



PROTECTION, GENDER, AND INCLUSION

ACHIEVEMENTS & LESSONS LEARNED
2016–2021

Cover photo caption: Philippine Red Cross run a child-friendly space in the village of Santo Domingo with the support of UNICEF. Every afternoon, children between 7-10 years old can participate in games, listen to stories read by the volunteers, and engage in drawing and visually expressing their experiences. © IFRC

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	6
2. Policies and strategies – development of the PGI approach	6
2.1. Assessment and analysis of National Societies' focus and priorities	10
3. Tools, training, research and advocacy	12
3.1. PGI mainstreaming and capacity building	13
3.2. SGBV	15
3.3. Child Protection and safeguarding	17
3.4. Disability inclusion	20
3.5. Trafficking	21
4. Programmes and operations	22
4.1. Emergency Operations	23
4.2. Operational examples	25
4.3. IFRC Annual Plans in support to National Societies	28
4.4. People reached Federation-wide by PGI actions	28
4.5. Expenditure	29
5. Staffing and networks	30
6. Movement and external collaboration	32
6.1. Collaboration within the Movement	32
6.2. External collaboration	33
7. Implementation at regional and country level	34
7.1. Asia Pacific	34
7.2. Americas	37
7.3. Africa	39
7.4. Europe	41
7.5. Middle East and North Africa	44
8. Learning from our experience	46

Executive summary



In a school in Beira, Mozambique - children learning about protection, gender and inclusion issues, including how to prevent harm from happening to themselves and others. © Anette Selmer-Andresen/IFRC

Over the past five years, the IFRC's approach to tackling violence, discrimination and exclusion has been strengthened through the consolidation of an area of focus on **Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI)**, now integrated into the **Values, Power and Inclusion** strategic priority identified in Strategy 2030. This report describes how this PGI approach was developed, outlines some of the key achievements, and demonstrates the future priorities of the IFRC including with the forthcoming PGI policy and operational framework.

The PGI approach evolved through continuous learning from programmatic implementation of policy and strategies; informed by reviews, evaluations, consultations; and monitoring data between 2015 and 2021. It was further refined through the development of new policies,

strategies, and frameworks, culminating in the development of an overarching PGI policy (to be approved at the 2022 General Assembly) and operational framework in 2021.

The policy encapsulates the learning of the past five years and articulates an official IFRC position on better integrating the ways in which the IFRC network addresses violence, discrimination, and exclusion, recognising that they are *"inseparably linked, and that to effectively address any one of these issues, we need to address them together"*¹. The operational framework explains how to enact the PGI policy in practice, and elaborates the IFRC's approach to protection as one that *"integrates issues of gender, diversity and inclusion into any protection response, to make it more appropriate, adapted and effective"*².

During this five-year period of evolution, programming needs have driven research in areas such as Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and disaster law, and the links between child protection, migration, and climate change. That research in turn has influenced policy and advocacy approaches.

The core programmatic emphasis during this time has been two-fold: developing a comprehensive approach to mainstreaming PGI into programming, while also emphasising specific themes in mainstreamed and specialised work. The primary themes have been SGBV (including Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)), Child Protection and Safeguarding, Trafficking in Persons, general Community Violence Prevention, and Disability Inclusion. A central feature of the evolution of the PGI approach has been to look at the intersection of these themes, and to develop the tools, guidance and procedures that addresses them in an integrated way.

Accordingly, to translate policy and research into practice, a range of adaptable tools, guidance and trainings have been developed. These different types of support to staff and volunteers cover both mainstreaming of PGI as well as specialised guidance on specific themes. These have included developing Child Friendly Spaces in emergencies, building referral pathways for survivors of violence,

1 From the current draft of the PGI policy

2 From the current draft of the framework

supporting survivors of trafficking, and supporting youth at risk of exclusion or violence to work within their communities promoting social change through sports.

To support the programmatic guidance, institutional structures and systems have been developed and refined, with core PGI competencies being established for all IFRC staff, and specific competencies being established for those specialised in PGI. Accompanying training and accreditation processes ensure a consistent quality across the organisation.

To support policy and programmes, addressing institutional issues has been the third main focus. Commitments made by the membership on ensuring diverse representation and composition of human resources at all levels have been supported by the development of dedicated PGI organisational assessments and leadership training.

All these policies, strategies, research, tools and training have one single common aim: better help for people affected by violence, discrimination and exclusion. Since the creation of the PGI Area of Focus in 2017, the overall number of people reached by PGI programming by National Societies worldwide has increased from 13 million to 26 million³. The numbers of people reached by PGI by IFRC emergency programming has also increased. 17 National Societies have adopted a PSEA policy during this team and a further 17 have a policy in development.

Inclusion of PGI measures in emergency plans has consistently increased from 81% to 100% in Emergency Appeals⁴ and from 37% to 55% in DREFs⁵. At the final report stage, PGI considerations also increased from 10% in 2017 to 57% in 2020. In IFRC-supported annual plans, PGI-type programming was already well established and has stayed consistent over the five year period with about 50% of all plans having a dedicated focus on either a mainstreamed or specialised programming on PGI.

Over the five years, some core lessons have become very clear:

- For the IFRC Network to realise its full potential to address violence, discrimination and exclusion, the IFRC and each member must comprehensively assess and address their own institutional capacity, staff composition, and willingness to address those issues. There needs to be dedicated focal points working on PGI-related institutional development, whilst all staff working across programs and operations should be supported to have core PGI competencies.
- Comprehensive efforts must be made to address the range of PGI issues across all operations, programmes, and services. Specific measures must be put in place at all stages of the programme cycle and in all sectors. Mainstreaming PGI is a minimum, but best practice is ensuring both mainstreamed and specialised work. In terms of specialised work, the IFRC must focus on a few key themes where it has most experience in order to have maximum impact. Any additional thematic areas would require full support from the Network.
- Advocacy, research, and learning will ensure that we continue to learn from our experience, and influence standards, norms, laws, and behaviour to ensure people's dignity, access, participation, and safety. Partnerships within the Movement and externally will ensure that collectively the impact of our programmes and advocacy has the greatest possible reach. There needs to be more investment in external engagement.

In 2021, these overall directions have been consolidated through the PGI Policy and Operational Framework. Over the next five years, they will provide the clear and steady focus for the IFRC Network to provide the greatest possible support to people affected by violence, discrimination, and exclusion.

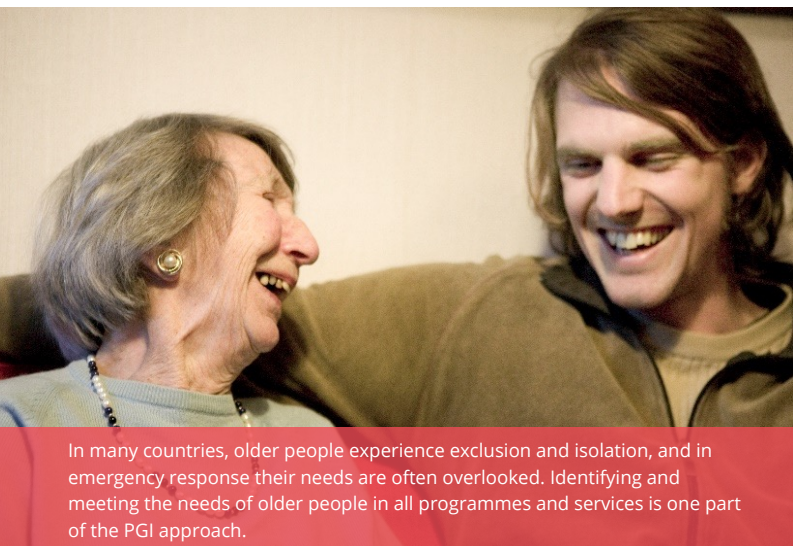
3 As reported (under "social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace") in **FDRS**

4 **Emergency Appeals** are large-scale emergency operations supported by the IFRC

5 The Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (**DREF**) is IFRC rapid support to small and medium emergency operations

1. Introduction

The IFRC network has always worked on addressing issues of violence, discrimination, and exclusion as one of the key expressions of the fundamental principles of the RCRC Movement.



In many countries, older people experience exclusion and isolation, and in emergency response their needs are often overlooked. Identifying and meeting the needs of older people in all programmes and services is one part of the PGI approach.

Over the past five years, the various ways in which these issues are addressed by the network – supported by the secretariat – have been consolidated, linked, and strengthened through the development of a specialised area of work known as Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), established as a strategic area of focus in the IFRC Plan and Budget in 2017. It remains a strategic priority in the current Plan and Budget, linked to Global Challenge of Values, Power and Inclusion identified in Strategy 2030.

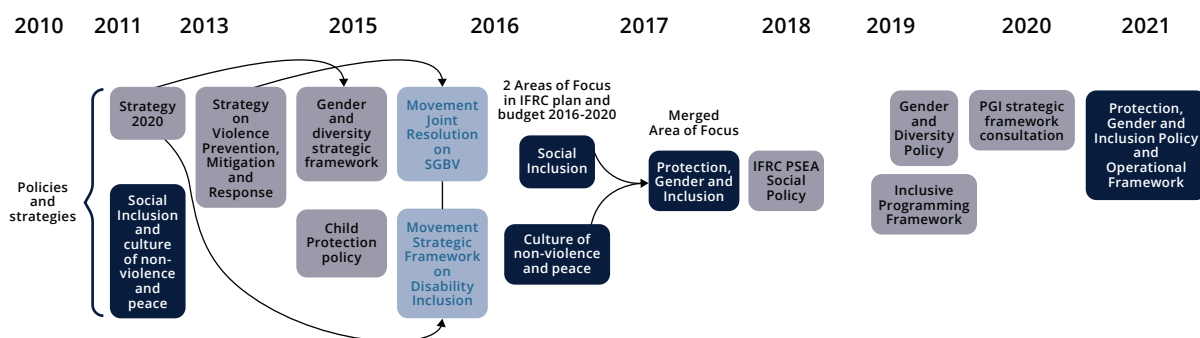
The objective of this report is to illustrate how this area of focus was developed, outline some of the key achievements, and demonstrate the future priorities as set out in the forthcoming PGI Policy⁶ and Operational Framework.

2. Policies and strategies – development of the PGI approach

This report focuses on achievements of the last five years (2016-2021). However, the policies and strategies that underpin these achievements go back further. The recent origins of the PGI approach lie in the **IFRC's Strategy 2020**. This ten-year strategy included a "Strategic Aim" called "Promoting social inclusion and culture of non-violence and peace". This framed the ways in which the IFRC network tackled issues of violence, discrimination, and exclusion, and placed human rights clearly at the centre.

Work on this Strategic Aim led to the development of the following; the **Strategic Framework for Gender and Diversity Issues 2013-2020**, the **Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response 2011-2020**, **Child Protection Policy** (2013) and the Movement **Strategic Framework on Disability Inclusion**.

⁶ Scheduled for adoption by the IFRC General Assembly in June 2022



The **2016 mid-term review** of Strategy 2020 highlighted a lack of focus on this strategic aim in general, as well as the absence of work to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Evaluations of emergency operations, such as the **real-time evaluation** of the IFRC’s migration response in Europe 2015-2016 highlighted the great urgency to tackle protection and inclusion more comprehensively.

The Secretariat’s **plan and budget 2016-2020** established for the first time⁷ two **“Areas of Focus” on 1) social inclusion and 2) a culture of non-violence and peace** – setting out priorities for the coming years, including referring to “protection issues” for the first time, with a focus on SGBV and on Child Protection in Emergencies.

This Secretariat strategic focus was further supported by significant milestones which included the 2015 adoption of the **International Conference resolution on SGBV** and the adoption of the Movement resolution incorporating the **Strategic Framework on Disability Inclusion**. In the same year, the pilot version of the *“Minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity in emergency programming”* was released (see *“tools and guidance”* section below).

Following an internal review and technical consultation of implementation in 2016-2017, it was decided to formally combine the two Areas of Focus to be more effective and closer to National Societies’ practice and policy. As a result, the new **Area of Focus of “Protection, Gender and Inclusion”** (PGI) was endorsed in the **2017 update to the plan and budget** to ensure the strategic focus on the combined strength of these two areas. Since then, the concept and approach of “PGI” has become a central pillar in all IFRC definitions, approaches and responses to preventing violence, addressing discrimination, and tackling exclusion in all contexts.

The PGI Area of Focus formally brought together the interconnected components of “gender and diversity”, “child protection”, “social inclusion”, “social cohesion”, “disability inclusion” and other violence prevention and response activities. The framing of these connected elements under the main banner of “Protection” also demonstrated – and increased – the recognition of the protection activities of the IFRC Network. Further demonstrating the increasing importance that IFRC is placing around Protection and establishing its role as a protection actor.

The concept and approach reinforce the focus on ensuring the “do no harm” principle being upheld as a minimum, as well as integrating, mainstreaming, and specialising in protection work throughout programmes and operations. PGI and its components thus have increased in focus and prominence from being an optional “cross-cutting areas” to being a required “Area of Focus”.

7 Previous Secretariat strategies had included a focus on “humanitarian values and principles”, but with limited programmatic focus.

From 2017 onwards, the strategic direction of PGI was implemented (and developed) through the emergency and long-term operational planning of the IFRC. This has meant that each annual country plan, and each Emergency Plan of Action for all Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREFs) and Appeals were required to identify PGI actions for the operation – the progression of these elements in those documents is illustrated in the “Programmes and Operations” section. Policy developments have continued in parallel and build on the progress being made in operations and programmes and inform practice from lessons learnt.

The first version of the **Child Protection Policy** was finalised in 2013 and was accompanied by an online course and a Child Protection Action Plan. In 2019, a survey indicated that only 19% National Societies had Child Protection policies in place, and identified their needs for more technical support and guidance. Based on this analysis and based on changing international standards and norms, the policy was upgraded in 2021 and relaunched as the “**Child Safeguarding Policy**”⁸ accompanied by guidance documents.

Position Papers, briefings, and research on Child Protection issues such as **Protection and Assistance to Children on the Move**, Alone and Unsafe – a study into **We need to do better – Policy Brief for Enhancing Laws and Regulations to Protect Children in Disasters** and most recently on **Anticipatory action & child protection** have served the dual role of establishing IFRC priorities, and articulating clear advocacy messages to the humanitarian community based on the experience of National Societies.

The increased focus on the humanitarian world on the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse (of people we seek to assist) was addressed by the IFRC Secretariat’s **Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in 2018**. The Policy initiated an ongoing project of support to National Societies to establish their own PSEA policies and action plans, with 46 National Societies supported so far, of which 17 have established policies which meets the IFRC standard⁹, 12 more have a policy in process, and a further 17 have received technical support (see related section on PSEA implementation below).

During 2017-2019, the IFRC focused on defining internally, what constitutes the “protection” element of the PGI Area of Focus. An internal “Think Piece” elaborated a three-fold focus on mainstreaming, integrated, and specialised work. The definitions and approaches elaborated in the Think Piece were integrated in the 2018 update of the Minimum Standards for PGI in Emergencies and was used as the main reference to harmonize the approach with other Movement actors. The core concepts were integrated into the PGI Policy and operational framework developed in 2020-2021.

