **Brazil** (approval of a normative resolution granting permanent visas to foreigners considered survivors of human trafficking), **Canada** (new legislation includes the balanced reform act. See Box 7 for more information); **Costa Rica** (through the adoption of the New Immigration Act in September 2009, Costa Rica incorporated “gender” as a ground for persecution within its Refugee definition -art. 106, Law No. 8764 -. Since the new law came into force two cases of which one is a survivor of human trafficking have been granted refugee status on this ground); **Mexico** (“gender” was included as one ground for persecution in the law on refugees and complementary protection); **Panama** (the Law 79 of 2011 provides, among other things, new standards of protection for victims of trafficking who are entitled to protection by the state through its assistance programs - access to shelters, basic needs coverage, medical and psychological care - as well as migration protection through a temporary stay permit - with a minimum period of 6 months); and **Venezuela** (Apure State implements the statutory law for women’s right to a live free of violence).

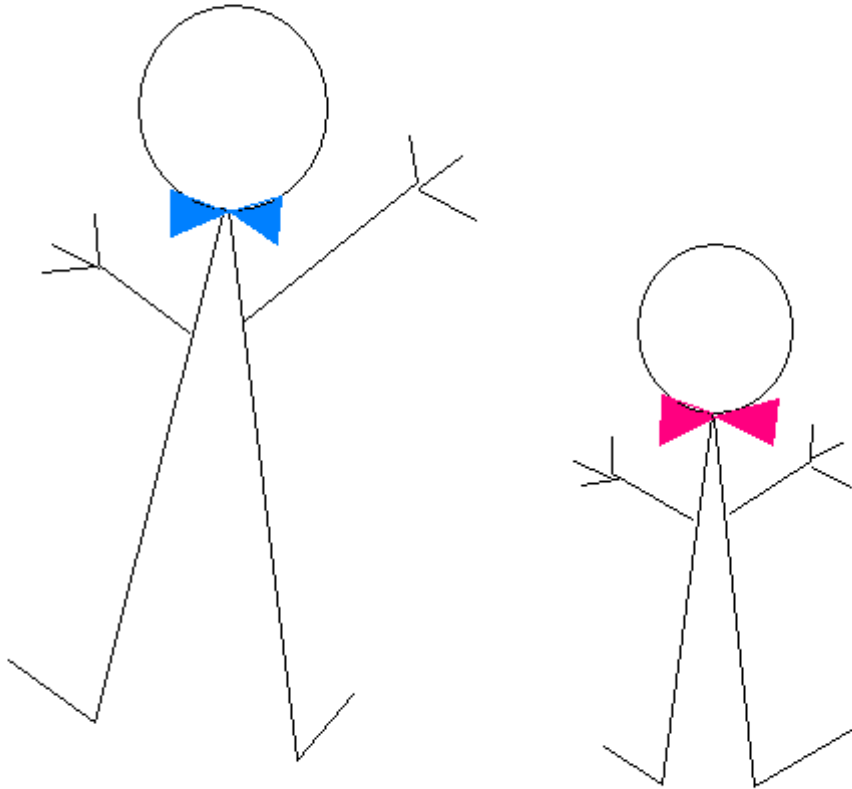


## Box 7: Monitoring the application of national guidelines within a gender approach

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Where?</b></p>                             | <p><b>Canada</b></p>  |
| <p><b>With Who?</b></p>                          | <p>Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), CBSA, CIC and Pre Removal Risk Assessment Unit.</p>   |
| <p><b>What?</b></p>                              | <p>UNHCR consistently monitors the application of the IRB gender guidelines including specific issues, such as state protection and internal flight alternative which are assessed in the case of at-risk-women. UNHCR is also monitoring RSD hearings and reporting to the IRB Senior Management on its findings <b>including</b> on AGDM issues two times a year. Examples of advocacy during reporting period include the prioritization of cases of single female head of household separated from spouse; ongoing training on gender issues for IRB decision makers; and ensuring accurate identification of gender (female) cases in IRB schedule prior to RSD hearing.</p> <p>UNHCR monitors the Pre Removal Risk Assessment Unit (part of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration) as well as Federal Court Decisions for gender related issues. UNHCR also observes procedures of Canada Border Services Agency at ports of entry, airports and inland offices to ensure gender sensitivity in front end examinations.</p> |
| <p><b>Why?</b></p>                               | <p>Because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhances AGD focus with the context of the new legislation;</li> <li>• Ensures prioritization of at-risk women and girl applicants.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Where can I find more information?</b></p> | <p><a href="http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/Pages/index.aspx">http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/Pages/index.aspx</a><br/> <a href="http://www.cic.gc.ca/">http://www.cic.gc.ca/</a><br/> <a href="http://www.cbsa.gc.ca/menu-eng.html">http://www.cbsa.gc.ca/menu-eng.html</a></p>  |



# MEN AND BOYS



The Americas Region has always been sensitive in ensuring a true gender oriented vision in its protection interventions, inclusive of men and boys. This is particularly true with SGBV prevention and response. **Colombia** has been active in involving men and boys in prevention activities and reducing the risk of them becoming perpetrators or victims themselves. The White Ribbon campaign initiated in 2004, mobilized civil society and masculinity groups and is still active today in sensitizing other men and boys and in creating a protective environment for all (see Box 1). The projects 'Fair Play' and 'Care Pathways through Theatre' worked with over 1000 children and adolescents but also parents, teachers, schools and indigenous communities in the Department of Arauca. Both projects dealt with SGBV concepts as well as prevention and care pathways for the concerned population.

### Box 1: Engaging Men and Boys in SGBV

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>Colombia</b>  |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | NGO CRECER, Colectivo Hombre y Masculinidad.   |
| <b>What?</b>                              | As part of the SGBV prevention work, UNHCR with NGO CRECER worked with the Male group “More Men, Less Macho” composed of 25 teenagers and 25 men. The establishment of this group was a request of women themselves, who considered it crucial to involve men in the prevention of SGBV. The men group has been trained in SGBV prevention, reproductive health, HIV prevention, human rights and gender equality, among others. |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | Because : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After two years of work, this men group is now undertaking awareness raising and prevention initiatives and organizing training workshops targeting men and aiming at enhancing the SGBV prevention community networks.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://www.aecid.org.co/2008/genero/documentos_genero/demachosahombres.pdf">http://www.aecid.org.co/2008/genero/documentos_genero/demachosahombres.pdf</a>  |

Other operations have been focusing on supporting perpetrators in getting out of the circle of violence. Refugee men support groups have also being initiated in **Costa Rica** and **Mexico** to enhance men support systems in the labour market, information exchange, support networks and the strengthening of their capacities.





