

# GUIDANCE NOTE

## HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR DIFFERENT AT-RISK GROUPS IN DISPLACEMENT

April 2024

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

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- To effectively protect and assist displaced persons with diverse characteristics, it is essential to address challenges to their participation, promote more inclusive coordination mechanisms and data systems, and ensure the delivery of more appropriate services.
- The active and meaningful participation of at-risk groups in displacement is a pre-condition for more inclusive and effective humanitarian action.
- Defining roles and responsibilities for the protection of specific groups among humanitarian actors and integrating specialised stakeholders in relevant coordination mechanisms are crucial for developing tailored responses to the specific needs of displaced people.
- Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the composition of the displaced population and identifying gaps in data collection, use, analysis, and dissemination can lead to practical improvements in humanitarian programming for all displaced persons.
- Effective humanitarian action requires removing barriers to accessing essential services, as well as complementing these services with targeted efforts that ensure the safety and dignity of every displaced individual.

Guidance Note: Humanitarian Action for Different At-Risk Groups in Displacement.  
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## INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian crises—whether triggered by sudden-onset disasters, slow-onset environmental degradation, conflicts and violence, poverty, or health crises, as well as combinations of compounding hazards—frequently result in large population movements. People’s mobility, the specific needs people face as a consequence of their movement, and their reduced human security while on the move impact their need for humanitarian aid and the ways it can be delivered. In order to address their specific needs, humanitarian actors must identify the people forced to move, understand their assistance and protection needs and how these will evolve throughout their journeys, how and where to provide assistance, and what partnerships need to be established and managed to ensure successful outcomes.

The lived experience of forced migrants shows that their capacities and their needs differ widely as a consequence of both individual and contextual determinants. Hence, humanitarian actors must build flexibility and adaptability into their work to assist and protect people with different physical abilities and from diverse demographic, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds.

This guidance note synthesises the key findings from the **“Research on the Evolving Humanitarian Action for Forced Migration”** project of the JICA Ogata Research Institute for Peace and Development. The research project was driven by the need to better understand specific needs and risks faced by different individuals and groups in displacement—those who are too often rendered invisible and marginalised in humanitarian programming. These groups experience a range of conditions of vulnerability that intersect across their identities and phases of displacement, creating complex and evolving situations of insecurity. Colleagues from both the research and practice communities contributed to the process, identifying gaps and practices in implementing humanitarian action for diverse at-risk groups in displacement through a series of case studies on children, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, and migrant workers.

## AT-RISK GROUPS IN DISPLACEMENT

Humanitarian action encompasses the wide variety and diversity of activities to save lives and address the basic needs of people in crises, including those in situations of displacement. This work is guided by the fundamental principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence[1]. In humanitarian contexts, specific efforts should be aimed at addressing the needs of at-risk individuals and groups within the displaced population.

Forced migrants and displaced individuals have distinct sets of needs, priorities, and risks shaped by intersecting forms of discrimination. In such circumstances, “intersectionality”[2] should be an inherent consideration in planning and implementing humanitarian assistance. However, traditional humanitarian action for displaced populations often fails to adequately address specific forms of discrimination and effectively meet individual needs. Certain groups of forced migrants routinely encounter barriers in accessing assistance and services, which further heightens their vulnerability to direct and indirect crisis impacts, including violence, deprivation and insecurity.

Different marginalised groups require heightened protection and tailored interventions to mitigate their unique challenges. Without attempting to be fully comprehensive, this guidance note specifically focuses on children, women, people with disabilities, older people, and trafficked migrant workers. **(See Box.1)**

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[1] These principles are rooted in both international humanitarian law and practice, as recognised by the United Nations through General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 and 58/114.

[2] Coined by legal scholar and activist Kimberlé Crenshaw, the term “intersectionality” elucidates how various systems of oppression intertwine, exemplified by the experiences of black women in the USA grappling with the convergence of racial and gender identities. This framework has since then been extended beyond race and gender to encompass the nuanced oppressions faced by marginalised groups, based on identities such as nationality, migration status, indigeneity, ability, age and more.

## Box 1. At-Risk Groups in Displacement

### Women

Women are individuals who are assigned female sex at birth or who define themselves as women. Women also fit into the socially constructed set of characteristics, norms, behaviours and roles associated with women and girls in different communities and cultures.

### Children

In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a “child” is defined as a human being below the age of eighteen unless a majority is attained earlier under the law applicable to the child. “Unaccompanied and separated children” are children who are not accompanied by any adult relative and who are separated from their parents or primary caregivers, respectively.

### People with Disabilities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) states that “persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” The CRPD further recognises disability as an “evolving concept” and as the result of barriers imposed on persons with impairments by society.

### Older Persons

The UN defines an older person as someone aged 60 years and older. From a chronological perspective, old age begins at 55 in developing countries and 60–65 in developed countries. From a health perspective, older persons are older than 60, with people from 45 to 60 identified as “pre-senile” and those above 70 as “older people at risk.”

### Migrant workers

The 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers defines a migrant worker as “a person who is to be engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.” This group may include a mix of regular and irregular migrant workers, depending on whether they fulfil (or not) the conditions of entry in their host country.

## IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

This research project explores the interconnected and diverse humanitarian challenges that different at-risk populations face. It examines various elements of humanitarian action through case studies on (1) the use of data on child migrants and their humanitarian needs in Northern Africa and Southern Europe, (2) women’s representation in humanitarian data collection as enumerators and key informants across regions, (3) disability-inclusive humanitarian action to internal displacement in Vanuatu and Nigeria, (4) representation of older displaced people in research and support for older people in the Philippines, and (5) protection and coordination mechanisms deployed in rescue operations of trafficked migrants in Thailand.

