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United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
Office of Inspector General

Report of Audit

Department of State Humanitarian
Response Efforts for Women Refugees
and Conflict Victims

Report Number AUD/PR-02-09, March 2002

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluated the Department of State's progress in ensuring that international organizations (IOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) provide adequate services and funding to address refugee, returnee, and internally displaced women's needs. This review is part of OIG's ongoing effort to evaluate the Department's initiatives to advance national interests. The OIG audit team focused on the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration's (PRM) policy and program goals for women because they are a priority within the Bureau and the Department, as reflected in its humanitarian response strategic goal to *prevent or minimize the human costs of conflict and natural disasters*.

BACKGROUND

"Refugees" are legally defined as people who are outside their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group and who cannot or do not want to return home. Burundians and Congolese refugees living in Western Tanzania are examples of this.

In addition to refugees, there are many groups of people who live in refugee-like conditions but have not crossed an internationally recognized frontier. These people have fled their homes, generally during a civil war, and are "internally displaced." Various ethnic populations in the former Yugoslavia are examples of this.

Many refugees and other victims of conflict suffer the loss of family members, especially males, during war and genocide. The most vulnerable persons are usually those who are unaccompanied or have lost the head of household. Frequently, the largest portion of the surviving population – women, children, and the elderly – are the most vulnerable. The international humanitarian community, including PRM, attempt to address the needs of refugees and conflict victims through direct and indirect protection measures and assistance.

RESULTS IN BRIEF

OIG's review found that the Department has made progress in providing adequate services and funding to meet the needs of women refugees and conflict victims. Progress has been made in implementing internationally accepted standards, including providing women with assistance in public health, national capacity building, and food and nutrition. However, reduced international donor support for food in Africa hampers refugee response efforts and programs. Continued attention is needed to integrate women's issues into IO and NGO regular programming and develop international standards for addressing psychological social distress or health.

PRM has been at the forefront of promoting the integration of women's humanitarian needs into all aspects of programming. Performance monitoring and evaluation are done at the project or country level, but there is no systematic approach to reviewing overall progress toward meeting women's policy and program objectives. OIG found PRM-funded IOs are generally less accountable in terms of performance than NGOs. The inclusion of women's issues and activities into IO core budgets is a joint goal shared by many in the humanitarian community. In the short term, PRM is funding some women's activities separately to ensure that their needs are being adequately met.

Women's initiatives and programs are diverse, ranging from services for the protection of sexual violence victims to income-generation projects. Specially funded initiatives and programs that are not explicitly linked to the broader humanitarian context may be viewed, incorrectly, as peripheral to the mission.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Progress Made in Advancing Humanitarian Response Goals for Refugee, Returnee, and Internally Displaced Women

PRM funding directly benefiting refugee, returnee, and internally displaced women has improved not only the lives of these women, but also those of their families and communities. In many instances, PRM funds services that were not available to rural women in the past. OIG found that sexual violence, reproductive health, and

psychosocial programs that PRM funds through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) core budget are less accountable and provide less care than PRM-funded NGO programs. However, both IO and NGO efforts are needed to address these issues.

PRM also funds capacity-building projects, including income-generation and skills training to empower women. OIG found that PRM needs to monitor these programs closely to ensure that they are on track to reaching the goal of self-sufficiency and sustainability.

The humanitarian community has advanced its agenda to provide refugee women with equal access to donated food and other support items in relation to refugee men. However, OIG found that women's access to tangible goods differs greatly across continents.

Performance Monitoring Needs To Be Used More To Support Program and Funding Decisions

Performance indicators provided in the Department's performance plans and reports are too broad to draw conclusions about the services refugee women are receiving. However, performance indicators that address women's issues can be extrapolated from individual project proposals and annual reports. PRM's performance evaluation documents are not yet part of an automated database. As a result, tracking or reviewing progress toward meeting crosscutting women's policy and program objectives is difficult. Whether best practices and lessons learned are being implemented in PRM-funded programs is not always apparent.

