

Report

on the Annual Consultations with
Non-Governmental Organizations
15-17 June 2016

CICG • Geneva, Switzerland

On behalf of NGOs:

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UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



Acknowledgments

The preparations for the 2016 Annual UNHCR-NGO Consultations are very time consuming. It takes a focused and dedicated team to make it all come together.

As the Rapporteur for this year's Consultations, I would like to thank the amazing group of people I had the pleasure to work with for the last year. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to UNHCR, especially the Partnership Section, and ICVA, especially Policy Analyst Sophie Helle. The planning team enjoyed excellent support from Rachael Reilly of the Women's Refugee Commission and Nick Sore of UNHCR, who were also leading the Global Refugee Youth Consultations.

This report would not have been possible without the efforts of the many note takers and tweeters. I would also like to recognize Aslı Salihoğlu for her efforts in helping draft this report.

A very special thank you goes to the Vice-Rapporteur Rachel Criswell of World Vision who helped me throughout the Consultations process and also in the drafting of this report.

I am thankful to you all for your aspiring guidance and friendly advice during the last year. It has been my absolute pleasure to work with you all.

Thank you!

Musarait Kashmiri

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Executive Summary

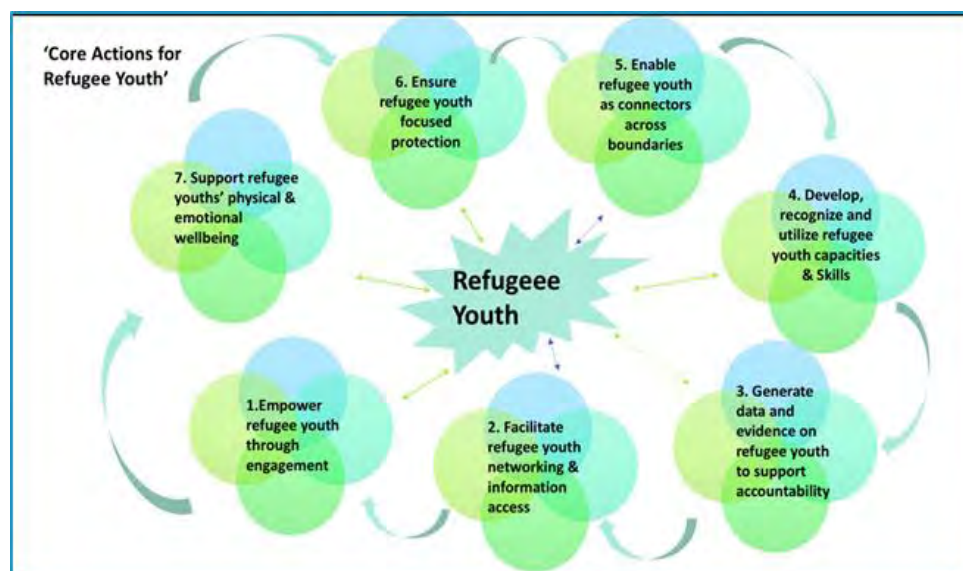
A year of youth for UNHCR: UNHCR’s 2016 Annual Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) took place in June in Geneva, Switzerland during a time when more than 65 million people are forcibly displaced; a tally never before recorded in the history of UNHCR. Refugee, stateless and internally displaced youth—young women and men between the ages 15 and 24—represent an underserved group in humanitarian operations. They often slip through political, social, and bureaucratic gaps and programming often focuses on initiatives for children and adults. To examine these issues more closely, 30 youth delegates met with 520 representatives from 300 organizations in 87 countries at the consultation to discuss this year’s theme, “**Youth – the future is now.**”

This consultation was the culmination of conversations begun earlier in 2015 on the unique capacities and vulnerabilities of the youth with whom and for whom UNHCR works. These conversations included consultations with stateless youth in 7 countries (July and August 2015) including Côte d’Ivoire, the Dominican Republic and Thailand. The information and testimonies gathered during these consultations were used to publish the report “I Am Here, I Belong: The Urgent Need to End Childhood Statelessness,” which was launched on the occasion of the 1st anniversary of the #IBelong Campaign.

October 2015 saw the start of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations (GRYC) in countries around the globe, including Malta, Uganda and Jordan. These aimed to provide a more visible platform for refugee and host community youth voices. Young women and men boys and girls convened to express their concerns highlight and demonstrate their capacities, elaborate on the challenges they face, and offer feedback on current programming by UNHCR and partners. By June 2016 the Global Refugee Youth Consultations process had heard from nearly than 1,000 youth from 30 different countries.

Through the GYRC, youth developed 7 policy recommendations in the form of ‘Core Actions for Refugee Youth’; to address the specific challenges that refugee youth face. The Core actions adopt a whole of systems approach that considers the whole person, rather than focussing on sector specific responses, as follows:

- Action 1:** Empower refugee youth through engagement
- Action 2:** Facilitate refugee youth networking and information access
- Action 3:** Generate data and evidence on refugee youth to support accountability
- Action 4:** Develop, recognize and utilize refugee youth capacities and skills
- Action 5:** Enable refugee youth as connectors across boundaries
- Action 6:** Ensure refugee-youth focused protection
- Action 7:** Support refugee youths’ physical and emotional wellbeing





Integrating youth in the Annual Consultations with partners

Bringing a youth focus to the 3 days of UNHCR Annual Consultations with Partners, in many ways changed the dynamic from previous years. Refugee and stateless young people participated as speakers and moderators in the majority of the regional and thematic sessions. Feedback from NGO participants highlighted that people felt there was a genuine benefit to having refugees and stateless persons present and actively participating.

Across all of the sessions, four main themes, a number of priority challenges and associated calls to actions emerged, these are outlined below:

1. Opportunities for youth engagement and participation

Youth are active contributors to solutions for displaced youth, but do not feel engaged in decision-making processes at the local, national and global levels. UNHCR, civil society, States and communities should engage in genuine consultative dialogue with young people in a continuous and iterative manner. Youth should participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs that concern them and their communities. To this end, **NGOs, in partnership with UNHCR and Member States were called to:**

- **Support initiatives by youth, for youth, including linking into existing national regional and global networks,**
- **Develop and prioritize youth-specific programming and services tailored to the unique needs and capacities of refugee youth, separate from initiatives for children and adults,**
- **Collect age and sex disaggregated data on refugee youth to better target programming,**
- **Establish a global working definition of “youth,” – at the moment the UN sees youth between the ages of 15 and 24 whilst UN Security Council resolution 2250, states youth are between the ages of 18-29.**
- **Consider making refugee youth participation in annual NGO consultations regular practice instead of a one-time event.**

2. Learning and employment opportunities

Access to education, training, skills development and employment is critical for displaced youths' self-reliance in host communities and for stateless youth. **NGOs, in partnership with UNHCR and Member States, were called to:**

- **Work together with national ministries of education in transit and destination countries to ensure the integration of youth into local education systems, especially at the secondary and tertiary level where possible,**
- Work through partnerships, including with the private sector and development actors **to facilitate access to employment for refugee youth**
- Work with other actors to standardize the recognition of educational qualifications,
- **Increase funding for academic scholarships, vocational training programmes, language courses, and arts and sports activities as a way to break cultural barriers and strengthen integration into host communities.**
- **Support for learning** initiatives led *by* youth, *for* youth,
- **Support** refugee youth with getting the right to work, **including by providing them with necessary documents, and by showing flexibility in the recognition of certificates.**

3. Psychosocial support and mental health services

Displaced and stateless youth are under completely different daily stressors from those of their own age group in host populations; these include discrimination, feelings of hopelessness and increased vulnerability to exploitation. They have unique mental health needs, shaped by the extraordinary circumstances of their lives and their stage of development. To address these needs, **NGOs, in partnership with UNHCR and Member States, were called to:**

- Increase partnerships **with governments, international organizations and local NGOs to collectively** ensure the provision of psychosocial support and mental health services throughout the asylum process,
- Create youth-specific safe spaces **in refugee camps and reception centres and train legal representatives, healthcare professionals, and other service providers in youth-friendly approaches,**
- Advocate for alternatives to detention, **including supportive shelters, foster care arrangements, and semi-independent living with community support which are sustained past the age of 18,**
- Encourage more investment in one-stop centres **where survivors of sexual and gender-based violence can receive medical, legal, mental, psychosocial, shelter, livelihoods support and other types of assistance.**

4. Documentation

Official identification documentation is critical to access education, employment, and healthcare in host communities. An increasing number of young refugees are spending years waiting for official papers, having to postpone their education indefinitely during lengthy asylum application processes. To amend deficiencies in documentation and the consequent limitations they bring, **NGOs, in partnership with UNHCR and Member States are called to:**

- Lobby governments to issue official identification documents to refugees **in a timely and systemic manner,**
- Work with governments **of transit and destination countries to** fill legislative gaps regarding the issuance of work permits to refugees.
- Facilitate documentation for stateless youth.

The 2015-16 Global Refugee Youth Consultations, the **UN Security Council Resolution 2250** and the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action launched at the **World Humanitarian Summit** have created the necessary momentum to drive forward the conversation on refugee, stateless and IDP youth. UNHCR has already taken significant steps to this end by co-leading the GRYC and having been engaged in the development of and signed the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian

Action. The agency has also reiterated its intention to expand and improve existing youth-specific funding and programming such as the UNHCR Youth Initiative Fund.

Whilst there is much to be done in the operations and day-to-day practice to meet the needs of youth, there is also more to be done in global policy. Moving forward, UNHCR, NGOs and Members States **are called to:**

- Establish a working definition of “youth” **standardized among all UN agencies and partners and** collect disaggregated data on youth,
- Work with states to develop and adopt the UNHCR draft conclusion on youth,
- Include youth **in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation in a transparent and accountable manner,**
- Engage youth with rights-based programming **that meets their diverse needs,**
- Adopt inclusive approaches **that lead to greater power sharing among various stakeholders, and**
- Transform the humanitarian ecosystem of response **to be a better fit for persons of concern and deliver resources and services to those best suited to respond.**

As we take forward actions to reshape systems, processes and policies to better recognize the needs and unique contributions of youth; let us remember a closing remark from Ms. Maria ALESI, a Ugandan national Youth Representative at the annual consultation; she said “policies and law don’t integrate people; people integrate people.”

UNHCR Consultations with partner organizations overview

The 2016 youth themed consultations had daily themes that were designed to bring participants on a journey, travelling from addressing vulnerabilities, to then look at resilience, and finally identify solutions.

- **Vulnerabilities**

The first day of the Consultations was dedicated to hearing from youth themselves, their involvement in processes, including the Global Refugee Youth Consultations, the Consultations with Stateless Children and Youth and in the regional sessions the challenges and possibilities for young people to participate in each region. The sessions focused on three different questions: the main challenges that youth face in accessing fair and effective asylum procedures, enjoying appropriate community-based protection and reception; the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) refugees and internally displaced persons are facing and; exploring the challenges for youth in adult roles, often taking on additional social and economic roles and responsibilities to support themselves and their families.

- **Resilience**

Throughout the second day, the Consultations moved us from vulnerabilities to resilience, looking at the great capacity that youth possess. In this regard, the sessions looked at cross-cutting themes including youth participation approaches, the power of technology (social media) among refugee youth living in urban settings, youth as humanitarian actors and contributors towards rebuilding their communities, as well as youth health and well-being management, in terms of physical, psychological, and sexual and reproductive health.