The case studies collectively confirm that addressing challenges in [PARTICIPATION](#), [COORDINATION](#), [DATA](#), and [SERVICE PROVISION](#) is key to overcoming barriers to effectively, sufficiently, and appropriately delivering and implementing humanitarian assistance for diverse at-risk people in displacement.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDANCE NOTE

This guidance note provides an overview of cross-cutting issues encountered by people and groups facing specific needs and risks in displacement. It offers humanitarian practitioners and organisations working with such groups a synthesis of the challenges they face. The following pages expound on four operational elements in humanitarian action, with each section providing **definitions, key challenges, enabling solutions, best practices, and links to useful tools for humanitarian action**. While this guidance note is based on the evidence provided by the case studies elaborated under the project, it covers challenges that are relevant to at-risk populations in general; therefore, the recommendations for improved humanitarian programming it provides could also be applied to other vulnerable population groups.

## DEFINITION

This section defines **engagement** or **participation of at-risk groups** as the “inclusion” of relevant individuals to inform, design, and implement humanitarian actions. The absence or limited participation of at-risk people or groups in displacement is observable at various stages of humanitarian interventions: data collection, program design, service delivery, and evaluation. In turn, it further underpins their exclusion from relevant humanitarian assistance. Different at-risk groups in displacement experience differing forms of exclusion rooted in their intersecting characteristics (age, gender, status, disability, and other social identities). **Inclusion** is built on the recognition of the different barriers displaced people face in accessing targeted support and services that meet their requirements and needs as well as **“their capacity to participate in and shape how aid is delivered.”** [3]

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

In displacement situations, **engagement and participation of at-risk individuals and groups** frequently remain limited. Efforts to actively involve local community members in programme design and implementation often result in box-ticking exercises that only meet donor or programmatic requirements without producing meaningful change. Exclusion starts with data collection operations, leading to a **lack of acknowledgement of their presence, specific challenges and needs**, ultimately resulting in **poorly tailored and ineffective humanitarian planning**.

## KEY CHALLENGES

### 1. Perceived hierarchy among vulnerable groups

- Women and children in crises often have many organisations mainstreaming their needs and concerns in different crisis and displacement situations. However, other groups currently in displacement may have fewer organisations and response actors advocating for their concerns, which often leads to marginalisation as their situation may be **neglected and overlooked** (e.g., older people (OPs), persons with disabilities (PWDs), trafficked migrant workers).
- At-risk individuals are often grouped as a collective of vulnerable people in displacement, **overlooking the distinct risks they face, including diverse exposures to threats, needs, varying levels of support (family, community) and capacities**.

### 2. Inclusion of invisible/hidden populations

- The **absence of recognition for “invisible groups”** in displacement leads to top-down blanket responses during crises. This lack of targeted recognition and aid disproportionately affects, for instance, people with marginalised gender identities, sex workers, and people in need of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).
- Certain groups **do not want to be identified** in crises due to undocumented/irregular status or fear of abuse and persecution. This affects their ability to meaningfully participate in and benefit from the design and implementation of humanitarian action.

### 3. Limited or superficial inclusion of different groups in displacement

- Tight timelines and quick expected turnaround of humanitarian planning result in **limited or superficial inclusion** of representatives from at-risk groups. Often, these community representatives are included more as a box-ticking exercise, and their inputs do not result in an appropriate integration of perspectives into better-tailored assistance and service provision.

### 4. Issues within inclusion efforts

- In some cases, when a particular group is represented and recognised, social hierarchies may manifest that **impede the ability of specific subgroups to voice their concerns**.
- Even when humanitarian data collection, design, and programming explicitly include diverse at-risk groups, **their “meaningful participation” may be hindered** by the presence of dominant individuals or groups that control discussions and steer programming designs (i.e., male-dominated information sharing with people with disabilities in camps; older women-dominated discussions sideline the issues of younger women).

[3] Lough, Barbelet, and Njeri (2022, 7).

## ENABLING SOLUTIONS

KEY CHALLENGES	POTENTIAL ENABLING SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceived hierarchy among and assumptions about vulnerable groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently promote and initiate <b>equitable inclusion efforts from the outset</b>. This involves constantly monitoring and considering the diverse barriers for different groups that are experiencing forced displacement or immobility in the face of natural hazards, active conflicts or other humanitarian emergencies.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion of invisible/hidden populations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Take stock of and contact local and regional networks</b> (organisations, academics, social workers) with expertise and specialisation in working with and accessing hidden populations.</li> <li>In the case of data collection efforts through key informants, <b>engage key informant networks</b> who may have knowledge of which organisations operate locally and the extent of their reach into the community.</li> <li>Adopt careful, appropriate approaches when accessing populations that may be politically or otherwise socially marginalised in the society and may lack the same safety nets as other affected populations (e.g., ethnic minorities, migrant workers, etc). Whenever possible, seek the cooperation of local authorities for registering migrants in irregular status in order to facilitate the regularisation of their conditions and the protection of victims of trafficking and the abusive systems behind irregular migration.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited or superficial inclusion for different groups in displacement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Build trust with relevant individuals and their representatives</b> to ensure that all groups are meaningfully included, leading to the development of program designs that meet their specific and evolving needs.</li> <li>Maximise and maintain a diversity of channels of communication to reach out to groups, e.g., by identifying leaders of different networks, using different messaging apps, and other options for remote contact for hard-to-reach areas.</li> <li><b>Adjust the timing, location, duration and modalities for delivering relevant work</b> so that data collection and other efforts are compatible with people's different commitments (e.g., childcare, work, and other duties).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues within inclusion efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that facilitators during focus group discussions or other forums where communities raise their issues are well-trained and equipped <b>to spot and address any imbalance in the active participation</b> of everyone in the group (e.g., encourage those who speak less frequently to share their ideas/inputs first, set up separate and safer spaces to share ideas).</li> <li><b>Develop and implement more inclusive feedback mechanisms</b> with at-risk groups to evaluate their inclusion across humanitarian data collection, design and programming through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular people-centred exchanges that are focused on how different groups evaluate the productiveness of their inclusion and the extent to which their needs are tailored for and met.</li> <li>More accessible feedback and complaint mechanisms and bi-directional communication channels that account for people's various limitations (e.g., physical disabilities, language limitations, technological disadvantages).</li> <li>Safer, easy-to-reach and barrier-free location to conduct FGDs for feedback, complaint, and communication.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Design an <b>anonymised system</b> to encourage more people to participate in feedback mechanisms (i.e., setting QR code for ideas and complaints)</li> </ul>