This process to define the scope of the IFRC Network’s engagement in “protection” work was also linked to and supported by the “Protection in the Movement” project (described in section 7.1 Collaboration within the Movement below).

In 2018, the mid-term review of the *Gender and Diversity Strategic Framework*, while limited in scope¹⁰ found that the framework had enhanced the importance of gender and diversity issues, strengthened institutional architecture, and led to the development of the PGI area of focus. However, there was little evidence of the usage of the Framework in programming or to support changes in the gender

8 The policy aims to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect in all IFRC programmes, preventative actions are prioritized, and accountability is ensured.

9 Australia, Bangladesh, Burundi, Finland, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Panama, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, UK, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

10 The mid-term review only included a small sample of interviewees and limited secondary data sources. The initial findings were supplemented by the more extensive end-term review in 2020. The review was conducted at the end of 2017 but finalised in 2018.

and diversity balance in the IFRC Secretariat and NS membership and management. It found that implementation was lacking, due to limited dedicated staff and limited prioritisation.

In 2019, the increased focus on PGI demonstrated the pressing need to update and revise the 1999 *Gender Policy*. In parallel, the IFRC's programmatic focus on inclusive programming was defined through the development of the *Strategic Framework on Inclusive Programming*¹¹. Both were subject to global consultation, with different constituencies as relevant for the policy/strategy level, and run in close collaboration, establishing common definitions of gender, diversity, inclusion, and the meaning of social inclusion and broader inclusive programming.

The *Gender and Diversity Policy* was adopted by the 2019 General Assembly to give a broad direction to the membership, while the *Strategic Framework on Inclusive Programming* was adopted by the secretariat for implementation at the local level, providing a more detailed guidance on programmatic ways to implement inclusive programming. In 2020 and 2021, the programmatic implications of these policy development have become more relevant with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (among other factors) making clear more than ever the inseparability of issues of violence, discrimination, and exclusion.

PGI issues were also prominent at the Council of Delegates and the International Conference in 2019, including the report on the SGBV resolution (**joint action on prevention and response**), an open pledge on **safe and inclusive humanitarian environment**, an open and a **model pledge** on Disability Inclusion, an open pledge on PSEA and a **model pledge on SGBV**. Side events were held on SGBV, on Disability Inclusion and on Protection in the Movement. The importance of PGI issues was also emphasized in the resolutions and events on Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Mental Health Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and internal displacement. Institutional PGI issues were integrated into the "Trust" theme, and a **pledge** and a **resolution** was established on women and leadership.

Concurrently, the *Strategic Framework for Gender and Diversity Issues 2013-2020* and the *Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response 2011-2020* and the *Movement Strategic Framework on Disability Inclusion* all reached the end of their timeframe.



Dalal Al-Taji, Head of the Palestinian Red Crescent's *Continuing Education Department of the College of Ability Development in Gaza, Palestine*, and Professor in Braille and Policy of Inclusion, Rights & legislation), leads the opening ceremony for the 33rd International Conference with a speech focused on Inclusion.

The Gender and Diversity Policy was adopted by the General Assembly in the same year, and there were a number of events in disability inclusion and SGBV.
© Mina Mojtahedi / Tweet

11 Which evolved out of the Social Inclusion Strategy

With support from the Swedish Red Cross in 2020, the IFRC Network undertook an end-term review of the *gender and diversity framework*, considering previous reviews of both frameworks, all of the developments listed above, and included a detailed consultation with the membership and IFRC staff¹² (some of the key lessons learned from this review are included in section 8 below). The final report on the Disability Inclusion framework was also considered – including the limited influence that the Framework had on National Society action.¹³

The outcome of these consultations was further clarification and endorsement of Protection, Gender and Inclusion as a key strategic priority for the IFRC, as a continued major focus of the IFRC's overall Strategy 2030 – as core part of the broader strategic priority of “Values, Power and Inclusion”.

The culmination of this process resulted in a PGI policy and operational framework that defines *“the IFRCs approach to “Protection”, one that emphasises the importance of integrating issues of gender, diversity and inclusion into any protection response, to make it more appropriate, adapted and effective.”*¹⁴

In doing so, it establishes an approach which *“recognises that violence, discrimination, and exclusion are inseparably linked, and that to effectively address the causes, risks, and consequences of any one of these issues, we need to address them together”*¹⁵

2.1. Assessment and analysis of National Societies' focus and priorities

The aim of IFRC secretariat PGI work is to support and accompany National Societies to implement their work to support people affected by violence, discrimination, and exclusion. To ensure that this work is effective, efficient, relevant, and appropriate, the IFRC secretariat relies on having a good understanding of the areas where National Societies are working, which is provided through the knowledge of regional focal points and supplemented by surveys and assessments that have been carried out, which provide some overall context to the other data presented in this report.

In 2018, an initial survey was conducted in collaboration with ICRC (as part of the Protection in the Movement initiative), to gather information about National Societies' protection work for the purposes of developing this common approach (see section 7.1 below). This was followed by a similar survey linked to Covid-19 activities in 2020. Both surveys found that most of the National Societies (who responded) focused on Restoring Family Links (RFL), SGBV and Child Protection (*Chart 1* and *Chart 2*). In the 2020 survey, an additional question showed that mainstreaming of PGI activities and addressing the needs of marginalized groups was the most common activity (*Chart 2*).

12 A detailed report of the consultation held is [available here](#).

13 42% of the 24 National Societies who responded said that they were unaware of the Strategic Framework on Disability Inclusion, or that it had not influenced their organization.

14 From the current draft of the framework

15 From the current draft of the policy

CHART 1

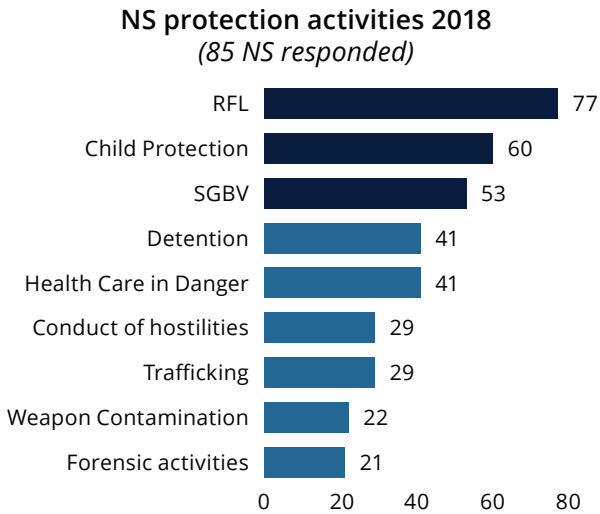
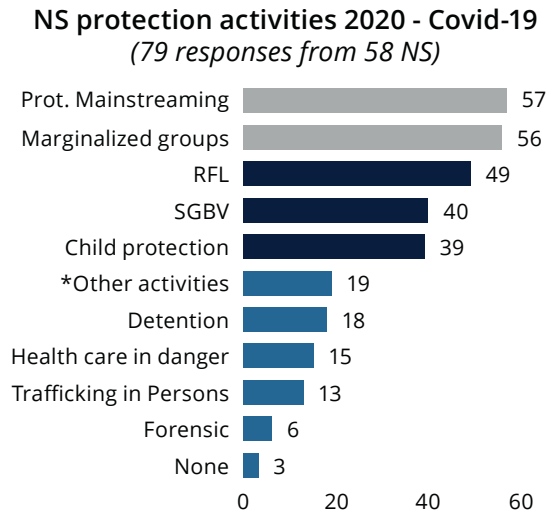


CHART 2



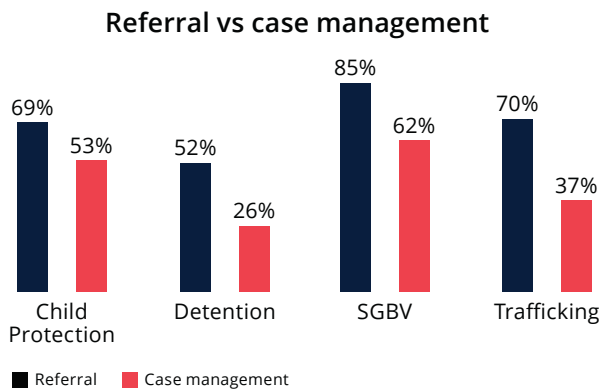
2.1.1. Modalities of protection work in National Societies

The survey in 2019 also looked at the modalities of protection, gender, and inclusion work, and found that there was stronger emphasis on referral to other protection actors in all sectors (*Chart 3*).

However, the gap was smallest for the work related to prevention and response to SGBV and violence towards children. This indicates that most National Societies, were almost significantly engaged in specialised or standalone work in these two domains.

Accordingly, this has influenced the focus of the IFRC secretariat to develop the services, tools, and support for National Societies in these two areas. The support is twofold; addressing the establishment of referral pathways and establishing specialised actions – such as Child Friendly Spaces and comprehensive support programmes.

CHART 3



2.1.2. Analysis of National Society Annual plans

In 2019, as part of the assessment for the *IFRC inclusive programming framework*, a snapshot was taken of National Society actions in “inclusive programming”, as found in the annual plans between the years 2017 and 2019. *Chart 4* below demonstrates the broad range of inclusive programming that was found – covering specific sectors like education, employment, livelihoods and health and care – but also significant numbers of “integrated programmes”, providing a range of services with an emphasis on inclusion, as well as dedicated programmes directly addressing issues of discrimination. This analysis also showed that while some programme areas focused more on transformative social inclusion work (Education and Employment for example), others such as shelter, and health and care were more focused on ensuring basic levels of equitable access.

CHART 4

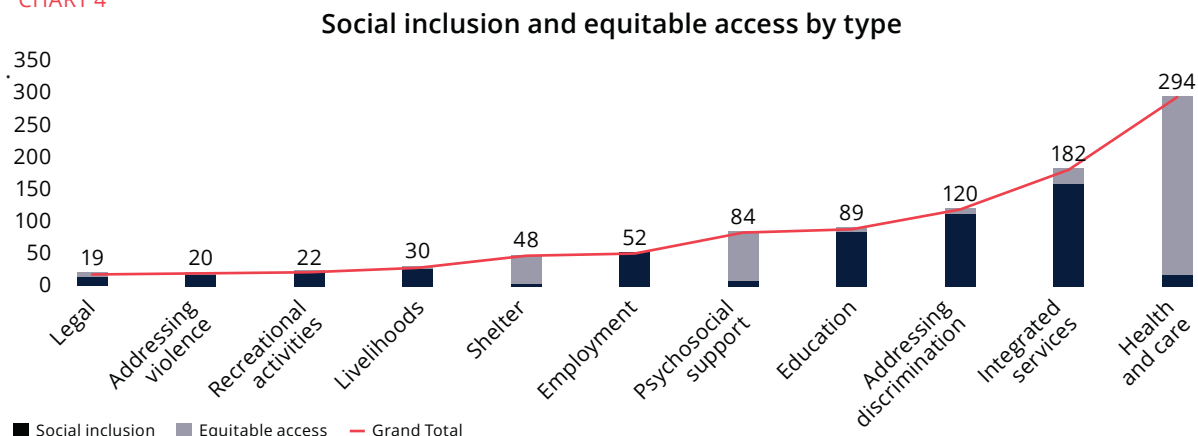
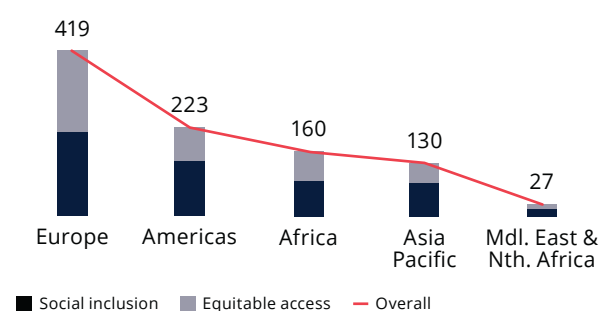


Chart 5 provides a snapshot of the scale of programming worldwide, and the level of inclusive work being carried out. It shows that all regions had a similar range of 50-50 split between programmes with a “basic” inclusive approach (equitable access) and a more transformative “social inclusion” approach.

This analysis informed the development of the **IFRC inclusive programming framework**, that fits the broader context of many National Societies, rather than developing a framework which focused exclusively on “social inclusion” that would only be relevant to some National Societies.

CHART 5

Total Inclusion-related programmes

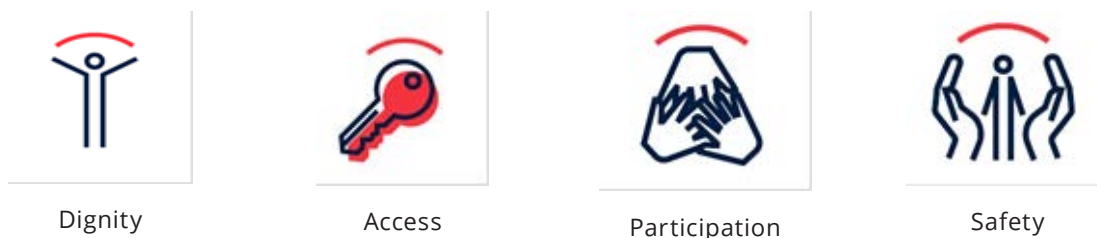


These overall conclusions were incorporated into the development of PGI policy and operational framework.

3. Tools, training, research and advocacy

The following section is organised by theme and provides a global overview of the core priority themes over the past five years. Further information about specific programme implementation under each of these themes is provided (by region) in section 7: *Implementation at regional and country level* on page 34.

3.1. PGI mainstreaming and capacity building



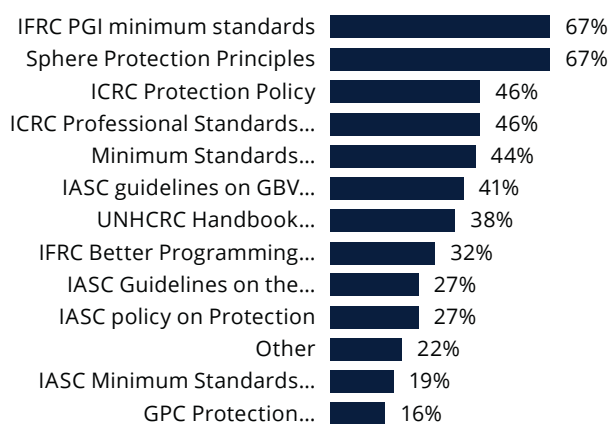
3.1.1. Tools and training

The most significant and influential tool developed in the past five years is the **Minimum Standards for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies**. Originally piloted in 2015 as the *Minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity in emergency programming*, this core tool underwent three years of testing in operational contexts. After extensive review, the insights gathered led to the revision of the guidance with updated content in 2019. The revised edition emphasised the interrelation between Protection, Gender, & Diversity and Inclusion elements – as well as a stronger focus on SGBV, disability inclusion, and other aspects of diversity.