- **Solutions & Opportunities**

The final day focused on solutions and opportunities including discussions on innovation, education and livelihoods. Together, participants tried to answer the following questions: What are the options for refugee youth for life-long learning? How can we facilitate the transition from school to work from different levels of education? How can we support young refugees to become more self-reliant? How does wage-employment or entrepreneurship help them in this regards? How to best build on and support the resources, skills and capacities of youth? Which practical actions could be done to support young people and youth integration in their host society?

On the opposite page is the summary of each session over the three days of the Consultations including *Trends and Challenges and Recommendations*.

2016 AGENDA

UNHCR Annual Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations 15 – 17 June 2016 | International Conference Center Geneva

YOUTH Rapporteur, Musarait KASHMIRI African Initiatives for Relief & Development

TIME	Wednesday 15 June YOUTH VOICES
08:30 12:00	Registration of participants ICCG entrance, UNHCR welcome desk
10:30 12:00	<u>Welcome coffee</u> <u>Informal meetings</u>
12:00 13:00	Food for Thought (E-F-S) Room 5 Sexual & Gender Minority Refugee Youth: empowerment & protection Room 6 People on the move
13:00 14:00	Lunch break (free)
14:00 14:45	Room 2 OPENING PLENARY with the High Commissioner (A-E-F-R-S) Opening: UNHCR and ICVA Progress achieved on solutions since last year's consultations YOUTH VOICES: Outcomes from refugee youth and statelessness consultations
14:45 16:00	Address of the High Commissioner and plenary discussion
16:00 16:30	Coffee break Room 2 MENA (A-E-F) Room 3 EUROPE (E-F-R) Room 4 AFRICA (E-F) Room 5 ASIA (E-F) Room 6 AMERICAS (E-F-S)
19:00 20:30	RECEPTION UNHCR Cafeteria

TIME	Thursday 16 June Vulnerabilities & Resilience
08:00 08:45	Room 2 Dialogue with the Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) (E-F-S)
09:00 10:00	Room 2 OPENING SESSION (E-F-S) <i>Youth: from vulnerability to resilience</i> Expert Panel
10:00 10:30	Coffee break
10:30 12:45	VULNERABILITIES Room 2 Where we live: safe asylum space for youth <i>Part I</i> (E-F-R-S) Room 21 Youth addressing SGBV – challenges & opportunities (E-F-S) Room 3 Building resilience: programming strength for the future (E-F-S)
13:00 14:30	Food for Thought Room 5 Statelessness (E-F-R-S) Room 6 Framework for implementing with partners (E-F-S)
14:30 16:15	FROM VULNERABILITIES TO RESILIENCE Room 2 Where we live: safe asylum space for youth <i>Part II</i> (E-F-R-S) Room 21 Youth participation: freeing and supporting potential (E-F-S) Room 3 Youth and data – a game changer in urban settings (E-F-S)
16:15 16:45	Coffee break Room 2 Youth as humanitarian actors – A joint response (E-F-S) Room 3 Act your age: exploring the challenges for youth in adult roles (E-F-R-S) Room 4 Being well and well-being – the health of the community (E-F-S)

TIME	Friday 17 June Solutions & Opportunities
08:00 08:45	Room 2 Dialogue with the Assistant High Commissioner (Operations) (E-F-S)
09:00 10:00	Room 2 OPENING SESSION (E-F-S) <i>From opportunities to solutions</i> <i>Youth responses</i>
10:00 10:30	Coffee break Room 2 Life-long learning: facilitating transitions from school to workplace (E-F-S) Room 3 Youth employment and entrepreneurship (E-F-S) Room 4 Youth and integration: building bridges and communities (E-F-S)
10:30 12:45	Food for Thought (E-F-S) Room 4 Resettlement Q & A Room 5 Innovation: change makers Room 6 World Humanitarian Summit follow-up
13:15 14:15	Room 2 CLOSING PLENARY (A-E-F-S) Concluding remarks and discussion with the Deputy High Commissioner
14:30 15:30	Break Report back on the NGO Consultations Rapporteur of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme Rapporteur to the Consultations



Opening Plenary



Asli Salihoğlu @aryaneth · Jun 15

High Commissioner Filippo Grandi: "The reason why we are all here is precisely to ensure that no one is left behind."

#UNHCRNGOs



Johan CELS, Secretary of the UNHCR Executive Committee, highlighted that it is critical to discuss how the humanitarian community can build a future together with youth. He referred to key issues on the agenda, such as the Grand Bargain on Humanitarian Financing, shifting the focus to national first responder organizations and bureaucratic streamlining. He also drew attention to challenges such as the unpredictability of financial contributions. He stated that NGOs want and need to be more involved, and UNHCR is continuously looking for ways to improve partnerships.

Nan BUZARD, Executive Director of ICVA, noted how the energy felt different at this year's consultations thanks to the youth representatives who were in attendance. She described how asylum space is shrinking globally and stated that the current situation is unacceptable. She estimated that if states spent as much time protecting people as they do their borders, the situation would not be as dire. To conclude, she underlined the need to have 'all hands on deck' for improved protection, assistance and durable solutions.

Musarait KASHMIRI, Rapporteur to the Annual Consultations with NGOs, pointed out that youth as an age group was not defined concretely enough. She went on to emphasize that youth have the capacity to be champions for change; humanitarian organizations need only give refugee youth the space to fulfil their potential. She called on the youth representatives present in the room to share their energy, enthusiasm, and expertise with UNHCR and partners.

Hourie TAFECH, refugee youth representative from Malta, underlined the fact that being a refugee was never her choice, having been raised in a Palestinian refugee camp. She stated that the Global Refugee Youth Consultations (GRYC) had encouraged her to speak up and participate in the effort to identify solutions to address challenges faced by refugee youth. She finally noted that everyone deserves the chance for change.

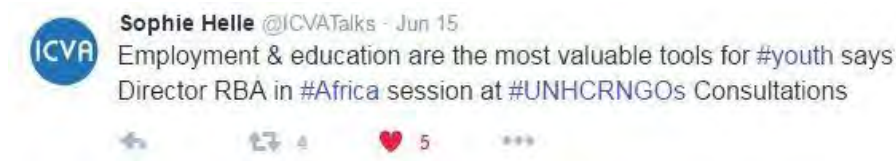
Diego Fernando NARVAEZ, refugee youth representative from Ecuador, talked about the youth initiative he spearheaded there, called "That which brings us together." He acknowledged the necessity for refugee populations to work together with civil society to generate change. Noting that youth are often disregarded, he lauded this year's consultative process in break down barriers. He expressed that youth are ready to work with governments and agencies to realize the proposals that emerged from the GRYC.

Zhirair CHICHIAN, stateless youth representative from Georgia, explained what it is like to live without a nationality. He recounted several instances in which not being in possession of identity papers limited educational, financial and extracurricular opportunities for him and his family. He said that he felt like a swallow which grew up in a nest with others and soon all will fly out of the nest but he can't fly because he has a broken wing. He then described how his life changed when he and was able to get his statelessness status recognized with the help of UNHCR. He encouraged youth to never give up fighting.

Filippo GRANDI, High Commissioner for Refugees, drew attention to the fact that youth often fall by the wayside in humanitarian response and programming, even though they have great capacity to become agents of change. He underlined that structure of youth programmes need to be reassessed in order to identify what new specific measures must be put in place. Here, he emphasized the need for direct youth participation in program design.

Regional Sessions

Bureau for Africa



Background Summary:

Since the Annual Consultations with NGOs were held last July, situations of forced displacement that occurred in the recent past in Africa (South Sudan, CAR, Nigeria, Mozambique and Burundi in particular) seem to have settled into a pattern of sporadic and unpredictable fighting, punctuated by calmer periods in some regions.

The Director of UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Africa has made repeated strong pleas to the international community not to forget Africa while much of the world's attention has been diverted to the crisis in Europe. Due to neglect, Africa risks losing generations of resourceful youth who would have been active contributing members in their communities under normal circumstances.

The global financial downturn, sinking oil prices, flagging donor response, and redirection of humanitarian aid to the situation in Europe have depleted UNHCR's resources beyond the most immediate lifesaving efforts of providing water, food, healthcare and shelter. The Bureau's two top priorities, namely education and livelihoods, are not within these lifesaving goals even though they can most critically protect youth from a spiral of lifelong poverty. For example, it is estimated that in 2016, refugees in Africa receive only \$0.20 cents per person per day in assistance; this leaves very little space for education and livelihoods initiatives.

Trends and Challenges:

- There is **not enough funding to cover needs related to education, livelihoods and employment** because of the priority placed on survival needs such as food, water, shelter and healthcare. In particular, there are not enough opportunities for secondary and tertiary education and vocational training for refugee youth. Furthermore, skill building in the arts, culture and sports for refugee youth is severely lacking.
- With armed groups on the rise in the region, **humanitarian access to people in need is impeded by insecurity**. Most refugees are not willing to repatriate until proper access to land and work is restored.
- Limited access to education and livelihood opportunities can lead to **negative coping mechanisms** for refugee youth, making them more vulnerable to militia recruitment. For example, 12,000 of South Sudan's 500,000 internally displaced children (age<18) are active recruits of militia groups in the country.
- **Refugee camps** throughout the continent have been **in operation for very long periods of time**. Refugee camp residents' access to employment opportunities and freedom of movement is often limited.

Recommendations:

- **UNHCR should speak to youth directly**. Refugee youth should be **involved in the design of programmes that target youth**.
- UNHCR should allocate **more funding towards education and vocational training**. Development of skills, particularly in arts and sports, presents an opportunity to strengthen livelihoods of refugee youth.
- **UNHCR and NGOs need to engage in joint advocacy**. National NGOs and civil society need to be included in the conversation alongside international NGOs.

- **Partnerships with private sector actors should increase**, especially in terms of facilitating access to the job market for refugee youth.

Bureau for the Americas



Background Summary:

Recent years have seen a sharp escalation in violence by organized criminal groups in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, collectively comprising an area known as the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA).

Children and youth are particularly affected as they escape forced recruitment and situations of extreme violence. They seek protection elsewhere in their own countries, seek asylum beyond their countries' borders or attempt to join family members abroad. This has resulted in a growing protection needs that requires a comprehensive regional response.

Once in the country of asylum or country of resettlement, refugee youth often struggle to integrate into their new cultural context while maintaining their cultural identity. Assisting their integration requires a comprehensive approach that involves families, communities and different support services.

Trends and Challenges:

- Forcible internal displacement due to the violence in the NTCA appears on the rise, even if data remain fragmentary. The lack of information and resources has impeded the development of a protection response. Measures to address the urgent protection risks faced by IDPs therefore remain at a nascent stage of development. They consequently turn to local NGOs and regional protection agencies whose **capacities are overwhelmed**.
- Honduran and El Salvadoran **gang recruitment** through schools and leaflet distribution is rapidly increasing. Consequently, children and youth flee forced recruitment, violence, poverty, and lack of opportunities. Furthermore, internally displaced children and youth continue to hide in their new locations because they are afraid of being seen in public. Fear and **perpetual hiding** deprive them of access to physical and mental health assistance.
- **Private sponsorships** promote effective integration of refugees to their destinations of resettlement while relieving the state budget. The process starts ahead of the refugees' arrival and **directly engages the local community** to welcome and integrate them. Here, **educational integration is key for long-term social integration**. Canada is an example of good practice.
- The **arts are essential for emotional health**, especially for refugee youth who have experienced trauma. They can be utilized as a tool for support and integration.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR and other organizations should establish a **more comprehensive international response** to those fleeing violence in the NTCA to address the protection needs of those at risk.
- There is a great need to create **legal frameworks and public policies for the protection of vulnerable displaced populations** such as women, unaccompanied children and LGBTI population seeking asylum. UNHCR can advocate alongside local NGOs for the establishment of protective legal measures and the provision of technical support.
- UNHCR can highlight and endorse initiatives that **directly mobilize local civil society** in the integration of refugees to their host communities.