Improved Coordination With Department's Implementing Partners Needed

UNHCR is PRM's key partner for implementing refugee return and reintegration initiatives for women. OIG found that many of the PRM-funded projects address returnee and internally displaced women's needs contributing positively to the overall humanitarian mission. However, women's initiatives suffer from vague statements of purpose, differing expectations, and uneven funding. One of the

stated objectives of these initiatives is the empowerment and self-reliance of local women. The means to achieving empowerment, the integration of women's initiatives with other refugee returnee and conflict victim activities, and the transition of the program to local women are not clearly articulated. The contributions that local women and women's initiatives make toward stabilizing their communities are often overlooked and undervalued.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OIG's major recommendations are the following:

- The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should establish performance objectives and indicators for all U.S.-funded international organizations and nongovernmental organizations activities addressing women's policy and program goals, including those for sexual violence and psychological social distress. Monitoring, evaluation, and funding of proposals, projects, and activities should be based on these performance objectives and indicators. An automated database for retrieving and analyzing project proposals, projects, and progress toward meeting policy and program objectives should be on line by the end of FY 2002.
- The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should coordinate with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to develop comprehensive guidelines for women's initiatives that address its empowerment objectives, the program's integration with other refugee returnee and conflict victims activities, and the framework for transitioning the program to local women. Lessons from previous studies of women's initiatives should be taken into account.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

We provided a draft version of this report to PRM. Where appropriate, we have addressed and incorporated the written comments throughout the final report. The full text of their comments to the draft report are contained in Appendix A.

In response to the overall subject matter of the report, PRM stated that the report offers valuable insights on programs of women in postconflict or reintegration situations; however, such programs represent only one type of women-focused

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activity that PRM supports. PRM primarily contributes to a wide array of programs for women in emergency refugee and conflict situations. PRM notes that the report is less comprehensive in its review and evaluation of these activities. PRM also states that the report does not acknowledge the important distinction between PRM's funding relationships with NGOs and its funding relationships with IOs.

In response to recommendations 1 through 5, PRM agrees that the establishment of objectives and indicators for programs funded by PRM is critical to successfully meeting Department goals. PRM concurs with OIG's recommendations to improve its in-house monitoring and evaluation capability. For recommendations 6 through 9, addressing guidelines and best practices for psychosocial interventions and women's roles in post-conflict or refugee return and reintegration activities, PRM intends to continue working with its implementing partners to raise the bar of acceptable performance and outcomes. While agreeing that women play a key role in the post-conflict reconstruction, PRM states that its role is to help them in the initial stages of their contribution — other agencies, including USAID, have a far more direct responsibility.

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Humanitarian response is one of the seven national interests identified in the Department's Strategic Plan. To pursue its humanitarian response mandate, the Department has established the following strategic goal: *prevent or minimize the human costs of conflict and natural disasters*. PRM takes the lead within the Department on this goal, ensuring that refugees worldwide are receiving services. PRM received in excess of \$800 million in congressionally appropriated FY 2000 funds for humanitarian protection and assistance (i.e., food, shelter, and health), which it allocates to IOs and NGOs. There are approximately 26 million refugees and 20 million internally displaced persons worldwide, and 80 percent of them are women and children. In FY 2000, \$11.5 million was specifically earmarked to support women's programs and initiatives.

The principal objective of this review is to assess the Department's humanitarian response efforts and its progress in ensuring that IOs and NGOs provide adequate services and funding for women refugees, returnees, and conflict victims needs. The review addressed the following questions:

- What are PRM policies, goals, objectives, and indicators for addressing women's needs?
- How well does the Department monitor and evaluate PRM-funded projects?
- How effectively do IOs and NGOs use PRM funds to provide protection and assistance to refugee women and support women's initiatives and programs?