At the heart of the Minimum Standards is the framework of Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety (DAPS). The DAPS framework provided a simple comprehensive guide for addressing the core actions in Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency programming, based on the common protection principles of the **Humanitarian Charter** and the **Core Humanitarian Standards**.

CHART 6

National Society use of protection guidance in 2019





Staff from around the Americas region participate in PGI workshop with a focus on SGBV in Guatemala in November 2017.
© Tina Tinde / IFRC

Based on the minimum standard commitments, several trainings were developed for different audiences and different purposes. The main training originally developed was the “Seven Moves: gender and diversity in emergencies” which demonstrated how the seven fundamental principles could be applied through the guidance in the minimum standards. A simplified version based on the Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety Framework (DAPS) was also developed for community volunteers. Comprehensive trainings on the minimum standards have been developed for emergency response (linked to the PGI developments in the **Surge Optimisation Process**), including basic training for all surge personnel, and a thorough and detailed training for PGI specialised staff deployed as part of surge response.

The trainings and tools have all been developed based on field experience, and tested in the field, with various piloting, and revision phases between 2016 and 2020. In 2021, the entire catalogue of core PGI trainings was launched after being validated, revised, and new trainings created. This also includes a new online training focusing on “PGI Foundations” – with a comprehensive introduction to PGI concepts, as well a core training for all audiences, and a Training of Trainers (ToT) for this core training (both available as classroom and remote trainings). A dedicated training for IFRC emergency operational leadership was also developed, to build their core competencies on PGI with focus on operational design, team-management and decision-making. This new set of training provides a wide choice adapted for different audiences and situations and updates the previous set of training materials. Approximately 1,000 people have been trained since 2015, not including those trained through dedicated PGI sessions in a wider range of other Movement trainings¹⁶.

In 2019, the PGI in Emergencies Toolkit was developed to accompany the Minimum Standards, providing guidance and tools on how to plan, implement, and monitor those standards during an emergency response and recovery. It is a compendium of tools, which can be drawn on and adapted when required, organized in 4 chapters: 1. Overview, 2. Planning and Assessment, 3. Implementation and 4. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting. The main focus is supporting the implementation of the Minimum Standards, but it also provides guidance on essential PGI actions building on those standards, such as protection monitoring, establishing referral pathways and **Case Management**.

In addition to the suite of trainings on core PGI competencies, additional training and supporting tools have been created over the past five years addressing different themes. All the general PGI tools and trainings include specific activities, guidance and elements which address core thematic areas¹⁷ at a basic level in the PGI trainings and Toolkit for Emergencies.

However, close follow up of the impacts of training and capacity building could be strengthened. The challenge of high turnover of PGI staff and limited secured funding has hampered the development of comprehensive accompaniments of staff after training and ensuring that learning is being put into practice. The necessary materials are in place, but establishing continuous and consistent training will only be possible with through more stable and sustainable resourcing models.

¹⁶ Trainings such as IMPACT, ERU, or the Movement Induction Course

¹⁷ including SGBV (including PSEA), Child Protection, Disability Inclusion and Trafficking – for example all these elements are covered

3.2. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)



Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in the world today. In Lima, Peru, women joined in the painting of a mural that shows strength, sisterhood and support for survivors.
© Cruz Roja Peruana / IFRC

The IFRC secretariat's focus in preventing and responding to SGBV has been through developing the comprehensive capacities of IFRC and National Societies to address SGBV within the broad approach of PGI – prevention and response to SGBV is incorporated into all PGI tools, trainings and support to implementation described above.

National Societies have engaged in a wide range of prevention activities to address various forms of SGBV – including intimate partner violence, forced and child marriage, female genital mutilation, and economic violence – through community-based prevention, outreach, awareness-raising and group support (women's, youth and men's groups), as well as direct psychosocial support services and referrals.

This has been achieved by training staff and volunteers and working closely with other specialised actors. Some National Societies also provide case management including referral pathways, and mainstreaming SGBV prevention and response into all humanitarian activities, with the support of the IFRC. PGI deployments have included direct technical support on SGBV, to test and disseminate referral pathways, ensure specialized services, and holistic survivor care are facilitated through volunteers and staff.

In 2019, linked to the [Oslo conference on SGBV](#), the IFRC released its [SGBV in Humanitarian Crises Appeal 2019 – 2022](#), which focused on supporting programmes in eight contexts¹⁸ and the regional and global support to those contexts.

The targeted National Societies were supported to develop plans to tackle PSEA, and develop trainings for staff, volunteers, and community groups on SGBV core concepts, PSEA, and safe referrals. These actions were supported with information, education, and communication materials. In some countries, specific programming issues were supported – such as remote counselling, dignity kits in the context of Covid-19. A training package on SGBV integration into emergency preparedness and response was jointly developed with UNICEF and run with National Societies, IFRC and UNICEF staff in Central Asia, and in Africa.

¹⁸ Bangladesh, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, Venezuela Crisis

3.2.1. SGBV research

Research on SGBV has been at the forefront of IFRC's work in this area. Case studies and more detailed research has been influential in the development of IFRC SGBV programming and have served as a key resource for advocacy towards governments and other humanitarian actors. A core, consistent finding has been that SGBV incidences are exacerbated by disasters, and that laws, policies and limited infrastructure in resource-poor environments increase the risks significantly.

The earliest research on SGBV in disasters "**Unseen, Unheard**" (2015) provided the initial evidence of the impact of disasters on increasing SGBV. The core finding was further explored in more detail in case studies from Bangladesh, Samoa and Myanmar in **Unseen, Unheard in Asia Pacific** (2016). Further research was carried out in Indonesia, Lao and the Philippines in 2017, on the theme of "**the responsibility to prevent and respond to SGBV in disasters and crises**". This in-depth research looked at why and how SGBV risks increase during humanitarian disasters, and what action can be taken in each of the three contexts.

In addition, in 2017, as part of a **wider collaboration** with Disaster Law, detailed case studies from **Ecuador, Nepal and Zimbabwe** were produced and a **global synthesis study** on effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from SGBV in disasters were produced.

Case studies were also developed by the Norwegian Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross on the lessons learnt through projects implemented by the **Kenya Red Cross, Burundi Red Cross, Colombian Red Cross** and **South Sudan Red Cross**.

The collective findings of the research described above has influenced the design and implementation of IFRC-supported SGBV programmes worldwide, primarily by providing evidence of the necessity of integrating analysis and activities to prevent and respond to SGBV in all disaster preparedness and response operations. The importance of consideration of legal frameworks and collaboration with Governments and other actors has also influenced programming – for example in Africa, extensive analysis was done on the integration of gender and SGBV considerations into disaster-related legal frameworks, supporting the collaboration and advocacy with the regional GBV working group, UNICEF and national Governments on SGBV prevention and response at country level.

3.2.2. SGBV tools and training

The primary IFRC training to build capacity of staff and volunteers to address incidences of SGBV is the *Joint action for prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence: Training curriculum and supporting documentation* (2018). The course aims to enable programme managers to understand how to integrate SGBV interventions into all areas of work with an emphasis on emergencies. Participants must have previously attended introductory courses on PGI (or similar courses), as the course builds on this basic knowledge. The course is run by facilitators with expertise in SGBV.

This course is complemented by the **two-day course on SGBV and psychosocial support (2015)**, developed by the IFRC Reference Centre on Psychosocial Support. This training is a basic introduction to understanding SGBV in a psychosocial context and provides staff and volunteers with the skills and confidence to ensure a survivor-centred approach in meeting the psychosocial needs of survivors of SGBV.

Other tools and approaches that support staff and volunteers in addressing SGBV (and other types of violence) are embedded within the **PGI in Emergencies toolkit**, such as the guidance on referrals, case monitoring and management.

3.2.3. PSEA tools

The IFRC Secretariat had its first PSEA action plan in 2007, including a PSEA coordinator and leadership group. Since 2018, following the development of its PSEA policy, the IFRC Secretariat has worked in close partnership with the British and Canadian Red Cross and other National Society partners to develop the following tools and support;

- Created a template to help NS to develop their own PSEA policies based on the IFRC PSEA policy,
- Presented several pledges to a) prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and harassment in humanitarian action, and b) ensure a safe and inclusive humanitarian environment at the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,
- Developed the **IFRC PSEA Operational Manual** to support National Societies, with six accompanying video animations to help disseminate the guidance in the Manual,
- Participated in **The Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme**,
- Launched a new **confidential integrity line** which enables RCRC volunteers and staff to report SEA concerns (and includes a case management system that can be adapted for use by any National Society),
- Developed a new safeguarding self-assessment framework that is also aligned with IFRC's risk management framework which includes sexual exploitation and abuse as a core risk category. This framework whilst aimed at the IFRC Secretariat can be used as a template for NS to undertake a self-assessment, particularly in fulfilling the requirements of any funding from the United Nations.

3.3. Child Protection and safeguarding

The IFRC Network has placed special attention on protecting children from violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect for decades, with a particular focus through the Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response 2011-2020, and the Child Protection Action Plan 2015-2020.

Over the past 5 years, National Societies implemented child protection activities in disasters, migration settings, and public health crises. Common interventions include establishing safe spaces for children, Restoring Family Links, MHPSS support, mapping out child protection referral pathways, and supporting access to education, healthcare, and legal assistance. Programming for children in particularly vulnerable situations (through child marriage, being unaccompanied and separated in migration, or working and living in the streets) have been prioritized. During COVID-19 National Societies have taken actions to protect children in labour and to enhance meaningful child participation in decisions that affect them.



Subotica, Serbia, July 2019 At a migrant reception centre in Subotica, Red Cross volunteer Sanja Grsic helps eight-year-old Zenb from Iraq complete an educational jigsaw puzzle aimed at helping children to recognise potentially dangerous situations and advise them how to take action. Between a third and half of refugees and migrants in Serbia are children. © Victor Lacken / IFRC

Partnership with the Child Protection Area of Responsibility and the IFRC role as a Steering Group Member of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action have been a core part of this work. More details on these partnerships are given in *section 6.2 on page 33*.

The IFRC has worked in partnership to lead innovative work – such as a campaign profiling the voices of 30,000 adolescents on climate change and child protection, a hugely successful online course on protecting Unaccompanied Children in migration, and the unique study “*Alone and Unsafe*” on the risk of SGBV against unaccompanied child migrants.

In support of this programming, IFRC has developed child safeguarding systems. As outlined in more detail above, the 2013 IFRC Policy was revised in 2021, along with new tools and strong institutional support.

3.3.1. Child protection research

There have been several research projects conducted on child protection. The research demonstrates the breadth and the depth of National Society involvement in a range of areas of concern – with a particular emphasis on Children on the Move, including the research-driven position paper ***Protection and Assistance to Children on the Move***.

The initial focus was on a case study collection to document the reach and focus of National Societies in core areas of child protection, especially through ***Lessons Learned review on Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies*** (2017) and ***Smart Practices for Working with Migrant Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Europe*** (2017). This was followed by the ***Rights of Migrants in Action: Child Protection Projects*** (2018) that examined the successes, challenges and future directions of Red Cross and Red Crescent supported projects to protect children on the move. In the same year, the extensive study ***Alone and Unsafe*** – focused on risks and types of SGBV faced by separated and unaccompanied children who are on the move.

In 2019, the ***Action by Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to Prevent and Respond to Child Marriage case study report*** was published, highlighting eleven projects from the Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Middle East and North Africa Regions.

In 2020, the comprehensive study: *We need to do better: Policy Brief on Enhancing Laws and Regulations to Protect Children in Disasters* continued to build an understanding of the intersection between PGI and disaster law – illustrated by case studies from **Uganda, Philippines and Brazil**. The study found that many governments don't have adequate laws, policies or regulations to protect children from the heightened risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation in disasters. The study recommends improved Government action on embedding child protection measures into disaster risk management laws, regulations, and policies. It also recommends improvements in applying established Minimum Standards and better collaboration between governments and humanitarian agencies.

The need to do better is studied further the ***Issue Brief on Anticipatory Action and Child Protection***, accompanied by forthcoming IFRC studies on child protection and climate related disasters.

This innovative research includes regional studies that gathered the perspectives of over 30,000 adolescents. The findings so far were that children face elevated protection risks and often do not know where to get help or do not trust the competence of the help they do receive. Protection of children in climate-related disasters continues to be reactive, occurs too late, and is not built into preparedness nor anticipatory actions across the humanitarian sector. The ***IFRC World Disasters Report 2020*** also addressed this topic.

Linked to the *Children as Partners in Child Protection in COVID-19 Guide*¹⁹, a *lessons learned case study* with the Colombian Red Cross in 2021 found that children were actively engaged in programme design when tools were well adapted for their participation.

All of this research has sharpened IFRC's focus on developing its specialisation on child protection, in particular through ensuring integration of child protection minimum standards throughout the emergency response. Based on the research findings identifying the need for greater collaboration with governments, a partnership between IFRC, the Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR), the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and UNICEF was formed in 2019 and initiated a global project to support national and sub-national systems of government in coordinating preparedness and response for child protection in emergencies (see section 6.2 on page 33).

3.3.2. Child protection tools and training

The research projects on child protection in migration and specifically on child friendly spaces in 2017 (see above) led to the development in 2018 of a collaboration between IFRC PGI and MHPSS teams with World Vision to develop the *Toolkit for Child-Friendly Spaces in Humanitarian Settings*. The toolkit provides a set of materials and training resources to ensure an effective and protective child-centred approach to the widespread implementation of safe spaces for children by National Societies. The toolkit provides specific guidance to complement the **MHPSS tools focused on Children** developed by the IFRC Psychosocial centre, including *psychological first aid for children* and a *children's resilience programme*.

2019 saw the launch of IFRC co-led interagency **Massive Open Online Course on Caring for Children Moving Alone** – a 6-week course available in four languages. The course to date has been completed by 27,0000 people.

In 2021 the *Technical Guidelines for National Society Actions against Child Marriage* was launched, based on the learning from the Child Marriage case studies mentioned above.

A number of tools were developed in 2020 to address the protection needs of children during the Covid-19 Pandemic. A set of *Child-Friendly activity cards* based on the CFS toolkit was developed to promote children's psychosocial well-being during the lockdowns of the Covid Pandemic.

The collaborative guidance *Children as Partners in Child Protection in COVID-19 Guide* demonstrates how to adapt and develop tools to reach out to children and accordingly adapt programs and services to their expressed needs. This practical guidance was supported by an advocacy tool *The Messages for Governments: Coordinating the Protection of Children during the Covid19 Response*, to be used in advocacy, guidance or training.

An online course was developed to support awareness raising among IFRC personnel about the 2013 *Child Protection Policy*. When the new Child Safeguarding Policy was launched in 2021 (see above),

19 Authored by IICRD, CPC Learning Network, Child Protection Area of Responsibility, UNICEF and IFRC, 2020

it was accompanied by a series of supporting documents to assist National Societies to develop and implement their policies, including the *Child Safeguarding Risk Analysis* which is a requirement for all IFRC programmes.

