Thematic Day

on
Working with Adolescents and Youth in Emergencies

Contents

> *"Those of us who have the privilege of working with young people have a contribution to make toward guiding their rebellion. We need to help them to direct their challenges and questions to those that are pulling them in the right direction..."*
>
> **Alan Hayes – Dublin, Ireland**

# Why a Thematic Day on Adolescents and Youth?

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.

In many contexts forcibly displaced young people are 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. However, these risks are not defined by gender stereotypes, as girls and young women are can also be caught up with armed groups and equally exploited in the labour market and boys and young men can be sexually exploited.

Young people, adolescents and youth, are at a critical juncture in their lives as they transition from childhood into adulthood. In humanitarian situations, this transition can be can be forced on adolescents prematurely, delayed or completely halted by the experience of displacement. 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 own and their communities development.

However, without dedicated programming 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. Taking into account the specific challenges that young people face in emergency situations, the 'Thematic Day on Working with Adolescents and Youth' was organised to provide the opportunity for child protection actors and other interested parties to engage in a discussion around programming for young people and adolescents in humanitarian situations, with a view to:

- to develop an understanding of adolescents and youth as a particular social group who require specific targeted programmatic responses
- to showcase and discuss organisations current 'good practices' for working with adolescents and youth
- to discuss and identify a set of core components for good programming for adolescents and youth in emergencies
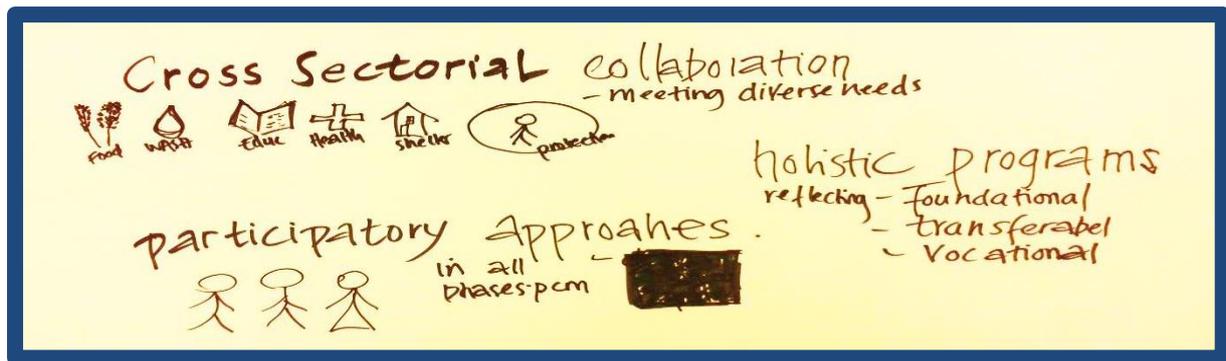
Interventions

The event was opened by Ms. Preeta Law, Senior Protection Coordinator, Division of International Protection, UNHCR Geneva. Ms. Law praised the cooperation and collaboration between UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Women's Refugee Commission and the Child Protection Working Group that made the event possible.

Ms. Law began by highlighting that adolescents and youth are fast becoming one of the largest demographics that humanitarian actors work with, and yet our understanding of how displacement affects their particular protection needs has not kept pace with this. As such the thematic day was seen as an excellent opportunity to bring together expertise for combined thought on how we can meaningfully achieve sustained participation of young people; how we reach out to young people engaged in risk taking behaviour; how we improve protection for forcibly displaced young people in camp but also urban environments and to identify what the core components of quality and accountable programming for adolescents and youth might be. Ms Law finished by saying that as humanitarians we have to put adolescents and youth at the centre of our programming, because in the future they will hold us accountable for our programming.

Session 1 – An Introduction to Adolescents and Youth

The session was facilitated by Alan Hayes, a youth work practitioner and lecturer in 'Youth and Community Work' from Dublin, Ireland. The session aimed to develop an understanding of the 'who, why and what' with regards to adolescents and youth in emergencies - 'who' are adolescents and youth; 'why' they have a need for dedicated programming and 'what' methodologies or tools can we use to facilitate this programming?