- **Arts programming serves as a form of therapy** for youth who have experienced trauma. Protection agencies and humanitarian organizations can strengthen refugee youths' resilience through creative outlets.

Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

Background Summary:

As of February 2016, the Asia and Pacific region hosted over 8.5 million persons of concern to UNHCR, including some 3.9 million refugees, 2.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and an estimated 1.5 million stateless individuals. Young people constitute the highest proportion of this total number globally and in the region. In the Asia Pacific, where more than two thirds of the populations of concern are living in urban and semi-urban areas, youth have much to offer in terms of strengthening the resilience of their communities through innovative approaches.

However young persons of concern to UNHCR often lack access to education and skills training, which in turn creates social barriers and hampers resilience and solutions. Furthermore, employment restrictions in host countries impede refugee youths' efforts to contribute to their families economically, further heightening protection risks among them.

Trends and Challenges:

- World interest has lately focused on the Middle East. **Refugee populations in Asia are less visible.**
- A majority of the refugees in the region, especially in South-East Asia, live in **urban settings**. Census data on certain refugee populations is lacking, while needs analyses are incomplete. **Community outreach programs** are necessary to support the provision of services and assistance to scattered urban populations.
- **Lack of documentation** is a key issue that creates barriers to establishing stable livelihoods, through education and work opportunities. An increasing number of young refugees are spending years waiting for official documents, having to postpone their education indefinitely during sometimes lengthy asylum application processes. Difficulties to access tertiary education lead refugee youth to drop out of education schemes or to join the informal sector.
- Alongside problems related to documentation, **a lack of relevant legislation for refugees in numerous areas hinders** asylum processes and stabilization efforts. Refugees are vulnerable to exploitation at work in host countries without legal protection.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR, in partnership local governments and NGOs should develop a more comprehensive **urban refugee services infrastructure**. Census data collection and urban registration exercises would inform this process.
- UNHCR to advocate for **increasing access to national education schemes**, particularly secondary and tertiary level education for refugee youth in the region, whether it be through the enactment of legislation, increasing documentation efforts or scholarships.
- UNHCR and local governments need to work in tandem to **fill national legislative gaps** regarding asylum procedures, status determination and **work permits**.

Bureau for Europe



Background Summary:

Children and youth are continuously opting to leave their countries of origin without parents or caregivers to go on a hazardous journey to Europe. The vast majority are Afghans, but there are also Syrians, Iraqis and Eritreans. In 2015, 91% of around 90,000 asylum applications from unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) to the European Union were made by boys aged 13 to 17. 40% of UASC chose to apply for asylum in Sweden as they perceived it offers good educational opportunities, has good human rights standards, and a fair and efficient asylum procedure (29%).

Even though arrivals of refugees and migrants to Greece in 2016 remain low, the number of unaccompanied children taking the perilous Central Mediterranean crossing more than doubled to over 7,000 UASC in the first five months of 2016, as compared to the same period in 2015. Unaccompanied children made up over 90% of the 7,567 children who crossed by sea to Italy between January 1 and May 31, 2016.

Overall, procedures for UASC, including guardian appointment and family reunification efforts, are overwhelmed and not well adapted to high numbers. Separated children detected by authorities to travel with relatives are often removed from their relatives' care, as national legal frameworks consider them as unaccompanied due to narrow definitions of family, forcing them into separate care arrangements. Furthermore, over-crowded and exposed reception conditions in many locations and detention of UASC upon arrival, in some cases even with adults, exacerbate protection risks.

Trends and Challenges:

- **Clear and accessible information** on the asylum procedures of European countries is **not sufficiently available**. Refugees are not well informed of the options open to them. Convoluted legal processes and lengthy application periods are often not explained to asylum seekers. **Language barriers exacerbate this problem**.
- A multitude of dangers faced by unaccompanied and separated minors and youth include the risk of human trafficking, smuggling, rape and detention. The aforementioned lack of information **inhibits family reunification** efforts. There is not accurate and complete data on the issue due in part to **minors' lack of self-identification**. This increases their chances of detention and deportation.
- Refugee children and youth can develop **distrust towards adults and institutional processes**. They sometimes consider humanitarian organizations to be obstacles blocking their efforts to reach their intended destinations.
- Programs and services tend to **infantilize refugee youth** when in fact they generally are capable independent. Speaking of their vulnerability without equally recognizing their resilience leads to **ineffective targeting and services** for the youth demographic.

Recommendations:

- Governments, UNHCR and organizational partners need to make sure **clear and accessible information is available** to refugees throughout their journey.
- UNHCR and partners should increase safe spaces for unaccompanied children and youth who are very vulnerable to exploitation. Transit accommodation facilities and escorting options are **safer alternatives to detention**.

- Working with **local and small-scale NGOs** that better understand the culture and bureaucracy of their countries, or employing **refugees granted asylum can ameliorate trust** between international protection organizations and refugee youth seeking asylum.
- UNHCR and NGOs need to include refugees themselves, particularly **refugee youth, in decision-making processes**. This should be mediated through **direct consultations and involvement**.

Bureau for Middle East and North Africa (MENA)



Asli Salihoğlu @aryaneth · Jun 15

"We are refugees, not criminals. We are refugees, not terrorists." - Syrian refugee youth Abdulrahman #MENA #UNHCRNGOs

👍 4 ❤️ 2

Background Summary:

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) accounts for more than 35% of global displacement; UNHCR estimates adolescents (10-17) and youth (18-24) make up just under a third of refugees in the region.

The Regional Session on the Middle East and North Africa aimed to highlight the massive challenges that young refugees and displaced persons are facing across the region and to provide a forum to openly discuss responses with regard to protection and solutions. The session also sought to provide a platform for young refugees to voice their opinions with a view to incorporate suggestions or concerns into future humanitarian programs and ultimately expand the role of youth in advocacy and awareness. It followed a Town Hall format, including two separate panels: “A Conversation with Youth” during which the challenges, needs, and aspirations of youth from the region were heard, followed by “A Conversation with Humanitarian Workers,” during which a range of actors subsequently shared highlights of their response strategies and identified opportunities for wider youth engagement therein.

Trends and Challenges:

- Access to education is a major challenge in the MENA region, with 50% of children and youth out of school. They are losing very valuable years of education and self-development due to language and documentation barriers, unaffordable school fees and long bureaucratic procedures in host countries. Access to secondary and tertiary education is particularly limited.
- Refugee youth face limited livelihood opportunities and risks in the labour market. They often work in **unsafe and exploitative working condition a** with an absence legal safeguards
- In their host communities, they experience **xenophobia and discrimination**.
- Youth **do not feel engaged in decision-making** at the local, national and global level
- Increasing levels of poverty and socio-economic vulnerability among refugees is one of the key factors contributing to young people being unable to continue their education and facing exploitation and abuse, including in the workplace. Addressing socio-economic vulnerabilities of families and providing appropriate livelihoods and self-reliance options for youth above the legal working age play a key role in the protection of young refugees.

Recommendations:

- **Harnessing skills, resourcefulness and capabilities of refugee youth in developing programmes** and responses tailored towards refugees, as well as community programmes
- **Engaging local community networks in integration** and support programmes, and empower and strengthen local/regional refugee networks in host countries. **Strengthen networking and**

- communication** between refugee and host communities, particularly through communal activities, to promote integration and social cohesion.
- Strengthening livelihood opportunities for young refugees, such as **access to vocational trainings and work permits**.
 - **Widening access to education, languages, career programs**, and responses targeted towards refugees in host countries. To the largest extent possible, refugees should be accommodated into national education systems.
 - Increasing responsibility sharing by the international community in response to the refugee crisis in the MENA region as well as greater emphasis and **funding support aimed at relieving over-burdened national systems of host countries**. Strengthen the linkages between humanitarian and development actors to expand livelihood and self-reliance opportunities for youth and other refugee groups.

Thematic Sessions

Where we live: safe asylum space for youth, Part I&II



Background Summary:

Putting people in detention has become a routine, rather than exceptional, response to irregular entry or stay of asylum-seekers and migrants in a number of countries. Some governments view detention as a deterrence measure to dissuade people from seeking protection in their territories. Nevertheless, seeking asylum is a lawful act and all persons have the right to seek asylum under international law, irrespective of their status or country of origin. Detention and other restrictive policies have a negative impact on the individual's chance and capacity to have access to protection and to fair and efficient asylum procedures. In this context, UNHCR launched in 2014 its Global Strategy Beyond Detention 2014-2019, a five-year strategy to support governments to end the detention of asylum-seekers and refugees.

Furthermore, young asylum seekers are routinely subjected to discrimination, abuse, and other forms of mistreatment when seeking asylum. The lack of youth-friendly spaces and asylum procedures may lead to failed asylum claims and even deportation. Unaccompanied children are particularly at risk in places of immigration detention because they are often unable to advocate for their fundamental human rights. Undue respect of the individual right to seek asylum constitutes *refoulement* if deportation leads to instances of torture, disappearances, and deaths of children and youth upon return.

In all, lack of appropriate reception arrangements and access to procedures for determination of refugee status and other protection needs are some of the main challenges faced by children and youth, meaning that novel and creative solutions to these challenges, involving all relevant stakeholders, need to be explored. Topics of concern include: adequate care arrangements; age and vulnerability assessment practices; situations of unaccompanied and separated children; 'ageing out' of child protection systems; the need for legal documentation, youth-friendly translators, interpreters, and legal assistance; accessing and navigating youth-friendly protection procedures; particular risks associated with detention; and risks associated with deportation or refoulement.

Part I - Trends and Challenges:

- Detention centres often **lack basic facilities** and are **overcrowded**. Detention of refugee children and youth may lead to **abuses of rights**, criminal influence, lack of legal assistance and access to a fair trial, etc. instead of protection.
- **Alternatives to detention** should be increased and not take a one-size-fits-all approach. Small-scale, child and youth specific **supportive shelters, foster care and semi-independent living with community support** are all temporary arrangements that can replace detention practices. Favouring engagement over enforcement models improves refugee youths' mental health.
- Refugee children and youth face **documentation challenges** if parents are unable to fulfil registration requirements and keep their asylum status current – youth can even become stateless. Unaccompanied children and youth are at a higher risk.
- Stateless youth are also particularly vulnerable. They face long or indefinite detention when no procedure is in place to challenge the detention even though no realistic prospect of securing the expulsion exists. Governments often ignore the stateless status of the person and don't know where to send them.
- Vulnerabilities increase in countries that have **not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention** and additional protocols and do not have comprehensive legislation regarding asylum.

- New reception centre models that answer specific needs of children and youth prescribe the **creation of safe spaces separated from adults**, including dormitories, recreation lounges, and computer access. **Vulnerability screening** and referrals to legal aid and psychosocial support need to be incorporated into these models.