3.4. Disability inclusion

The IFRC and Movement efforts in disability inclusion has been based on the implementation of the *Strategic Framework for disability inclusion*, adopted by the Council of Delegates in 2015. The **final report** to the Council of Delegates in 2019 found that only 46% of the 24 National Societies who responded to a survey knew or had used the Strategic Framework.

National Societies were found to have a broad range of disability-focused programming, some of which had a more medical focus, while others focused on inclusion. The recommendation of the framework to partner with disabled-persons organisations was implemented by 75% of respondents.

Advocacy and external collaboration have been prominent with a strong focus on inter-agency collaboration, including with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)²⁰, the shelter cluster, the Age and Disability Capacity Programme (ADCAP) consortium, Humanity and Inclusion and the Special Olympics. Further information on these collaborations is given under *Disability Inclusion in the section on external collaboration* on page 33.

Advocacy efforts included the adoption of the *Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities* at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and a dedicated chapter in IFRC’s *World Disasters Report 2018* on the extent to which older people and persons with disabilities are excluded from humanitarian assistance. The statutory meetings in 2019 opened with a powerful testimony on disability inclusion and saw several events held around disability inclusion topics. It was also an opportunity to ensure that the statutory events themselves were inclusive and accessible.



Senegalese Red Cross and Special Olympics Senegal at the end of a joint first aid training event. © IFRC

20 Which led to the development of the *Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action*

Some National Societies have very extensive and world-leading disability-inclusion programming – such as **Palestinian Red Crescent**. However, the overall picture in 2019 was disability-inclusive programming still needed to greatly increase. A review of Covid-19 plans in 2020 showed that many National Societies were targeting person with disabilities in their response, but not always in an inclusive way. In terms of disability-inclusive institutions, in 2019, neither IFRC nor ICRC, and only a few National Societies reported having made adjustments to their HR processes to support the recruitment of persons with disabilities.

3.4.1. Tools and training

The focus on mainstreaming disability inclusion has been in collaboration on inter-agency tools (see **external collaboration** on page 33).

Since 2016, a key focus of technical support has been developing guidance, training, and systems to improve disability-disaggregated data in National Society and IFRC programmes. Guidance and training were developed, specifically to support NS to adopt and use the Washington Group²¹ questions, in collaboration with PMER staff. A dedicated chapter in the IFRC report **Everyone Counts 2019** outlines the developments. The most recent figures on sex, age, and disability disaggregation is given in *Chart 13* on page 28. The overall guidance and training on Sex Age Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) is embedded into all core PGI tools and training as described above.

In 2015, the guide **All Under One Roof: Disability-inclusive shelter and settlements in emergencies** was developed. The practical actions in this guide have been implemented widely in IFRC emergency operations, supported by a training package. The guide has been influential and in 2021 is being revised in collaboration with the Shelter Cluster for wider use in the humanitarian sector.

Disability-inclusive considerations have also been well-integrated into many aspects of WASH work, leading the development of broader PGI integration to consider gender and other diversity factors also. Examples can be found throughout the regional implementation section, such as the **innovative disability-inclusive latrines in Lebanon**. The **guidance note on PGI and WASH** revised in 2021 incorporates the core advice on disability inclusion gained from **assessments** in emergency and other contexts.

An introductory training was developed, along with “sensitisation” training that links National Societies with local organisations of persons with disabilities, however, further human and financial resources are required to implement it more broadly.

3.5. Trafficking in Persons

Many National Societies have long-standing programmes supporting people who have experienced or are at risk of trafficking. Activities range from case management and other direct assistance and protection (e.g., Croatia), to public awareness-raising campaigns (e.g., in Montenegro) to humanitarian diplomacy aimed at influencing government policy and practice (e.g. Australia and Britain).

To strengthen and promote this work, in 2015, 17 National Societies signed a **pledge** to jointly respond to trafficking in Europe. In 2016, the IFRC, in collaboration with the European Red Cross Action for Trafficked Persons Network (ATN) published the **Guidance for European Red Cross National Societies on Assistance and Protection to Victims of Human Trafficking**, consolidating

21 A set of standardised questions on Disability inclusion

experience and providing practical guidance on actions that National Societies can take. The **Asia Pacific Migration Network** has a working group on labour migration and trafficking, and in 2018 spearheaded the **Bangkok Call for Action on Labour migration**, including provisions on trafficking, with support from IFRC.

A Training of Trainers based on the European guidance note was developed in 2017, piloted in Turkey with support from Turkish Red Crescent and then adapted to different contexts within Europe and elsewhere. Good practices to address risks of trafficking were incorporated in the migration programmes in Sahel countries, in particular through the “**action for migrants: route-based assistance**” supported by IFRC and British Red Cross. Increased risks of trafficking during the Covid-19 pandemic were addressed through a **fact sheet** and **technical guidance**, supporting key actions being implemented worldwide.

In 2020, the experience and lessons learned over the past five years were consolidated into the introductory e-training called “**Understanding and Responding to Trafficking in Persons**”. Developed by British and Australian Red Cross with IFRC, this training provides guidance for frontline and non-frontline staff and volunteers to be able to prevent and respond to this protection concern.

4. Programmes and operations

All the policies and strategies, research and training and tools on PGI have one common primary aim – to improve programming on the ground for National Societies to reach people affected by violence, discrimination, and exclusion.

Over the past five years, the policy and strategy developments described above have both driven and been influenced by programming. Lessons learned, especially in emergency contexts, have influenced the development of the latest policies and strategies, including the *2021 PGI Policy and Operational Framework*.

The overview of progress of the integration of PGI into emergency operations and annual programmes can be seen through two sets of data: the recorded level of integration into the annual and emergency plans, and through the number of people reached by National Societies – and the number of people reached by IFRC emergency operations.

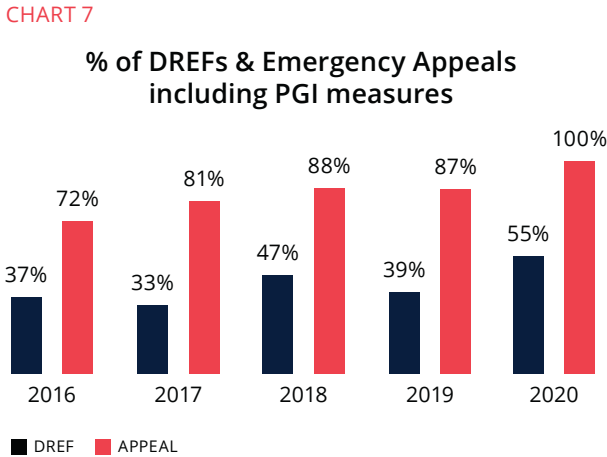
4.1. Emergency Operations

Chart 7 gives the top-level summary of the progress of PGI mainstreaming in the Emergency Plans of Action (EPOA) for both emergency appeals and DREFs²².

Steady progress can be seen over the years, although the levels of integration of DREF always remain significantly lower than the better-resourced Emergency Appeals. Part of the reason for this is the dedication of more IFRC resources focused on PGI in Emergency Appeals than in the smaller-scale emergencies supported by DREF – including surge deployments (see *section 6.1*) which in support of Emergency Appeal operations.

22 This analysis looked at inclusion of any elements of PGI work – whether labelled “PGI” or not

Nonetheless, in both cases, we see a steady improvement in inclusion of PGI themes and PGI section in Emergency Appeals after 2018, following the introduction of PGI as a dedicated area of focus in 2017. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, after the publication of the revised PGI minimum standards, toolkit and the related trainings, the percentage of appeals incorporating PGI gradually increased to 100%. This demonstrates the rapid adoption of the new Area of Focus in emergency operations, supported by the tools and trainings mentioned above. Based on this, from 2021 the tracking of PGI mainstreaming in EPOAs has been done through a more qualitative approach, based on the PGI “Checklist and Marker”. For the first half of 2021, 56% of DREFs and 91% of Appeals had PGI elements included that scored “good” or “sufficient”.



In parallel with the increased inclusion of PGI mainstreaming, integration of measures to address specific themes, such as Child Protection issues and SGBV has also increased. *Chart 8* and *Chart 9* below demonstrate this increase in these two priority themes. Other thematic focus areas have also increased, such as disability inclusion, trafficking in human beings, albeit to a lesser extent.

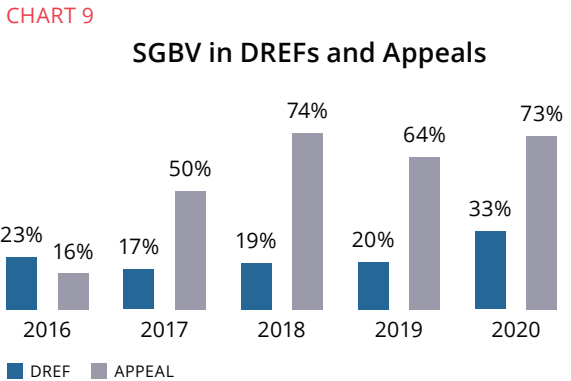
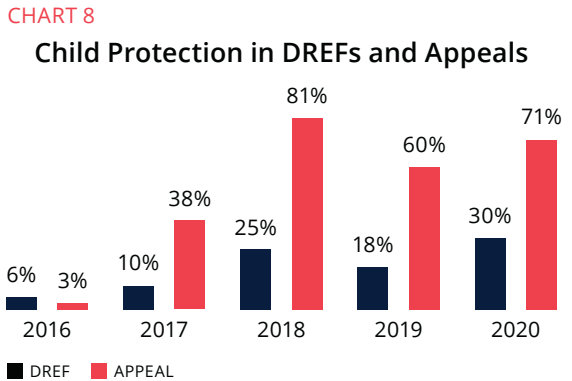


Chart 10 (on the following page) demonstrates a slightly different picture when looking at the final reports on EPOAs with a dedicated section on PGI. There is noticeably more integration in DREF reports and significantly less in Appeal reports, resulting in more consistency between Appeal and DREF reports than in the planning phase.²³ It also indicates that when EPOAs include PGI, but no dedicated role or budget is allocated, this has a significant impact on the ability of the operation to incorporate such actions and/or report on them.

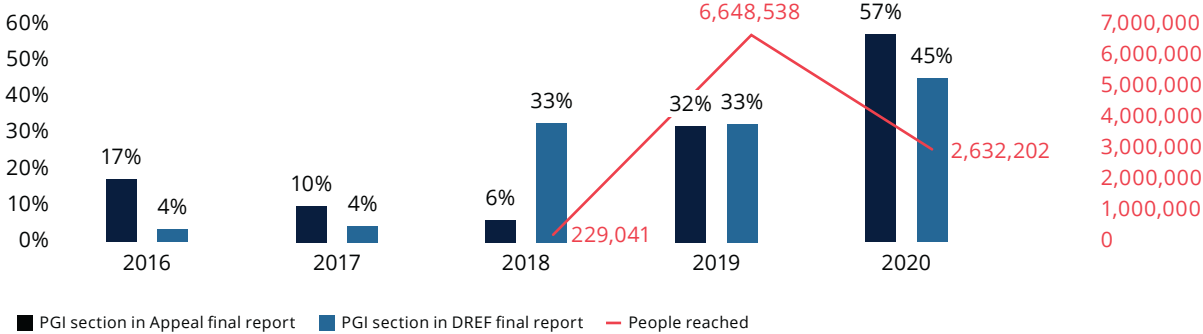
The planning tools in the PGI in Emergencies Toolkit provide clear guidance on the step-by-step process to incorporate PGI issues into EPOAs, and the accompanying training courses support specialised IFRC PGI staff and all sector staff in developing or furthering the relevant core competencies in PGI that they are required to have. In addition, to address this gap sustainably, training and orientation for National

²³ There are two caveats – this analysis looks at a dedicated section in the report (rather than integration throughout), and the year of the report relates to an operation which may have started 1-2 years previously.

Societies worldwide in PGI competencies should increase, as well as ensuring that actions which are supportive of a PGI approach are included, recognised as such, and budgeted for.

CHART 10

Percentage of DREF & Appeal Final reports with PGI section- & numbers of people reached

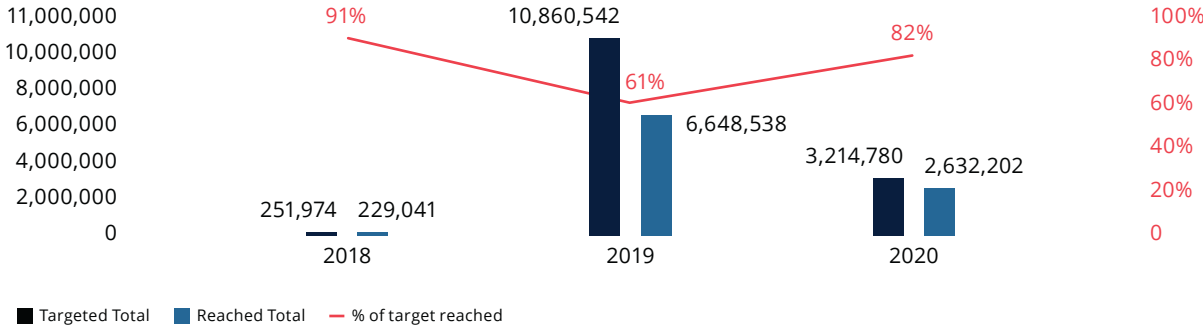


The number of “people reached” refers only to those people directly reached by dedicated PGI programmes – it does not cover the more extensive numbers of people reached by other sectoral programmes where PGI has been integrated.

Chart 11 shows another aspect of the achievements of PGI in emergencies in recent years – the extent to which the targets amount of people reached are actually being reached. Benchmarking against other areas of focus, the process to assess and prioritise support within PGI is shown to be quite accurate.

CHART 11

People targeted and reached by DREFs and Appeals 2018 –2020



A meta-review of the lessons learned from DREF operations from 2018-2021 found a few common points of good practice that were supportive of successful integration of PGI. These included:

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that integrate PGI are essential during emergency and as preparedness for response.
- Using the PGI Minimum Standard in Emergencies guides sectors in more specific assessment and analysis. Collecting and using sex, age and disability disaggregated data is increasing, however there are often gaps, and assessment don’t always include factors related to vulnerability.
- Collaboration between PGI and sector focal points ensures better protection of vulnerable individuals, this identification needs to be an ongoing process before and during response.
- Establish confidential multi-sectorial referrals of survivors and internal codes of conducts and escalation processes for cases of concern.

- Maintain a roster of trained PGI volunteers and ensure refresher trainings in relevant PGI themes.
- All responders need to have some knowledge in PGI to ensure operations uphold principles of dignity, access, participation and safety.
- Specific monitoring and guidance tools were useful, including guidance on protection monitoring and the “pocket” PGI/protection field guide.

4.1.1. Surge optimisation process

One significant element in the evolution of PGI as a core area in IFRC emergency operations was the “**Surge Optimization Process**”, which ran from 2017-2020. Based on a wide-ranging review of all IFRC emergency response mechanisms, there was acknowledgement the gap and pressing need to have PGI issues incorporated much more prominently in all IFRC emergency response mechanisms.