## USEFUL LINKS

- Christian Blind Mission. (2024). Inclusive participation toolbox. <https://participation.cbm.org>
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). (2019). Guidelines: Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-guidelines-on-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-humanitarian-action-2019>
- Initiative for Children in Migration (n.d.). Why does children's participation in advocacy matter? <https://www.childreninmigration.eu/childparticipation>
- UNHCR. (2022) Facilitator's guide for training on: Working with older persons on the move. <https://www.unhcr.org/facilitators-guide-working-older-persons-forced-displacement>
- Women in displacement: <https://www.womenindisplacement.org>

## ENGAGEMENT WITH BENEFICIARIES

### Fostering Meaningful Engagement of Displaced Persons with Disabilities

Recent policy developments aim to include persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action. On the humanitarian side, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action were endorsed in 2019 as the first system-wide guidance on the actions that humanitarian actors must take to effectively identify and address the needs of persons with disabilities in humanitarian settings. It set out four “must do” actions to be applied in all stages of humanitarian action, with the first being the meaningful participation of those with disabilities in all decisions that affect them.

One key aspect of improving the engagement of persons with disabilities is the provision of accessible infrastructure and ensuring inclusive meetings. Quite often, humanitarian actors invite persons with disabilities for consultations but do not consider the barriers that persons with disabilities must overcome to participate actively. Displacement sites must be designed for persons with disabilities, featuring ramps, widened pathways, and accessible sanitation facilities. Additionally, providing specific supports such as mobility aids, sign language interpretation, or braille materials is a precondition to enabling persons with disabilities to act more independently and contribute actively during consultations.

Another essential element to improve meaningful participation is strengthening the capacities of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations (OPDs). Recent studies by Christian Blind Mission (CBM) in Niger and Cameroon have shown that even OPDs already involved in humanitarian action often have limited knowledge of humanitarian coordination and processes. Although invited to consultations and meetings, persons with disabilities may struggle to contribute if they don't understand key concepts and terminology in meetings.

As part of the response to the displacement of the Rohingya people from Myanmar to Bangladesh, CBM and its local partner, Centre for Disability in Development (CDD), started a disability-inclusive response program in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar in 2018. The program explicitly addresses health, rehabilitation, education, and protection needs for persons with disabilities. However, accessibility issues, social stigma, and capacity constraints initially formed considerable barriers to the active participation of refugees with disabilities. To enhance their participation, so-called “Disability Support Committees” (DSCs) were developed through the project, with each comprising 8–14 refugees with disabilities. DSCs provide a platform for members to raise concerns and foster mutual support. This initiative has empowered DSC members to participate in consultations, governance, and coordination, serving as change agents and inspiring replication by other humanitarian actors.



## DEFINITION

A vital component of humanitarian action is the **coordination among all actors involved in assessing and analysing humanitarian needs and delivering and monitoring humanitarian assistance**. To ensure an inclusive response, coordination mechanisms should be open to inclusion-focused humanitarian actors,[4] non-inclusion-focused humanitarian actors, and self-representative organisations[5] of the crisis-affected population. Inclusive coordination allows for the most efficient, cost-effective, and successful operations that address the needs of different vulnerable populations in displacement contexts.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The full inclusion of specific vulnerable groups in humanitarian action is often hindered by the limited visibility of their issues in humanitarian coordination at the country level. A major reason for this is the **lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities between inclusion-focused and non-inclusion-focused humanitarian actors**. This issue is further exacerbated by the limited inclusion and participation of **self-representative organisations**, such as women-led organisations or organisations of persons with disabilities, in these coordination mechanisms.

## KEY CHALLENGES

### 1. Unclear roles and responsibilities among inclusion-focused and non-inclusion-focused humanitarian actors hinder successful coordination.

- There is a risk that vulnerable groups and their **needs may be systematically neglected if inclusion-focused actors are not represented in cluster coordination**. Inclusion-focused organisations play a key role in advocacy efforts at the global, regional, and national levels, raising awareness and building constituencies for action around inclusion. If such inclusion-focused organisations are not engaged in humanitarian coordination mechanisms in a specific crisis, there is a risk that the needs of an entire vulnerable group may be neglected.
- Non-inclusion-focused humanitarian actors often do not **know about the existence of inclusion-focused humanitarian actors and/or inclusion-focused service providers**. Relevant services may include, for example, rehabilitation services or assistance to survivors of gender-based violence.

### 2. Humanitarian actors often neglect the representation and participation of self-representative organisations in humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

- **Non-formalised self-representative organisations (grassroots organisations)**, which usually operate at the very local level, may **lack access to humanitarian coordination mechanisms and humanitarian funding**. These entities are often “invisible” and unknown to humanitarian actors who might commence work quickly in a region when a crisis occurs. In some cases, the (hosting) government may also place restrictions on formalising such groups (e.g., for refugees or migrant workers), further hindering their access to and representation in humanitarian coordination mechanisms.
- Even where formalised self-representative organisations exist, they often **lack an understanding of the humanitarian coordination system** and entry points for their (advocacy) work. So, even when invited to meetings, they may not be in a position to participate or contribute in a meaningful way to the design and implementation of humanitarian actions.
- **The organisational development of self-representative organisations and support for their core costs (staff, infrastructure, etc.) are not prioritised and often do not fit into short-term humanitarian cycles**. They may instead be seen as a “development” issue irrelevant to humanitarian funding.
- Humanitarian actors often **misunderstand the role of self-representative organisations** and see them as humanitarian service providers that are mandated to cover the needs of a particularly vulnerable group. This increases the risk of subcontracting these organisations for activities that extend beyond their capacity.