Part I - Recommendations:

- **Detention must only ever be used as a last resort.** National governments, UNHCR and partners must invest in alternative living arrangements.
- UNHCR needs to do more to push governments to issue temporary **legal migration status documents** and/or recognize those issued by UNHCR/IOM as legally sufficient. **Ratification of international conventions** on refugees and asylum procedures is another legal necessity to ameliorate conditions.
- There is a need for **children and youth specific programming** as well as **separate reception spaces**. **Consulting refugee youth** to build the necessary programs and spaces is key. Youth should not be evicted from safe spaces when they turn 18.

Part II - Trends and Challenges:

- Refugee children and youth **often do not have access to legal representation/counsel**. They are consequently not well informed of asylum procedures and can drop out of asylum procedures before their claims are resolved. For example, since 2014, Mexican authorities detained 10,000 unaccompanied children, out of them majority (around 80 %) were returned, 0.78% requested asylum and only 25 of them (0.25%) received protection.
- Authorities are often dealing with heads of household rather than other family members such as refugee children and youth, who can sometimes have stronger protection claims. **Screening and needs assessment procedures** may be one way to identify the potential needs of and opportunities for all family members.
- Asylum applications by children and youth are not always managed comprehensively. There is both a lack of a systemic approach, as well a lack lawyers, interpreters, social workers, etc. to support refugee youth and children. Existing staff needs **training in child and youth-specific approaches**.
- **Post-deportation monitoring** can improve refugee policy and prevent refoulement. A recent initiative is www.returnwatch.org-online, where one can reach asylum seekers in the EU at risk of deportation to Turkey.

Part II - Recommendations:

UNHCR, Member States governments and NGOs should:

- Facilitate access to legal representation for all youth undergoing the RSD processes.
- Coordinate efforts to **establish asylum case management** for children and young asylum-seekers by developing an **integral assistance plan** from screening/identification to case resolution. **Children and youth friendly approaches** need to be integrated into the process at every step of the way.
- Ensure that information gathered during **post-deportation monitoring** can serve to update relevant country of origin information and inform future asylum decisions.

Youth addressing SGBV – challenges and opportunities



Background Summary:

Refugee and internally displaced youth (15-24) face sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including domestic violence, child marriage, and survival sex. Innovative ways to prevent and respond to SGBV can be found via providing a platform for refugee youth to speak and be the centre of discussion regarding their own health and wellbeing. How are youth taking action to prevent and respond to SGBV? How can UNHCR and NGO partners better involve and support youth in their work to prevent and respond to SGBV? How can we work together to integrate male survivors, persons with disabilities and sexual minorities into these efforts? How can we engage men and boys in SGBV prevention and response? Examination of good practices in the field is key.

Trends and Challenges:

- There is an **epidemic of silence regarding SGBV**. Rape and sexual violence issues are difficult to talk about in certain cultures and victims often **fear being socially ostracized**. Existing SGBV in society increases in times of crisis, including in displacement contexts. **Peer-to-peer education** and interactive theatre are effective ways for **raising awareness on SGBV amongst youth**.
- **Child marriage amongst refugees is taking on a dimension that constitutes human trafficking**. Syrian refugee girls and youth are currently being sold into marriage in Turkey. They are often second or third wives and are eventually cast aside and stigmatized. Many resort to sex work.
- Young girls are told that if they do not undergo female genital mutilation (FGM), they dishonour their culture and risk not being able to find a husband. Older generations can see youth as a threat, trying to change revered traditions. Other youth can force those who have not undergone FGM to do so through peer pressure.
- Counselling services are important for victims to heal psychologically after traumatic experiences such as rape, being forced into child marriage and FGM. The inclusion of family and friends in the counselling process allows them to act as a support system for the victim.
- A multi-sector approach in SGBV prevention and response for youth constitutes livelihoods support, medical response, access to education, curricula on SGBV prevention in schools, psychosocial support and creating safe environments that guarantee confidentiality.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR should encourage partners to **actively involve youth** in the development of programmes, including on SGBV, and ensure that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms specifically measure youth input and impact.
- National and international NGOs are encouraged to **join the [Call to Action on Protection from SGBV in Emergencies](#)**.
- Civil society and local leaders should work with community leaders to portray FGM not as a religious practice or duty but as a cultural choice and harmful practice.
- UNHCR and international organizations, together with youth, can create a toolbox of training exercises, games, discussion topics and awareness raising information about domestic violence prevention and response – adapted to various levels of education and translated into various languages.

- UNHCR should encourage more investment in one-stop centres where survivors of SGBV can receive medical, legal, mental, psychosocial, shelter, livelihoods support and other types of assistance.

Building resilience: programming strength for the future



Background Summary:

The notion of resilience emphasizes that despite exposure to severe adversity such as war, mass casualty, violence, or political oppression—often the bases for which refugees are forced to flee their homes—individuals and communities can demonstrate positive adaptation and a strong capacity to recover and even thrive. One must recognize the interplay between both the capacity of individuals, and the capacity of their social and physical ecologies to facilitate their coping in culturally meaningful ways. For refugee youth, these social and physical ecologies are often weakened, fragmented or destroyed.

The impacts of experiences such as loss of home, detention, family separation and rejection from host community can surface in complex manners. Here, social and physical ecologies are important to facilitate accessing the capitals (social, human, financial/institutional, and environmental) refugee youth need to buffer the impact of psychological stress caused by distressing experiences. Adequate access to, and the application of, these capitals are critical to the dynamic process of positive adaptation needed for adolescents and youth to overcome severe adversity and transition into a peaceful and productive adult.

Trends and Challenges:

- **Resilience is not a static trait of a person but arises from experience as well as environmental factors.** Daily stressors such as lack of access to services have a huge impact on refugees' wellbeing – sometimes more than prior traumas or can exacerbate the effects of prior traumas.
- Refugee youth face **different and more daily stressors compared to persons of the same age group in host populations.** Such stressors include: incomplete families and insufficient family support, poverty, pressure to work multiple jobs instead of going to school, and uncertainty about the future. This may lead to feelings of invisibility and hopelessness, and give rise to depression, suicide and negative coping mechanisms including social withdrawal, substance abuse and participation in violence.
- The following are **sources of strength** for refugee youth: support of family or caring adults, language acquisition in host or resettlement countries, connection with other refugee youth, arts and sports, knowledge of rights, creation of/involvement in youth-led groups.
- There is a disconnect between services and refugee youth insofar as **youth do not always have an effective platform to speak of their needs** to inform programming. Youth should have the opportunity to contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives launched for them.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR should commit to engaging refugee **youth inactive partnership** and provide more opportunities for dialogue with protection organizations for programme design and regular

evaluations. Developing **initiatives by youth, for youth** is central to this shift in programming. To this effect, UNHCR may consider establishing an **advisory council** that includes diverse groups of refugee youth.

- UNHCR should consider making refugee youth participation in annual NGO consultations regular practice instead of a one-time event.
- **Community based protection** and promotion of social cohesion will enable people to help themselves, and build capacity within existing systems in terms of mental health and wellbeing. Training and actively engaging refugee youth, for example, as peer-workers, should be encouraged.
- There is a real need for more **mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)** programmes for refugees, IDPs and other persons of concern. Improved psychological wellbeing is likely to result in improved outcomes in other areas for refugee youth (education, employment, community engagement, etc.). **Funding towards services for MHPSS** and training of onsite service providers in health and community based protection needs to be increased.

Youth participation: freeing and supporting potential



Background Summary:

Youth participation is fundamental to freeing and supporting the potential of displaced young people to be change-makers in their communities. Participatory approaches recognize the rights of young people to engage in decision-making that affects their lives. As experts in their own lives, they are best placed to identify their needs and should be supported to develop and advocate for solutions.

Meaningful youth participation is not just about opportunity; it is about engaging with young people as partners and equipping them with the knowledge, skills and resources to influence policy and practice. It is about valuing the perspectives of young people, recognizing and utilizing their expertise, and building on their skills and insights. Barriers to meaningful youth participation in humanitarian settings should be identified and overcome.

Trends and Challenges:

- There is a need to allow for more youth engagement, to develop displaced and stateless youths' **sense of ownership** of programs serving their demographic. **Safe and free spaces** where displaced and refugee and stateless youth can express their needs and advocate for change can help facilitate this.
- It is important for youth representatives to be able to **reflect the full diversity of youth populations** of their communities. Certain cultural attitudes can question the appropriateness of minority groups participating and having decision-making power.
- **Funding imperatives** constrict program design and impede meaningful inclusion of refugee and stateless youth in decision-making. Differences in language and culture can hinder youth participation as well.

Recommendations:

- **Train young people in program design, implementation and evaluation** so they can be involved in a meaningful way in all parts of the program cycle and ensure funders and donors understand the importance of youth participation.

- Displaced and stateless youth do not represent one homogenous group with **some members more at risk to be left out of the humanitarian conversation**. Youth participation efforts should ensure women; LGBTI youth and other minority groups are fairly represented.
- Improve youth participation through (i) more flexible funding structures, (ii) utilising and building on existing effective models, (iii) building the capacity and expertise of NGOs and other actors to genuinely engage young people
- Utilise young people as facilitators for youth participation/engaging other young people

Youth and data – A game changer in urban settings

 Nina @nina_seminara · Jun 16
 "If we're not using the medium they use, we're not communicating."
 @TranslatorsWB @rpetras
 #UNHCRNGOs #YouthData



Background Summary:

Today, some 60% of the world's 19.5 million refugees and an even greater percentage of the 41 million internally displaced persons live in towns or cities. Refugee youth constitute a significant proportion of this demographic. With displaced populations that are scattered and mobile, urban settings make it difficult for humanitarian organization to gather and employ accurate data about the vulnerabilities and needs of displaced youth.

Quality data is critical to ensuring that programmes are effectively assisting those in need. Protection and assistance organizations are increasingly using smart phones to connect refugees with essential services and resources more easily and effectively. Moreover, the wide use of mobile phones amongst refugee youth helps them stay in contact with their relatives and friends, and share information related to safe routes of passage, employment opportunities, etc. via email, SMS, WhatsApp, and social media. Apps that assist in translation, finding accommodation, and accessing information regarding local services make smart phones essential tools to navigate new urban environments. On the flip side, misinformation disseminated through social media and networks present a risk.

Clearly, this is an area where more can be done - by UN agencies, NGOs, governments, private sector, refugees and other stakeholders – in order to better seize the opportunities of social media and information sharing networks as well as to address related risks.

Trends and Challenges:

- Research reveals that refugees are **wary of trusting governments and large institutions** for fear of surveillance. They are more likely to turn to trusted local sources and intermediaries.
- Smart phones and social media **empower refugees who communicate, seek and share information**, build support groups and record media about their experiences using these tools.
- Collection of personal data through social media may pose **surveillance and security risks** for refugees. Online underground networks that are used to disseminate or obtain information about migratory routes, asylum processes, etc. may lead to the **purposeful or inadvertent provision of misinformation**.
- Social media and other technology platforms can be used to **increase youth engagement**.

Recommendations:

- **Trust is best built locally** and face-to-face. **Trusted intermediaries** can be an effective way of providing information to refugee youth directly and gather data about needs.
- **Access to the internet and social media is crucial to the provision of relevant information** to young refugees in urban and camp settings. UNHCR and partners must work to put in place the infrastructure necessary to ensure constant information flow.
- Humanitarian agencies can take advantage of online refugee networks to **identify and support already existing community based initiatives**.
- Humanitarian **outreach** and assistance to refugee youth is more effective if it **speaks the language of youth, is media-based** (photos, videos etc.), and is humorous where appropriate.