A significant milestone achieved during this process was that at the start, PGI was considered as only “cross-cutting issue” influencing other sectors – by the end of the process it was established as an Area of Focus in its own right (both mainstreamed and specialised/standalone).

The process led to the development of the PGI “**Core Competencies**” for all surge staff, as a core way to implement the minimum standards for PGI (mentioned above). In addition, key improvements established by the end of the optimisation process included the establishment of a PGI pool of experts integrated into Surge Roster. PGI was also incorporated as a key component in all surge trainings and all sectors surge learning pathways including PGI.

Those field-informed core competencies were also then used as the basis for structuring the revised PGI core and specialised trainings in 2021 (see PGI mainstreaming and capacity building section 3.1 above).

4.2. Operational examples

The surge optimization process greatly facilitated better integration of PGI work into IFRC’s emergency response. There are many examples (constantly increasing) of operations where this has been done well – two of the most prominent in the past five-year period are used here as illustrations.

4.2.1. Bangladesh population movement operation

This operation began in January 2017, and was an early example of prioritising PGI as a central pillar in the operation. The nature of this crisis, with over 900,000 people fleeing Rakhine state in Myanmar to Cox’s Bazaar and in Bangladesh due to extreme protection risks, made evident the need for this prioritisation.

Multiple delegates were deployed to the operation for this purpose, supported the development of the PGI response with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), as well as in close collaboration with other National Societies (Canadian RC, Danish RC, Swedish RC, Swiss RC and Turkish RC). Activities included awareness-raising on protection



Bangladeshi Red Crescent staff planning the operation to support thousands of migrants in Cox’s Bazaar, Bangladesh.

PGI assessments were integrated through all sectors of the operation, and dedicated community centres called “dignity, access, participation and safety” (DAPS) centres were set up for specialised PGI work. © Mirva Helenius / IFRC

issues, provision of dignity kits and solar lighting, training of female volunteers, establishing internal protection mechanisms and ensuring sex, age and disability disaggregated data was collected by all sectors.

PGI- focused community centres were established in three of the camps – focused on Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety and facilitated a range of activities (hence initially called DAPS centres). An evaluation by Swedish Red Cross in 2019 found that the overall response had been relevant and appropriate and had changed lives in a meaningful and positive way. PGI was well integrated into WASH: between 2017 and 2019; 27,870 dignity kits and MHM kits were distributed and 121,500 people reached with SGBV awareness-raising. Overall, 1,342 of BDRCs' staff and volunteers were trained in PGI.

The 2019 evaluation (and management response) also found that although the main PGI activities were well integrated, mainstreaming into the other sectors still needed further emphasis – demonstrating that it takes time, experience, and sufficient human resources to fully integrate. In addition, not all the recommendations on sufficient PGI staffing were implemented, which hampered the full integration and establishment of consistent specialised protection services.

Further information is available in the [Bangladesh: Population Movement Three-Year Federation-Wide Report](#)

4.2.2. Tropical Cyclone Idai in Mozambique



April 2021, Mozambique one year after Idai. In a school in Beira, Mozambique, IFRC staff with Mozambique Red Cross staff are teaching children about the menstrual cycle as part of an overall orientation on protection, gender and inclusion issues that affect boys and girls. © Anette Selmer-Andresen / IFRC

This was one of the first operations to implement the recommendations of the Surge Optimisation process for stronger and more consistent integration of PGI in IFRC emergency response, as [described in this summary](#). This operation incorporated one of the most significant PGI programmes in an IFRC emergency response, emblematic of the increased prominence of PGI in the organization. The programme incorporated mainstreaming of PGI, specialised standalone projects focused on SGBV and on Child Protection, including policy development and programme implementation – closely integrated with MHPSS activities. There was also very strong collaboration with the WASH team on providing protective and inclusive services. During the first year of the operation, the PGI support was well-resourced with a number of dedicated local staff in different regions.

By March 2021; 127,520 people had been reached with support services; 1,712 staff and volunteers had been trained; 32,038 further people had been reached with awareness raising about PGI issues; and 22,453 reached through MHM awareness sessions. In March 2021, a Learning Forum was held on Lessons Learned from the PGI work in this operation (available on [video](#) or [audio](#)). More information is available in the ongoing [operations updates](#).

4.2.3. IFRC PGI response to Covid-19

The impacts of the pandemic, show that people are being pushed into vulnerable situations, exacerbating existing inequalities and risks, and creating new situations of vulnerability affecting people's dignity, access, safety, and participation to maintain their current livelihoods. As the pandemic changes in scale and as vaccination becomes a reality, massive efforts are required to ensure that no-one is being left behind by community, local, national, and international response and ensuring those in vulnerable situations are visible within priorities to address the pandemic.

The IFRC has supported National Societies through the global coordination of a strategic approach to PGI identifying and addressing these increased risks, establishing a four-pillar approach to its response, focused on mainstreaming PGI in all programmes, addressing violence, addressing discrimination, and addressing education-related needs.

Since the start of the Pandemic, 4,246,305 people were reached through exclusion-related programmes, 2,685,174 people were reached through violence related programmes, through the programmes of 127 National Societies conducting activities related supporting inclusion of marginalised groups. In those National Societies, 1,235 branches include an analysis of the specific needs of marginalized groups in their assessments.

This work of National Societies was supported through guidance documents, webinars and multiple online training sessions for professionals working in the Movement. The support covered themes from the integration of PGI into Covid response (key messages and detailed technical guidance) to child protection, SGBV, disability inclusion, working with older people, trafficking in persons, child friendly messaging and child participation. Specific guidance and training have been provided on how to ensure an inclusive and accessible vaccine rollout in collaboration with Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and identify potential barriers to vaccines acceptance and how to address them to ensure access for marginalised people. In a survey, 86% of responding National Societies indicated that they are using one or more guidelines.

SGBV was one of the major issues worldwide, described as a “**shadow pandemic**”. To support National Societies to adopt or adapt SGBV interventions to the Covid-19 pandemic, a technical guidance note was developed, supported by regional webinars (in English, French, and Spanish) where several National Societies presented examples of how they adapted their SGBV interventions. The risk of violence against children during Covid-19 was widely reported around the world. To protect children from violence, the IFRC supported the National Societies of Ecuador, Egypt, Gambia, and Nepal to implement projects aimed at protecting children in labour and those connected to the streets.

Opportunities for peer exchange and learning have strengthened National Societies ability to localize best practices from different contexts. Lessons learned have been gathered in the form of case studies and will be disseminated to contribute to a better understanding of how PGI, when embedded within NS operations, can support engagement of people before, during



December 2020. Croatian Red Cross personnel distribute protective equipment to older persons more vulnerable to COVID-19 infection. © Croatian Red Cross

and after disasters. All PGI guidance notes and other related resources on Covid-19 are available on the [PGI section of the Covid-19 Compendium on the Prepare Center](#) website.

4.3. IFRC Annual Plans in support to National Societies

These figures are based on the dual focus of inclusive programming that was established under the Social Inclusion (and later PGI) area of focus: those programmes which aim to ensure equitable access during times of emergencies and those which aim for a more transformational change in social inclusion and change in the status of excluded people.

Chart 12 shows the steady pace of both aspects of inclusive programming in the annual plans of IFRC offices (supporting around 90 National Societies per year) reflecting the core work of inclusive programming for many National Societies.

Two of the highest priority areas that were established for specific long-term programming support by IFRC for NS long-term programming were Child Protection and SGBV – reflecting the priorities of National Societies in their annual plans (see below) and also reflecting areas where National Societies had requested IFRC to provide guidance and technical support through statutory and other consultation processes (see above), and the priorities of National Societies as reflected in the surveys conducted through the Protection in the Movement process.

Many examples of the types of SGBV, Child Protection and other PGI long-term programmes are included in the section “implementation at regional and country level” on page 34.

CHART 12

Inclusive programming focus in IFRC annual plans

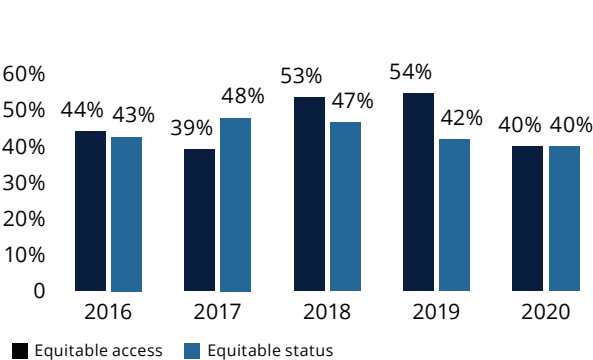
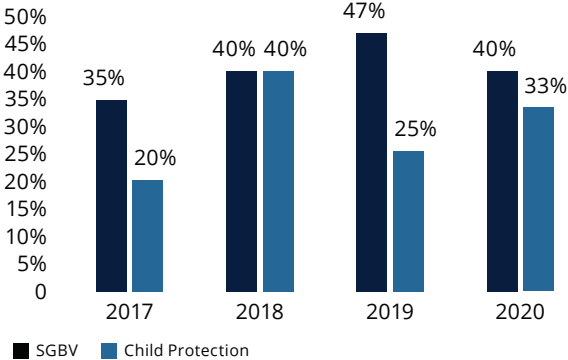


CHART 13

SGBV and Child Protection in IFRC annual plans



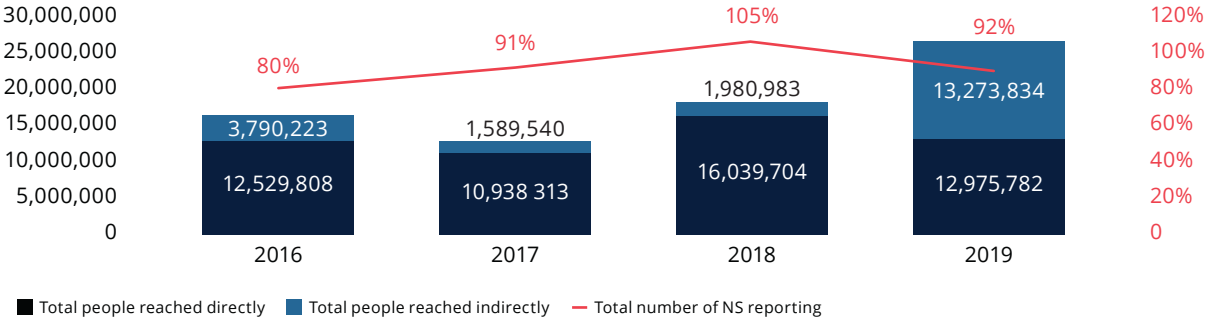
4.4. People reached Federation-wide by PGI actions

The support of the IFRC to all National Societies in the area of protection, gender, and inclusion is reflected most broadly in the numbers of people reached as recorded in the IFRC’s “Federation-wide databank and reporting system (FDRS)”. The support work described above in the programmes and operation section is a direct support to the programming reflected in these figures, whereas the total numbers reflect the overall strength of the IFRC network in this area.

FDRS has been tracking the number of people reached by PGI work²⁴. The number of National Societies reporting on how many people they reach with PGI has steadily increased over the past five years (from 80 to 105) and the number of people reported as reached. *Chart 14* reflects the number of people reached “directly” and “indirectly” by PGI programming²⁵ – an increase from 2016 to 2019.

CHART 14

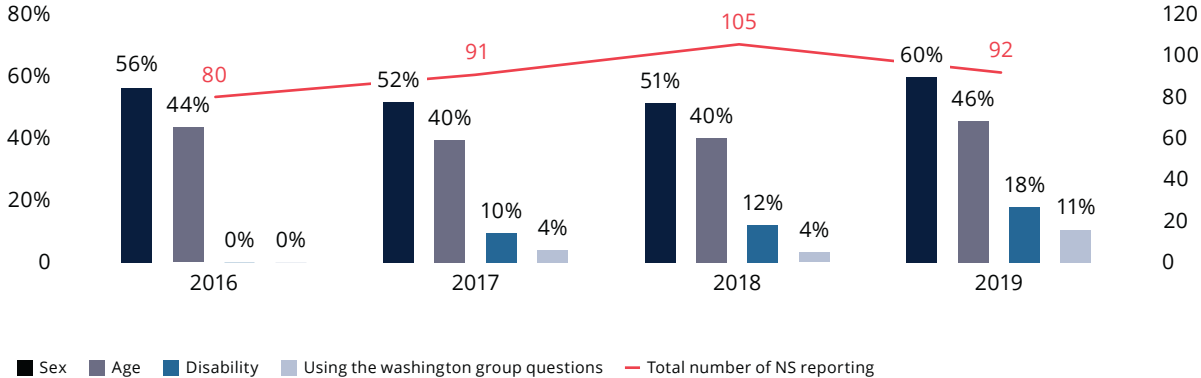
Number of people reached directly / indirectly - and number of NS reporting



PGI staff have worked closely over the past five years with the FDRS staff to develop and promote improved disaggregation of data by sex, age, and disability. *Chart 15* below shows the progression of the disaggregation of the PGI people-reached data.

CHART 15

Levels of disaggregation of PGI data in FDRS



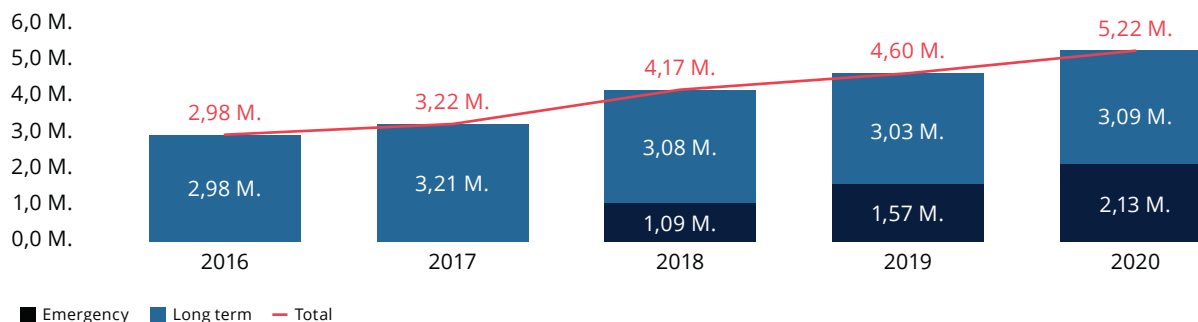
4.5. Expenditure

Chart 16 illustrates the growth of PGI as a strategic priority for the organisation through the lens of expenditure. The increased expenditure correlates with the overall net increase in people reached worldwide through PGI work in National Societies (see *Chart 14*), the steady implementation in annual plans (*Chart 12*) and the increased PGI integration in DREFs and Appeals (*Charts 7, 8, 9*) and increased staffing and deployment and related structures and systems (*Chart 17* and *Chart 18*).

24 As described above, the two areas of focus “social inclusion” and “a culture of non-violence and peace” were combined in 2017 as the basis for PGI.
 25 Note that the high number of “indirect” people reached in 2019 is due to one National Society reaching 10 million people with a PGI-related campaign.