Alan began by discussing the definitions and labels that are given to young people transitioning from childhood to adulthood, including adolescent, youth, teenager and young person. The challenges surrounding the difference in definitions according to nationality, ethnicity and organisation were discussed. It was highlighted that in Ireland for example Youth work is aimed at those between the ages of 10 and 19 years, whilst in Zambia youth are those aged between 15 and 35 and in the UN system youth are considered to be those between 15 and 24 years.

Alan provided some historical context, outlining how during the agricultural and industrial revolutions in the industrialised nations of the West, there became a need for a concept to bridge childhood and adulthood due to the desire for extended education and learning for the growing middle classes. The presentation then moved to examining some more contemporary sociological views of adolescence,

for example; as a time of 'Storm and Stress' or a 'Coming of Age'.[1] Adolescence and youth were then explored from physiological, sociological and cognitive perspectives as a time of change when the body and brain change and when the young person s developing new responses and new ways of looking at the world.

Participants then offered their thoughts on some of the challenges for young people growing up today. Discussion centred on the blurring of community boundaries for young people as a consequence of the digital age; the extra challenges around identity - developing understanding of oneself and how this has dramatically changed and the need to focus rebellion and challenges to authority into the right areas so that young people can direct their questions and frustrations in positive direction.

The presentation briefly discussed the negative historical views of youth and the influence that society has on young people during their transition to adulthood, from their families, friends and communities as well as the media, governments and circumstances such as displacement. It then moved on to highlight four models of working with young people that are utilised in youth work in Ireland. These are: recreation, personal development, critical social education and radical social change. They differ in levels of genuine participation and the way in which they engage young people with the environment in which they live. The former is merely engaging young people in activities to keep them occupied whilst the later assumes that young people have chances to make substantial changes to the prevailing socio-cultural system in which they exist.

Finally, the presentation concluded with Alan introducing the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) for youth work in Ireland. The framework guides the youth work sector in Ireland to ensure that work that is carried out with young people meets the required standard. The Framework has four pillars that work towards better engagement with young people. The pillars ensure that youth programming is 1) young person-centred, recognising that they are central to the process as rights holders; 2) Committed to ensuring and promoting the safety and well-being of young people; 3) Educational and developmental; 4) Committed to ensuring and promoting equality and inclusiveness; 5) Dedicated to the provision of quality youth work and committed to continuous improvement

Session 2 - Exploring Current Good Practices

The aim of the second session was to showcase promising practices for working with adolescents and youth in emergencies. The session was kindly moderated by Josh Chaffin from the Women's Refugee Commission. Presentations were made by:

- Nick Sore   Adolescent and Youth Officer, UNHCR, Geneva
- Emma Bonar   Youth Project Manager, NRC, Jordan
- Mai Jaradat   Project Coordinator, Norwegian Refugee Council, Zaatari
- Rachael Reilly   Geneva Representative, Women's Refugee Commission
- Lisa Zimmerman   Researcher for the Child Protection Working Group
- Mike Niconchuk   Emergency Response Coordinator, Questscope Jordan.

Nick Sore – UNHCR's engagement with Adolescents and Youth

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[1] For these and other theories on adolescent development please see: http://www.psyking.net/id183.htm

Working with adolescents and youth has emerged as a priority for UNHCR since the release of the 2013 Global Review on UNHCR's Engagement with Youth. The starting point for this work has three main elements: 1) a focus on capacities and capabilities as well as vulnerabilities; 2) development of an evidence informed understanding of what works with adolescents and youth in emergencies and 3) advocating for a stronger focus on working with adolescents and youth in humanitarian situations. The UNHCR 'Youth Initiative Fund' – a dedicated fund that provides young refugees with opportunities to develop their own protection projects – was highlighted as an innovative way of working with, developing and strengthening young people's existing capacities and capabilities. Through the YIF 6 projects were supported in 2013 with 16 supported in 2014. UNHCR is also piloting promising practices for working with adolescents and youth. Both of these initiatives are trying to develop an evidence based understanding of what works with adolescents and youth in emergencies. The presentation concluded by highlighting the following as core components to UNHCR's work with adolescents and youth: Active participation; building sustainable capacity; engaging young people on their own terms; focus on capacities and capabilities and potential for impact.

Emma Bonar – Norwegian Refugee Council/Youth Task Force, Jordan.