[4] In this guidance note, “inclusion-focused humanitarian actors” refers to those humanitarian actors that have a mandate to promote the inclusion of a specific vulnerable group, for example, “HelpAge International” with its mandate for supporting older persons or “Save the Children,” that has a mandate for child protection.

[5] In this guidance note, the term “self-representative organisations” refers to organisations comprised of individuals from the vulnerable group that represent their members’ interests. This includes, for example, organisations of persons with disabilities or women’s rights organisations. Typically, their main role is to advocate for the rights of the specific group rather than providing concrete (humanitarian) services.



### 3. Limitations inherent in the formal humanitarian coordination system constitute a significant institutional barrier to adequately addressing the needs of vulnerable groups affected by displacement.

- **Challenges deriving from the silo structure** of intra-government, intra-cluster, and inter-cluster coordination in crises amplify the risks that the needs of vulnerable groups will be neglected. This problem is further exacerbated when there are **gaps between humanitarian and development actors**.
- **Gaps in cross-border coordination** can further increase the possibility that the needs of vulnerable populations in displacement will be overlooked. Such cases may include situations where there is limited coordination of humanitarian actions across migration routes or people displaced across international borders and unable to rely on international protection.
- There is the risk of a **blind spot on specific vulnerable groups where no cluster has formally taken on the lead responsibility**: e.g., the protection cluster mandate usually does not cover the specific protection needs of persons with disabilities, older persons or undocumented migrants. Responses to trafficking in persons outside of large-scale humanitarian crises are also often neglected.

### ENABLING SOLUTIONS

KEY CHALLENGES	POTENTIAL ENABLING SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited participation of inclusion-focused humanitarian organisations in humanitarian coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide all stakeholders with a general understanding of how to mainstream the protection of different vulnerable groups</b> in their work and define in their strategies the extent to which the specific needs of these groups should be covered by the organisation's mandate.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge of the existence of inclusion-focused humanitarian actors and service providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Map relevant service providers</b> with the help of inclusion-focused humanitarian actors that work with specific vulnerable groups <b>and establish contact between humanitarian actors and grassroots local organisations</b> who are often more knowledgeable and better connected with the affected communities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted access for non-formalised self-representative organisations to humanitarian coordination mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise humanitarian actors' awareness of the presence and work of relevant local self-representative organisations, including the least formalised and less visible ones. Humanitarian actors should <b>explore low-cost opportunities for setting up informal dialogue mechanisms</b> with such organisations wherever possible.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Formalised) self-representative organisations often lack sufficient understanding of humanitarian coordination systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where time allows, <b>build the capacity of self-representative organisations on the basics of the humanitarian coordination architecture</b> and link them with inclusion-focused humanitarian actors that focus on this particular group.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of (sustainable) organisational development of self-representative organisations and support for their core costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Leverage self-representative organisations</b> to better capture the situation and needs of the crisis-affected population. While there might be limitations on involving and supporting such organisations in a sudden-onset crisis, there are usually more opportunities in protracted crisis contexts.</li> <li>• Although it is clear that humanitarian organisations focus on allocating their funds to humanitarian services for the crisis-affected population, <b>some small budget lines should be used to support and strengthen self-representative organisations</b>.</li> </ul>

## ENABLING SOLUTIONS (Cont.)

KEY CHALLENGES	POTENTIAL ENABLING SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Misunderstanding of the role of self-representative organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Raise awareness among the humanitarian community about the roles of self-representative organisations</b> but also their limitations in service delivery. The focus of self-representative organisations is mostly on advocacy work and only rarely on service delivery. Humanitarian actors should avoid overloading self-representative organisations with expectations and tasks.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges derived from the siloed structures and the gaps between humanitarian and development actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the <b>habit of coordination/cooperation between different inclusion-focused agencies</b> beyond the existing coordination structure, starting well in advance of a crisis. <b>Promote an intersectional perspective</b> to be taken by every humanitarian actor to avoid siloed approaches among different vulnerability factors.</li> <li>Identify the existing midterm needs of specific vulnerable groups requires <b>building a wider network of humanitarian and development actors</b>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gaps in cross-border coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Build and strengthen dialogue and information exchange mechanisms</b> by networking for both inclusion-focused and non-inclusion-focused humanitarian actors at regional levels.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blind spots towards specific vulnerable groups when no cluster is formally taking on the lead responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish <b>dedicated working groups to improve coordination on specific vulnerable groups</b> that are not yet covered by the official mandate of the cluster coordination, e.g., “Age &amp; Disability Working Group” under the Protection Cluster.</li> </ul>

## USEFUL LINKS

- DFID. (2019). Guidance on strengthening disability inclusion in humanitarian response plans. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/guidance-strengthening-disability-inclusion-humanitarian-response-plans>
- European Commission. (2019). The inclusion of persons with disabilities in EU-funded humanitarian aid. Operations: [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/doc\\_echo\\_og\\_inclusion\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/doc_echo_og_inclusion_en.pdf)
- IASC. (2021). IASC Strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in IASC Humanitarian coordination mechanics. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/operational-response/iasc-guidance-strengthening-participation-representation-and-leadership-local-and-national-actors>
- IOM. (2019). IOM Guidance on Referral Mechanisms for the Protection and Assistance of Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse and of Victims of Trafficking. [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom\\_guidance\\_on\\_referral.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom_guidance_on_referral.pdf)

## COORDINATION

**Working together for trafficked migrant workers**

Coordinating different humanitarian actors' assistance is vital for effectively reaching those in need. This includes the crucial activities associated with assisting migrant workers who are victims of trafficking. Between 2014 and 2016, more than 3,000 trafficked fishermen from Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos were rescued off the coasts of Indonesia. This large-scale rescue operation was a coordinated effort between governments, international organisations, and NGOs—each with their own expertise and roles to play. Several lessons can be drawn from this experience of coordination in the fight against human trafficking.