Youth as humanitarian actors – A joint response



Tom Albinson @tomalbinson · Jun 16

"We will not wait for you. We will move ahead. If you want to join us, you are welcome." -Refugee youth

#youthhumanitarian #UNHCRNGOs



Background Summary:

The time period when a person is young represents a pivotal time in life when discoveries and decisions are made about one's future path, identity and place within society. Displacement often catapults youth into a situation of chaos, shattering future plans, confusing his or her identity, and changing the very nature of society and a youth's place within it.

Yet, in this challenging context, youth have shown time and time again their resilience and the enormous contribution they can make towards creating a better future and rebuilding their communities. They take initiative, self-organise, offer support to peers and vulnerable groups and often step up to support families in times of crisis. Despite this proven capacity and potential of youth to be a part of the solution, they are often marginalized in humanitarian programming and efforts, their voices rarely heard by the community and humanitarian agencies. The result is a generation of youth with untapped potential and a wealth of missed opportunities to engage, empower, and enable young people to transform their futures and communities.

The Global Refugee Youth Consultations have provided a unique opportunity for youth to speak for themselves about the issues affecting them on a platform that recognizes their capacity and gives them the freedom to shape content, build solutions and engage with decision-makers and key stakeholders.

Trends and Challenges:

- Refugee youth have **great potential to contribute to their communities**. However, they don't have the necessary **social and political platforms** from which their voices can be heard. Female refugee youth are particularly disadvantaged in this regard. For example, Caritas Lebanon's Youth Project was successful because youth were decision-makers, not just implementers.
- **Lack of access to education and employment are major challenges**. For youth to advocate for themselves, specific learning and training (covering areas such as life and business skills, advocacy and policy making) is needed. Access to microfinance can improve employment opportunities.
- Other barriers to youth taking up humanitarian roles include: **mistrusted governments, scarcity of funding, lack of recognition from stakeholders, and lack of security in conflict zones; skewed media stories about refugees; and unfair treatment of refugees in host communities**.
- Attaining a **higher-level education and vocational training** also enhances refugee youth employability. Yet, the opportunities are **extremely limited** in refugee settings. Health, security, financial, and social conditions are insufficient for safe learning environments.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR and NGOs should develop a strategic plan to ensure **youth are involved and included in decision-making** related to their demographic. They should be able to assume **leadership roles** and invest in projects that enhance youth capacity and participation.
- The **provision of a range of educational programs**, whether academic, extracurricular or vocational, prepares refugee youth to be humanitarian actors who can affect change. UNHCR should advocate for more funding towards these programs. Scholarships for refugees should increase.
- **Partnerships with private sector** actors can increase employment opportunities for refugee youth.

Act your age: exploring the challenges for youth in adult roles



Background Summary:

Displaced young people often take on additional social and economic roles and responsibilities to support themselves and their families. Whereas displacement may pressure young men and boys to migrate or travel far in order to find work, young women and girls are more likely to take up a greater share of unpaid domestic labour, including gathering food or caring for younger children. The pressure on adolescents and youth to take up low-skilled work as a short-term strategy traps communities in a vicious cycle of poverty as young people are unable to complete basic education or access opportunities for skilled employment.

Many young people feel proud to be able to contribute to their households, and to be seen as valuable members of the community with a greater say in family and community decisions. However, the pressure on them to provide for their families can have consequences for their physical and psychological development. Feelings of isolation and desperation as well as physical hardship can drive risky behaviours such as survival sex and drug and alcohol abuse. Increased responsibilities can also mean increased exposure to violence and exploitation in the workplace, at home or in the community.

Trends and Challenges:

- Youth who have worked a number of dangerous jobs, migrated across land and sea, as well as **taken on adult roles** are categorized as **“children”** if they are under **the age of 18** and **“adults”** if they are older. This **dichotomist designation** does not fully correspond to their unique needs and experiences.
- For unaccompanied children in their mid-teens who apply for asylum, there is a **risk of being deported** when they turn 18 before the process is concluded. **Lengthy asylum applications exacerbate this “ageing out” problem.**
- A significant challenge that displaced and stateless youth face is **balancing education with work.** Access to education is an imperative for them to have stable livelihoods. However, **barriers to education** disallow them to invest in their future livelihoods for the sake of surviving in the present. Barriers include the maximum age of enrolment, lack of documentation, timing of classes, and unaffordable school fees.
- **Lack of proper self-development and employment opportunities** may force youth to join armed militia groups or take on work that makes them **more vulnerable to exploitation.**
- Displaced and stateless youth also need to be able to have fun and **experience youth in an uninterrupted fashion** as much as possible. Opportunities to engage in **arts and sports** allow for youth to be youth.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR should work to internationally **establish the category of “youth” as separate** from “children” and “adults” in data collection, in policy, and in programming.
- National governments and international donors should offer refugee youth **more scholarships to attain secondary and tertiary education.** Opportunities in education should be complemented with **vocational skill training** in order to respect the economic realities that require many youth to continue working.
- UNHCR should **engage with youth directly** in order to identify meaningful livelihood opportunities for them. They should be consulted on programming tailored to their demographic.

Being well and well-being – the health of the community



Background Summary:

The Global Refugee Youth Consultations have highlighted young people's thoughts and concerns about managing their health and wellbeing – including their physical, psychological, and sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Factors such as availability, acceptability, affordability and geographical accessibility of healthcare facilities and services for refugee youth differ from context to context. Their needs are unique insofar as there are barriers to meeting those needs in crisis settings.

Community-based approaches can be employed to decrease refugee youth vulnerability, increase access to healthcare facilities and services, and build resilience. Health systems can be strengthened to meet the SRH needs of adolescents in crisis, including improving provider attitudes toward adolescent SRH and restructuring health services to be more youth-friendly.

Trends and Challenges:

- Certain populations, such as pregnant women, refugee youth, or disabled people, **need specialized services**. There is a need for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in general.
- **Sustainability of healthcare services in host and transit countries is under pressure**. Emergency responses can overwhelm capacities of healthcare facilities for refugees.
- **Access to information and healthcare services are limited by factors such as crisis settings**, lack of documentation or issues of confidentiality. For example, HIV testing procedures in Jordan requires the presentation of official documentation, without which authorities do not administer the test.
- **Peer-to-peer mentoring** and/or networking can ameliorate access to information in a grassroots manner. Active participation of and **consultation with refugee youth can facilitate this**. The “My Health, My Choice” program at the Kakuma Refugee Camp is an example of best practice.
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health challenges** include ensuring menstrual hygiene in times of crisis or displacement, child marriages in transit, and incidences of survival sex. Furthermore, issues surrounding sexual health have a **gender bias**, with information being less accessible to women refugees.

Recommendations:

- **More data collection on refugee youth**, especially regarding their health needs would enable UNHCR and partner organizations to better respond to emergency situations such as disease outbreaks.
- UNHCR should work with providers to **build youth-friendly healthcare spaces**. Engagement with refugee youth in terms of what a safe healthcare space for youth is key. Engagement with healthcare providers is also essential in order to change attitudes and ensure young people are welcome to access sexual reproductive health services.
- Healthcare practitioners can better **integrate Sexual and Reproductive Health and MHPSS services** to general health services provided in humanitarian settings. Respecting cultural sensitivities of different contexts, more awareness should be raised on available protection options from STDs.

Life-long learning: facilitating transitions from school to workplace



Background Summary:

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in 2015. SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all. One of its targets is to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (Target 4.4). In the same vein, the UNHCR Education Strategy aims to ensure that “opportunities for education are lifelong and available to all according to need.”

For adolescents and youth around the world, the transition from school to work is a pivotal phase that can be demanding. In particular, refugee youth might face specific challenges related to limited access to quality education as well as limited meaningful and decent livelihoods opportunities. Globally, it is estimated that around 80% of young refugees are out of formal secondary education and only about 1% of refugee youth has access to tertiary education services.

Strategies to address aforementioned challenges include increasing enrolment in quality secondary and tertiary education, providing non-formal education that combines literacy, numeracy and technical skill training, and supporting youth engagement and community-based approaches.

Trends and Challenges:

- The **transition from formal education to employment** is a strenuous stage. Refugees that have not had the opportunity to learn skills applicable to the current job market face more difficulties in finding employment. Initiatives that train youth in **business, entrepreneurship and leadership** are needed.
- Organizations hold high-quality workshops for young people but they are often one-time events. Developing **comprehensive and continuous training programs** that offer **standardized qualifications** for refugee youth would strengthen the employability of youth refugees in attendance.
- **Vocational training and mentorship programmes** equip refugee youth with relevant tools to succeed at their future jobs.
- Different youth have **individually particular needs**. Organizations have to come up with strategies that correspond to a host of individual needs.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR and partners need to focus on **education and skills training** for refugee youth to make the transition from school to work easier. **Online coursework** may be an option.

- Local NGOs and UNHCR must work together with national ministries of education of host countries to ensure the integration of refugee youth to the local education system.
- UNHCR should **support and expand the initiatives already in place**. Funding for continuous skill building programs that offer recognized and transferable qualifications should increase.
- There needs to be **greater partnership between the private sector and the humanitarian sector** in order to facilitate life-long learning practices and set up initiatives that will **benefit the youth in the long-term** as opposed to in the moment.
- Programming must **give young people the space to grow**, exercise their creativity and business instincts.

Youth employment and entrepreneurship



Aslı Salihoğlu @aryaneth · Jun 17

Lack of training, language barrier & host country's bureaucracy block refugee youth's entrepreneurial efforts #UNHCRNGOs #BeyondLivelihoods



Background Summary:

In UNHCR's Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018, self-reliance is defined as “the ability of an individual, household or community to meet essential needs and to enjoy social and economic rights in a sustainable manner and with dignity”. While young refugees have the potential to become self-reliant and be positive agents of change, they face a number of specific challenges towards accessing wage employment and entrepreneurship.

Supporting self-reliance for young refugees can enable them to live active and productive lives by empowering them to build strong social, economic and cultural ties with their host communities, and by strengthening their capacity to claim their rights during displacement. More so, through supporting young refugees' self-reliance through wage-employment and entrepreneurship, young refugees may become better equipped to find their own solutions: Fundamentally, how a displaced person fares in the future, whether in the country or place of asylum, country of origin or in a third country, depends on the assets – understood broadly as encompassing belongings, wealth, health, skills, experience – maintained and developed while displaced. With these assets, young refugees may be better placed to become positive agents of change in their communities, including in areas of return or relocation, or in countries of asylum or resettlement. Moreover, young refugees can help addressing root causes to displacement in their countries and areas of origin.

Trends and Challenges:

- **Skills training** based on market demand and work experience preferably from the host country is crucial to strengthen **refugee youth's employability**
- **Lack of legal identification documents** for refugees is a major barrier to entering the workforce. The average length of time required to obtain legal documents is unreasonable.
- Certification and **recognition of qualifications** obtained through formal education, vocational trainings etc. pose a significant challenge to the employment of refugee youth.
- Language barriers are reducing the employability for many refugee youth.
- It is vital for **refugee youth to be involved** at all levels of program planning. This gives youth an opportunity to contribute to their communities, expands their social networks, and changes how the community views them.
- **The limited access to financial services** for refugee youth, including loans, is a major challenge that needs to be addressed.
- **Access to electricity and internet** for refugee youth in camps needs infrastructural investment.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR and NGOs need to offer **market-driven livelihoods programming** to refugee youth and support their **financial inclusion**, including their access to start-up capital.
- UNHCR and local NGOs need to lobby host governments **to support refugee's access to employment, including offering the right to work and issuing official identification documents to refugees** in a timely and systemic manner.
- **Collaboration with the private sector and development actors should be a priority.**
- UNHCR and national governments can invest more in **technology centres in refugee camps** to provide access to computers and internet.