Emma's presentation focussed on the 'Youth Task Force' an innovative youth focussed, action orientated cross sectorial group that has been operating in Zaatari camp in Jordan for the last two years. The Youth Task Force sits under the education and child protection working groups and meets on a weekly basis to discuss and coordinate youth activities with a focus on practical action. Areas of work include building relationships with and capacity of community and juvenile police, linking youth with opportunities, linking in with youth committees to hear the opinions of young people and data collection and experience sharing. The Youth Task Force is a forum for developing collaboration between agencies and has supported monitoring of programme impact through the agreement on five youth related indicators in the country level protection strategy for Jordan. The YTF aims to achieve recognition of youth as a specific demographic that will be prioritised in strategies and have youth representation at all levels. The Youth Task Force is in the process of being expanded to the national level in Jordan to explore how the same focus can be utilised for young urban refugees as well as those based in camps.

Mai Jaradat – Norwegian Refugee Council

Mai's presentation described the NRC Youth Training Centre programme in Zaatari in Jordan. The programme is as aimed at providing young people with market ready skills and capabilities, and soft skills. The presentation developed an understanding of the core components of their youth programming. These include working with the community, understanding and adapting to the specific context, ensuring participation, ensuring accessibility and long term engagement. NRC technical training facilitators are peers of the participants from the same community and of similar ages who have been trained into the roles and they are supported by programme experts. It was highlighted that this is a deliberate and important strategy as the overall aim is to create long term engagement between the student, facilitator and teacher. The presentation also highlighted that programming must be relevant to community needs and represent a cross section of the community. For example a desk repair project in primary schools is a good example of giving project ownership to young people, and creating a stake in the continued success of the project

Rachael Reilly – Geneva Representative, Women's Refugee Commission

Rachael presented on the ongoing work of Women's Refugee Commission with adolescent girls across five intersecting areas. Areas include, Programming for adolescent girls at onset of an emergency; the 'protecting and empowering displaced adolescent girls initiative'; adolescent sexual and reproductive health programmes in humanitarian settings; inclusion of adolescent girls with disabilities in SGBV programming; and the impact of economic strengthening programmes on adolescents (including SGBV prevention). The presentation developed an understanding of adolescent girls as far more hidden than their male peers and highlighted that the roles and responsibilities they are often forced to take on mean that they become socially isolated and are rarely consulted on matters of their protection. Further to this interventions often miss adolescent girls because they are not in easily visible groups. Five lessons learned were shared, these were – 1) Identification and targeting is key; 2) Outreach is critical – don't expect girls to come to you; 3) Put girls at the centre of programme design, decision making and implementation; 4) Safe spaces work and are a critical programming tool for adolescent girls; 5) Female mentors benefit girls and communities.

Lisa Zimmerman – Researcher for Child Protection Working Group

Lisa presented a study that has compiled sixteen (16) documents that review youth and adolescent programming in emergencies, from either a child protection or education related perspective. The study, 'Ensuring Protection and Education in Emergencies: Lessons Learned from Adolescent and youth Programming' is a first step towards documenting lessons learned and 'good practice' for working with adolescents and youth in emergencies. The document was developed as a result of a gap that was identified at last-years CPWG annual general meeting. The document is presented in three sections. Section one highlights lessons learned which include the need to: engage adolescents and youth as active participants; build partnerships with communities, teachers and parents and the need for rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems to demonstrate programme impact. The second section provides a more substantive review of the documents and the third section provides readers with access to additional resources on areas including: tools and guidance; youth and youth programming; education and child friendly spaces and female adolescents.

Mike Niconchuk – Emergency Response Coordinator, Questscope Jordan.

In his presentation Mike drew from Questscopes experiences on empowering young people for positive change in Zaatari camp in Jordan. Questscope has more than 25 years of experience of working with at risk young people in Jordan and have brought that Knowledge and expertise into Zaatari camp to work with at risk young people. One of the big concerns for young people that Questscope works with, especially young men is a lack of agency and power. Consequently it is very important to provide them with opportunities to develop agency and feel in control of their lives in meaningful ways. Questscope identifies at risk young people and then tailors programming to their exact needs. Assessments carried out with participants showed that the older the young men attending the centre were, the more powerless they felt. The building of relationships and provision of opportunities to exercise agency were considered to be the most significant factors for empowerment with these groups.