OIG's audit work was conducted between August 2000 and April 2001. During the survey and review phase, the audit team interviewed officials in Washington from PRM program offices, UNHCR, and Africare. In January and February 2001, overseas field work was conducted in Kigali, Rwanda, and Western Tanzania. In Western Tanzania, the audit team visited seven refugee camps in the Ngara, Kibondo, Kasulu, and Kigoma regions and Embassy Dar es Salaam. In March and April 2001, the team visited PRM-funded programs in Sarajevo and Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Embassy Sarajevo; Pristina, Kosovo, and the U.S. Office in Pristina; and the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Geneva.

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The OIG team also attended the two PRM courses offered at the Foreign Service Institute. The PRM Orientation and the Monitoring and Evaluation Workshops help prepare program officers in Washington and refugee coordinators overseas for PRM duties and responsibilities.

This review was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards by Lynda Kyte (team leader), Djenaba Kendrick, and Janice McCain.

BACKGROUND

Humanitarian response is a major foreign policy issue, as highlighted in the Department's Strategic Plan for FY 2001. PRM is charged with meeting the Department's strategic goal of preventing or minimizing the human costs of conflict and natural disasters. The Bureau carries out this mandate through the distribution of funds to IOs that have the skills and manpower to offer adequate assistance. PRM is responsible for: (1) directing population, refugee, and migration policy development; (2) determining the level of U.S. contributions to IOs and NGOs for refugee and migration purposes and reviewing their activities to ensure effective use of U.S. funds; and (3) guiding the activities of refugee assistance offices at U.S. diplomatic missions and the U.S. Mission to Geneva concerned with refugee assistance, relief, and resettlement.¹ Although PRM has the second largest budget in the Department, it is one of the smallest bureaus in terms of staff. The Bureau operates under the authorities listed in the Foreign Affairs Manual, Volume 1, Section 520.

The Migration and Refugee Assistance and the U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance are the principal Department funding sources supporting its humanitarian response goal. The Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 provided the basic authority for U.S. international assistance to refugees, migrants, and other persons of concern. Support for these efforts is directed to IOs by specifying that appropriations are authorized: (1) for contributions to the activities of UNHCR for assistance to refugees under its mandate, and to other organizations such as the International Organization for Migration and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), among others; (2) to NGOs as authorized by presidential decree; and (3) through the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund, also as authorized by the President. The FY 2000 request of \$690 million consisted of \$660 million for migration and refugee assistance and \$30 million for emergency refugee and migration assistance. The areas identified for receipt of these funds include the protection of refugees, response capacity and standards of care, voluntary repatriation and reintegration, and international migration and resettlement.

¹ See 1 FAM 521, activities of the Department of State through the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

PRM operates on the basis of seven authorities that provide direction for specific refugee assistance activities. Three acts that have direct bearing on the status of refugees and potential immigrants to the United States include the Immigration and Nationality Act (1952), the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act (1962), and the Refugee Act (1980).

U.S. POLICY ON ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

Special areas of focus for PRM include the protection of refugee women and children, proper distribution of food, and basic care. Laws and regulations geared specifically toward the protection of women are few. Section 501 of Public Law 103-236 stipulates guidance on standards for refugee women and children. Specifically, the U.S. government, in providing assistance and protection to refugees and displaced persons, must seek to address the protection and provision of basic needs of refugee women and children, who represent 80 percent of the world's refugee population. Either directly or through IOs and NGOs, the Secretary of State, as established in the 1991 UNHCR *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*, must, among other things, seek to ensure the:

- protection of refugee women and children from violence and other abuses on the part of governments or insurgent groups;
- full involvement of women refugees in the planning and implementation of the delivery of services and assistance and the repatriation process;
- incorporation of maternal and child health needs into refugee health services and education, particularly in the area of reproductive health;
- availability of counseling, grievance, and protective services to victims of violence and abuse, including, but not limited to, rape and domestic violence; and
- provision of educational programs, particularly literacy and math, vocational and skills training for income-generation, and other training efforts promoting self-sufficiency for refugee women, with special emphasis on women heads of household.