## Box 2: Increased access for men to asylum procedures

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>Canada</b>  |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | Canadian Red Cross   |
| <b>What?</b>                              | <p>UNHCR has successfully advocated for the inclusion of a toll free number in Ontario provincial jails to allow persons of concern to connect to outside support. It is primarily male asylum seekers that benefit from this initiative. The toll free number to the Red Cross First Contact program was added to the Corrections Offender Telephone Management System (OTMS) in Ontario for immigration hold detainees in July 2011. Lack of access to legal and other support was noted during UNHCR monitoring visits; until implementation in July 2011 there had been a consistent lack of access to information, services and support for persons held under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in Correctional facilities, as they could only make collect calls, many of which were not accepted. These restrictions impacted on ability to effectively pursue an asylum application (given difficulty in meeting time limitation periods, obtaining identity documents).</p> |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases fair access to legal and other needed support;</li> <li>• Increased access to information;</li> <li>• Allows persons of concern to file an asylum application.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <p><a href="http://www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=8264&amp;tid=071">http://www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=8264&amp;tid=071</a><br/> <a href="http://www.cleo.on.ca/english/pub/onpub/PDF/immigration/arrdetim.pdf">http://www.cleo.on.ca/english/pub/onpub/PDF/immigration/arrdetim.pdf</a></p>  |

## Box 3: Involving men in their community

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Where?</b>    | <b>Haiti</b>  |
| <b>With Who?</b> | KOFAVIV (Komision Fanm Vitktim pou Viktim)  |
| <b>What?</b>     | <p>KOFAVIV has identified and trained 25 men as community agents within the biggest IDP camp in Port-au-Prince (Champ de Mars). They regularly carry-out prevention activities and “door-to-door” sensitisation, in addition to which they also contribute to the identification and referral of victims/survivors of SGBV in the camp.</p> |
| <b>Why?</b>      | <p>Because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves men who are the main perpetrators in preventing, responding and monitoring SGBV.</li> <li>• Allows a higher number of men living in the camps to understand the widespread issue of SGBV and to enhance protection networks.</li> </ul>                                |



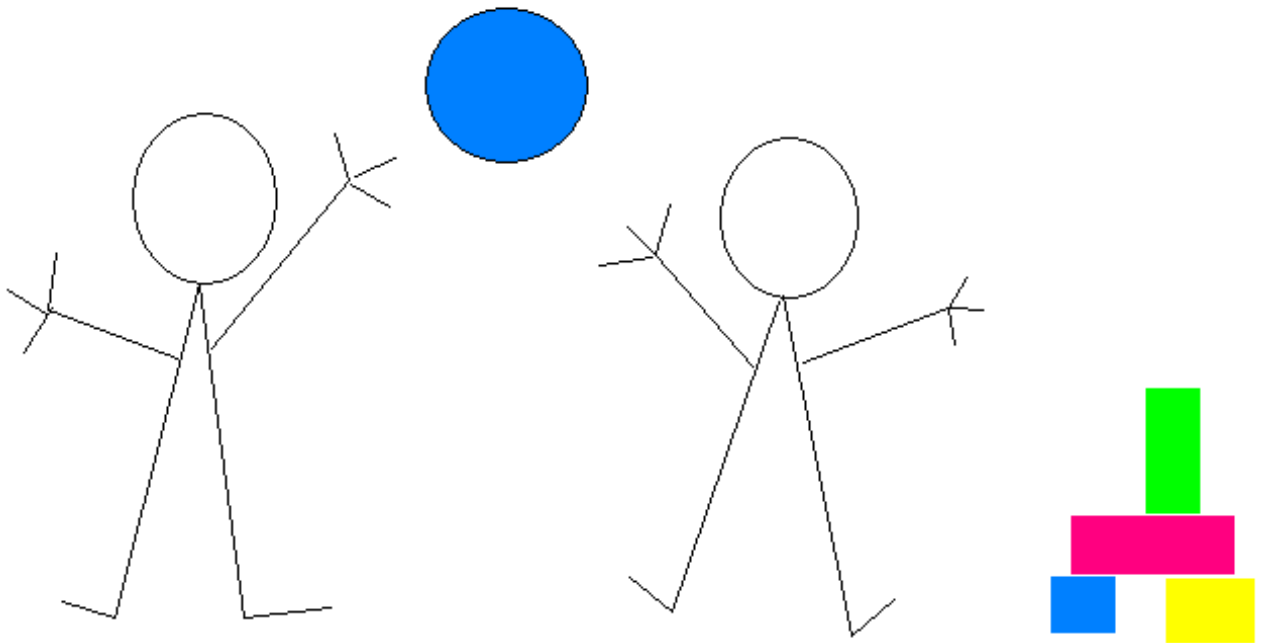
Where can I find more information?

- Includes information dissemination that will reach a higher number of potential victims/survivors of SGBV.

<http://kofaviv.org>



# CHILDREN INCLUDING ADOLESCENTS



The protection of children is a priority in all operations in the Americas. Some operations, such as **Argentina** (See Box 1) and **Mexico** have been leaders in protection of unaccompanied and separated children, while **Costa Rica** (see Box 2) and **Colombia** (see Box 3) have engaged with very positive results with adolescents, an age group that for its nature – no longer a child, not yet an adult – could fall into the cracks of prevention and assistance.

### Box 1: Protection and assistance for UASC

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | Argentina   |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | IOM, UNICEF, Migration Department, Ministry of Public Defense, CONARE and UNHCR's IPs (FCCAM and MYRAR).  |
| <b>What?</b>                              | In 2011, a “Protocol for the protection, assistance and search of durable solutions for unaccompanied or separated children seeking asylum” was adopted and partially implemented. The Protocol refers to the initial protection, reception and care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children as well as to the implementation of a special procedure for the determination of international protection needs.   |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the first agreement of its type in Argentina, and implies that since its introduction, initial care arrangements, accommodation and protection arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children are under the direct responsibility of national authorities;</li> <li>• Since November 2011 initial care arrangements, accommodation and protection measures for unaccompanied and separated children are under full responsibility of government authorities without UNHCR/UNICEF intervention;</li> <li>• A legal representative or “guardian”, provided by the Ministry of Public Defense, is assigned to each UASC who seeks asylum; and</li> <li>• Child Protection systems in Argentina are in charge of carrying out BIDs for all UASC.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://www.mpd.gov.ar/articulo/index/articulo/protocolo-para-los-ni-os-no-acompanados-o-separados-de-sus-familias-en-busca-de-asilo-953">http://www.mpd.gov.ar/articulo/index/articulo/protocolo-para-los-ni-os-no-acompanados-o-separados-de-sus-familias-en-busca-de-asilo-953</a>   |



## Box 2: Creating Youth Participation Networks

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Where?</b></p>                             | <p><b>Costa Rica</b></p>  |
| <p><b>With Who?</b></p>                          | <p>Ministry of Education of Costa Rica, IOM, Refugee Education Trust.</p>   |
| <p><b>What?</b></p>                              | <p>In February 2011, the Youth Conference “Ties without borders” took place in Costa Rica with the participation of some 180 adolescents who discussed the challenges of local integration for migrants and refugees.</p> <p>As a follow-up to the conference, a declaration and an action plan to work towards a more inclusive society were presented and the “Youth Network without Borders” was created. This Network is managed by young people aged between 16 and 30, and is addressing the main challenges that were identified during the Conference using innovative methods such as social networks, arts, music and theater. Since its creation, the Youth Network has been present throughout Costa Rica working with universities and the media. Moreover, the Youth Network has worked on creating awareness on integration matters. More than 120 Migration Board staff members were trained by the youth and the group has received funding from the Dutch embassy in Costa Rica to carry out its activities. The “Ties without borders” Facebook page has more than 1000 followers.</p> |
| <p><b>Why?</b></p>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Youth Conference and Youth Network have served as an advocacy tool and participatory exercise to discuss matters of concern to adolescents. Persons of concern themselves have been empowered to take action and have been given direct dialogue with national institutions.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Where can I find more information?</b></p> | <p><a href="http://www.acnur.org/t3/?id=940">http://www.acnur.org/t3/?id=940</a></p>  |