Youth and integration: building bridges and communities



Background Summary:

Integration is a multi-dimensional, long-term, two-way process of mutual adaptation by newcomers and the host society. With their unique perspectives, skills and resources youth have an important role to play in this process. However, too often their views are overlooked.

Incorporating the perspectives of youth is crucial for successful integration. This entails recognizing the trauma of past experiences and the particular challenges youth may face, but also their strength, resilience, and the potential contribution to the social and economic future of their host countries. To do so, we must engage youth in the conversation for finding solutions, for themselves and their communities.

Trends and Challenges:

- It is vital for refugee adolescents and youth to stay **together with their families** to have continuous support and better integrate to the host country. Splitting families and communities apart is not ideal.
- Refugee youth often have **difficulty finding their identities**. They feel conflicted when trying to please their families, their communities, the local and their selves at the same time. To a certain extent, older generations fear younger generation's full integration to the host country. These pressures can make young refugees resort to **self-harm**.
- Lack of transparency from governments about the process of requesting **official identification** lead families to prefer **hiding** instead. This limits access to education and employment.
- **Laws** of host countries can be very restrictive for refugees, **effectively blocking full integration**. For example, in Lebanon, Palestinians cannot own a home and have limited career opportunities; they are permitted to practice 22 professions only.
- Stateless youth have often lived in the country of their birth for years but feel excluded from the rest of society. Having no nationality and no identity documentation makes it difficult to access school, university, work or sometimes even to travel to another part of the country. Appropriate documentation is crucial for successful integration.

Recommendations:

- **Post-resettlement networking and workshops** (health, job search, access to services, education) would improve integration of youth to host communities.
- UNHCR and partners should foster **partnerships with the private sector** to provide refugee youth with jobs and/or volunteering opportunities for them to gain skills and enhance self-esteem,

- UNHCR should lobby national governments to **lift legal restrictions** to refugee integration in host communities.
- Adding diversity as a subject in primary school education is an option to foster understanding and acceptance between refugee and host populations.

Food for Thought Sessions

Sexual and gender minority refugee youth: empowerment & protection



Background Summary:

Sexual and gender minority (also called Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex-LGBTI) youth are among the world's most vulnerable refugees. After perilous departures from their countries of origin, they often face new abuses and challenges in countries of asylum. They are unable to access support systems that are available to other refugees for fear of revealing their identity, and must therefore fend for themselves. Unlike other refugees, they are unable to call on their families or communities of origin for support.

Trends and Challenges:

- Young LGBTI asylum-seekers and refugees are **often stuck somewhere in between refugee and host communities**. They may be rejected by host communities due to xenophobia and racism, but may also be rejected by refugee communities if they express their identity.
- Young LGBTI refugees are often severely traumatized due to experiences in the country of origin and during flight. There is **not enough psycho-social support and safe spaces** to meet the unique needs of LGBTI refugee youth in transit and upon resettlement.
- Young LGBTI individuals who are **internally displaced** can find themselves in extremely vulnerable positions where, due to their identity, they are **unable to obtain travel documents** and thus have access to asylum.

Recommendations:

- Humanitarian agencies and service providers have to ensure that **staff are trained in providing a safe, welcoming space** that is sensitive to the potential needs of LGBTI refugee youth.
- National governments, international organizations and local NGOs collectively should ensure the **provision of mental health services and psychosocial support** throughout the asylum process.
- It is important to undertake **a mapping of the local (host) LGBTI community and organizations** that provide services for them, and to understand potential risks and opportunities in providing services to LGBTI refugees resettling in the area.
- Humanitarian practitioners should **not think of LGBQI as an undifferentiated whole**—each group have their particular needs.

People on the move

Background Summary:

The issue of securing better international cooperation in addressing and responding to large movements of people has come to the forefront, particularly in anticipation of the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting on Refugees and Migrants (UNGA Meeting) on September 19th, 2016.

In light of the upcoming UNGA Meeting and the potential establishment of an international cooperation system on responsibility-sharing for refugees, it is important to determine how international agreements, such as those negotiated at the General Assembly, can impact individuals moving across international borders. All too often, safety and survival are dependent on luck and being in the right - or wrong - place at any given time. This can especially be the case for refugee youth, particularly unaccompanied youth, who may not be well equipped to navigate the often dangerous journeys taken to seek safety. Agencies and organizations providing assistance and protection to refugee youth have the responsibility to consider how protection mechanisms for youth on the move may be better systematized by all.

Trends and Challenges:

- There is a **momentum** to address the issue of **protection of people on the move** with the upcoming 19 September UNGA Meeting. An intergovernmental process is underway in order to negotiate an **outcome document, expected to be adopted** in the plenary meeting.
- Within the wider context of large scale refugee movements, **the number of children and youth undertaking dangerous irregular travel has sharply increased**, including those who are unaccompanied or separated.
- **Deterrent practices** implemented by some countries to reduce the incoming numbers of refugee children and youth include deportation and forced return. These practices **interrupt services, weaken livelihoods, and may constitute refoulement**. For example, the recent European Union-Turkey deal has created a freeze on services and has resulted in a sharp increase in children not attending school.
- While not everyone can be resettled, **education, skills training, and psychological support** help refugee children and youth adapt to their situations and be resilient. **Education is key** in terms of providing youth with both **access to information**, as well as hopes, skills and tools for the future. It also protects youth from poor life choices due to a lack of knowledge and support. Here, information and protection are very closely linked.
- The link between irregular movements and **risk of statelessness** should be recognized and acknowledged, particularly in the ways it affects children.

Recommendations:

- National governments and the international community should increase **alternatives to detention** and **end all detention of children**. They should develop and implement effective regional policies to protect children and respond to their needs once they are on the move.
- Refugee youth need much better **access to information** regarding refugee status determination, accommodation, educational and employment opportunities etc. in all countries of travel, including transit, asylum and destination countries. Not only should agencies and NGOs provide better information, but states should also be compelled to ensure better information is available.
- The outcome document of the UNGA Meeting on 19 September should include specific commitments relating to ensuring education for refugee children. Where possible, education should not be disrupted; **no child, even if on the move, should be out of school for more than one month**. Ensuring the continuity of refugees' education is crucial their future livelihoods.

Statelessness



Background Summary:

The disadvantages that statelessness brings are enormous, whether they are difficulties accessing education, work or healthcare; restrictions on their freedom of movement; or the inability to own mobile phones or property. Having to cope with these challenges from a very young age can have a significant toll on the wellbeing and happiness of stateless children and youth.

The burdens of stateless children and youth include: the burden of their past – the injustice and discrimination, often against their parents or communities which caused their statelessness; the burden of their present – the exclusion they encounter in all types of social interactions and activities; and the burden of their future – the impossibility of pursuing their dreams and/or the necessity to temper them to fit within the smaller realm of possibility available to the stateless.

NGOs, the UNHCR and other actors have a crucial role to play in helping alleviate these burdens, through promoting and fulfilling the human rights of stateless youth and ensuring that their statelessness situation is resolved. This requires a shift in the way humanitarian practitioners think about such issues by placing stateless children and youth at the centre of policy and programming design and implementation, and by ensuring our collective accountability to them.

Trends and Challenges:

- Access to a **nationality is a fundamental human right**. In addition to being a human rights violation itself, statelessness causes significant and wide-ranging additional human rights violations, including violations of the right to education, healthcare, freedom of movement, political rights, and more.
- Most stateless children are **born stateless**; therefore ensuring nationality at birth would be a major step towards ending statelessness worldwide.
- The major root causes of statelessness are state secession or ethnic, religious, racial, or gender-based discrimination. At the end of the day, however, statelessness is **a political problem** that demands political solutions offered by national governments. NGOs can contribute to the solutions. Combating statelessness is a long-term project that requires initiatives and collaborations designed to involve **long-term engagement**.
- Though significant work is still required to raise awareness around statelessness, **collaborative outreach** by NGOs and UNHCR has **dramatically increased the spotlight on the issue** over the last several years.

Recommendations:

- **Further collaboration** between UNHCR and NGOs is vital to combating statelessness.
- **Birth registration** should be made free and accessible in order to uproot childhood statelessness.
- **Litigation and advocacy** on a national and regional level is crucial to hold governments accountable to uphold international law.
- **The elimination of gender discrimination** in nationality laws would be an important step to remedy the causes of childhood statelessness.
- It is critical those stateless persons are **made visible**, and that their connections and **self-identification with their country illustrated** to national policy makers and the public.

- UNHCR, through civil society partners, should advocate for increased accession and implementation of statelessness conventions. Improved implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women should also be encouraged to address statelessness.

The state of partnership: town hall meeting on the new enhanced Framework for implementing with partners

Background Summary:

UNHCR has long maintained strategic partnerships with NGOs to fulfil its mandate, including its work with refugee youth. Collaboration has grown significantly in terms of substance and resources.

Since 2012, UNHCR has made considerable progress working in consultation with NGO partners through field and network reference groups, to review and revise the framework of cooperation with a new standard partnership agreement, new policies and procedures on selection and retention of partners, joint monitoring of projects and regular partnership review, with the intention of enhancing partnerships and collaboration.

In 2015, the funds UNHCR allocated through joint partnerships surpassed US\$1.2 billion (almost 40% of UNHCR's total annual expenditure). The number of partners playing a significant role in the quest for durable solutions has reached a record high of 936 across the globe, including 586 national/local and 167 international NGOs. Of these, 90 were new and first time partners. UNHCR attaches particular importance to enhancing the capacity and engagement of national partners and first responders. UNHCR currently spends about 12% of its annual expenditure on partnerships with national NGOs and has set itself a goal to increase this to 25% by 2020.

Trends and Challenges:

- **UNHCR spent US\$1.2 billion through 935 NGO partners in 2015.** National NGOs (NNGOs) expressed more satisfaction in communications than international NGOs (INGOs). On another note, NGOs wished for more time between calls for Expressions of Interest (EOI) and Concept Note due dates and less time when it comes to the signing of Agreements.
- Demands for operational flexibility, management of shared risks, and accountability expectations form in the agenda for the **Enhanced Framework for Implementing with Partners**. Other factors that can improve UNHCR-NGO partnerships include increasing the use of **the Partner Portal** and the **Pre-Qualification for Procurement (PQP)** processes. UNHCR's contributions towards partner personnel costs have not been finalized yet.
- Greater clarity regarding the commitments detailed in the **UN's Grand Bargain** document is needed. This can be achieved through **collaborative effort**.
- **Increasing the capacities of NNGOs** would strengthen local initiatives and improve direct service delivery to refugees. **Small-scale funding agreements, multi-year funding agreements,** and UNHCR-INGO accompaniment of NNGOs in their early stages of collaboration with UNHCR are suggested ways of accomplishing this goal.
- Guided by UNHCR's policy of **zero tolerance for misconduct**, the priorities of the **Investigation Service** in 2016 are preventing SEA, fraud/procurement, and RSD/resettlement fraud; proactive investigations; and information sharing with staff and Partners.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR should intensify efforts to ensure that **all partners are well-informed** about the particularities of the **Enhanced Framework for Implementing with Partners**.
- UNHCR must continue to promote collaborative effort to **manage risk and address accountability demands**, with the ultimate aim being more efficient and effective services for persons of concern. This includes encouraging all Partners to achieve **PQP status**, greater transparency by all in **financial reporting**, and everyone learning more about the **prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse**, as well as **mechanisms for addressing misconduct**.
- UNHCR should finalize and disseminate UNHCR's position on UNHCR contributions towards **partner personnel cost**.
- UNHCR should issue the finalized Operational Guidelines for capacity strengthening document, developed by UNHCR/ICVA and the Network Organisations Group
- In a collaborative manner, UNHCR can develop concrete plans for **enhancing the capacities of national actors**, particularly NNGOs. This includes working alongside NNGOs from the beginning of operations, not just when international actors are leaving.