Firstly, cooperation between actors with different roles is essential to meet trafficked persons' short-, medium- and long-term needs. According to the different stages of the anti-trafficking response—i.e., (1) rescue and identification, (2) protection and recovery, (3) safe return and repatriation, and (4) rehabilitation and reintegration—counter-trafficking actors with different specialties must work together to provide the necessary assistance.

Second, a predictable and planned coordination mechanism is essential to respond to a sudden humanitarian crisis. In the case analysed, pre-established coordination mechanisms needed to be in place, and counter-trafficking actors faced significant challenges in coordination on an ad-hoc basis, which hindered their ability to provide aid quickly and effectively during an emergency. This lesson highlights the importance of increasing humanitarian preparedness for coordinated responses to crises. In the anti-trafficking context, this lesson led to the recent development of Thailand's National Referral Mechanism, a nationwide coordination mechanism for anti-trafficking efforts.

Thirdly, migrant workers can be critical actors in counter-trafficking actions. An NGO called the Labour Rights Protection Network (LPN), which led this rescue operation, worked with the survivors of trafficking and other migrant workers and contributed significantly to protecting the dignity of victims, including through victim identification, networking, and family reunification. Humanitarians, especially NGOs, are expected to explore how they can facilitate the proactive role of migrant workers and survivors of trafficking in humanitarian action as capable individuals rather than seeing them as passive victims of trafficking.

## ADVOCACY

**Inclusive responses: Advocating for older people in disasters**

Disasters and emergencies highlight the neglect of older people, underscoring the crucial need for advocacy. The importance of institutions and organisations advocating for and safeguarding older people's rights amid disasters, including the impacts of climate change and other crises, cannot be overstated.

The Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), the leading non-governmental organisation working with older people in the Philippines, aims to address the needs of older people, focusing on poverty, exclusion, and invisibility, with a particular emphasis on the most disadvantaged. In 2013, COSE collaborated with HelpAge International in response to Typhoon Haiyan. The joint program not only yielded significant results in meeting the immediate needs of older people affected by the typhoon but also demonstrated the crucial role of recognising older people's agency in actively contributing to mitigating and preventing disasters.

Within COSE's activities, several effective practices can be adopted to promote better advocacy for older people:

COSE establishes and sustains older people's organisations (OPOs) in certain Philippine provinces. Following Typhoon Haiyan, several OPOs received evacuation and first aid training, improving disaster-risk awareness and attitudes towards preparedness. OPOs serve as immediate information sources during disasters in affected communities.

In a flood-prone fishing town, COSE's recent project acknowledges older adults as valuable local knowledge sources. The Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (BDRRMO) acknowledged older people's significant contributions to developing the local hazard map and community DRRM plan. This involvement enhanced the self-confidence of older people.

COSE empowers older people and community members, recognising climate change as an intergenerational concern. Disaster response is seen as a family and community issue, with older people playing a crucial role. The initiative prioritises age-friendly local livelihoods, acknowledging both the limitations and competencies of older people in contributing to their community's well-being.

Advocating for older people in crisis situations involves recognising and leveraging the strengths found in their collective voice, memories, and experiences.

## DEFINITION

The term **data gaps** refers to gaps in the **availability of quality, timely and disaggregated quantitative and/or qualitative data concerning at-risk populations**, specifically displaced women, children, people with disabilities, older people, and migrant workers.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Various entities gather data on forcibly displaced populations, including humanitarian organisations, government ministries, national statistical offices, UN agencies and other international organisations, civil society organisations, and researchers. Data gaps often result from **practical challenges regarding data collection**, such as a lack of funding and resources, capacities and time, as well as the limited competencies of data collectors. In other cases, they result from a **lack of incentives such as the absence of corresponding reporting requirements from donors**. The resulting data gaps on different groups of at-risk populations contribute to their invisibility and heighten the **barriers they encounter in accessing humanitarian assistance**. When addressing data gaps in forced migration contexts, applying an intersectional lens and understanding and upholding ethical data collection practices is essential.

## KEY CHALLENGES

### 1. Challenges in data collection

- **Lack of standardised/harmonised data collection**
  - Conflict between the need for **context-specific data vs. standardisation**.
  - Data collectors within and across countries use different **tools, definitions, and groupings** depending on their data needs and the purpose of data collection (e.g., how to define a person with a disability or the age groups used to classify displaced children). This makes it difficult to aggregate and compare data within and across contexts.
  - Gaps in **training and knowledge of data standards** amongst data collectors lead to inconsistent approaches.
- **Barriers to data representativeness**
  - Collecting data on specific groups (e.g., children) is often not possible or advisable due to **ethical considerations**. Parents or key informants are often surveyed on their behalf, which can reduce the representativeness and granularity of data.
  - **Accessibility issues and stigma** mean some populations are not identified or do not want to be identified during data collection, depending on the political context/sensitivities (e.g., migrants, especially if undocumented).
  - Lack of resources means data collectors may only have access to **small sample sizes** or have to focus on **household-level data without the further breakdown of age, sex, disability, etc.**, of individual household members.
  - **Limited diversity amongst enumerators** reduces access to specific groups or participants' willingness to disclose information about their specific experiences.
- **Issues in data quality**
  - **Limited investments in training** enumerators affect data quality and the ability to capture accurate data on specific population groups.
  - **Dynamic mobility** and the changing characteristics of displaced populations mean that the data collected in displacement contexts can quickly become outdated.
  - **Inconsistent data collection across borders** and at different geographical points leads to gaps in the understanding of a person's displacement journey.
  - There is a **misconception** amongst humanitarian actors that **quantitative data is more valuable than qualitative data**,<sup>[6]</sup> which leads to gaps in understanding of the barriers that specific population groups face, their journeys and motivations, and the diversity of their experiences.