## Box 3: Engaging Adolescents

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Where?</b></p>    | <p><b>Colombia</b></p>  |
| <p><b>With Who?</b></p> | <p>PCN, Fundescodes, Parroquia San Pedro Apostol, Pastoral Afrocolombiana, Fundacion Rostros y huellas del sentir humano, SJR.</p>  |
| <p><b>What?</b></p>     | <p>As a result of a Music Festival in Buenaventura, a space for meetings and participation of young people was developed; it was called “<b>Marcando Territorio</b>”. This group has created songs whose themes are their rights, the defense of the territory, forced displacement, women, and other subjects related to their everyday life. With this music they are creating awareness about their protection gaps and getting young people</p> |



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Why?</b></p>                               | <p>involved in seeking solutions.</p> <p>During 2011 UNHCR supported the II Marcando Territorio Festival, institutionalized space for training, reflection and proposal building for the young people of Buenaventura, around organization strengthening, participation, advocacy and defense of territory.</p> <p>Because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes identity, territory and ethnic rights</li> <li>• Mitigates risks of forced recruitment and/or linkage of children to the armed conflict, as well as other risks associated to child labour, sexual violence, and child abuse,</li> <li>• Involves teachers on the strengthening of schools as safe and protection environments for children</li> <li>• Promotes children and teachers participation in the construction of a “sense of community” and to rebuild social fabric from an ethnic and rights perspective;</li> <li>• Shares experiences and a cultural events involving the entire community</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Where can I find more information?</b></p> | <p>One of their songs is called “Libertad” (Freedom) can be watched on YouTube: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMjFcmCC1ro">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMjFcmCC1ro</a></p>  |

Other operations supported Governments in developing, strengthening or enhancing national child protection systems: in **Brazil**, refugee children are treated on par as nationals and the best interest of the child principle is also enshrined in the Brazilian Constitution; in **Colombia**, UNHCR worked with the National Institute for Family Welfare - lead institution on protection and attention of children - to design a Children Protection Plan in all the south of Bolívar that included actions to respond to: forced recruitment; creative use of the free time; exploitation and child labor; and sexual and economical slavery). In the **Dominican Republic**, CONANI (Consejo Nacional para la Niñez y la Adolescencia) and the governmental National Child Protection entity were assisted by UNICEF and UNHCR to develop a policy framework entitled “Protocol for Vulnerable Haitian Children and Adolescents who crossed into Dominican Republic as a Consequence of the Earthquake”. This Protocol provides general guidelines for governmental and non-governmental entities on how to proceed with cases of unaccompanied and separated children survivors of the earthquake. UNHCR has worked jointly with national and international partners to strengthen child protection safety nets in the Dominican Republic. In **Central America** (See Box 4 below), and **Mexico**, where UNHCR is part of inter-institutional Dialogue Table led by the first lady and the Children Protection System, UNHCR supports governments in the establishment and enhancement of the Child Protection Officers (Oficiales de Protección de la Infancia) for the protection of unaccompanied and separated children in particular.



## Box 4: Design of a Child Protection System

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>Guatemala</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Instituto Mexicano de Migración (INM) within the frame of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM).   |
| <b>What?</b>                              | In February 2011, a Workshop on Child Protection Officers was co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mexican Immigration Institute and the RCM in order to establish a protection system for migrant children, including the framework of action for the child protection officers. Over 50 officials from national institutions, including the police, attended the workshop. The workshop was followed by a series of inter-institutional meetings called by the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs who proposed the adoption of an “Acuerdo Gubernativo” (Governmental Decree) to implement this child protection framework. Both UNHCR and UNICEF have been playing an active role in this process, and the input of these organizations is to be reflected in the “Operative Manual for Child Protection Officers,” that includes a referral procedure for those who may be in need of international protection. UNHCR and NGO partners participated in trainings for Operational Partners (OPs) that took place in Guatemala City (2009 and 2011), Honduras (2010) and Nicaragua (2011). |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | Because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It gathers key national and international actors to discuss ways of improving current practices and raise awareness on Child Protection with focus on migrants and refugees. Further work in this area is expected as new Government authorities are in place since mid of January 2012.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=biblioteca/pdf/7297">http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=biblioteca/pdf/7297</a> Please refer to paragraph 9.   |

Education opportunities were also created for refugees in **Brazil** (see below Box 5) and in **Ecuador**, where the Education and Youth Community-based projects - PACI - in Santa Barbara and Lago Agrio combine developing educational and recreational infrastructures along with the strengthening of civil society organizations and local government institutions and promote social inclusion and integration. In **Mexico, Costa Rica** and **Panama** children’s books were published as a way to raise awareness on refugee issues among children and to promote tolerance<sup>21</sup>. In **Panama**, as part of the national awareness campaign and sensibilization programs on the rights and duties of refugees the animated book “Eloisa and the bugs” was published and used as an advocacy tool against discrimination in preschool classrooms and other cultural spaces with a more diverse public as the VII international Book Fair in Panama City.

<sup>21</sup> In Costa Rica, the Story of Carlitos was published at

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.165556280121257.40044.149421481734737&type=1>.

In Mexico, the book Eloisa y los Bichos was Published at <http://www.acnur.org/t3/noticias/noticia/con-llevo-total-acnur-presento-edicion-especial-del-libro-el-loisa-y-los-bichos/>



## Box 5: Access to tertiary Education for Refugees

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | Brazil  |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair <sup>22</sup> : the Catholic University of Santos (UNISANTOS), the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar) and the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG).   |
| <b>What?</b>                              | <p>Special entry requirements and selection processes are in place for refugees who want to pursue their studies at the Catholic University of Santos, the Federal University of São Carlos and the Federal University of Minas Gerais, three key centers for higher education in the country and members of the Sergio Vieira de Mello Chair (SVMC). Among the courses on offer there are Business Management, Nursing, Medicine, Computer Science, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Linguistics, Pedagogy and Psychology.</p> <p>The SVMC has two key aims: to stimulate academic production on forced displacement and International Refugee Law and to facilitate the access of refugees living in Brazil to higher education through the establishment of partnerships with learning institutions to provide fee discounts, scholarship and adapt their entry mechanisms to make them more accessible to refugees . The Chair further seeks to enhance the access of PoC to services Universities provide to the general public, including medical, legal and counseling services.</p> |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It removes barriers refugees face to access tertiary education improving their skills and employability, and enhancing their local integration and livelihood opportunities among the host community.</li> <li>• The initiative also sensitizes students and the Brazilian academia about refugee issues and forced displacement, and stimulates scholarly research and academic production on relevant themes. It further encourages Universities to extend services they make available to the general public to UNHCR's persons of concern and adapt them to respond to their specific needs.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <p>Direct link with more information on the SVMC: <a href="http://www.acnur.org/t3/portugues/sobre-o-site/envolva-se/eventos/ii-seminario-nacional-da-catedra-sergio-vieira-de-mello/">http://www.acnur.org/t3/portugues/sobre-o-site/envolva-se/eventos/ii-seminario-nacional-da-catedra-sergio-vieira-de-mello/</a><br/>           UNHCR Brazil's website: <a href="http://www.acnur.org.br">www.acnur.org.br</a><br/>           Twitter: @acnurbrasil</p>  |