Resettlement Q&A



Trends and Challenges:

- Countries in the European Union have diminished their quotas in practice for refugees out of Africa. Refugees of **nationalities other than Syrian need to be equally present** on the humanitarian agenda.
- There is a need for a **broader definition of family** beyond the traditional nuclear family. The current definition **hinders family reunification efforts** for unaccompanied and separated children and refugee youth.
- Resettled refugees are **not informed enough about post-resettlement programming** and processes.
- Refugees who are not given priority in asylum processing need **counselling services** to inform them on the progress of their cases regularly in order not to lose hope or drop out.

Recommendations:

- **More partnerships between NGOs and governments** would enable UNHCR to find alternative pathways for refugees who are denied asylum.
- The legal working **definition of “family” needs an update**. UNHCR should work with global partners to advocate for the expansion of the current definition.
- National governments to whom asylum applications are launched should **recognize the impossibility of retrieving official documents** from disaster/war settings.
- **Engaging local Diaspora** in the resettlement process facilitates faster integration of refugees into the host countries.

Innovation: change makers



Evelyne Dévaud @evelyne0012 · Jun 17

Internet connection, crowdsourcing for youth is the starting point for funding initiatives #Innovation at #UNHCRNGOs



Trends and Challenges:

- **Recognition of qualifications** is a critical issue. Countries of resettlement that don't recognize educational degrees from countries of origin effectively erase the self-development accrued by refugee youth before their displacement. The creation of a **skill set recognition system** or global primary and secondary education curricula might close this systemic gap.
- **Work permits for refugees** are absent in certain destination and transit countries. Legislation needs to ensure that refugees have the right to earn dignified and safe livelihoods.
- **Discrimination** against refugees in host communities limits job opportunities. Measures such as **refugee hiring quotas** for businesses might compensate for this.
- It is important to **train humanitarian staff**—teachers, social workers, lawyers etc.—in youth friendly practices and familiarize them with the unique needs and concerns of this demographic.

Recommendations:

- UNHCR and national governments should **create a task force** that can assess the feasibility of launching an international body that can **globally standardize the equivalence of national educational qualifications**.
- UNHCR and NGOs should **consult with refugee communities directly** during the design and testing of new solutions or programmes. Engagement should be iterative and continuous.
- **Training humanitarian staff** and equipping them with the appropriate tools to recognize and respond to the needs of refugees in stressful working conditions would **decrease burn out rates** for personnel working in the field.

World Humanitarian Summit follow-up



Background Summary:

The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) was held in Istanbul from 23 to 25 May 2016 where 1,500 commitments were made. Three such post-WHS initiatives are the following:

The *Youth Compact* lays out six actions that signatories pledge to take to ensure that the priorities, needs and rights of crises- affected youth are addressed, and that young people are informed, consulted and meaningfully engaged in all stages of humanitarian action.

The *Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action* (in the stage of design, implementation and monitoring) was endorsed by over 100 states, civil society organizations and UN agencies. As a next step, global guidelines will be developed with a multi-stakeholder approach. Efforts will also focus on getting broader endorsement of the Charter as well as its implementation.

The *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies* is an initiative launched in 2013. It aims for every humanitarian effort to include mechanisms to mitigate SGBV risks, and to provide safe and comprehensive services for those affected by SGBV. A five-year roadmap was established in 2015. The UNHCR has made 10 commitments to realize its key action areas through changes in policy, inter-agency systems and program implementation methods.

Trends and Challenges:

- Youth are being **generalized** as a demographic, which leads to **inappropriate targeting** and programming.
- Refugee youth can utilize their personal resources where requests for funding from and engagement of other actors have failed. Examples of **youth resourcefulness** include spearheading grassroots community initiatives and taking on mentorship roles for their peers.
- At 15%, **people with disability** constitute on average **the biggest minority** in refugee populations. **The Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action** is a step towards recognizing their unique needs and increasing their participation in initiatives launched for them.
- Localization of humanitarian action is shifting the focus from international organizations to local actors.

Recommendations:

- Humanitarian action should be transformed **with and for young people**.
- **Joint action** between various actors in the humanitarian sector and provisions for **accountability** between all partners need to increase.
- UNHCR and partner organizations that have already signed on should **endorse** the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and other **charters that have come out of the World Humanitarian Summit**.
- **Resources** pledged for humanitarian aid and programming should increase at the international level while funding that goes to **local first-responder organizations** should increase.

Closing Plenary



Louisa Shea @shealouisa · Jun 17

Now is time to stop hiding between tweets, behind selfies. Now is time for action.

@Arif_Hazara closing #UNHCRNGOs



Kelly CLEMENTS, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, highlighted the importance of keeping communication channels open with all stakeholders. She pointed out that despite the enormous challenges; the political system was in a place it hasn't been in many years to enact change. She further emphasized the need to invest more in the humanitarian-development nexus to offer better or more comprehensive solutions to tackle worldwide displacement.

Musarait KASHMIRI, Rapporteur to the Annual Consultations with NGOs, called on NGOs, UNHCR and UN Member States to make sure youth participation remains meaningful and is not just a token gesture. She pointed out deficiencies in working definitions and data collection on youth, encouraging all stakeholders to amend these gaps in order to ensure that the humanitarian ecosystem of response correctly corresponds to the needs of persons of concern. Recalling High Commissioner Filippo Grandi's speech at the opening plenary, she emphasized the need to ensure nobody is left behind, including IDPs, Stateless and youth.

Yanit Tefera HABTEMARIAM, Rapporteur of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme in Ethiopia, listed the following five areas of improvement: protection capacities; disaggregated data collection; involvement of youth in decision making processes; education, skills training, and livelihood opportunities; and international cooperation. She underlined that all of these areas require increased funding and support from UNHCR's partners and donors

Nan BUZARD, Executive Director of ICVA, expressed the opinion that the age of 18 often acts as a random number that differentiates adults from children, disregarding the transitional stage in between: youth. She mentioned that integration and connection were important factors in combating feelings of isolation and emphasized the need to include youth every step of the way.

Maria ALESI, Youth Representative from Uganda, started her speech by saying, "Home is the place in the world where hearts are sure of each other." She admitted that she thought lowly of refugees in her country before becoming acquainted with many refugees herself, and through her participation in the Global Refugee Youth Consultations. She stated that she now seeks to create space for displaced and stateless people; she also made a sobering remark: "Policies and law don't integrate people; people integrate people."

Arif HAZARA, Youth Representative from Australia, stated that although resourceful and capable, refugee youth cannot ‘do it alone.’ He asserted that being inspired by youth and applauding their resilience and initiative was not enough; they had done their best to find solutions and now it was time for action. He invited UNHCR and NGO representatives to dedicate resources to young refugees, prioritize their needs, enact structural changes, and be accountable with regards to translating their consultative efforts into policies.

Moving forward, UNHCR, NGOs and Members States should take into account the **overarching calls to action** that have come out of the NGO consultations¹.

In summary, NGOs, in partnership with UNHCR and Member States, are called to:

- Establish a working definition of “youth” standardized among all UN agencies and partners and collect disaggregated data on youth,
- Work with states to develop and adopt the UNHCR draft conclusion on youth,
- Include youth in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation in a transparent and accountable manner,
- Engage youth with rights-based programming that meets their diverse needs,
- Adopt inclusive approaches that lead to greater power sharing among various stakeholders, and
- Transform the humanitarian ecosystem of response to be a better fit for persons of concern and deliver resources and services to those best suited to respond.

Thanks to a cross-cutting approach and the inclusion of people of concern in the discussion, the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations on Youth was a successful event. Participants strongly appreciated the energy the youth brought to the Consultations along with their testimonies. There was a general consensus that UNHCR should keep on bringing people of concern to its meetings. Additionally, opportunities to network, the diversity of NGOs present, the access to and interaction with UNHCR staff, as well as participatory and action-oriented sessions contributed to have three fruitful days of discussion.

While a better balance needs to be found between thematic and regional sessions, the inclusion of affected populations and diverse actors was particularly appreciated and needs to be further strengthened in the next coming years. We look forward to the 2017 UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations, which promise to enhance further discussion among UNHCR and NGOs, for stronger collaboration to face the tremendously challenging humanitarian crises our one humanity is experiencing.

¹ Please find the complete list in the Executive Summary

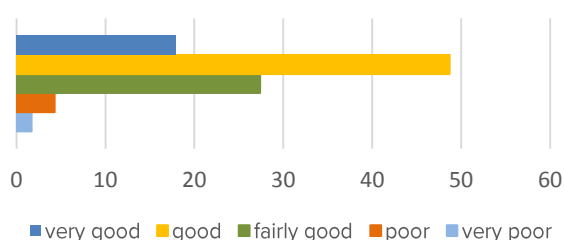
General Evaluation

2016 Annual Consultations with NGOs

This document shows a summary the results of the general evaluation participants were invited to complete at the end of the 2016 Annual Consultations. The first part of the questionnaire focuses on the general evaluation of the Consultations, the second part summarises the comments we received.

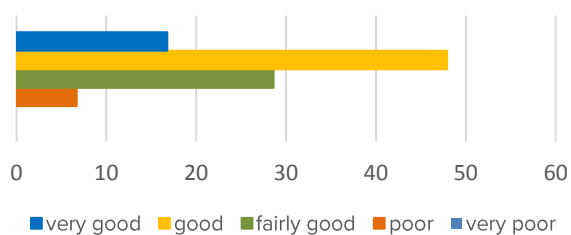
About the respondents: more than a fourth of the participants completed the general evaluation. 81% of those surveyed attended 5 or more sessions, 17 % attended 3-5 sessions and only 2% attended less than 3 sessions. 71% of respondents did not attend the Consultations last year, 29% did.