### 2. Gaps in Data Analysis

- Gaps in existing capacities and the lack of capacity development exercises on **quantitative and qualitative data analysis for policymakers, decision-makers and other stakeholders** can reduce their perceived value and the likelihood that resources will not be allocated to strengthen data collection.

[6] See Sundberd (2019). Beyond the numbers: How qualitative approaches can improve monitoring of humanitarian action.

## KEY CHALLENGES (Cont.)

- **Time constraints and capacity limitations** inhibit thorough data analysis and processing needed to improve understanding of at-risk populations and their needs. In addition, scarce interoperability of sources contributes to lost opportunities for more comprehensive analyses.
- Priority is given to new data collection prior to investing in the **full potential of existing data (including administrative data)**, leading to duplication, lack of coordination and data sharing, redundancy, and the perpetuation of poor interoperability between sources.
- **Low data literacy** amongst data users inhibits their meaningful input for shaping analysis most useful to them.
- **Intersectionality** is rarely considered when analysing data, which makes it difficult to identify overlapping/cross-cutting barriers and needs.

### 3. Insufficient data usage

- Data is not presented in an accessible/operable way, which means it is **not used effectively** to address the barriers specific groups encounter.
- **Multi-country datasets** are also rare, which prevents a full understanding of displaced populations moving across borders.
- There is insufficient understanding of the limitations of data, which can mean it is not used appropriately to inform humanitarian programming.
- There is a **lack of accountability when it comes to data usage**: there are gaps in monitoring and evaluating how data has been used to inform and improve humanitarian programming, which makes it difficult to assess the outcomes for specific population groups.

### 4. Concerns about data security and protection

- Affected populations, particularly those who are already marginalised, may be **reluctant to share sensitive information** due to concerns about data security (e.g., migrant workers facing the risk of deportation).
- Data protection measures (e.g., anonymisation and pseudonymisation, informed consent, access controls, etc.) can reduce the risk of storing data by reducing data sensitivity; however, some activities require data that could expose affected populations to risk in the wrong hands. Defining symbiotic data protection and data security practices to meet context-specific needs is challenging for humanitarian actors.
- **Awareness of the relevance of data protection** and relevant tools is sometimes low, leading to challenges regarding appropriate safeguards to protect the privacy and safety of beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance.

## ENABLING SOLUTIONS [7]

KEY CHALLENGES	POTENTIAL ENABLING SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of standardised/harmonised data collection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement <b>data mapping exercises</b> that indicate <b>what data</b> is collected, <b>at what point</b> of a crisis and <b>who is responsible</b> for assisting with data harmonisation processes, definitions, terms and indicators amongst data collectors.</li> <li>• <b>Plan for better interoperability with other relevant data sources</b> to improve access to and availability of more disaggregated data for these population groups.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish/strengthen context-specific <b>data working groups</b> to encourage data harmonisation in each context. In addition to establishing standard terms, definitions and indicators, data working groups can be important forums for data collectors to receive training on data standards and express and address data challenges throughout a crisis.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Foster greater transparency in the methodological and operational elements</b> throughout the data mapping exercises and working groups to improve the interoperability of existing data.</li> </ul>

[7] See: The UN OCHA Humanitarian Data Exchange (<https://data.humdata.org>)

## ENABLING SOLUTIONS (Cont.)

KEY CHALLENGES	POTENTIAL ENABLING SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues in data quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that donor proposals include <b>funding requests for data collection, processing and analysis, allowing a greater disaggregation</b>, particularly by core parameters such as citizenship, age, gender, and disability, to enable the identification and cross-group analysis of specific population groups. This could be complemented by improved advocacy and awareness-raising towards donors to highlight the value of data collection on specific groups.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve <b>self-representative groups/affected populations</b> as trained enumerators and in data collection to improve the quality and robustness of the data collected.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Select the appropriate methodology and mobilise resources to execute it.</b> This will improve data disaggregation for less visible populations. Reducing the over-reliance on key informant-based data collection and household surveys; using <b>inclusive/innovative data collection practices</b> (e.g., drawing, story mapping, focus group discussions) instead can enhance inclusion of specific participants, such as children.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gaps in data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide <b>training on data literacy skills</b>, including data disaggregation and intersectional analyses, prior to the onset of a crisis to improve data analysis processes when a crisis hits. Better and more impactful analysis can show the value of data and lead to greater investment in data processes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient data usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to data collection, consider <b>how the data can be operationalised</b>. This can assist in making the data more impactful and reduce assessment fatigue amongst participants, who may feel that the data they are sharing has no purpose.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a <b>data working group</b> amongst humanitarian actors in each specific context and strengthen existing coordination structures to facilitate better data sharing and avoid duplication. Examples at a global level already exist (e.g., International Data Alliance for Children on the Move). However, local-level data working groups are needed to support more context-specific findings.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen coordination and establish a safe data ecosystem and <b>data sharing agreements</b> across data collectors prior to the onset of a humanitarian crisis to assist in improving data sharing when a crisis hits.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide <b>training on data literacy skills</b> to decision-makers and humanitarian actors.</li> </ul>

## USEFUL LINKS

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- IASC. (2021). Operational guidance on data responsibility in humanitarian action. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2021-data-responsibility-guidance.pdf> [Contains templates and tools that are designed to support the implementation of the recommended actions for data responsibility including data management and sharing].