Particular attention in the Americas is given to Unaccompanied and Separated Children, as is the case of **Canada** and the **USA** (see Box 6 and 7). **Best Interest Determination (BID)** processes or **Best Interest Assessment (BIA)** are carried out in **Argentina, Bolivia** (for Unaccompanied and Separated Haitian smuggled children) **SOPS for UASC** have also been discussed in with IOM and UNICEF. In **Mexico**, UNHCR managed to include BID on the implementing regulations of the Refugee and

<sup>22</sup> In 2003, UNHCR signed the first of a series of forthcoming agreements with both public and private universities in southern Latin America, to set up academic chairs named after Sergio Vieira de Mello. The chairs promote the teaching of human rights, international humanitarian law, and refugee and migration law.





Migration Laws. In **Ecuador**, the attention is given to the autonomy and the independence of these children (see Box 8).

### Box 6: Legal Representation of UASC during eligibility interview

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>Canada</b>  |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | The Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), the Canadian Red Cross, Peel Children’s Aid Societies and the law firm of McCarthy Tétrault.  |
| <b>What?</b>                              | <p>During 2010 and 2011, UNHCR actively promoted a pilot project for a Proposed Child Representative Program for Unaccompanied Children at Pearson Airport during eligibility interviews. This project allows for support from the beginning of the asylum process to the child asylum seekers arriving at Pearson airport. In partnership with the organizations listed above, UNHCR facilitated a process where CBSA will contact the Children’s Aid Society, the IRB and McCarthy Tétrault as soon as an unaccompanied child is identified. The law firm will indicate within 48 hours whether they can provide a Proposed Child Representative to be present at the front end examination in support of the child. Their services are on a pro bono basis. CBSA will schedule the examination date when proposed child representative can be present and the IRB commences the process for formally appointing a Designated Representative under their jurisdiction to allow for seamless support to the child claimant.</p> |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides support to children of concern during the examination process and seamless transition to the IRB;</li> <li>• Reduces detention;</li> <li>• Expedites the RSD process at the IRB; and</li> <li>• Reduces the government’s costs of detention and early identification of children’s cases for the IRB, allowing them expedite their procedures as vulnerable claimants.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://www.mccarthy.ca/community_and_pro_bono_work.aspx">http://www.mccarthy.ca/community_and_pro_bono_work.aspx</a>  |

### Box 7: Border monitoring and introduction of safeguards

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Where?</b>    | <b>United States of America</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b> | Department of Homeland Security (DHS)   |
| <b>What?</b>     | <p>UNHCR is actively involved with DHS in an effort to monitor the implementation of screening for protection needs and related processes of Mexican Unaccompanied Children (UAC) at the US/Mexico border as mandated under the 2008 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) §235 (a) (2) (A) &amp; (a) (4). UNHCR has</p> |



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Why?</b></p>                               | <p>presented and discussed with DHS a detailed proposal to conduct this monitoring. As a first step, DHS provided UNHCR access to their staff and facilities, and to UAC in the Laredo, Texas border area to assess the operational challenges faced by Customs &amp; Border Protection (CBP) at the US/Mexico border, the effectiveness of the training and practices used to identify, screen and process Mexican UAC in need of protection in light of these challenges, and the feasibility of conducting further monitoring at other US/Mexico border locations. UNHCR has provided a “feasibility study” with observations, findings and recommendations based on the Laredo border mission and will meet with DHS to discuss the study and the implementation of the fuller UAC monitoring proposal in the near future.</p> <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration with national institutions is crucial to ensure mainstreaming of persons of concern in national protection mechanisms;</li> <li>• At the conclusion of the Laredo Feasibility Study Mission, UNHCR had a teleconference with DHS officials directly involved in the study. During this teleconference, DHS and CBP agreed with the conclusion that there is a need for a comprehensive monitoring and, in response to concerns identified by UNHCR relating to inconsistency in the implementation certain aspects of the law, DHS and CBP suggested that further training would be important, an observation and recommendation UNHCR planned to raise at a later time and appreciated that they had come to this conclusion on their own.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Where can I find more information?</b></p> | <p>At this time, all information is confidential between UNHCR and the USG. These confidential documents include: UAC Monitoring Proposal; Feasibility Study Proposal; Report on Feasibility Study conducted in Laredo, Texas.</p>   |

**Box 8: Respect for the autonomy of Unaccompanied and Separated Adolescents**

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Where?</b></p>    | <p>Ecuador</p>   |
| <p><b>With Who?</b></p> | <p>CONFIE (<i>Consortio de Organizaciones de No Gubernamentales a Favor de la Infancia Ecuatoriana</i> - Consortium of non-governmental organizations in favor of Ecuadorian childhood), ASA (<i>Asociación Solidaridad y Acción</i> - Association of Solidarity and Action).</p>  |
| <p><b>What?</b></p>     | <p>In the case of unaccompanied adolescents it is very difficult to find shelter and assistance that can respond to their specific needs. In Ecuador the institution participating in this project has developed a model of attention which respects the Independence and autonomy of these youngsters through provision of “roving” assistance. The adolescents live in rooms that they can rent, and are responsible for managing their own lives, but if needed or wanted, these adolescents can seek and receive the support of a specialized team of care givers, helping them in building their future through facilitate access to education, training, employment and recreational activities.</p> |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is an innovative experience in the country that could become an effective response not only for unaccompanied refugee adolescents and youth but also for other youths for whom the traditional mechanisms of foster care are not viable.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <p><a href="http://www.confie.org.ec">www.confie.org.ec</a><br/> <a href="http://www.asosolac.org/site/">http://www.asosolac.org/site/</a></p>  |

Birth registration and access to birth certificates is still one of the gaps in protecting children in the Americas. UNHCR **Haiti**, together with the Organization of America States are taking steps in closing this gap by ensuring that all the newborns in Carrefour, Delmas and Cite Soleil areas in Port au Prince are declared and registered before them and their mothers are released from the hospital. UNHCR is also assisting in family tracing (see Box 9 Below).