Session 3 – The Way Forward, Core components of Good Programming or statements of good practice

The final session was directed towards identifying core components of good programming for working with adolescents and youth in emergencies.

At the beginning of the day participants were invited to share what they considered to be three core components of good programming for adolescents and youth. Ideas for core components included: meaningful participation, taking the context into account and recognising youth as a diverse group – a complete list of these can be found in the Annexes (annex 1).

In three smaller breakout groups led by UNHCR, WRC/Questscope and NRC participants engaged in broad and wide ranging discussions that captured thoughts on working with adolescents and youth including for example positive components and some of the challenges. . The discussions around technical programming, participation and inclusion and community engagement and protection considered many angles, identifying many of the same issues and areas of focus.

Participants engaged on numerous topics including the need to understand who adolescents and youth are and to be able to classify them for purposes including data collection, programming and participation; the need to mainstream youth across sector responses versus a focus on dedicated programming and participation of young people throughout the programme cycles including links into a collaboration with existing community structures. It became apparent quite early in the discussion that identifying core components of good programing would not be achieved but that statements of good practice were a more realistic interpretation of what was emerging from group discussions.
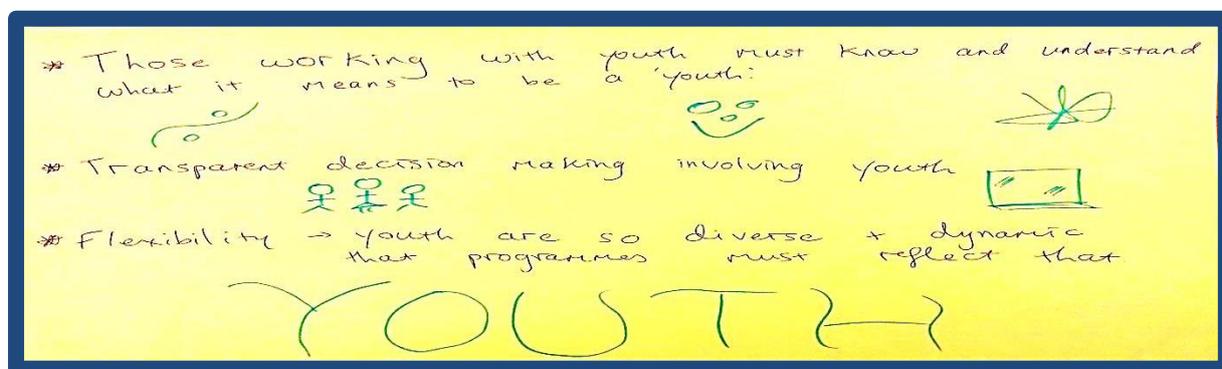
Statements of good practice

The statements of good practice that were gleaned from the final session were collated and organised under four thematic headings. These were not in themselves a statement of intent but merely a best fit for classification purposes. The themes chosen and some examples of the statements of good practice were:

- **Ensure quality**
    - o Ensure definitions around youth and adolescents are understood
    - o Do no harm when working directly with youth and adolescents

- o   Cultural sensitivity

- **Address protection needs**
  - o   Diverse and targeted programming for young people needs to be ensured
  - o   Programmes should be integrated and supported including for example PSS
  - o   Bridge gaps between refugee and host community young people

- **Collaboration and cooperation**,
  - o   Engagement with communities and families
  - o   Programmes provide meaningful roles for the community
  - o   Mainstreaming of adolescents and youth across sectors

- **Youth centred engagement**
  - o   Effective programming builds in a sense of purpose to young people's lives
  - o   Participation leads to personal accountability
  - o   Participation differs based on age ranges

The full list of statements of good practice can be found in Annex 3.