CHART 16

PGI (and education) expenditure 2016-2020 (in Millions CHF)



5. Staffing and networks

5.1.1. Staff positions



Saida Marzia, has been working as Senior PGI Officer IFRC Population Movement Operation, Cox's Bazar since March 2018. Her responsibilities include PGI mainstreaming and planning, implementation and monitoring of PGI focused activities. She also supported a safer workplace and gender sensitive approach in field and office, as well as being the PSEA Focal person for IFRC PMO Office.
© Ibrahim Mollik / IFRC

Qualified and motivated staff and volunteers in IFRC and in National Societies are at the heart of our progress and development in the PGI area.

In 2016, the *Inclusion, Protection and Engagement* unit was created in Geneva, consolidating previous positions related to PGI themes. The PGI staff in the unit were a small team leading the development of the original tools, trainings, and policies.

In 2016 there were already some regional positions focused on Gender and Diversity and Social Inclusion in the regions, but with varying responsibilities, and no clear technical reporting lines. Having this team of dedicated technical specialists in both global and regional positions was crucial to the development of the vision, strategy and implementation of the PGI approach.

The development of more standardised PGI regional roles and the support to establish further positions in the regional office and sub-regional offices was a priority. *Chart 17 (above)* shows how this priority has translated to a steady increase in PGI staffing in IFRC offices

worldwide – this increase in dedicated and qualified staff has been absolutely crucial in IFRC's ability to implement PGI programming worldwide. Securing funding for regional, sub-regional, (country cluster) and country positions has been a constant challenge, hampering the effectiveness and impact of the support to National Societies.

CHART 17

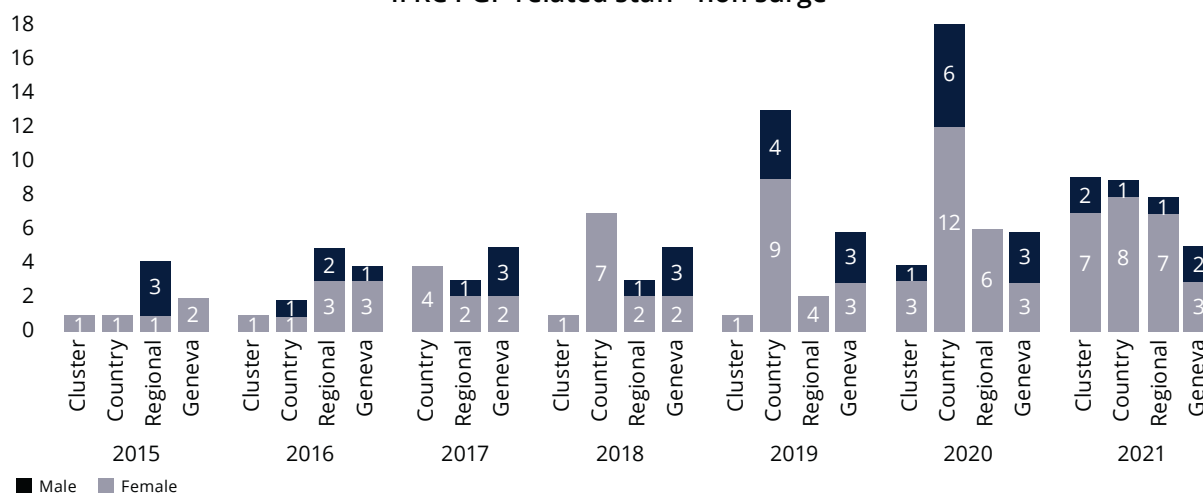
IFRC PGI-related staff - non-surge deployments



Chart 18 below demonstrates that the emphasis has been placed on country-level and sub-regional (“country cluster”) positions, ensuring that IFRC support is as close to the country level as possible. The regional and global positions also play a vital role in coordinating consistent efforts across the regions.

CHART 18

IFRC PGI -related staff - non surge



5.1.2. Surge deployments

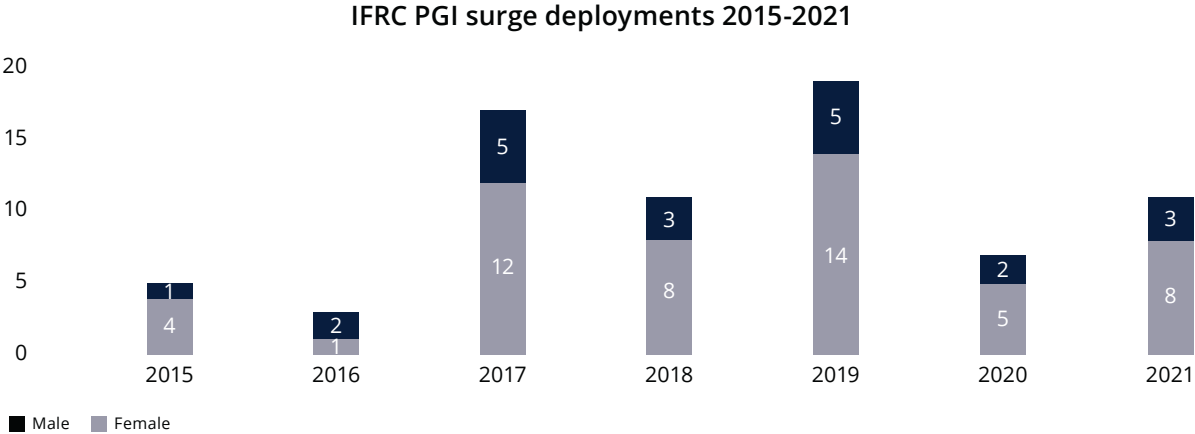
The integration of PGI as an approach and an area of focus in all IFRC emergency operations is reflected in the overall increase in PGI surge deployments shown in *Chart 19*.

Note that the overall number of deployments is dependent on disasters and other context (e.g., in 2020, Covid-19 prevented many deployments).

The establishment of the standard role profiles for PGI specialised staff (through the surge optimisation process described above on *page 14*) greatly facilitated the increased deployment of qualified staff. The PGI “**Core Competencies**” that were developed as part of the same process has also led to other sectoral staff having increased awareness and ability to support the mainstreaming of core PGI concerns.

All the charts in this section demonstrate that the gender balance tends to be predominantly female, the consideration to have a more gender-balanced pool of PGI staff has been addressed in recent recruitment processes. Clear data is not available on other aspects of the diversity of PGI staff, such as skin colour, disability, or age. Nonetheless, on all of these aspects it is clear that currently there are improvements that need to be made to increase the diversity of staff working within PGI.

CHART 19



6. Movement and external collaboration

6.1. Collaboration within the Movement

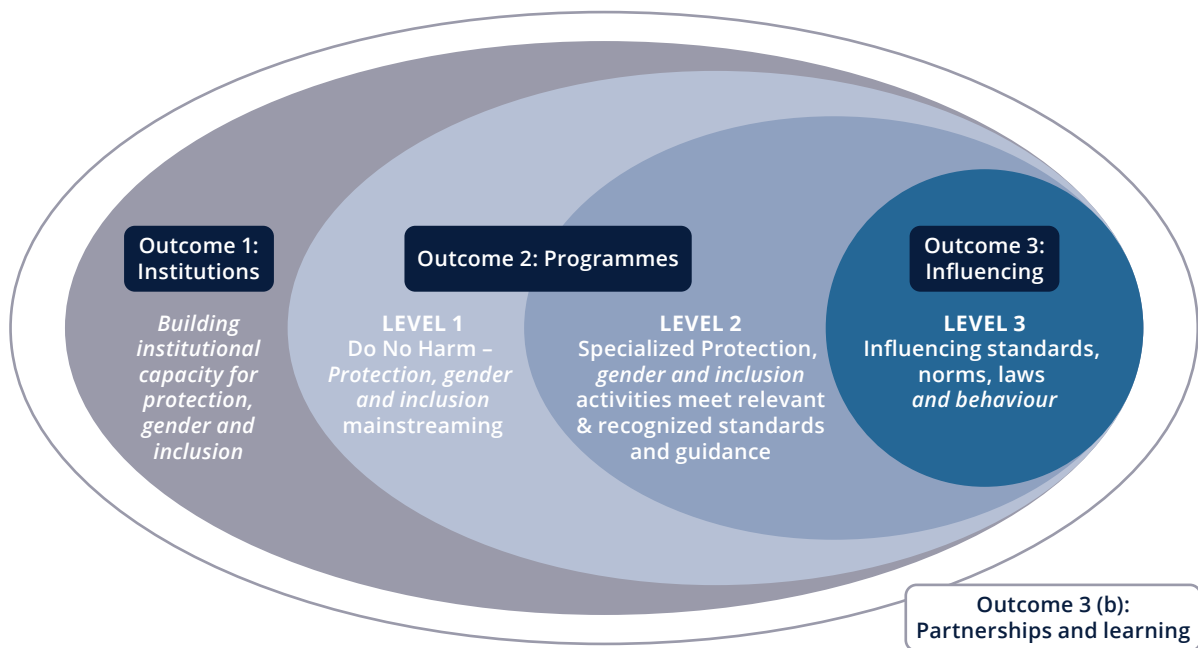
The most significant collaboration over the past five years has been the Protection in the Movement initiative, launched in 2016 in response to National Societies’ increasingly prominent role and expertise in this area.

The project is guided by an Advisory Board²⁶, and aims to establish a common understanding of what the Movement considers as protection work and establish greater coherence and complementarity of actions. The project has led to the establishment of a **Protection Framework for the Movement** and a common **“Minimum Protection Approach”**. The project will be discussed at a workshop at the Council of Delegates in 2022.

The Framework sets out three levels of protective action that are common across the Movement, providing a context where all components of the Movement can demonstrate the ways in which they engage in protection work. Those levels of protective action are also aligned with the priority objectives of the forthcoming PGI operational framework – as shown in the illustration above.

The surveys conducted through this project validated the other sources of information on National Societies priorities that led to IFRC support on specific themes (see section 2.1 *Assessment and analysis of National Societies’ focus and priorities* on page 10). Through direct and coordinated support to National Societies, and through regular webinars, online coaching and engagement in statutory meetings, integration in many ICRC, IFRC and NS workshops, this project has furthered the understanding and implementation of PGI within a Movement collaborative context.

26 Co-chaired by ICRC and IFRC, with board members from the National Societies of Australia, Belize, Nigeria, Lebanon, South Sudan, Sweden, Norway and Turkey.



6.2. External collaboration

Ensuring stronger involvement with specialised inter-agency groups has been ensured over the past years. Significant collaborations include joining the Call to Action on Gender-Based Violence and participation in various sub-groups of the Global Protection Cluster: the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR), the Child Protection AoR, the Housing, Land and Property Rights AoR, and the Anti-Trafficking Task Team. IFRC also engaged in the annual Global Protection Cluster forum. IFRC has also been contributing to relevant IASC working groups, including the current working group on reviewing the influential IASC policy on protection in humanitarian action.

In 2019, a partnership between IFRC, the Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR), the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and UNICEF initiated a global project to support national and sub-national systems of government in coordinating preparedness and response for child protection in emergencies.

The project seeks to ensure that governments increase their national capacity to implement and coordinate evidence-based strategies and interventions for the prevention of, and response to violence against children in emergencies. Support is provided to ensure the participation of children in preparedness planning, coordinate interagency preparedness and response, and strengthening implementation of minimum standards, effective leadership, and coordination of the child protection sector.

IFRC also joined as Steering Group members the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Response, to contribute to the collective decision-making, promote and benefit from the tools, coordinate with other members and input tools and resources.

In the area of Disability Inclusion, IFRC was actively involved in several inter-agency initiatives, starting with participation in the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and its **Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action**. Linked to that process, it collaborated on the development of the **Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities** developed by the **Age and Disability Capacity Programme (ADCAP)** in 2018.

In 2018-2019, IFRC collaborated with the IASC **Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action** and took a leading role in the development of the **Guidelines for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action** and the related **case studies**. Linked to IFRC's lead of the Shelter Cluster, there was close involvement in the Working Group on disability inclusion for the Shelter Cluster working on a **baseline mapping of disability inclusion in shelter** and eventually led to the revision of the IFRC guidance "*all under one roof*", to be used more widely by all humanitarian actors endorsed by the shelter cluster (to be published in 2021).

IFRC also established a partnership with the Special Olympics (SO) in 2013, and has continued to partner with them on advancing the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities, linking SO athletes with first aid volunteers and supporting advocacy by persons with intellectual disabilities. In 2019, National Societies have conducted 14 first aid training events in 11 countries, resulting in 292 individuals with intellectual disabilities and 156 young people without disabilities being trained.

7. Implementation at regional and country level

7.1. Asia Pacific

The Asia Pacific region has had a strong focus on PGI since 2015, one of the first regions to have both a regional coordinator and focal points at sub-region ("country cluster") level and at country level – South-East Asia, East Asia, the Pacific as well as Afghanistan and Bangladesh have all had dedicated PGI staff. The Asia Pacific regional PGI network (originally called the gender and diversity network) was active since 2015 and included a focus on establishing focal points in the NS and on training. Sub-regional networks were also established (in Pacific, South Asia, and South-East Asia). Strong support was provided to all emergency operations – for example in 2018 alone specific support was provided to the Philippines volcanic eruption, Bangladesh Population Movement Operation, Lao PDR dam collapse and the Lombok earthquake in Indonesia, each with a dedicated support on SGBV. The support to PGI work in the Bangladesh Population Movement Operation was particularly significant (see page 15).

PGI approaches were integrated into other sectors, with particular focus in this region on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and on Community-Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) Violence Prevention Programme. Work to improve disaggregation of data by sex, age and disability was also piloted in this region. As mentioned above (under **SGBV research**), there has been a significant emphasis in this region on research and advocacy, particularly linked with SGBV and with disaster law. Advocacy initiatives also included collaboration with Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and participation in events such as the LGBTIQ regional forum in Bangkok and Global Protection Cluster Meeting. In South-East Asia, a Regional Resilience initiative started in 2015 integrated strong PGI (then



Kathmandu, Nepal - May 14, 2015: Sophie Sumwar, a make up artist touches up her face at the camp where the transgender, gay community is located, supported by Nepal Red Cross and IFRC. © Paula Bronstein for IFRC Red Cross

called gender & diversity) elements into a range of activities to strengthen community safety and resilience through regional learning, sharing and collaboration which are documented in the [regional resilience library](#). This initiative also led to the [SGBV research](#) and [gender & diversity sensitive assessments](#) being conducted in the region.

Strong attention has been paid to SGBV prevention and response in the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for National Societies, with Philippines Red Cross leading the way on stronger coordination with government actors for greater prevention and response activities. Initiatives across key areas of work, such as Youth, Migration, and Livelihoods, as recommended in the published research, has also strengthened the SGBV prevention and response work in Asia Pacific.

Asia Pacific was also a pioneer in developing a focused approach on protection and inclusion of LGBTIQ individuals and communities in humanitarian work – through research, videos and training materials first developed in this region and then made available globally. These materials were based on the strong work by National Societies in the region, including the engagement of Tonga and Fiji Red Cross with youth brigades and LGBTIQ networks and engagement with the LGBTIQ networks in the pacific, and transgender-specific health clinics in Thailand, Viet Nam, Bangladesh and Philippines. Pakistan Red Crescent has a number of programmes and advocacy initiatives to support and promotion inclusion of LGBTIQ and trans communities (for example in [engagement with the transgender community for COVID-19 protection](#)).