Overall quality of the Consultations - %



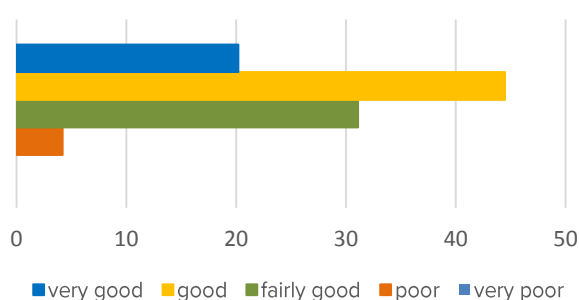
The majority of respondents evaluate the overall quality of the Consultations as either 'good' (49%) or 'very good' (18%). (Number of respondents: 117)

Overall quality of the agenda - %



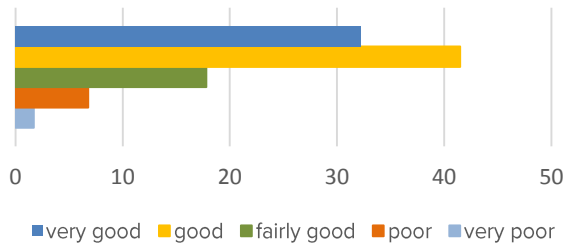
48% of respondents considered the overall quality of the agenda as 'good', 17% as 'very good' (Number of respondents: 119)

Overall quality of the speakers - %



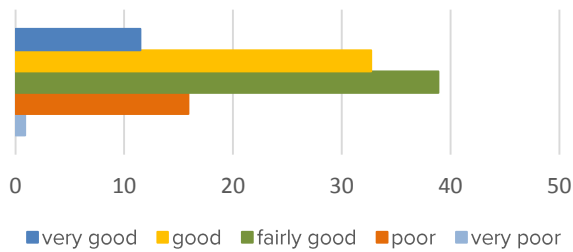
45% of respondents evaluate the quality of the speakers as 'good', 31% as 'fairly good' (Number of respondents: 119)

Opportunities to network - %



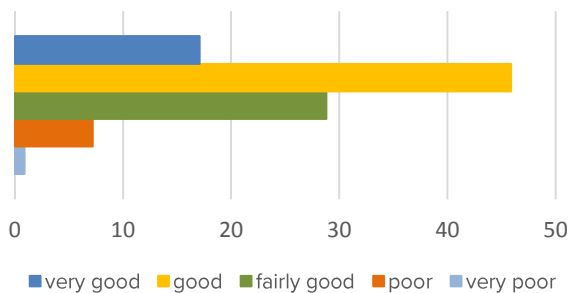
More than 2/3 of respondents consider that the opportunities to network are either 'good' or 'very good'. (Number of respondents: 118)

Balance between thematic and regional sessions - %



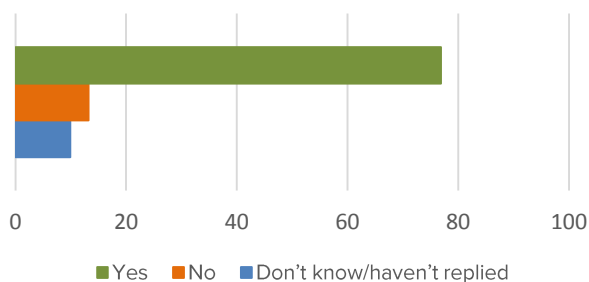
33% of respondents felt that the balance between thematic and regional sessions was 'good', 39% evaluated it as only 'fairly good' demonstrating that there could be room for improvement. (Number of respondents: 113)

Relevance of topics to area of work - %



29% of the respondents thought that the relevance of the topics to their area of work was 'fairly good', 47% felt that it was 'good' and 17% 'very good'. (Number of respondents: 111)

Do you plan to attend the Consultations next year? - %



77% are planning to attend the Consultations next year, 13% are not planning to attend and 10% don't know or have not replied. (Number of respondents: 121)

What did you like the most about the Annual Consultations with NGOs?

Respondents unanimously applauded the **increased participation of people of concern** to the Annual Consultations. They strongly appreciated the energy the youth brought to the Consultations along with their testimonies. There was a general consensus that UNHCR should keep on bringing people of concern to its meetings.

There is a very strong emphasis on **networking opportunities** that the Consultations offer to its participants. They want to come and discuss their issues and exchange ideas with other partners and with UNHCR. The great **diversity** of NGOs participating was also highlighted. Many participants appreciated the **marketplace** as it offered a great opportunity for initial interaction.

Access to and interaction with UNHCR staff was also highlighted. Many respondents appreciate the participation of the High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner and the two Assistant High Commissioners to Q&A sessions, underlining that it demonstrates their commitment to NGOs.

Participatory sessions which used **break-out groups, workshop methods** and which were **focused on recommendations** were much appreciated. Participants appreciated **action-oriented sessions**, where speakers developed strategies and models for engagement. The cross-cutting approach worked well for some sessions.

Finally, participants also highlighted the usefulness of the **webinar** for the newcomers as well as for the old-timers who wanted to know what was new with the Consultations.

What did you like the least about the Annual Consultations with NGOs?

The biggest issue was that of **poor facilitation** and **poor time-keeping**. Consequently, some complained that there was **not enough time for the Q&A part of the sessions**.

Whilst most appreciated this year's **theme**, some felt it was **too dominant** in the discussions. Some mentioned that the **Consultations did not offer enough opportunities to discuss current global challenges** and some sessions were out of tune with what is really going on in a particular region and/or on a particular issue. A few reported confusion between youth issues and child issues. Others felt that the discussions, outcomes and recommendations were mainly focused on youth engagement, but that no recommendations were made on how UNHCR and NGOs could improve their working relationships with and enhance the outcomes of their work.

Some disliked the **tough stance on registration** but we also received **complaints on "jam-packed" sessions** where people had to stand or renounced to attend a session because there were too many people.

Some respondents wished for a **balance between thematic, operational and regional sessions**. Another approach would be to **balance between discussions vs. panels, information sessions vs. action-planning type sessions**. A few participants mentioned that the **Q&As with AHCs were scheduled too early** and that there would be a better turnout if scheduled later in the day. Another common issue was the **scheduling of all regional sessions at the same time**, because a lot of participants would be interested to follow more than one. Finally, some respondents recommended to **start the sessions on the morning of the first day** in order to have a better repartition on the agenda.

Some participants felt that **the UNHCR-NGO relationship was largely absent**. In their view, there is rarely an opportunity for NGOs to pose direct questions and get direct answers from UNHCR and UNHCR was often not represented on thematic panels.

On methodology, the opinion received was that many speakers **described situations rather than analysing them and setting forth proposals**. Generally, people surveyed regretted a **lack of concrete discussions on policies and action plans** and that not enough emphasis was put on innovative solutions for refugee crises. **Practitioners were not given a lot of room to share best practices** on core issues related with UNHCR and partners' mandate. Secondly, some mentioned that **panel "method" might not be the most conducive to real discussion**, exploration and cross-fertilization of experience. A "workshop" or goals/objectives oriented approach might be more effective.

A large part of respondents noticed that there was **no consistent use of Arabic translation** in all the sessions. A few mentioned that the break-out groups **did not take into account participants who do not speak English**.

Finally, some mentioned that sometimes, the Consultations felt as if participants were talked AT rather than talked TO. The three-day meeting needs to be **more a consultation and less a conference**, as in their own terms, “NGOs do not need to be convinced, rather worked with”.

What can be improved?

Participants to the survey suggested that it would be **useful to define what the main objectives of the Consultations are**. **When preparing the session**, some recommended to **ensure that there are clear discussion points and desired outcomes** for each session so that participants can prepare accordingly. This would also **facilitate the follow-up** of the Consultations.

There is a strong demand to **continue to include affected populations** and to **involve more diverse actors**, such as smaller NGOs, development NGOs and the private sector. **Disabilities and other diversity should be better reflected/included** into presentations, speakers and experiences.

Communication could be improved from the Partnership Section and ICVA side. Some persons still don't know where to find the information (background papers, lists of participants...). **Communication could also be improved between NGOs** during the Consultations. One respondent suggested for instance a white board where NGOs representatives can call on particular NGOs to network and to meet through providing further information.

Have a marketplace, for half a day during the three days of the Consultations, where every day different NGOs can showcase their work and share their best practices.

Finally, many suggested that there is a **need for more UNHCR senior staff presence** throughout the event.

What should be next year's Consultations theme? *(Non-exhaustive. Full list available upon request.)*

- **Diversity** (disability, gender, age)
- **Solutions** (moving out of camps in a proactive way, refugees as capital, integration)
- **Creative solutions in unstable political realities** (innovation, new models of protection and assistance, working with local partners)
- **Follow-up on processes** (WHS, pledges, UNGA high-level meeting to address large movements of refugees and migrants, previous Consultations)

What kind of topics would you like to be included in future Consultations? *(Non-exhaustive. Full list available upon request.)*

- Education
- Community-based protection
- Innovation
- Role of development organisations
- Detention
- Statelessness
- Protracted-situations
- SGBV
- Livelihoods and employment
- IDPs
- Resettlement
- Integration
- Disabilities
- Refugee-led organisations
- Health
- Unaccompanied minors
- LGBTI
- Gender
- Insecurity and humanitarian assistance
- Migration and climate change
- Cross-border cooperation and coordination focusing on individuals
- Urban refugee protection
- Sustainable development refugee programming
- Emergency response, financing, partnership procedure and policies
- Follow up of the GRYC

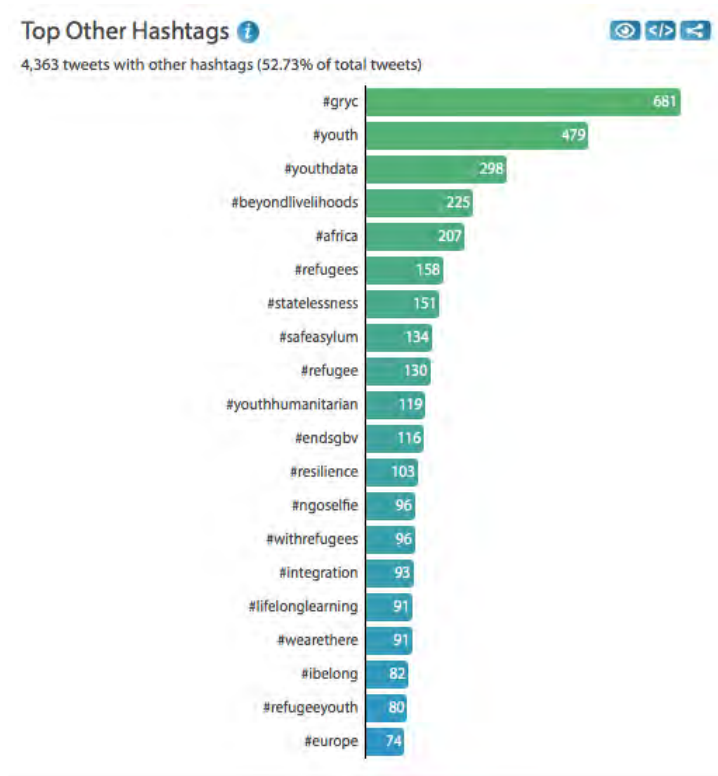
Twitter Platforms:

No surprise there, 75% of tweets were from a mobile device.

Top Other Hashtags:

Interestingly, most tweets came from these three sessions:

1. #youthdata
2. #beyondlivelihoods
3. #Africa



Most active Tweeters

Careful with this stat, though – it doesn't mean that the most active were producing "original tweets" - Lucy Kiama is third most active, but almost exclusively from retweets.



Most Retweets

The more famous you are, the more you get retweeted. Top retweets @Refugees and the High Commissioner @RefugeesChief.



Top Tweets from @UNHCRPartners

And the winner is... Bird Eye by Matthew Plumb.

 Partnership Section
@UNHCRPartners

Birds-eye view of the opening plenary at the #UNHCRNGOs.



RETWEETS 28 LIKES 22

0:47:03 42 Jun 2016

Top Tweet earned 13.6K impressions

#UNHCRNGOs starts this morning, a gathering of 592 participants from around the world on "Youth: the Future is now" pic.twitter.com/OH8AIr50fN



1 26 41

 Partnership Section

@UNHCRPartners · Jun 15

"It is youth who drive the program"
#UNHCRNGOs opening plenary



27 41

 Partnership Section

@UNHCRPartners · Jun 14

"Coming together is the beginning, holding it together is progress" #GRYC
#UNHCRNGOs




26 29

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PUBLISHED BY:

UNHCR

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