Follow up

Several modalities of follow up were discussed. The Youth and adolescents in Emergencies (YAE) advocacy group was introduced to those who were not aware of it, and was put forward as one vehicle that can be used to progress work on adolescents and youth in emergencies. It was also suggested that the YAE group take the initiative with regards to the statements of good practice, working with the outputs to develop a more concrete long-term document. It was highlighted that the Child Protection Work Group would be interested in working more closely on the issue of adolescents and youth in emergencies. Establishment of a task team only requires the interest of three member organisations; those who are interested should contact the coordinators. Finally, the UNHCR annual NGO consultations in 2015 will have a dedicated session on adolescents and youth for the second year running. This is an important opportunity for interested individuals and organisations to engage on the issue. There is also a broad interest in having "adolescents and youth" as an overarching theme for the Consultations, most likely in 2016. With this in mind, the opportunity to hold a year of regional consultations with refugee and displaced youth and adolescents in the run-up was discussed, with the YAE group again potentially moving this forward.[2]

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[2] NB - In a meeting of the YAE group on November 24th 2014, it was decided to establish a working group to develop the statements of good practice into a more substantive document that could eventually become something akin to minimum standards for working with adolescents and youth in humanitarian situations. Global youth consultations were also discussed and are something that the group is also working to move forward.

Annexes

Annex 1 - Guiding questions for breakout groups

Guiding questions were developed to assist the groups in identifying core components of adolescent and youth programming. Participants were asked to keep in mind both camp based and urban displaced young people when formulating their answers to the questions.

Group 1 – led by NRC

1. How do we ensure SGBV issues are addressed through adolescent and youth programming with both male and female young people?
2. How do we ensure linkages with education and self-reliance colleagues/partners to meet the different learning, education and livelihoods needs of young people?

Group 2 – led by WRC/Questscope

3. What does participation for adolescents and youth in emergencies look like?
4. How do we ensure that girls, young women and young people with disabilities are included in programming?
5. How do we incorporate hard to reach, in trouble or likely to engage in risk taking behaviour young people in programmatic interventions?

Group 3 – led by UNHCR

6. How do we incorporate peaceful coexistence/conflict resolution into programming for refugee and other displaced young people?
7. How do we re-engage displaced and refugee young people with their communities and build intergenerational linkages and relationships?
8. How do we address the growing challenge of working with and meeting the needs of urban refugees and displaced young people?

Annex 2 - Core components of good practice – morning session

Prior to the morning session many participants wrote three components of good practice for adolescents and youth programming on sheets of paper and affixed them to the wall of the room. The following is a summary of these.

- Disaggregated data

- Agents in community development

- Flexibility in programming

- Participation

- Targeted programming

- Inclusive

- Beat interests

- Holistic

- Cross sectorial

- Needs based

- Youth and adolescent ownership

- Recognize diversity

- Work with families and communities

- Utilise existing assets and capacity

Annex 3 – Statements of good Practice

The statements of good practice listed below evolved organically from discussions during the afternoon of the thematic day. It is expected that the statements will be consolidated tightened up language wise and have operationalising descriptions added. After the event the YAE group established a working group to move this forward.. The full list is as follows:

Quality

1. Should be needs based but also take into consideration aspirations/competencies/capacities
2. Must identify the needs of youth as well as the youth themselves
3. Should try to utilize existing assets and capacities
4. Ensure definitions around youth and adolescents are understood
5. Don no harm when working directly with youth and adolescents
6. Cultural sensitivity
7. Programmes should give space for meaningful social action
8. Ensure honesty and management of expectations
9. Evaluation from the beginning
10. Advocacy must be attached to programming
11. Programming should be holistic in approach

Address Protection Needs

1. Include skills development, livelihoods, economic strengthening activities,
2. Targeted programming
3. Do no harm with programmatic responses for adolescents and youth
4. There should be shared ownership and flexibility in approach to programming for young people
5. Diverse and targeted programming for young people needs to be ensured
6. Programmes should be integrated and supported including for example PSS
7. Bridge gaps between refugee and host community young people
8. Participation in DRR and response
9. What are the issues around scaling up
10. Challenge perceptions
11. Advocacy
12. Informed an affective identification

Cooperation and Collaboration

1. Find a common theme/place/activity/issue for peaceful coexistence
2. Proactively recognize, embrace and involve diversity within and inter communities
3. Identify existing coping mechanism, aspirations, competencies, capacities and risks
4. Engage with CBOs and local adolescent and youth structures
5. Engagement with communities and families
6. Programmes provide meaningful roles for the community
7. Bridge gaps between refugee and host community young people
8. Identify existing structures
9. Mainstreaming of adolescents and youth across sectors
10. Meaningful outreach