**Box 9: Protection of children and adolescents at risk in border areas.**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Where?</b>    | <b>Venezuela</b>  |
| <b>With Who?</b> | Institute for the Rights of children and Adolescents (IDENNA)   |
| <b>What?</b>     | <p>A Memorandum of understanding has been established between UNHCR and the Institute for the Rights of children and Adolescents (IDENNA). As part of this agreement, UNHCR will provide input on the Protocol of Standard Procedures in the Treatment of Girls, Boys and Adolescents at risk in border areas currently being elaborated by the government. In addition, in 2011, training of trainers workshops were carried out with 34 personnel from the states of Zulia, Apure, Táchira, Bolívar, Amazonas and from Caracas. Each participant in turn carried out a workshop with a group of 10 – 20 members of child protection networks in their region. Furthermore, UNCHR has strengthened its coordination mechanisms with IDENNA and several Municipal Councils for child protection in border areas to ensure the best access to services for minors in individual cases that find themselves in particularly vulnerable situations.</p> <p>In 2012 participatory assessments are being carried out in the border area and UNHCR is collaborating in order to ensure that refugee population have their say in this process. The assessment will feed the public policy and standards of treatment of children and adolescents at risk in border areas. It is also envisaged that two assistance centres for children will be set in strategic points of entry at the border.</p> |
| <b>Why?</b>      | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National child protection capacities and standards will be more inclusive of refugee population. Increased levels of awareness on the specific needs of refugees and more appropriate intervention methodologies will have an improved impact on the lives of child and adolescent refugees and their families.</li> </ul>   |



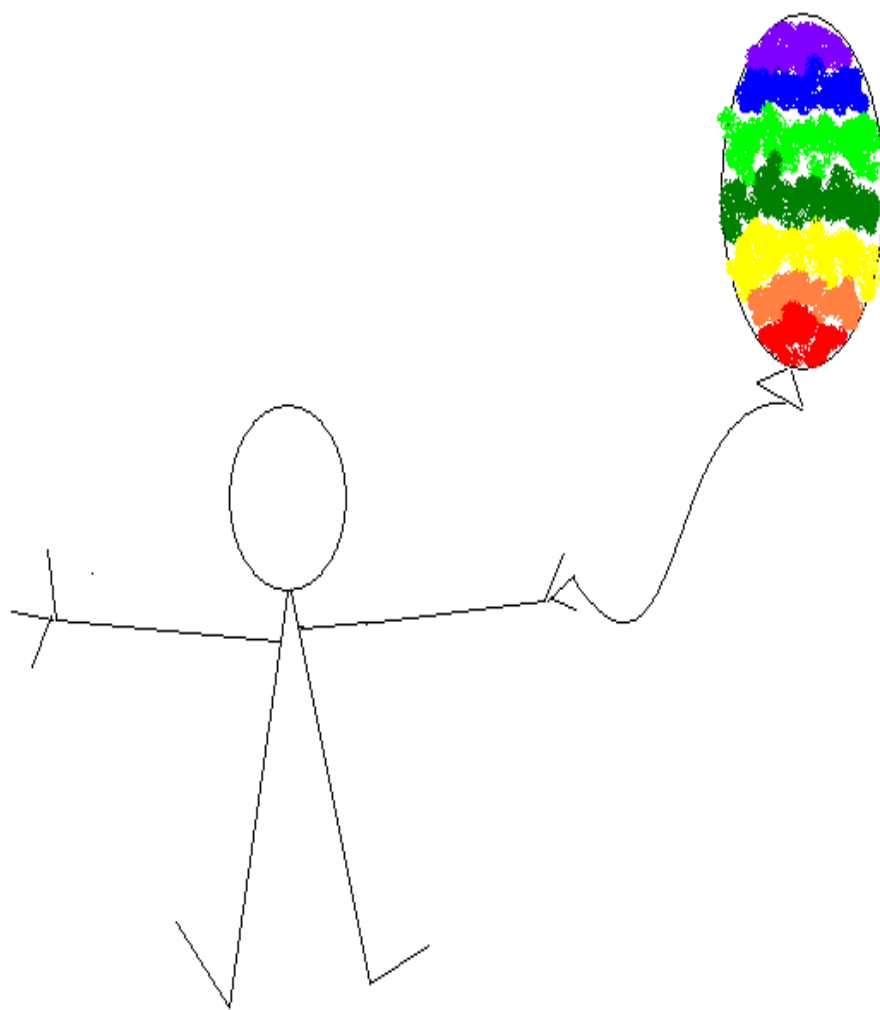
|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a public policy with concrete actions that will address specific concerns of population in border areas.</li> </ul> <p>N/A</p> |
|---|---|

**Box 10: Working towards durable solutions for unaccompanied and separated children**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>Haiti/Dominican Republic</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | CONANI (National Council for the Childhood and Adolescence)   |
| <b>What?</b>                              | <p>UNHCR has engaged in the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracing of separated children Haitian siblings who disappeared after the earthquake;</li> <li>Family reunification for children at risk of SGBV (e.g. in the US, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Argentina);</li> <li>Exploring durable solutions for Haitian children in the Dominican Republic whose guardians are not found;</li> <li>Support pro-bono attorneys on Humanitarian Parole cases</li> <li>Establishment of BID panel for short and long term solutions.</li> <li>Training of 9 “Juntas Locales de Proteccion y Restitución de Derechos” (local councils for protection and restitution of rights).</li> <li>Facilitated the coordination between Child Protection Agencies of Dominican Republic and Haiti.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It reinforces the protection of children, especially survivors of the earthquake.</li> <li>Strengthens the dialogue and cooperation between UNHCR and CONANI.</li> <li>It raises further awareness on the needs, concerns and challenges that local NGOs as well as CONANI are facing regarding the protection of children.</li> <li>All activities established with CONANI have raised awareness on the need for institutionalizing the BID procedure.</li> <li>UNHCRs efforts with CONANI have strengthened the communication and coordination with UNICEF and IOM.</li> <li>UNHCR has ensured the incorporation of child protection vision to all members of the BID panel and has achieved to reunify several children with their families in Haiti taking into account the best interest of the child.</li> <li>Reinforced the communication between both nations Child Protection Agencies.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://www.conani.gov.do/">http://www.conani.gov.do/</a>   |



# LGBTI PERSONS



LGBTI is a group of concern often overlooked. With its updated SGBV strategy, UNHCR renewed its commitment to ensure that the “D” in the age, gender and diversity strategy is as inclusive as possible. In the Americas, UNHCR has been actively involved in ensuring protection for all groups of concern and in advocating for the creation of a protection space that is free from discrimination and inequality.

The Legislation and jurisprudence in the region favors the protection of LGBTI. As an example, a recent decision by **Brazil’s** Supreme Court<sup>23</sup> (STF) of recognizing legal rights to same sex partners in stable union created a better environment for the analysis of asylum claims based on the grounds of sexual orientation persecution. These couples now have the right to receive alimony; heritage rights to be included into their partners’ health insurance, and to adopt children. Furthermore, the country has granted asylum and has accepted resettlement cases of individuals who fled from persecution on account of sexual orientation, under the ground of membership of a particular social group.

