

# How to Identify Gender Gaps in Urban Forced Displacement Guidance Note

September 2023



## I. Introduction

**This Guidance Note offers comprehensive insights on how to conduct a gender gap analysis of the needs of displaced women and girls in situations of urban forced displacement.**

Addressing gender disparities is critical to the consolidation of peace and security. The [2024-2030 World Bank Group Gender Strategy](#) commits the Bank to closing gender gaps in fragile and conflict-affected situations, which includes addressing women's leadership, control over assets, access to employment, and social protection. The [World Bank Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020-2025](#) also highlights the Bank's role in mitigating the impacts of violent conflict and strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable populations. Disaster risk management is crucial in urban areas, especially for displaced people living in informal communities. Therefore, the World Bank's [2021-2025 Climate Change Action Plan](#) is a critical component of a thorough gender gap analysis in urban settings.

## II. Key concepts

The term 'refugee' refers to someone who has crossed an international border seeking protection on the basis of the 1951 Refugee Convention. An IDP is an internally displaced person – someone displaced within the borders of their own country. The term 'displaced people' is used when referring to both groups. States and United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) have specific legal obligations regarding the protection of refugees so it is important to know if the project will be reaching refugees, IDPs, or both. This guidance note primarily focuses on conflict-induced forced displacement but frequently overlaps with natural disaster-induced forced migration and displacement. For example, people might seek refuge from violent conflict and establish residence in a community that suffers catastrophic flooding, displacing them again. This Guidance Note incorporate both groups into the analysis but does not explicitly address economic migrants.

### III. People-in-Place Approach

This approach focuses on displaced women and girls in urban settings while considering the development needs of urban area across five dimensions: spatial, physical, social, economic and institutional. Implementing the People-in-Place Approach demonstrates the importance of municipal government service capacity and partnerships among development and humanitarian organizations and governments. Notably, it implicitly addresses issues of social

cohesion so that displaced women do not become targets of violence or harassment. Local governments are directly involved in the provision of the following services to displaced women and girls: documentation, health services, education, development planning, land use and administration, and some political rights such as local elections and voter registration. The World Bank Group’s work on urban forced displacement has highlighted the usefulness of this approach.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1 People-in-Place Approach

	People-Based Approach	Place-Based Approach	People-in-Place Approach
<b>Focus</b>	Focus on the needs of the <b>people</b> – usually the forcibly displaced.	Focus on <b>places</b> impacted by forced displacement, including on managing institutions.  Leverages their existing systems and capacities.	Focus on both the <b>people</b> – i.e. forcibly displaced and hosts – and the <b>places</b> where they are located, and institutions managing <b>place</b> .
<b>Interventions</b>	Targeted interventions depending on the needs and vulnerability of different groups of <b>people</b> , including individuals and households, e.g. social safety net, livelihoods support, emergency service provision.	Targeted interventions on improving infrastructure, services, land management in <b>places</b> affected by the inflow, e.g. urban upgrading, network extensions/expansions.  Targeted interventions on institutions that manage <b>places</b> , e.g. capacity building, planning, procurement, financial management (FM).	Targeted interventions for vulnerable <b>people</b> regardless of status in the <b>place</b> where they are located, e.g. safety nets, livelihoods support, coupled with provision of services in <b>places</b> to the vulnerable, and extension of services across city.  Target interventions to institutions managing <b>places</b> , e.g. capacity, planning, procurement.
<b>Suitable Context</b>	Support for displaced in camps. “Place” or “Space” blind. Relies on status identification & monitoring. Benefits/interventions move with people.	Support for cities, towns, districts that host the displaced. Interventions are “status blind” in that they benefit all people who live in an affected area regardless of whether they are FD or hosts.  Benefits/interventions fixed in place.	Support for the displaced, host communities, and institutions in cities/towns. Accepts “status” but extends benefits to “vulnerable hosts” and also to <b>place</b> .

World Bank Group, 2021b

<sup>1</sup> World Bank Group. 2021. “Forced Displacement: An Agenda for Cities and Towns.” Washington, DC: World Bank [Internal Document].



### IV. Known Gender Gaps

The Global Report on Gender and Urban Forced Displacement (add link) identified known gender gaps in urban forced displacement across the five dimensions. The report was

based on a literature review, key informant interviews, a portfolio review of World Bank projects on forced displacement, and five city Deep Dives using the methods outlined here.

Table 1 Gender and Evidence Gaps

	DATA GAPS
<b>SPATIAL</b> Informal settlements and unsafe public spaces	Where are displaced women and girls concentrated within a city?
<b>PHYSICAL</b> Inadequate housing, education, and well-being	What is the impact of eviction on displaced women and children– more unattended births, maternal deaths, fewer educational years, more GBV, etc.?
<b>SOCIAL</b> Personal safety, IPV, child marriage	When are women most vulnerable to GBV? When they first arrive? During the first wave in a movement of people out of a conflict or disaster-affected area, or later when networks have been established to exploit them?  Are refugee women more at risk than internally displaced women?  How do climate-related events magnify the GBV risk for displaced women?
<b>ECONOMIC</b> Household composition and labor force participation	What are the specific impacts of women’s care responsibilities on their economic engagement?
<b>INSTITUTIONAL</b> Documentation, law, voting rights, and coordination	What sorts of institutional arrangements are better for the protection of and service provision to displaced women and girls?  Are internally displaced women able to access their political rights, such as voting? Does this make a significant change in their access to services?



## An institutional and policy mapping review can determine the relevant laws and duty-bearers involved in service provision for displaced women and girls.

### V. Assessing the needs of the municipality

**Three activities can be used to assess displaced women and girls' needs within a municipality: 1) key informant interviews, 2) data analysis, and 3) an institutional mapping/policy review.** Interviews with key informants, such as leaders in the mayor's office tasked with addressing displaced people or gender officers, can help understand displaced people's perceived needs and constraints, and the host community's response to an influx of displaced people.

**Several datasets can also assist in determining which neighborhoods displaced people are concentrated in and their vulnerability to climate-related disasters such as flooding, landslides, etc.** The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR have data on the location of displaced people. The World Bank has a wide range of publicly available datasets and tools that can be useful in analytical work, such as high-resolution satellite imagery for each city hosted by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) team; Fathom data hosted by GFDRR; quick diagnostic city scans using global datasets by the City

Resilience Program; climate data available through the [climate change knowledge portal](#), etc. These can be used to identify change in urban growth patterns, access to services, risks, etc. They can be combined with geospatial data on displaced populations (such as IOM and UNHCR data) and other city-wide datasets on access to basic services. By identifying the location of displaced people, it is then possible to assess the adequacy of key resources such as schools, clinics, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and transportation.

**Finally, an institutional and policy mapping review can determine the relevant laws and duty-bearers involved in service provision for displaced women and girls.** Displaced women face persistent problems pursuing formalized housing, education, medical care, and work due to a lack of information about services available for themselves and their children. There are also often additional layers of confusion in terms of which organization or government entity is responsible for meeting their needs; this confusion can lead to an absence of service provision and responsibility.

#### Box 1 Available Public Datasets

Gender Data Portal – <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/>

Gender Statistics - <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/gender-statistics>

IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix - <https://dtm.iom.int/>

UNHCR Global Data - <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/reports-and-publications/unhcr-data>

Prindex – Women's Tenure Security - <https://www.prindex.net/data/>

OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index - <https://www.oecd.org/stories/gender/social-norms-and-gender-discrimination/sigi/>

International Recovery Platform – <https://recovery.preventionweb.net/build-back-better/themes-recovery/gender>

Humanitarian Open Street Map - <https://www.hotosm.org/>

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) - <https://www.internal-displacement.org/>

Global Disaster Displacement Database (GRID)-<https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2023/>

ACAPS API Global Humanitarian Datasets - <https://www.acaps.org/en/>

### VI. Attention to safety

**Displaced women and girls are extremely vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV), harassment and exploitation.** Every potential service or intervention should, at a minimum, consider the safety implications for women and girls.

For services, this can mean additions such as:

- installing appropriate lighting or security around common WASH facilities;
- assuring safe and reliable transport to and from project activities and services; and
- ensuring the presence of female staff members to interact with women and girls.

This attention to safety is also important for project and program development, such as jobs programs that ensure safe transport and group placement.

### VII. Conducting a Gender Gap Analysis

**A gender gap analysis will assess how displacement differentially impacts women and girls, and will provide methods for addressing those gaps in a specific context.**

Suggested questions are included in Annex 1. Displaced women and girls have specific and different needs during displacement and an influx of displaced women can negatively impact employment opportunities available to host community women. It is important to consider and incorporate the perspectives of host community women in any analysis. This approach promotes their voices and agency alongside the perspectives of displaced women.

- Review of the literature: identify published studies and sex-disaggregated databases related to the issues facing displaced women. Search for reports from non-governmental organization and international organizations doing work in the country to assess any previous work that has been done as well as persistent problems.
- Identify and interview key informants such as female community organizers, religious leaders, or displaced community members who can identify specific needs. Identify displaced women who can participate in focus group discussions (FGDs).

### VIII. Establishing actions or interventions

**Annex 2 lists possible interventions over the short-, medium-, and long-terms that have been successful in urban settings around the world.** There are key considerations to keep in mind when assessing possible actions. First, as noted above, safety must be a primary concern in any project or program for displaced women and girls given the pervasive threat of GBV. Second, ensure host community women are included



- Identify whether the displaced people you will be targeting are refugees, IDPs, or both.
- Organize separate FGDs with displaced women and host community women.
  - Organize questions around the five areas, informed by the known gender gaps (see Annex 1).
  - Recognize that FGDs will need to be held in a safe area, with transportation and childcare provided where possible.
  - Use FGDs to prioritize needs and assess whether certain actions that may appear desirable, such as including women's names on rental contracts, are safe for a particular community of women.
  - Recognize that displaced households move frequently in response to evictions and in search of a combination of safe housing, employment and access to services such as education for children.

and not negatively impacted by employment interventions. Third, well-intentioned interventions should consider the risk of GBV and specifically intimate-partner violence (IPV). Activities such as including women's names on property documentation has led to a backlash and IPV in some settings. This highlights the importance of the FGDs and the need to include the perspective of displaced women in any planned activities.

## Annex 1 Questions to ask in designing a gender-sensitive People-in-Place Approach

### 1. SPATIAL QUESTIONS

- Where are displaced people settled in the city? and disaster hazards based on where they settle? Do the neighborhoods displaced women settle in have access to public services such as piped water and transportation? Are women able to safely access those services?
- Are they also located in peri-urban areas?
- Are there changes in the urban footprint because of densification of housing?
- What percentage of the displaced population is female?
- What is the exposure of women and girls to environmental
- Can women and girls safely access transportation networks and other public spaces?

### 2. PHYSICAL QUESTIONS

- How do displaced women and girls access WASH facilities?
- Are girls prevented from attending school as a result of WASH-related responsibilities such as water collection?
- What is the distance to water points, toilets, and other WASH facilities? Are the routes to those facilities and the facilities themselves well-lit and secure?
- Do WASH facilities provide adequate privacy and safety? Are there separate facilities for men and women an adequate distance apart?
- What sort of housing are displaced women and girls able to access?
- Do issues such as type of housing, permanence of housing, and threat of eviction increase risks of GBV?
- In what ways do housing and GBV intersect (e.g. sexual violence and exploitation by landlords; threat of violence related to lack of documentation and/or evictions; child and/or forced marriage; engagement in harmful practices such as exchanging sex for land rights or money; IPV and other forms of domestic violence; staying in abusive relationships; etc.)?
- Do women and adolescent girls have access to documentation and/or evidence that proves the formality of their housing arrangements?
- Are there processes in place for determining access to safe shelter for unaccompanied girls?
- How are displaced women and girls protected from evictions?
- Is overcrowding an issue?
- Are single mothers and their children housed with people who are not their families?
- How are women with specific intersectional vulnerabilities (e.g. pregnant/lactating women, disabled women and girls, transgender women) being prioritized for shelter?
- Are displaced girls enrolled in schools? How far are those schools from their places of residence and are there safe transportation networks between home and school?
- Which children are not attending—or face barriers to attending—school at the primary and secondary levels?
- What cultural barriers do girls face in accessing education? Are schools and other learning environments located in areas that are safe and equally accessible for women, girls and other at-risk groups?
- Has safety mapping been conducted with students and teachers to identify at-risk zones in and around learning environments?
- Are learning environments physically secure and sufficiently lit?
- Are toilets accessible, private, safely located, adequate in number and sex-segregated?
- Are sanitary supplies available in schools?
- What is the number, location, safety and accessibility of health facilities that provide clinical care—including mental health and psychosocial support?
- What is the rate of C-sections for displaced women and women in the host community?
- Where are women having their babies?
- Are women using traditional birth attendants or medical personnel to assist them in their births?

### 2. PHYSICAL QUESTIONS *continued*

- Are safe, confidential, accessible, and supportive GBV-related health services available? resources for at-risk women and girls (e.g. pregnant and lactating women, children under two, etc.)?
- What are the obstacles that survivors face when seeking GBV-related health care?
- Do displaced women and girls have access to appropriate food and nutrition? Are there available food and nutrition
- Are there cultural restrictions that prohibit women, girls and other at-risk groups—especially pregnant or lactating women—from travelling alone to access outpatient/inpatient care or therapeutic services?

### 3. SOCIAL QUESTIONS

- What percentage of girls under 18 are married in the host community and in the displaced community?
- Are displaced women aware of how and where to report GBV?
- Are there cultural or linguistic barriers to reporting GBV? Are the numbers of displaced women reporting GBV tracked?
- Are female police officers or social workers available to respond to reports of GBV or IPV?

### 4. ECONOMIC QUESTIONS











- Are displaced women legally able to work?
- What issues prevent women and adolescent girls from accessing work and training opportunities (e.g. childcare, other household responsibilities)?
- Will their job opportunities place them in competition with host community women?
- Are there economic activities that are profitable and empowering, particularly for women and adolescent girls?
- What kinds of activities are forbidden for women or men by local customs?
- Are women able to access and control household productive assets?
- What are the risks of backlash associated with women and girls engaging in economic training or programs—particularly by intimate partners and/or family members?
- Are there any private companies or organizations that would be willing to collaborate in training and/or service delivery?















### 5. INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

- Do women have identity documentation that allows them to access work, medical, financial, and educational services, or rent an apartment? around child labor?
- Do refugees have documentation of their status? Is that documentation in their own name or in the name of their husband/father? Are they receiving the protection to which they are legally entitled? How is UNHCR engaged in addressing the needs of this specific population?
- Is there a process for displaced women to receive, recover or replace key identity documents?
- Are women legally able to sign contracts or rent or own property in their own name?
- What is the legal age of marriage?
- What is the legal age of employment, and what are the laws
- Are there national action plans or policies for addressing forced displacement, poverty reduction, GBV or gender equity?
- Are there any national and local laws aimed at preventing and regulating forced evictions? Who is responsible for activities addressing the needs of displaced women and girls?
- Do internally displaced women have the ability to vote?



**Annex 2: Possible Interventions for the Needs of Women and Girls in Urban Forced Displacement Over Different Time Horizons**

DIMENSION	GENDER GAPS	SHORT-TERM/EMERGENCY	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
<b>SPATIAL</b>	<p>Women, girls, and other dependent children lack safe access to public spaces and transportation.</p> <p>Informal settlements with inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities place a higher burden of care on women.</p>	<p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Instituting risk-identification and risk-mapping, neighborhood watch programs or security patrols</p> <p>Ensuring adequate multipurpose water and sanitation facilities with appropriate lighting for night-time safety</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Promoting sensitization campaigns targeting the right of women to safely use public transport</p> <p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Creating safe spaces for women</p> <p>Providing multipurpose water and sanitation facilities with appropriate lighting for night-time safety</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Hiring more female bus drivers and public transport workers</p> <p>Mandating gender sensitive training and capacity building for duty bearers in transport and public service sectors</p> <p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Building new transportation networks</p> <p>Creating new public services such as water and sewer lines</p> <p>Providing street/access lighting in informal communities</p> <p>Investing in parks and green spaces where women can be with children</p>
<b>PHYSICAL</b>	<p>Women lack access to information on service availability.</p> <p>Overcrowded and insecure housing renders women and girls vulnerable to GBV.</p> <p>Displaced women disproportionately face eviction.</p> <p>Displaced adolescent girls face difficulty accessing education and are at high risk of child marriage.</p> <p>Displaced women often have inadequate sexual, reproductive and mental healthcare.</p> <p>Food insecurity has a greater impact on pregnant and lactating women.</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Providing assistance in obtaining safe housing</p> <p>Providing cash transfers to help with housing, health services and food</p> <p>Ensuring women are named on leases</p> <p>Providing women and girls with information on the location of health clinics and services</p> <p>Providing women and girls who have been victims of GBV with access to trained and specialized service providers</p> <p>Including women in efforts to participatory assessments and project prioritization</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Providing legal aid, mediation, and education programming around housing rights</p> <p>Providing stipends for girls to attend schools</p> <p>Facilitating GBV prevention and response training for displaced and host communities</p> <p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Densification of housing</p> <p>Establishing and supporting mechanisms for gender-responsive property restitution, where appropriate</p> <p>Providing mobile clinics including reproductive health services</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Investing in physical and mental health services to address the needs of displaced women</p> <p>Providing vocational training programs</p> <p>Providing GBV prevention and response training for displaced and host communities</p> <p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Adding to overall housing stock</p> <p>Ensuring safe educational facilities for girls with appropriate toilet facilities</p> <p>Building new schools near where displaced people live</p> <p>Instituting tax incentives to landlords to rent to single women/female-headed households</p>

DIMENSION	GENDER GAPS	SHORT-TERM/EMERGENCY	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
<b>SOCIAL</b>	<p>Women face time and movement challenges due to their care-giving responsibilities.</p> <p>Safety concerns, and specifically the threat of GBV, limit women's access to services.</p> <p>Displaced women are at increased risk of IPV.</p> <p>Displaced adolescent girls are at increased risk of child marriage and GBV.</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Providing cash transfers</p> <p>Systematizing and coordinating identification and referral processes that provide priority access for the most vulnerable groups to protection and services.</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Establishing women's committees to consult on services. Provide childcare to enable women to attend.</p> <p>Creating a mobile app and/or web portal that has georeferenced information on access to services and resources.</p> <p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Creating safe spaces for adolescent girls and women</p> <p>Remove legal and administrative barriers (such as proof of residency) preventing displaced women and girls from accessing services</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Establishing a 24-hour hotline and services for GBV</p> <p>Coordinating efforts of schools, clinics, civil society groups and law enforcement around the protection of women in urban areas</p> <p>Displacement management training for local governments and NGOs</p> <p>Protection programming for adolescent girls that targets male family members</p>
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	<p>Forced displacement increases multilocality of households and household composition.</p> <p>Displaced women are largely informally employed in low-skill professions and compete with host community women for low-skilled work at lower wages.</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Providing cash transfers</p> <p>Assisting in identifying employment opportunities</p> <p>Providing emergency cash for work programs</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Ensuring ability of women to have financial services in their own names</p> <p>Ensuring affordable childcare services to allow women to work</p> <p>Facilitating group placement of displaced women into employment opportunities</p> <p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Registering female informal workers with labor departments or relevant government agencies for social security and better wages, where applicable</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Providing technical (business development and vocational training opportunities for women</p> <p>Ensuring access to legal aid</p> <p>Targeting Woman-Owned Businesses in procurements for projects</p> <p>Encouraging hiring of female staff on projects in a variety of roles</p>
<b>INSTITUTIONAL</b>	<p>Lack of (separate) documentation for women prevents them from accessing services and formalization.</p> <p>Citizenship laws often do not allow women to transfer citizenship to their children.</p> <p>Property and inheritance laws often discriminate against women.</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Registering women as individuals not as family units</p> <p>Ensuring all women and girls have appropriate documentation such as identity papers, ID cards for refugees, IDPs, or stateless women</p> <p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Developing ways to communicate with IDPs to inform them of services and get their input on programs; social media applications such as Telegram or WhatsApp may be appropriate</p> <p>Coordinating response planning across levels of governance</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Encouraging NGOs to hire local and displaced women</p> <p>Creating of specialized task forces and efforts to address GBV</p> <p>Ensuring women's names are on leases</p> <p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Aligning IDP policy with local development plans</p> <p>Co-funding intergovernmental grants to states and municipalities with large numbers of displaced people</p> <p>Engaging in medium and long-term planning for multiple futures for IDPs in the municipality</p>	<p> PEOPLE BASED</p> <p>Ensuring women are named on property documentation</p> <p> PLACE BASED</p> <p>Supporting the reform of national laws and local policies provide gender equality</p> <p>Creating of IDP law, if none exists, articulating the responsibilities of local governments</p>

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**PHOTOGRAPHY:**

**Front Cover**

Mohamed Azakir / World Bank  
Syrian Refugees Face an Uncertain Future: A refugee filling an application at the UNHCR registration center in Tripoli, Lebanon.

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Rama George-Alleyne / World Bank  
Women at health center: Gonoshasthaya Community Health Center (outside Dhaka). Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK) provides health care and health insurance to undeserved populations in Bangladesh.

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Dominic Chavez / World Bank  
Syrian refugees have found temporary safety in Kafar Kahel informal settlement in the Koura District: Syrian refugees have found temporary safety in Kafar Kahel informal settlement in the Koura District, in Lebanon, on June 2, 2014.