Youth Centred Engagement

1. Enable the opportunity to lead projects and programmes
2. Provide more innovative communication structures, how are youth heard, how do they engage with the wider community
3. Responsibilities of families and communities to support young people
4. Effective programming builds in a sense of purpose to young people's lives
5. Participation leads to personal accountability
6. Participation differs based on age ranges
7. Avoid token participation
8. Be aware of participation power relations
9. Consider male adolescents/youth (18+)

Annex 4 – List of participants

#	Family name	First name	Organisation
1.	**Abdalla**	Elsadig	Islamic Relief Worldwide
2.	**Ali**	Farman	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
3.	**Algoni**	Mutasim	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
4.	**Andrew**	Susan	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
5.	**Antonini**	Nicoletta	Save the Children
6.	**Aznar Daban**	Rocio	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
7.	**Barnett**	Katy	Child Protection Working Group (CPWG)
8.	**Bousquette**	Jessica	World Vision International (WVI)
9.	**Brusati**	Annalisa	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
10.	**Chaffin**	Josh	Women's Refugee Commission
11.	**Claessens**	Lotte	Plan International
12.	**Compingt**	Emmanuelle	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
13.	**De Coninck**	Sophie	International Labour Organization (ILO)
14.	**Ellermeijer**	Rinske	War Child
15.	**Eynon**	Alyson	Child Protection Working Group (CPWG)
16.	**Fasseaux**	Leila	Islamic Relief Worldwide
17.	**Finaurini**	Silvia	Save the Children
18.	**Fischer**	Tina	Child Protection Working Group (CPWG)
19.	**Giannini**	Elena	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
20.	**Grisewood**	Nicholas	Independent
21.	**Hoseth**	Anne	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
22.	**Kachuka Byamungu**	Jacques	Save the Children
23.	**Kashando**	Frank	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
24.	**Kollie**	William	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
25.	**Mahrt**	Michael	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
26.	**Mansourian**	Hani	Columbia University
27.	**Marchand**	Cecile	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
28.	**Mege**	Jean	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
29.	**Mwebe Mofya**	Frieda	World Vision International (WVI)
30.	**Nigane**	Alice	War Child
31.	**Nolan**	Anthony	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
32.	**Nyakato**	Rhoda	World Vision International (WVI)
33.	**Paskarasingam**	Ranjini	Save the Children
34.	**Perera**	Sampathi	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
35.	**Prats**	Marion	Terre des Hommes (TdH)
36.	**Queirazza**	Anita	Plan International
37.	**Rakotomalala**	Sabine	Child Protection Working Group (CPWG)
38.	**Rock**	Megan	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
39.	**Rushton**	Verity	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

40.	**Samake**	Harouna	Direction Nationale de la Promotion de l'Enfant et de la Famille (DNPEF)
41.	**Sesay**	Samuel	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
42.	**Siegrist**	Saudamini	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
43.	**Tekola**	Melaku	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
44.	**Vio**	Giovanna	Save the Children
45.	**Wirth**	Vanessa	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
46.	**Yamano**	Makiba	World Vision International (WVI)
47.	**Zinyanya**	Aaron	Ministry of Public Service
48.	**Lopez-Anselme**	Marina	Refugee Education Trust
49.	**Roe**	Jennifer	Refugee Education Trust
50.	**Bonar**	Emma	Norwegian Refugee Commission
51.	**Wold**	Katrine	Norwegian Refugee Commission
52.	**Jaradat**	Mai	Norwegian Refugee Commission
53.	**Niconchuk**	Mike	Questscope
54.	**Hayes**	Alan	Independent consultant
55.	**Gerard**	Sylvie	ICRC
56.	**Putnam Cramer**	Caroline	ICRC
57.	**Capobianca**	Chiara	ICRC
58.	**Zimmerman**	Lisa	CPWG
59.	**Hiddlestone**	Trish	Independent Consultant
60.	**Tschudin**	Alain	University of KwaZulu-Natal
61.	**Walker**	Beatrice	CPWG consultant
62.	**Treves**	Nura	UNHCR
63.	**Zeus**	Barbara	UNHCR
64.	**Sandvik-Nylund**	Monika	UNHCR
65.	**Riddsale**	Janis	UNHCR
66.	**Guanzirola**	Luca	UNHCR
67.	**Karlin**	Dan	UNHCR
68.	**Norgaard**	Grith	UNHCR
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