Disability inclusion was also a focus for some National Societies, including Nepal which developed three case studies; disability inclusion in the **earthquake response**, inclusion of **women with disabilities** and **institutionalisation of disability inclusion** in the National Society. Collaborations in Nepal with both LGBTIQ and disability groups demonstrated the importance of collaborating with Civil Society Organisations.

Child protection was addressed through policy development with many National Societies in the Region adopting their own Child Protection Policies. National Societies have implemented safe spaces for children in disasters, supported migrant children, and worked against child marriage and to protect children connected to the streets.

This programmatic, advocacy, and research work was also facilitated by supporting institutional processes related to PGI issues, including PGI organisational assessments in the IFRC Asia Pacific Regional office and in some National Societies, as well as a focus on promoting women in leadership. The Fund for Women's Economic Empowerment in Asia-Pacific was set up in 2019 and has continued to strengthen the economic and financial inclusion of women throughout the region. This work is closely aligned with the IFRCs support in livelihoods and basic needs.

Nepal Red Cross: PGI in the Earthquake operation 2015-2018

One of the first major operations where the minimum standards were piloted was the **Nepal Earthquake response**. This operation was also the first IFRC operation to have a dedicated "PGI" delegate included in the surge response.

During the relief phase, the pilot version of the minimum standards for PGI was applied widely for the first time, improving the reach to marginalized groups. NRCS staff, volunteers and healthcare workers received training in SGBV and child protection to identify risks and learn about the different types of support. NRCS broadcast preventive messaging on child protection and SGBV on local community radio stations, along with dissemination of printed information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on SGBV, child protection and protection of people with disabilities in all programme districts, supporting awareness of relevant referral mechanisms.

Protection, gender, and inclusion issues were also applied to the design and implementation of the recovery activities, to identify individuals and households that were particularly vulnerable so they could be provided with the relevant services. Similarly, referral mechanisms for SGBV cases as well as people with disabilities were put in place, ensuring the confidentiality of reported cases.

The **final external evaluation** of the operation observed many good examples of PGI work, recording positive impacts from people served and noted *"wide-reaching benefits from elevated awareness, understanding and application of best practice, to actually bringing about social changes in communities"*. It also noted that the PGI area was drastically under-staffed and under-budgeted, and more staffing and dedicated budget lines for PGI was essential – a recommendation that remains valid.

7.2. Americas

In this region, there has been a strong focus on dedicated social inclusion initiatives, with the National Societies of Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, Argentina and El Salvador, Colombia and Costa Rica all developing comprehensive social inclusion plans and models. In many cases this has been combined with an equally strong emphasis on building institutional capacity for PGI establishing policies and procedures on policies for Social Inclusion in the community as well as for gender equality and equity in the institution. An equally important focus has been promoting the PGI minimum standards in emergencies within National Societies' operations and those managed by the Americas Regional Office.

Based on the context in the region, which has some of the highest rates of violence (especially urban violence) in the world, National Societies in the region were supported to develop flagship initiatives tackling violence and exclusion. These initiatives, led by National Society staff and volunteers, with support and training from the IFRC, focusing on fostering interaction and dialogue between different groups and ensuring safe spaces for all community members. Specific aspects included Friendly Schools, Friendly Stadiums (using sport as a means to promote inclusion and non-violence) and Friendly Neighbourhoods²⁷ for example in Honduras, Mexico and Venezuela. Other earlier violence prevention initiatives included widespread implementation of the CBHFA module on violence prevention and the better programming initiative (BPI).

After 2017, the minimum standards for PGI in emergencies were also promoted in the region through training and orientation – leading to better integration in the emergency response operations, steadily increasing the amount of emergency response operations with PGI integrated (Nicaragua, Tropical Depression; Guatemala, Floods; Brazil, Floods). During these years, PGI rapid analysis started to be implemented, in Colombia and Ecuador (focused on child protection), in Argentina (focused on GBV and trafficking) and in Colombia (focused on protection broadly for the Darien Gap emergency).

SGBV programming and implementation has been supported, with a focus on strengthening the capacity of the National Societies. Significant initiatives included the Workshop and Regional Forum on SGBV and the development of a study on effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters (Ecuador Earthquake). National Societies supported by IFRC to further their SGBV work in 2018 included El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Perú, in 2019 additional National Societies included Argentina and Trinidad & Tobago. To capture and support the SGBV programming in the region, a dedicated toolkit was developed in 2019, including specific guidance and training on key actions and approaches against SGBV. A unique focus in this toolkit is a manual on how to integrate understanding of masculinities into National Society work to address SGBV.

As in other regions, there have been strong links between PGI and migration – for example the “Monarch Butterfly Programme” to help reduce vulnerability and respond to the needs of migrant people in Colombia, and Central America – also including a focus on addressing PGI issues with emphasis on SGBV and Child Protection. National Societies were also specifically supported to prevent, mitigate, and respond to violence towards children, supported by case studies and assessments, for example, in the Ecuador-Colombia border to raise attention for the plight of migrant children. Many countries in the region addressing migration issues have been supported with training on Children on the Move, with the implementation of Child-Friendly Spaces and with school-based initiatives for migrant children in host communities.

²⁷ Friendly Neighbourhoods is a comprehensive initiative led by the IFRC that seeks to increase neighbourhood interaction, dialogue and participation in those issues that affect each community's way of life.



In Americas, clay animation videos have been used to create public awareness about issues related to PGI, such as protection of migrants, social inclusion of marginalised people, especially during Covid, and the issues of sexual and gender-based violence.

Training National Societies has been a priority, with an increase in virtual training delivery since the Covid-19 pandemic. Themes have included general introductions to PGI, PGI in emergencies and more specific and specialised trainings on supporting children on the move, SGBV, Dignity Kits, PGI and MHPSS, PGI in Migration, PSEA, Minimum Protection approach and Prevention and Response to Trafficking in Persons. The regional response to trafficking has been a key focus in recent years, with many National Societies increasing their initiatives to prevent and respond to trafficking, supported by IFRC, British Red Cross, and Netherlands Red Cross including the development of a region-specific guidance and a toolkit named

"Implementing a safe response to meet the humanitarian needs of trafficked people", and a regional Guide for the creation of safe referral mechanisms for migrants and refugees.

There have been a number of advocacy campaigns, recent examples include an anti-discrimination campaign related to migration, a social inclusion called *"I'll explain it with Clay"* which has videos for Covid-19 and migration, a campaign to prevent domestic violence during Covid-19, and yearly activities linked to the 16 days of activism against SGBV.

Colombian Red Cross: SGBV prevention and response

This project has been running since 2016, with the following elements:

Safety and livelihoods: an emergency fund provided support to women and their children at immediate risk of intimate partner violence to move away from their aggressors. The safe relocation was coordinated with other Red Cross units and support for income-generating activities was provided to support the independence of the survivors.

Health: Survivors were offered survivor-centred, individual and group therapy by a Colombian Red Cross (CRC) professional psychologist and were accompanied through the process of accessing health, justice, and protection services through the referral pathway.

Community prevention, mitigation, and response: The project worked with the CRC Youth on activities in schools. Students were trained in SGBV-related matters, first aid and psychological first aid, and were helped to identify cases of SGBV and guided on how to provide survivors to support. Home visits and prevention workshops were undertaken working with women's and youth organisations from each targeted community focused on risk and protective factors, types of violence and referral pathways.

Institutional Coordination: CRC worked with the relevant state institutions and international actors to **update the SGBV referral pathway**. Communication material was developed regarding the rights of survivors for support and how to access the responsible institutions. Workshops for public officials in those institutions were conducted by CRC staff to ensure knowledge of their specific responsibilities. CRC helped create working groups within the local structures to increase coordination.

7.3. Africa

The PGI work in the Africa region was somewhat limited due to the lack of a dedicated coordinator for most of 2016-2018. The groundwork was laid for PGI work through general Gender and Diversity orientations and trainings provided to 17 National Societies along with support to develop action plans. In 2017, 15 National Societies were supposed to implement violence-prevention programmes, mostly focused on SGBV prevention and response or child protection, reaching a total of 40,000 people.

In 2018, Eastern and Southern Africa were the first contexts where the Child Protection AoR²⁸ and IFRC worked together to enhance local coordination for child protection in emergencies. National Societies across the region have been active in action against child marriage, protecting children connected to the streets, and delivering services like child friendly spaces in disasters.

After dedicated regional support was put in place in 2019, the pace was picked up on all PGI issues. The initial focus was placed on improving PGI integration in emergency response through trainings and orientation within operations. The support to SGBV in the region was strengthened by four annual SGBV forums in collaboration with the Norwegian Red Cross and the ICRC.

From 2019, hands-on technical support was provided to National Societies in the region to integrate PGI mainstreaming in all programs and projects, while also maintaining specific focus on SGBV prevention and response, including PSEA which entailed supporting National Societies to develop



Maphallang Ntsene, Lesotho Red Cross care facilitator shares a smile with Mabosiu Rahkhosi. For 18-year-old Mabosiu, the support from the Red Cross has been her lifeline, providing her school uniform, health care and school fees, regular counselling and psychosocial support so that she can become a nurse. © IFRC

28 Area of Responsibility within the Global Protection Cluster

their PSEA policies. A meeting of the Global Gender and Diversity Network (now PGI network) boosted the membership for National Societies across the African continent and was the impetus for a pilot training on disability inclusion. Advocacy was also a focus at high profile events such as the fifth Commonwealth Conference on International Humanitarian Law.

During 2020 and 2021, the IFRC PGI team in Africa grew and was able to support a wide range of activities in the region, including piloting of disability inclusion advocacy training and training around disability data collection. Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities has been an important focus for many National Societies in the region, with joint trainings organised with disabled persons organisations in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, and Gambia, training Red Cross volunteers in how to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities during humanitarian responses.

The Africa PGI team was able to expand and improve its support to programmes preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence. As part of the IFRC SGBV Appeal, an Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) package on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention and response tailored to the region was developed, to support front line volunteers in their work, and sensitise staff through the Movement actors in the region. National Societies (such as Somalia, Burundi, and DRC) were supported in their activities on SGBV prevention and response in the Covid-19 response. Including integration into other sectoral areas – for example with Burundi Red Cross, Somalia Red Crescent, and DRC Red Cross to work closely with the health and WASH teams and ensuring dignity kits distribution in Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps.

PSEA has been a strong focus, with the development of a five-year action plan (2019-2024). During Covid, implementation started through webinars and through direct support to National Societies of Tanzania, Liberia, Malawi, Zambia Red Cross, and Burundi Red Cross. The interest in developing PSEA policies has been strong across the and IFRC offices have been supporting National Societies to develop and adopt the PSEA policy and utilize the PSEA Operational Manual. In Southern Africa alone, National Societies engaged in PSEA policy development include Baphalali Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia.

Collaboration with other actors – Movement and external – has been strong in Africa, with PGI regional coordination meetings held to ensure coordinated and complementary service provision from IFRC, PNS and ICRC in this area. A thorough analysis of the integration of gender and SGBV considerations into disaster-related legal frameworks in nine countries supported targeted collaborations and advocacy at country level. The Africa PGI team are also working with the regional GBV working group, as well as collaborating with UNICEF on SGBV prevention and response at country level.

Other actions supported in 2020 include advocacy around PGI topics, including at high profile events on International Humanitarian Law, Disaster Law and Legislative Advocacy, as well as in internal leadership orientation. In 2021, the momentum was maintained despite the ongoing Covid restrictions with support to ensure PGI is embedded in strategic, policy, leadership, and programme processes for National Societies across the region.

Lesotho Red Cross: Child Marriage Prevention

One of the Lesotho Red Cross's (LRCS) most effective responses to child marriage is built on the foundations of an extensive HIV/AIDS project that supported orphans and vulnerable children from the increased risk of Child Marriage.

The project established a country-wide network of "care facilitators" who provide emotional and practical support to affected children, protecting them from early marriage as a means of survival. The project includes a strong component of Community Engagement and Accountability, ensuring that the project is well understood, accepted, and supported by the community, facilitating the protective and inclusive actions.

The care facilitators network has also enabled the establishment of referral pathways for child marriages. Because of their trusted role in the community, care facilitators can both observe the presence of risk factors, and act as reliable reporting points for community members concerned about a risk or case of child marriage. The National Society then ensures a holistic, child-centred approach when responding to referrals – regularly reporting child marriages to the police, providing psychosocial support, legal support and dignity kits to girls who have faced early marriage.

Based on these successes, the National Society is expanding its response, building on its dissemination activities to engage more actively to educate communities (especially adults and boys) about the contents of child protection statutes and the harms of child marriage. Such activities are helping to sensitively bridge the gap between cultural practices in some communities and national laws.

The LRCS also provides dignity kits to thousands of girls in communities with high rates of teenage pregnancy and child marriage. Such kits support their physical and psychological wellbeing, and ensures they are able to remain in school, protecting against early marriage and SGBV.

7.4. Europe

In Europe, there was a particularly strong emphasis on integrating PGI work in all emergency operations, especially those linked to migration. This was based on assessment of the enormous protection needs and the urgency to address them, identified in the **real-time evaluation** of the IFRC's migration response in the region 2015-2016. PGI was then further integrated into the many migration-focused emergency appeals in the region. The existing Movement networks and platforms²⁹ linked to migration issues, supported increased National Society action, collaboration, and guidance on PGI issues linked to migration, and IFRC PGI and migration staff at regional and country level ensured these actions were integrated and shared across operational and programmatic responses.

Preventing and responding to Trafficking in Persons (TiP) has been a strong emphasis in the region, with a dedicated network, which supported the development of **guidance on assistance and**

²⁹ **Action for Trafficked Persons Network**, the Mediterranean Platform on Migration and Platform for European Red Cross Cooperation on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Migrants (PERCO) and the Centre for Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CCM) as well as the Alliance Expert Co-ordination Team partners (AECT) of the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.



Kate, a community volunteer from Cameroon, is operating the hotline of the Multifunctional Centre in Athens, supporting people from around the world who have come to Greece in search of safety. The Hellenic Red Cross, supported by Movement partners, provides migrants with protection, assistance and social inclusion measures. © Hellenic Red Cross Multifunctional Centre, Athens, Greece, 2021.

protection to victims of trafficking, and an accompanying training package, based on the extensive National Society actions and IFRC support to survivors and people at risk of trafficking. The work on TiP in Europe also supported work worldwide, with strong links with the work in Asia Pacific, and supported the creation of a dedicated **online resource hub** and **online training** (led by British and Australian Red Cross and technically supported by IFRC). Restoring family links and Psychosocial support has also been an essential part of the PGI response across the region.