## USEFUL LINKS (Cont.)

- IASC. (2023, April). Operational guidance: Data responsibility in humanitarian action. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2023-04/IASC%20Operational%20Guidance%20on%20Data%20Responsibility%20in%20Humanitarian%20Action%2C%202023.pdf>
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- Washington Group on Disability Statistics. (n.d.). The Washington Group Questions. [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/washington\\_group/wg\\_questions.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/washington_group/wg_questions.htm)

### HUMANITARIAN DATA

#### Good practices on data on child migration

Data are essential for humanitarian programming on child migration. However, significant challenges persist in both the availability and quality of relevant data and their use in informing humanitarian assistance. Efforts to address these challenges have increased recently. In 2020, UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, and OECD launched the [International Data Alliance for Children on the Move \(IDAC\)](#) to improve statistics and data on migrant and forcibly displaced children, as well as supporting evidence-based policymaking. The IDAC—a cross-sectoral global coalition comprised of governments, international organisations, NGOs, think tanks, academics, and civil society—works on strengthening national data systems and capacities, developing child-specific indicators and metadata, improving data availability, and promoting innovative methods and solutions. Other promising approaches and solutions have also emerged. For example, UNICEF developed guidelines for ethical research involving children, recommending the following four critical areas for ethical consideration: harm and benefits, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and payment and compensation. In addition, IOM started including adolescents aged 14–17 in the flow monitoring surveys conducted in some locations. UNICEF now includes adolescent migrants in its U-Report survey platform. The IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility have developed the Needs Identification and Analysis Framework (NIAF) approach, which combines different available data sources as proxy indicators to produce an assessment of the situational factors increasing risks for children in emergencies. Such good practices are vital for improving child migration data, which in turn is essential for the design and implementation of well-informed and targeted humanitarian efforts and, ultimately, for improving humanitarian assistance provided to migrant children.



**DEFINITION**

Humanitarian action aims to provide services and assistance that save lives and preserve the dignity of crisis-affected persons. Ensuring specific attention is paid to the needs of people and groups facing particular conditions of vulnerability or marginalisation is essential to the **effectiveness of humanitarian service provision**.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Members of at-risk groups face **specific barriers to meeting basic needs** and have specific needs linked to their age, gender, physical conditions, social and economic circumstances, or legal status. These issues may prevent them from enjoying a safe, dignified life in normal times and will likely be amplified during crises and periods of displacement. Meeting these needs in an inclusive manner is a **precondition for effective humanitarian action**. This requires both **mainstreaming access** to basic services (e.g., provision of food, water, shelter, and health care) through adapted operations and complementing these services with **targeted efforts** that ensure the safety and dignity of members of all groups (e.g., prevention of GBV, continuity of education, access to assistive devices, redocumentation, repatriation, and reintegration).

**KEY CHALLENGES****1. De-prioritisation of efforts needed to address the needs of specific at-risk individuals and groups**

- Interventions to address the needs of specific individuals and groups are **not always considered a priority in humanitarian service delivery, especially when these interventions are perceived as “non-lifesaving”** (e.g., delivery of assistive devices for persons with disabilities (PWDs), renewal of immigration documents for migrant workers).
- While some of these efforts are now generally mainstreamed into humanitarian action (e.g., prevention of GBV), services that address other essential needs are yet to be systematically included in relevant planning and operations (e.g., support for PWDs, legal assistance for vulnerable migrants).

**2. Members of at-risk groups have insufficient access to information**

- Several factors reduce risk awareness and access to essential preparedness and relief information for different groups:
  - **social roles** leading to isolation (e.g., for women or older displaced persons),
  - **dependence** on others for access to information (e.g., for children),
  - **language barriers and illiteracy** or geographical and social **segregation** in communities that have little exchange with local institutions or communities (e.g., for migrant workers) or
  - lack of access to **specific channels or products** (e.g., for PWDs with visual or hearing impairments).
- These challenges result in limited knowledge of options for protection and assistance.

**3. Members of at-risk groups might be unable to access assistance**

- A diversity of factors challenges the ability of specific displaced persons to **access services and distributions of key relief supplies**, including:
  - **physical inability** to access locations where assistance is delivered (e.g., older persons and PWDs with physical impairments),
  - **social roles** dictating who can access public spaces alone or accompanied (e.g., women),
  - **unwillingness or fear to evacuate or travel** to distribution sites (e.g., older persons who prefer to remain in their residence, migrants – especially if undocumented), or
  - **extra costs** needed to access what for others are free distributions (e.g., PWDs requiring transportation assistance).
- Local laws or regulations might not recognise specific people’s **right to receive some forms of assistance** (e.g., migrant workers or refugees), or might not allow others to access assistance directly (e.g., children).
- Some people might **not be able or allowed to access some forms of assistance autonomously** (e.g., cash distributions hindered by technical challenges to older people or social challenges to women in some contexts).

**4. Humanitarian organisations may be under-prepared to respond to the diverse needs of at-risk groups.**

- The presence of people with specific needs might not have been adequately considered in **evacuation planning**. This can result in **people being left behind during crises** (e.g., PWDs, older persons, migrant workers).

## KEY CHALLENGES (Cont.)

- The presence of people with specific needs might not have been adequately considered in the **planning and design of displacement sites**. This can hinder access and use of displacement sites (e.g., PWDs unable to access emergency shelters due to architectural barriers, dependent children unable to use gender-segregated facilities). It can also expose them to specific protection risks while displaced (e.g., risks of GBV for women, girls and boys). In some cases, this can result in people having to leave official shelters.
- Humanitarian actors might not have **sufficient stockpiles of specific items** required by the different groups (e.g., personal hygiene kits or dignity kits for women, assistive devices for PWDs) or might not be able to procure them easily, especially if relevant coordination and referral systems are not established.

### 5. Emergency response personnel might not be able to respond appropriately to the diverse needs of at-risk groups.

- Response personnel may be **insufficiently aware of the rights and requirements of different groups** or unable to address their rights appropriately and effectively. This can lead to negligence or outright abuse and discrimination against members of specific groups (e.g., older persons, PWDs, migrants, or refugees).

