Inter-agency Working Group (IAWG) on Reproductive Health in Crises

Formerly the Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations, the IAWG was formed in 1995 to promote access to quality reproductive health care for refugee women and others affected by armed conflict. It was originally comprised of over 30 groups, including United Nations (UN) agencies, universities, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and was led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The IAWG developed the Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations: An Inter-agency Field Manual for people assisting refugees, outlined the minimum services that must be provided in all disaster settings, designed kits for rapid deployment to aid workers and recognized the need for continued advocacy, funding and technical assistance for reproductive health programs in refugee and internally displaced person (IDP) settings.

Since its formation, the IAWG has met annually (with the exception of 2005 and 2009) to exchange information, identify challenges, gain from the experience of others, build partnerships and collectively work toward the institutionalization of reproductive health care for refugees and IDPs.

In 2004, the IAWG conducted a ten-year global evaluation of reproductive health in conflict-affected settings to identify gaps and constraints so that UN agencies, governments and nongovernmental agencies can better target resources and interventions. Findings showed that services were generally favorable for refugees in stable settings but were lacking for the internally displaced.

In 2010, the IAWG launched the revised Inter-agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings that continues to serve as the authoritative guidance on reproductive health programming in humanitarian settings.

Membership in IAWG is open to representatives of UN, nongovernmental, research and donor agencies interested in actively contributing to the advancement of the reproductive health of women, men and adolescents in humanitarian settings.

For more information, including on how to join IAWG, please go to www.iawg.net.