The protection of migrant children has been a key priority (documented in the **Smart Practices for Working with Migrant Unaccompanied and Separated Children in the Europe Region**). This has involved provision and access to basic services, accommodation for unaccompanied and separated children, mental health and psychosocial support, and support to access education. IFRC has invested in the capacity of National Societies to address Child Protection and SGBV, including dedicated training and guidance adapted to the region, with training of trainers sessions held regularly, ensuring links with TiP and psychosocial support in the support to survivors. In 2021, a new toolkit on protection and assistance to child migrants was finalised, supporting practitioners and frontline workers to address the impact of the migration journey on children on the move.

In 2017 major PGI initiatives were launched in the region including the €22 million protection-focused Humanitarian Implementation Plan in Turkey. The development, implementation, and management of this major initiative run by Turkish Red Crescent was developed with close support from IFRC,

which included project design, protection advocacy and outreach, case management and monitoring. A dedicated PGI officer was recruited to support the ongoing work, and additional support on developing a Social Inclusion strategy were provided from the IFRC Geneva. Core PGI elements were also included in the TRCS's support to the **ESSN** (the largest humanitarian cash assistance programme). The PGI work in Turkey has been influential through the IFRC – the **final evaluation of the Emergency Appeal** recommended the approach to be replicated throughout the Movement. In Italy, the extensive protection, gender, and inclusion work also brought many lessons learned that have been replicated, such as the establishment of “Safe Points” that ensure migrants can access protective services.

The IFRC networks' migration response in **Greece** also had a significant focus on protection issues, with support in the refugee camps including child protection, protection monitoring, PSS support for SGBV survivors, **assessment** and action plans for disability inclusion, as well as dedicated support on social inclusion. A common and successful approach in both Greece and Turkey was the establishment of community or multifunctional centres, providing a range of protection, inclusion, health, MHPSS, legal and other services and a sense of belonging.

In the responses in Greece, Turkey, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere, there was strong collaboration with different Movement actors. A joint workplan was developed with ICRC on protection work in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with the aim to jointly strengthen the capacities of the NS to support migrants with mobile services to address their protection needs. Specific sector collaborations included jointly developing an PGI-WASH training with Austrian Red Cross for the operations in Lesbos, and close collaboration with British Red Cross on TiP and creating tools for remote technical support together with British Red Cross and ICRC. These collaborations continue to lay the ground for Movement-wide approach to PGI issues.



Ukraine. Slovyansk, 2015. Rayisa Onyschenko, 80, is a widow without contact with her family. She regularly gets health visits from Red Cross nurse Lena Yatsenko. Of the 1.4 million people internally displaced in Ukraine, 60 percent are older people, while 13 percent (about 180.000) are children.
© John Engedal Nissen / IFRC

Many European National Societies have long-stranding social inclusion programmes, many supporting migrants as well as other excluded groups. In the recent years, this expertise has been strengthened through IFRC support, including the projects: **“Amplifying the voices of asylum seekers and refugees for integration and life skills”** (AVAIL) in United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy and Latvia; the project: **“Action of Red Cross on Integration of Relocated and Resettled Persons”** (ARCI) which aims to help refugees to settle in their host countries of Germany, Bulgaria and Croatia. The **“Employability and Social Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers”** (ESIRAS) project supported asylum seekers and refugees with integration in society and the labour market in seven National Societies: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Italy, Slovenia, and United Kingdom.

This programmatic focus was supported by **research** that found strong links between **volunteering and social inclusion**, and dedicated communication and advocacy to tackle discrimination and xenophobia towards migrants in many National Societies, linked to IFRC global campaigns.

Addressing the protection and inclusion needs of older people has also been a focus in Europe, in collaboration with health and dedicated focal points, implementing the “healthy aging” toolkit and programme, and ensuring the specific needs of older persons in humanitarian response. Particular focus was paid to the need of older persons during the Covid response, leading the development of the IFRC **global guidance** on this theme, followed up by webinar and public talks. National Societies throughout the region support older adults’ well-being in many ways, for example the Italian Red Cross has a pilot project to promote digital skills with older people to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

To capitalise on this strong protection, gender, and inclusion focus in both emergency and long-term work, regional and country level workshops and training programmes were held since 2017 linked to the programme support across the region. During the Covid-19 response, much of this support moved online, with extensive support to National Societies across the region on incorporating PGI issues (older adults, trafficking in persons, general protection risks and specific SGBV risks) into their Covid-19 response.

Turkish Red Crescent: Comprehensive Protection Programme

The main aim of this programme is to prevent, mitigate or eliminate the risks, threats, and consequences associated with violence, exploitation, or abuse faced by vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities, including Turkish Nationals and people who seek asylum in Turkey – particularly Syrians – due to conflict or humanitarian crises.

Through dedicated trained staff, the programme provides specialized protection support through case management, most commonly for cases of child protection, SGBV and Restoring Family Links. The Protection Programme is closely connected with the TRCS community centres, working in collaboration with other teams to mitigate protection risks.

A referral mechanism orientates people towards different services depending on their needs. These include the different teams in the TRCS community centres who are focused on socio-economic empowerment, PSS & health, and social cohesion. All staff in the community centres are trained on asylum procedures, case management and communication with vulnerable groups. The protection teams received additional specialized training to prevent abuse and neglect of children, including child labour and child marriage. The Protection Programme also works outside of the community centres, ensuring protection is mainstreamed in the cash-based interventions and child protection teams.

The services provided include legal counselling, in-kind assistance (to mitigate protection risks), and information dissemination. Advocacy activities are carried out with local and national government staff, NGOs and donors. Capacity building activities are provided for mukhtars, imams, teachers, school administration, NGO staff who have responsibilities in national protection mechanisms.

7.5. Middle East and North Africa

In 2016, the MENA regional office had a gender and diversity (G&D) advisory team which provided technical resource to National Societies and IFRC staff. The focus was on mainstreaming PGI minimum standards through practical tools and guidance on data collection, needs assessment, programme planning and implementation, as well as advocacy and communications. National Societies were also supported in initiating special projects including SGBV and Child Protection. Leadership development and the role of women in the RCRC in the region was also a focus. As in other regions, the context required that much of the PGI work was linked to migration, particular those fleeing violence in Syria and Iraq, providing equal access to assistance and integration into communities in the region.

Strong momentum on addressing SGBV issues was initially established linked to a global SGBV workshop and “writeshop” in Beirut where the SGBV in Emergencies training module was developed. However, securing sufficient funding for the planned activities hampered progress on IFRC support on SGBV and on other PGI issues in 2017-19.

In 2018–19 (in collaboration with the WASH team), supporting menstrual hygiene management (MHM) programmes in the region was a priority. WASH tools and regional training were translated, and MHM projects were established in Lebanon and Iraq, carrying out field trials of locally produced MHM



A participatory video, supported by IFRC PGI and PMER staff, at the school for deaf children in Cairo run by Egyptian Red Crescent. The video documents the way in which the children were supported to learn and practice first aid. © IFRC / Indaba

materials for refugees and displaced women and young girls. The project also raised awareness of the need for better understanding of MHM issues including the need for female-friendly sanitation facilities.

In 2021, the focus on MHM was expanded to also include provision of disability-inclusive WASH facilities, through a **innovation project in Lebanon** to design, develop, and test Minimum standard checklists for MHM and disability friendly communal latrines and bathing/laundry areas. The project aims to develop standard MHM and disability friendly equipment which can be pre-positioned for rapid deployment.

In 2019, a Protection Delegate supported the Libyan Red Crescent to develop a multi-year protection programme to support those affected by the conflict. Staff in LRCS were trained and supported to design the programme incorporating protection mainstreaming, direct protection services and capacity-building of the Branch staff and volunteers. The training and orientation continued into 2020, adapted to the context of Covid.

In 2021, efforts of the MENA and Geneva offices in collaboration with the NSD team in the MENA regional office to secure funding for a dedicated PGI coordinator were successful, and future plans for scaling up PGI institutional and programmatic support within the region are already in place and making progress.

Iraqi Red Crescent: Person-centred menstrual hygiene programming

The Iraqi Red Crescent (together with the French Red Cross) has strengthened its MHM interventions, with a focus on education, awareness, and provision of MHM items.

To involve women and girls from the community in the design of MHM kits IRCS conducted focus group discussions to understand different needs and preferences between rural and urban areas. Findings showed schoolgirls in the city preferred single-use disposable pads (rather than carry used pads home to wash them), and women and girls in the villages preferred reusable pads as it is difficult to buy disposable pads.

IRCS therefore developed two types of kits – one with disposable pads for urban schoolgirls and one with reusable pads for rural women and girls. Both kits also included underwear, soap, small plastic bags, intimate washing lotion and a small plastic bin with lid, based on additional feedback from the focus groups.

Results from a survey after the first distribution showed that more than half of women and girls felt embarrassed when collecting the kit. The team therefore made a number of changes – distributing kits in cardboard boxes rather than in a plastic bag so they were not visible, distributing door to door instead of in groups and ensuring only female staff and volunteers were involved in the distribution. These adaptations enabled women and girls to menstruate with dignity and change their perceptions around menstruation.

Surveys before and after implementation showed that a huge increase in the percentage of women reported they were able to leave the house normally while menstruating – from 22% before the intervention to 79% afterwards.



8. Learning from our experience

The progress outlined above demonstrates that the profile and prominence of PGI issues had hugely increased in the past five years within the IFRC Network.

Notable achievements are visible in improved guidance, tools, and processes for PGI in emergencies, commitments made to gender parity institutionally and an increased emphasis and engagement on core issues such as SGBV, Child Protection, TiP and supporting disability inclusion. The integration of different related areas previously framed as Social Inclusion, a Culture of Non-Violence and Peace into one focused area of Protection, Gender and Inclusion was seen as positive and unifying. This broad and integrated approach is founded on the very nature of National Societies as fundamentally inclusive and diverse organisations (based on the principle of unity³⁰), which translates into unique access and understanding of humanitarian issues at community level.

However, despite many achievements there is still a lack of consistent application of our approach to Protection, Gender, and Inclusion. One key challenge is maintaining secure dedicated positions for staff for PGI at regional and country delegations of IFRC, and within National Societies. Another key challenge was the lack of common strategic objectives across the Network.

The consultation for the operational framework found that when PGI work is done in a fragmented manner, the effectiveness and impact is greatly reduced. If our approach is limited to addressing people's needs through categorical approaches such as targeting generic "vulnerable groups", or unthinkingly labelling individuals as "SGBV survivor" or "physically disabled person" or "volunteers" and failing to see the intersections between all the complexities of people's lives, our response will always remain partial – and create the risk of a "competitive" approach to programming, seeing one type of violence or experience as more significant than another. Similarly, if we do not mainstream PGI in the work of all sectors – based on the dedicated specialised work that supports it – our reach will always remain partial.

The consultation for the forthcoming operational framework also found that discrimination and marginalization still exists *within* the IFRC Network, in direct contradiction to our fundamental principles. In light of this, the work to ensure that all members of the IFRC Network fully understand and live by a principled approach to PGI in all aspects of our work must remain the very highest priority and be further scaled up. We have seen that progress in PGI is hampered when a safe, inclusive, and flexible working environment is not prioritised, leading to loss of staff and commitment.

It is essential that we build on good practices and lessons learned from working on PGI, both operationally and institutionally, from the last decade. From the consultations, we know that PGI related risks and needs are appropriately and sufficiently addressed when the following is in place:

Institutional capacity, composition, and willingness to address violence, discrimination, and exclusion, including ensuring that:

- At all levels of the organisation, from senior leadership, staff, and volunteers as well as partners and donors: PGI is well understood and there is a shared ownership to prevent, mitigate and safely respond to violence, discrimination, and exclusion
- Distinct commitments to PGI are made in all our policies, statutes, plans and budgets

³⁰ "There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in anyone country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory."

- Decisions are made based on the diverse perspectives of different staff and volunteers and they feel encouraged and safe to share, participate and seek opportunities
- Dedicated PGI staff and focal points are in place in National Societies and in the Secretariat offices to provide direction, technical support, contextual adaptation, and capacity building
- Staff and volunteers have access to continuous learning and capacity building on PGI issues
- PGI indicators, actions and commitments are meaningfully integrated and followed-up in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks
- Technical, strategic, and financial support is directed to build institutional capacity, and both mainstreaming and specialised PGI capacity for the IFRC as a whole.

Comprehensive efforts to ensure PGI across all operations, programmes, and services, including:

- Internal protection mechanisms are in place to ensure child safeguarding and prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)
- PGI mainstreaming activities are systematically incorporated in all projects and operations, with sufficient technical expertise and financial resources. Mainstreaming PGI is a prerequisite for any specialised PGI activities, however good practice is doing mainstreaming and specialised activities in parallel
- Emergency responses are properly informed by a PGI analysis and consistent of technical support from the onset and all related surge systems include mechanisms that ensure PGI
- Particular attention and priority is given to identify, prevent, mitigate and respond to risks that different groups face based on their gender, diversity or identity
- Protection considerations are mainstreamed as well as addressed in parallel with targeted and specialised activities related to preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect, SGBV and TiP



Rosa Tamara Fernandez Avile lives with her son Tommy Monterrey in Boer Barrio, Managua. She empowered herself to overcome gender stereotypes and run her own business after participating in a Nicaragua Red Cross program. © Nigel Dickinson / IFRC

- IFRC Minimum Standards for PGI in emergencies are continuously applied, monitored- and adjusted in all projects and operations
- Sex-, age, and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) is systematically collected and analysed
- Data protection standards in relation to privacy are systematically applied, especially for case management
- Targeting of populations with programming (needs, capacities, and opportunities for participation) is based on the evidence gleaned from this analysis.

Advocacy, research, partnerships, and learning are conducted to influence standards, norms, laws, and behaviour to ensure people's dignity, access, participation, and safety, including ensuring that:

- We remain attentive, accountable, and active in addressing the demands and needs raised by global, societal, and humanitarian movements, such as the focus on eliminating and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), the unprecedented increase in violence, discrimination and exclusion caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic and especially the stark and entrenched inequalities and growing marginalization that the pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated worldwide
- Guidance is provided to ensure more systematic and strategic advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy on PGI issues as local, national, regional, and global level
- We more systematically document, analyse and share the experience of National Societies in dealing with these issues, to support learning from experience and having the necessary evidence-base to bring about change
- Regional and global networks of PGI champions, staff and focal points are vibrant, dynamic, and supportive forums, which enhance and share learnings and technical expertise
- The IFRC secretariat can provide support both globally and regionally by being prepared and competent, to coordinate, and provide tools and guidance to National Societies in their efforts to address PGI issues.



The Thai Red Cross Society's AIDS Research Centre launched Adam's Love, Thailand's official men who have sex with men (MSM) health project. The project is centred around an edutainment website, www.adamslove.org, an innovative strategy that uses communication technology to scale-up routine HIV testing, promote safe sexual behaviour and build positive self-image among MSM and transgender population. © XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



Bangladesh. Cox's Bazaar, October 2017 Rugia, 11, came to accompany her grandmother to the field hospital. She was helping the nurses and says she wants to become a nurse herself. © Emilia Kangasluoma/Finnish Red Cross

For more information about the work described in this case for support, please contact:

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