UNHCR in the Americas is working to ensure that the LGBTI guidelines are distributed and implemented among partners (see Box 2) and to advocate for their rights and protection. In **Canada**, UNHCR provided training to the IRB<sup>24</sup> decision makers on the UNHCR Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and cooperated with the Training Sector of the umbrella organization “Table de Concertation des Organismes au Service des Personnes Réfugiées et Immigrantes” (TCRI) in disseminating the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Special Feature to its local partners. In **Panama**, the Capacity Building Plan has focused on LGBTI and targeted different public institutions as well as the Refugee Status Determination Eligibility Commissioners.

In the **United States of America**, the UNHCR Regional Representative for the United States and the Caribbean spoke at the Human Rights First Conference on “Protection and durable solutions for LGBTI refugees: Challenges and opportunities”. UNHCR has also partnered with a local NGO to fight issues related to LGBTI discrimination and injustice (see Box 1). UNHCR **Mexico** raised awareness on the situation of LGBTI refugees through consultations from the US George Washington University. In **Costa Rica**, members of the Migratory Administrative Tribunal were trained on LGBTI.

In Arica (**Chile**), the Human Rights Office provided information and support related to LGBTI related queries and in cases of discrimination. UNHCR shared its LGBTI guidelines with Human Rights Office of the municipality of Arica. The FASIC, one of UNHCR’s main implementing partners in Chile, are working together with civil society organizations.

**Box 1: Advocacy for equality and non-discrimination**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Where?</b>    | <b>United States of America</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b> | National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC), Heartland Alliance in Chicago.  |
| <b>What?</b>     | In April 2011, NIJC filed a mass civil rights complaint about the abuse and mistreatment of thirteen gay and/or transgender detainees, some who were asylees to the U.S. In June, the Heartland alliance was awarded a grant from the DHHS’s Administration for Children and Families (ACF), specifically the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to |

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,,BRA,,4dc8d5d62,0.html>

<sup>24</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board



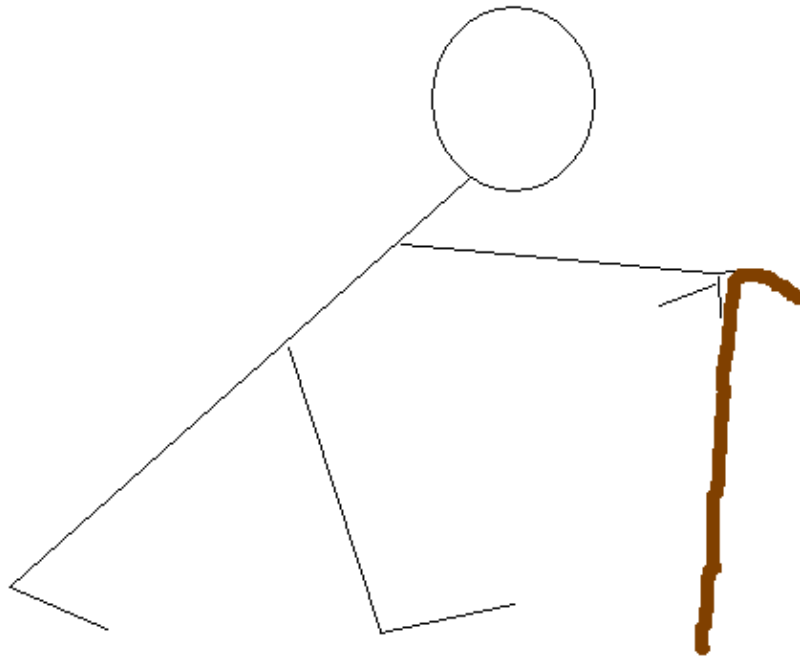
|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>support the resettlement of LGBTI refugees.</p> <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It opens up legal spaces for specific groups of concern to claim their rights;</li> <li>• It raises further awareness on the needs, concerns and discrimination faced by LGBTI persons; and</li> <li>• It allocates particular funds for the implementation of particular targeted actions.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <p><a href="http://www.rainbowwelcome.org/">http://www.rainbowwelcome.org/</a></p>   |

### Box 2: Assessing LGBTI RSD claims

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>Venezuela</b>  |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | National Commission for Refugees  |
| <b>What?</b>                              | <p>A concrete interpretative guidance in line with UNHCR standards has been introduced in the “Eligibility Criteria Manual” of the National Commission for Refugees (RSD eligibility body) so as to adequately interpret the sixth ground of the national refugee definition “sex” (including: persecution of LGBTI groups, domestic violence, discrimination and gender identity).</p> |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It incorporates UNHCR guidelines into the national RSD manual;</li> <li>• It involves the National Commission for Refugees in the elaboration of the manual, strengthening ownership and cooperation.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | N/A   |



# OLDER WOMEN AND MEN





Older persons can face enormous challenges in accessing services and enjoying their rights due to limitations in mobility and understanding, among others.

In the Americas, UNHCR works in partnership with Governments, NGOs and UN Agencies to ensure that policies and services are inclusive and responsive to the needs and concern of this population group.

**Colombia, Costa Rica and USA** have been at the forefront when working with governmental institutions and partners in ensuring access to services and income generating activities (see Boxes 1, 2 and 3).

### Box 1: Partnership with Governmental Institutions and Line Ministries

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>Colombia</b>  |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | Ministry for Social Protection   |
| <b>What?</b>                              | <p>Following a participatory methodology, UNHCR and the Ministry for Social Protection developed National Guidelines for the prevention and attention of Forced Displacement, with a focus on older women and men. The guidelines have been used as training material for public officials and communities and as reference for local and national policies.</p> <p>Furthermore, a process with the Ministry of Social Protection and the advocacy for supporting an occupational initiative of the “New Family” Association. This process is oriented to promote institutional services for elderly displaced people from the “Asentamiento Nueva Esperanza” (IDPs settlement).</p> |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public policies at local level included affirmative actions for older persons;</li> <li>• Older persons were identified and referred to the proper institution for attention;</li> <li>• Public functionaries and civil society organizations members were trained on the subject; and</li> <li>• The guidelines are widely used by functionaries and communities.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://www.minproteccionsocial.gov.co/Lineamientos/Lineamientos-%20Directriz%20Persona%20Mayor%20en%20Desplazamiento.pdf">http://www.minproteccionsocial.gov.co/Lineamientos/Lineamientos-%20Directriz%20Persona%20Mayor%20en%20Desplazamiento.pdf</a>  |



## Box 2: Partnership with Governmental Institutions and Line Ministries

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | <b>United States of America</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | US Congress Members, US Citizenship & Immigration Services (CIS), White House Staff, and national and local NGOs.   |
| <b>What?</b>                              | UNHCR has been actively involved in a national working group addressing the ability of older refugees and asylees to continue to have access to an important economic support program, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for individuals unable to work due to age or disability. The law currently limits the receipt of SSI to a maximum of seven years for refugees and asylees who have not become US citizens, a process that poses numerous obstacles that are especially difficult for older persons and individuals with disabilities to overcome. Many of these individuals are survivors of torture and other severe trauma. |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It offers life-sustaining economic assistance to particularly vulnerable individuals;</li> <li>• It raises further awareness on the needs, concerns and discrimination faced by older persons and persons with disability, including survivors of torture and trauma; and</li> <li>• It serves as a tool to promote solutions to the difficulties faced by the older persons and persons with disability in becoming US citizens</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <a href="http://advocacy.hias.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=203">http://advocacy.hias.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=203</a>   |