### 6. Tensions with other community members over service provision and discrimination might hinder the effective provision of services.

- The provision of targeted services to specific groups can sometimes result in **tensions with other affected persons or with members of host communities** whenever there is a perception that at-risk groups are being unduly prioritised, especially if they belong to a minority that is marginalised before a crisis (e.g., PWDs, migrants). This can, in turn, reduce the willingness to access assistance by the people in need or the inability to deliver assistance by humanitarian actors.

## ENABLING SOLUTIONS

KEY CHALLENGES	POTENTIAL ENABLING SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• De-prioritisation of delivery of relevant services, especially targeted services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Commit institutionally</b> to inclusion and non-discrimination at all levels by adopting consistent and explicit frameworks, mandates, policies and integrating relevant markers in the project cycle.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adopt a phased approach</b> to the provision of services, ensuring that inclusion considerations are factored into assistance as soon as immediate life-saving concerns are met.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Advocate</b> for inclusion of all groups with governments, donors and other humanitarian actors by amplifying evidence and requests coming from at-risk individuals and organisations that represent them.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all warnings and information on humanitarian action are formulated (or translated) in a <b>language all at-risk groups are likely to understand</b>, avoiding technical jargon and using pictorial elements.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share information through <b>different media</b> (text and images, audio and video), <b>different means of communication</b> and <b>different channels</b> (mainstream media, social media, informal channels in each at-risk group) to ensure effective outreach to different individuals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of access to assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide humanitarian assistance outside officially designated sites</b> by organising mobile or temporary points for service provision and distributions in the areas where at-risk groups are displaced, including through door-to-door delivery of assistance for less mobile individuals.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider and <b>adapt the timing of the provision of relief items and services</b> covering different times of the day or days of the week in order to allow for people with different constraints to directly access assistance.</li> </ul>

## ENABLING SOLUTIONS (Cont.)

KEY CHALLENGES	POTENTIAL ENABLING SOLUTIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate chaperones to <b>accompany individuals during evacuations or whenever assistance is provided.</b></li> <li>Whenever possible, <b>avoid requiring identification or registration in order to provide assistance</b>— especially life-saving assistance, such as evacuation assistance or life-saving healthcare.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of preparedness of humanitarian organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Plan shelters and evacuation sites</b> keeping in mind the different needs of all at-risk groups, including avoiding architectural barriers, minimising protection risks, setting up safe recreational areas for children, and considering religious diversity of displaced persons.</li> <li><b>Pre-position relief items</b> that are sufficient and appropriate to the size and composition of the displaced population, reflecting the expected needs of its diverse components.</li> <li>For supplies that cannot be effectively pre-positioned or services that cannot be directly provided <b>identify (ideally before the crisis) relevant providers</b> and establish procedures for rapid procurement.</li> <li>Make sure that coordination and service delivery systems cover <b>long-term displacement and multi-sited service delivery</b>, including providing assistance to support the return home (or potential resettlement in a different country)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of capacity of emergency response personnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Prepare response personnel</b> to be able to assist diverse individuals by increasing their awareness of the composition of the local population, needs and rights of different groups, principles of their work (e.g., non-discrimination, do no harm), and of procedures and approaches that need to be adopted to address the needs of specific groups (e.g., prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, child protection, cultural competence).</li> <li>During displacement, <b>include specific information on at-risk groups</b>, their needs and specific responses in briefings and pre-deployment information responders receive.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tensions with host communities over service provision and discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Mainstream interventions</b> that specifically address at-risk groups (especially marginalised groups) into broader area-based approaches targeting all displaced persons and people otherwise affected.</li> <li><b>Inform members of host communities and other affected persons</b> on the full extent of ongoing work, and <b>advocate</b> for inclusive assistance.</li> </ul>

## USEFUL LINKS

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## SERVICE PROVISIONS

### Identifying the service: IOM DTM's work with Female Enumerators and Key Informants

Including women in data collection is vital for accurate and complete humanitarian data. Women should be included as data collectors and key informants providing data; however, social norms and gender roles in different contexts can inhibit not only female participation but broader participation across different demographic contexts. This can lead to missing or less accurate data, particularly in areas where women are more knowledgeable or have gender-specific knowledge. Missing data may result from a lack of willingness to answer questions due to sensitivities around the person asking and answering the questions.

Concrete actions can be taken to mitigate these barriers to participation. Case studies from IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix operations in different contexts show that donor buy-in and investment in greater inclusion allow teams to adapt working conditions to better accommodate women, including better safety measures and culturally appropriate accommodation for female staff. This buy-in, including from the broader humanitarian community, can also allow teams to allocate more time to identifying female candidates for both roles by linking with local organisations and stakeholders that can facilitate women's inclusion and support the identification of candidates. Government sensitisation has also been shown to improve women's participation, particularly when efforts are made to implement this at different administrative levels. Finally, case studies show that quantitative methods can be supplemented by targeted qualitative data collection to include insights from hard-to-reach populations.

# Acknowledgement

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## About the Research Project

The Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Support cluster at JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development is conducting a research project titled “Research on the Evolving Humanitarian Action for Forced Migration.” This project explores the evolving humanitarian action supporting displaced populations through five case studies that look into assistance and support to (and engagement with) displaced children, women, people with disability, older people, and migrant workers. Each case study presents a narrative on the development of humanitarian action for a specific group of forced migrants and in specific forced migration contexts.

While this study intends to contribute to academic and policy efforts in a field growing increasingly central to global discussions across sectors, it also attempts to specifically support and inform the work of humanitarian actors assisting diverse groups of forced migrants. The outcomes of this work will improve our collective understanding of forced migration phenomena and contribute to tangible, more effective responses to this crucial issue.



With support from the following organisations:

