

Working with Adolescents and Youth in Emergencies Thematic Day

Co-hosted by UNHCR, WRC and NRC in cooperation with the CPWG

Friday 7th November 2014, 09:00 – 15:30 at UNHCR HQ, Geneva.

Background

The unique capacities and needs of refugee and other displaced adolescents and youth are often overlooked in humanitarian situations. Few humanitarian organizations have programmes specifically targeted at young people and there is often limited funding.

These young people are at a critical juncture in their lives as they transition from childhood into adulthood. Whilst internationally adolescence and youth are often categorised through assigned age ranges, in many contexts movement from one stage to the next is facilitated by a change in circumstance, such as marriage or leaving the parental home. This means that for some young people this transition is delayed or completely halted by the experience of becoming a refugee.

In some contexts young people who seek refuge can be perceived as a threat to stability and security (especially males) or as vulnerable victims (females), displacement often forces them to take on new roles and responsibilities to ensure their own, and their families' basic needs are met. These new roles may put them at risk, for example girls and young women are often at an increased risk of harmful coping strategies such as survival sex and child marriage, while boys and young men may face an increased risk of forced military recruitment and exploitation in the labour market. The reality of course is that these risks are not mutually exclusive, as girls and young women are all too often caught up with armed groups and equally exploited in the labour market. Despite this adversity, and often against the odds, young people consistently demonstrate great resilience in challenging situations, finding the ability to adapt and exercise agency.

Individually and as part of groups refugee and other displaced young people display unique talents, utilising skills and resources which – if effectively nurtured and channelled – can assist them not only in their own transition to adulthood, but also to make considerable contributions to their communities, and to challenging situations such as a humanitarian response. Without specialised programmes and the kind of targeted support that younger children receive, the investment that is made in yesterday's children, today's young people and tomorrow' adults is at risk of stalling, with talents and skills wasted and a generation of young people lost.

Purpose of the thematic day

The purpose of the **Adolescents and Youth in Emergencies Thematic Day** is to provide interested members of the CPWG and other interested actors with the opportunity to participate in a day focussed on engaging in discussion on the core issues that surround working with and for adolescents and youth in emergencies.

The Adolescents and Youth in Emergencies Thematic Day will have three main aims:

1. *To develop an understanding of adolescents and youth as a particular social group who require specific targeted programmatic responses;*
2. *To showcase and discuss organisations current good practices that demonstrate youth and adolescent protection programming that is community led, participatory, educational and sustainable amongst other things;*
3. *To discuss and identify ways in which concerned humanitarian actors can better work for adolescents and youth in emergencies in the future.*

Overview of the Thematic Day

On arrival participants will be provided with a sheet of A3 paper and some thumb tack to attach the paper to the wall of the main room. Each participant will be asked to write three things that they think are core to effective adolescents and youth programming on the piece of paper. Participants will be allowed to alter what is written on their sheets during the day. These sheets will help to inform the afternoon session.

The day will begin with an opening address by Preeta Law, Senior Protection Coordinator from UNHCR's Division of International Protection. The thematic day will then be split into three sessions with lunch and coffee in between. The sessions will be formulated as follows:

Session 1 – An Introduction to Adolescents and Youth

The first session will aim to develop an understanding of why there is a need for specific programming for adolescents and youth, and possible approaches to working with these young people. More specifically the first session will employ a facilitator – who lectures on and has many years of experience working with and for adolescents and youth – to help develop, through a combination of discussion and participatory methodologies, three main areas of enquiry.

- **Definition/understanding** – Who are youth and adolescents, what is different about them when compared to younger children and adults, what are the physiological, neurological and sociological reasons why we work with adolescents and youth differently;
- **Needs** – As a result of developing an understanding of the above, what are the needs that are specific to adolescents and youth, what should we as humanitarian actors look out for, how do we think about meeting these needs, how can young people participate in this process;
- **Actions** – Following on from the above discussion we should develop an understanding of different methodologies and tools for working with adolescents and youth, outlining how young people can be a part of this process and providing participants with practical ways to do this in the process highlighting resources that could be used in the future.

Session 2 - Exploring Current Good Practices

This session will present, examine and discuss some current programmatic responses from the work of participant organizations with displaced adolescents and youth that they consider to be good

practice. Participating organisations in this session will include the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Women's Refugee Commission, Questscope, UNICEF/CPWG and UNHCR with discussion and input from other organisations.

Presentations will focus on the intervention not the organisation and should try to demonstrate what makes it a good practice, through youth and adolescent participation, programme design and implementation, capacity building, sustainability, adding to the body of research etc. This may include presentations by the organisations representatives or young people themselves, highlighting and discussing the initiatives that they are engaged in, or have designed and implemented.

Session 3 – The Way Forward, Core components of Good Programming

The final session will bring together the themes that have been discussed during the morning providing participants with an opportunity to operationally discuss ways forward for working with young people. The ideas that participants have been developing since the first session on what 'Core components' of adolescent and youth programming might look like will be synthesised and presented to the group. The session will enable participants to delve deeper into what are the '**core components**' for holistic programming for adolescents and youth. Three breakout groups will discuss a set of guiding questions related to the challenges that young refugees and other displaced adolescents and youth face. The three groups will be led by following organisations:

- Group 1 Technical programmes (Led by NRC)
- Group 2 Participation and inclusion (Led by WRC/Questscope)
- Group 3 Community engagement and protection (Led by UNHCR)

Guiding questions to assist the groups in identifying core components of adolescent and youth programming are: (please keep in mind both camp based and urban displaced young people)

- How do we ensure SGBV issues are addressed through adolescent and youth programming with both male and female young people?
- How do we ensure linkages with education and self-reliance colleagues/partners to meet the different learning, education and livelihoods needs of young people?
- What does participation for adolescents and youth in emergencies look like?
- How do we ensure that girls, young women and young people with disabilities are included in programming?
- How do we incorporate hard to reach, in trouble or likely to engage in risk taking behaviour young people in programmatic interventions?
- How do we incorporate peaceful coexistence/conflict resolution into programming for refugee and other displaced young people?
- How do we re-engage displaced and refugee young people with their communities and build intergenerational linkages and relationships?
- How do we address the growing challenge of working with and meeting the needs of urban refugees and displaced young people?

The breakout sessions will be followed by a plenary that will provide participants the opportunity to present the ideas that emerged during group discussions and further elaborate on them, with the aim of developing a shortlist of 'Core Components' for effective adolescent and youth programming.

Outline of the day

Time	Session description	Who and where?
08:30 – 09:00	Registration coffee and networking	Room MBT04 UNHCR HQ
<i>Welcome and opening session – An Introduction to Adolescents and Youth</i>		
09:00 - 09:15	Welcome and introduction	Room MBT04: Preeta Law – Senior Protection Coordinator
09:15 – 10:40	Interactive session on young people, their needs and working with them	Room MBT04 Alan Hayes – Lecturer and facilitator on adolescents and youth, Dublin Ireland
<i>10:40 – 10:50 Coffee and tea refills – to be consumed during second session!</i>		
<i>Exploring Current good Practices in Adolescent and Youth Programming</i>		
10:50 - 12:45	Presentations of current good practices by participant organisations and young people	Room MBT04 UNHCR, WRC,NRC Questscope, CPWG
<i>12:45 - 13.30 LUNCH</i>		
<i>The way forward – Core Components of Good Programming.</i>		
13:30 – 13:40	Introduction to final session	Room MBT04 WRC
13:40 – 14:45	Three break-out sessions to discuss what might be the core components of good programming for adolescents and youth	Rooms: MBT04, MBT303, MBT403 Led by: UNHCR, NRC, WRC, Questscope
13:45 - 15:30	Plenary to discuss ‘Core Components’ of good programming for adolescents and youth, possible ways forward and wrap up.	Room MBT04: Led by UNHCR