## Box 3: Enhancing capacities of persons of concern

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Where?</b>    | <b>Costa Rica</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b> | Asociación de Asesores y Consultores Internacionales (ACAI)   |
| <b>What?</b>     | UNHCR Implementing Partner has assisted in establishing a group of older refugees that is a support network and also promotes some income generating activities. The group has become part of the national network for organizations of older persons, which is a nationwide network that works to strengthen self-reliance among the elderly; to promote their human rights; their access to health services; and arrange income generating courses and trips. |
| <b>Why?</b>      | Because:  |



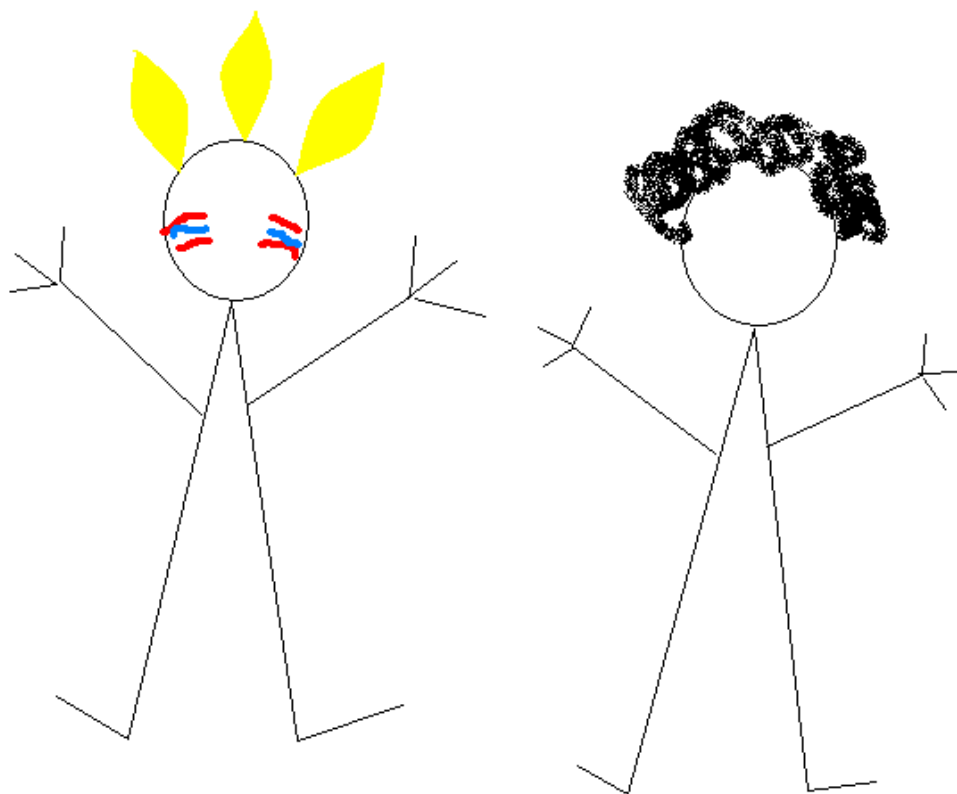
**Where can I find more information?**

- The participation in the national network has enabled the older refugees to interact with persons from the whole country, and even to raise awareness about the situation of refugees in Costa Rica. It has also opened doors to different kinds of activities that the older refugees did not have access to earlier.

<http://www.acnur.org/t3/noticias/noticia/festival-integrarte-celebra-a-migrantes-y-refugiados-en-costa-rica/>



# PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS GROUPS



Conflicts in the Americas region have traditionally had a strong impact on Afro-Colombians and indigenous groups. The indigenous and the Afro-descendants suffer of systematic violations of their individual and collective rights and are among the groups of concern to UNHCR at heightened risk.

The Durban Plan of Action<sup>25</sup> requested Governments to fulfill their international obligations vis-à-vis the protection of refugees and asylum seekers. Latin America has been the most active region in implementing, monitoring and following up on the Durban Plan of Action and in ensuring that the individual and collective rights of indigenous and afro-descendants stay high on the public agendas. As an example, in **Colombia**, the participation of indigenous and afro descendant communities is enshrined in the Colombian legal framework recognizing their cultural diversity, right to land and autonomy. Legal Order 005 of 2009 includes the protection of the fundamental rights of the afro descendant population forcibly displaced. UNHCR is developing interventions aiming at the respect and the recognition of cultural diversity, protection of collective territories and the autonomy of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, authorities and organizations. UNHCR is also working to promote the strengthening of the relations between State institutions and authorities of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities (see Box 2).

In 2009, through its resolution No. 64/169, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year for People of African Descent. In the Americas, UNHCR commemorated this year with many initiatives, including a Public Information campaign (See Box 1); photo exhibitions (such as the “Let’s never forget” exhibition in **Ecuador** and the “Salvavárda, el Pueblo Awá Aguarda” exhibition in **Colombia**); and particular activities (see Box 2). UNHCR participated in the Third International Conference of the Center for Culture and African Languages and the Diaspora<sup>26</sup> in **Brazil** and in the World Afro-descendant Youth Summit.

### Box 1: Raising awareness through Public Information campaigns

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Where?</b>    | <b>Colombia</b>   |
| <b>With Who?</b> | Local authorities   |
| <b>What?</b>     | The campaign “If they disappear, a part of you disappears” was launched on 9 August 2011, followed by an event at the museum of gold to commemorate the year of indigenous communities. This campaign tries to ensure a closer contact between Colombians and each of the 35 indigenous communities that were declared at risk of extinction by the Colombian Constitutional Court.                           |
| <b>Why?</b>      | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It raises awareness in the Region on the risk of extinction for more than 35 indigenous communities;</li> <li>• The Campaign was embraced by the civil society;</li> <li>• The website turned out to be an informative tool for people and media; and</li> <li>• It had a vast coverture of the main national and international media and</li> </ul> |

<sup>25</sup> Adopted by consensus at the 2001 World Conference against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa, the DDPA is a comprehensive, action-oriented document that proposes concrete measures to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Paragraphs 52-55 make specific reference to refugees and asylum seekers.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.unesp.br/noticia.php?artigo=6924>



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Where can I find more information?</b></p> | <p>gained privileged spaces in Colombia’s most influential newspapers.</p> <p>A website was created for people to support the campaign and learn about the 35 indigenous communities: <a href="http://www.mipresente.org">www.mipresente.org</a>.</p> |
|--|---|

**Box 2: Empowerment of persons of concern belonging to ethnic minority groups**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Where?</b></p>                             | <p><b>Colombia</b></p>   |
| <p><b>With Who?</b></p>                          | <p>Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)</p>   |
| <p><b>What?</b></p>                              | <p>UNHCR worked with the indigenous people “Bari” (Norte de Santander) in building prevention and protection plans to defend their territory and preserve their culture. UNHCR and NRC conducted a three-day workshop with 50 Bari indigenous representatives and traditional chiefs in Tibú, in order to elaborate a public policy agenda with the five municipalities of the Catatumbo region. The main topics of the agenda were: land, health, education, culture, autonomy, organization and family welfare. The Bari’s agenda was then presented to the local authorities. UNHCR and NRC will provide technical support for the inclusion of the indigenous’ proposals in the Municipal Unique Integral Plans (PIU) and development plans.</p> |
| <p><b>Why?</b></p>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It ensures that minorities’ rights are respected; and</li> <li>• It involves communities in the elaboration of their own protection plans and creates a link between communities and national institutions.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Where can I find more information?</b></p> | <p><a href="http://www.acnur.org/t3/pueblos-indigenas/pueblos-indigenas-en-colombia/">http://www.acnur.org/t3/pueblos-indigenas/pueblos-indigenas-en-colombia/</a></p>   |

As an example of promoting communication and community participations, in the Sucumbíos province of **Ecuador**, refugees and Ecuadorians living in border areas use the radio program “El río habla” to express their needs and concerns and defend their rights. This radio program has significantly contributed to increase State presence and public investments in these remote communities and has enabled the development of a social dialogue between these communities and relevant authorities. In **Colombia**, Awá, Siona, Jiw and Sikuni were trained on organizational skills, and negotiation process of the ethnic protection plan. An indigenous leadership school was also promoted.

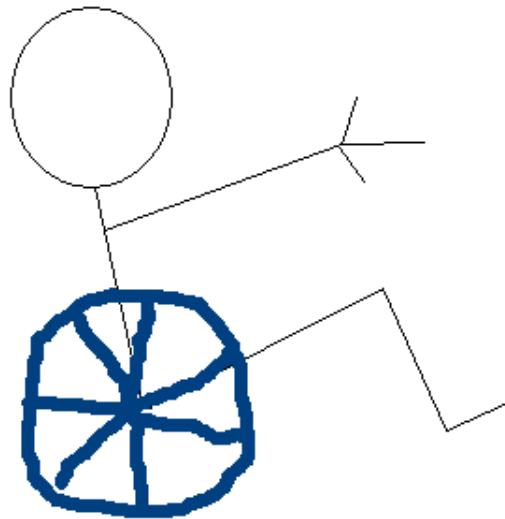


### Box 3: Promoting rights, peace and local integration through sports

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Where?</b>                             | Ecuador   |
| <b>With Who?</b>                          | San Lorenzo Municipality, Esmeraldas Church – Nación de Paz, HIAS, RET.   |
| <b>What?</b>                              | <p>In September 2010, in San Lorenzo, UNHCR supported the association of young afro-descendants in the organization of a street football festival as an event to promote peace. This event gathered both Ecuadorian nationals and Colombian refugees. Teams were made up of both men, women, Colombian and Ecuadorian nationals and no referees were present during the game. Instead, mediators promoted agreements on the rules for the games. The festival was initiated by a parade along the city that contained messages of peace and integration.</p>  |
| <b>Why?</b>                               | <p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It promotes local integration in a culture of peace and tolerance</li> <li>• It is an inclusive activity that engages communities to decide on their own rules.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Where can I find more information?</b> | <p><a href="http://esmeraldas2012.blogspot.com/2011/11/acnur-trabaja-con-proyectos-de-cultura.html">http://esmeraldas2012.blogspot.com/2011/11/acnur-trabaja-con-proyectos-de-cultura.html</a><br/> <a href="http://www.acnur.org/t3/index.php?id=550&amp;no_cache=1&amp;tx_ttnews[ttnews]=1648&amp;cHash=787efe5e720501a19d4428449565a01e">http://www.acnur.org/t3/index.php?id=550&amp;no_cache=1&amp;tx_ttnews[ttnews]=1648&amp;cHash=787efe5e720501a19d4428449565a01e</a><br/> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.162929860404012.32982.100000609984412&amp;type=3">https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.162929860404012.32982.100000609984412&amp;type=3</a><br/> <a href="http://www.explored.com.ec/noticias-ecuador/futbol-de-calle-contra-la-violencia-438707.html">http://www.explored.com.ec/noticias-ecuador/futbol-de-calle-contra-la-violencia-438707.html</a></p> |



# PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES





The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>27</sup> defines persons with disabilities as: *“those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”*<sup>28</sup> The Convention recognizes the responsibility of States in providing protection to persons with disabilities, emphasizing in particular that: *“State parties shall take, in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.”*<sup>29</sup>

Disability is a cross-cutting issue that for the purpose of this document we kept separate but it is another variable that is taken into account when talking about women, children, boys, girls and men.

In the Americas, almost all the operations are working in ensuring that persons with disabilities have equal access and full enjoyment of their rights.

In **Canada** UNHCR established Regional Advisory Committees on Mental Health in Ontario to review gaps and best practices in asylum procedures for individuals with specific needs. Key developments have included the creation of flowchart to review intersection between mental health and asylum process in Canada, development of a checklist as a screening tool for front line workers, review of alternatives to detention for this group of concern and proposed training workshop for government, NGOs on the issue. In Toronto, a research paper on intersection between Mental Health and Asylum resulted from internship with the Experiential Education Opportunity of the International Refugee Protection Regime I & II courses at York University. A similar initiative is also on-going in Toronto.

In **Chile**, UNHCR’s partners have established protocols to refer and support people with disabilities, (See Box 1). In 2009, the Government of Chile established the Working Group on Vulnerable Persons, which as of 2010 fell under the Department of Social Assistance (DAS). The Working Group reviews cases of vulnerable individuals and provides a proposal to the DAS on the level of support recommended for each case. The working group consists of the Department of Social Assistance, the Department of Migration, UNHCR and other members of the asylum program in Chile ( the Vicaria, FASIC).The DAS establishes the criteria for the distribution of funds by the Ministry of Interior. Other government institutions, such as the National Service for Women or the National Service for Minors, etc, may also be invited on an ad hoc basis. In the future, this program will be decentralised to also include the programs in the North of Chile (Arica, Iquique).

**Box 1: SOPs for responding to persons with disabilities**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Where?</b>    | Chile  |
| <b>With Who?</b> | FASIC of Arica (Evangelist church)                               |
| <b>What?</b>     | Protocols for referral and support to persons with disabilities. |
| <b>Why?</b>      | Because:   |

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

<sup>28</sup> Article 1(2)

<sup>29</sup> Article 11



**Where can I find more information?**

- It ensures referral to the correct institution ensuring a proper response and follow up.

<http://teleton.cl/institutos/arica/> provides information on rehabilitation services for persons 0-18 years old

As further examples, in Mocoa, **Colombia**, the differential approach's working group – promoted by UNHCR – designed and implemented an advocacy strategy to facilitate access to institutional services by persons with disabilities. In the **USA**, UNHCR continues to urge the Government to ensure that older and disabled refugees and asylees who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits have a meaningful opportunity to naturalize and for those who cannot naturalize to retain benefits necessary for their health and well-being. In **Venezuela** a Regional Meeting sponsored by the Zulian Blind Association was the occasion for organizing a networking group that will be involved in the protection of persons with disabilities.