FUNDING TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Monetary assistance to IOs and NGOs is accomplished through PRM's Office of the Comptroller. The Comptroller prepares and executes all funding arrangements, including cooperative agreements, contribution letters, grants, and contracts. The Bureau receives its funding from congressional appropriations and then initiates an annual process of reviewing and approving proposals for humanitarian relief. PRM is committed to multilateral humanitarian response efforts with organizations such as UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The United States is the single largest donor to these international organizations. In FY 2000, UNHCR received the largest grant provided by PRM, which was \$253 million. The second largest PRM grant that year was \$119 million provided to ICRC.

Owing to its broad mandate to provide protection and assistance to the world's refugees, UNHCR is PRM's key implementing partner and primary candidate for the receipt of monetary assistance from the Department. UNHCR, created in 1951, has its headquarters in Geneva and operates in over 120 countries.

PREVIOUS OIG HUMANITARIAN REVIEWS

OIG has completed four audits addressing refugee programs funded by PRM and conducted an inspection of PRM in 1996. The audit reports are: (1) *International Organization for Migration* (97-CI-010) in 1997; (2) *Refugee Admissions Program* (6-CI-008) in 1996; (3) *Refugee Assistance: Grant Agreement Between the U.S. and the United Israel Appeal* (5-CI-009) in 1995; and (4) *U.S. Contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East*, (4-CI-029) in 1994. OIG's audits found that the main area of weakness is insufficient PRM oversight and monitoring, which hampers the Bureau's ability to evaluate the extent to which its programs have met stated objectives.

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FINDINGS

PROGRESS MADE IN ADVANCING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE GOALS FOR REFUGEE, RETURNEE, AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN

OIG evaluated the Department's progress in ensuring that IOs and NGOs provide adequate services and funding to address refugee, returnee, and internally displaced women's needs. Women's issues are one of PRM's crosscutting policy areas. OIG reviewed the Department's policies, goals, objectives, and indicators for addressing targeted women. Under the national interest of humanitarian response, the Department's overarching strategic goal is to *prevent or minimize the human costs of conflict and natural disasters*. One of the related FY 2001 performance goals is to *promote equal access to effective protection and first asylum for refugees and conflict victims, maintain mechanisms for effective and efficient international humanitarian response at internationally accepted minimum standards, and support voluntary repatriation of refugees and provide a catalyst for their sustainable reintegration in the country of origin*. Strategies to address this performance goal specifically designed to protect and assist women refugees and conflict victims include:

- incorporate to the maximum extent possible women's issues, children's issues, and national capacity building into programs funded by PRM and collect and disseminate best practices and lessons learned;
- pursue adequate physical and legal protection for refugees and conflict victims, with special attention to vulnerable groups such as children and women, including all possible measures to deter, detect, and address the consequences of sexual violence;
- promote the participation of refugee women in refugee camp management, with particular focus on distribution of food and other support items; and
- provide assistance to refugees and conflict victims that meets internationally accepted standards developed in the sectors of public health, shelter, food and nutrition, water and sanitation, education, psychosocial support, and the environment;

The Department's strategy to incorporate women's issues into the programs it funds, to the maximum extent possible, is referred to as "mainstreaming."

According to a senior PRM official, since the UNHCR policy and guidelines on refugee women were written, the international humanitarian community has not reached a mature stage in mainstreaming women's issues. The underlying principle of UNHCR's mainstreaming policy is to integrate resources for and needs of refugee women into all aspects of programming to ensure access to protection and assistance activities. The guidelines also recognize that special efforts may be needed to solve problems faced by refugee women.

PRM has a history of funding initiatives and programs for the advancement of women, who represent half or more of the intended IO beneficiaries. Since FY 1996, PRM has funded three special UNHCR women's initiatives for returnees and internally displaced women. They are the Bosnian Women's Initiative (BWI), the Rwanda Women's Initiative (RWI), and the Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI). PRM provided \$6.4 million for BWI, \$1 million for RWI, and \$10.6 million for KWI. The congressional appropriation for KWI came from an emergency supplemental bill. The funds for all three initiatives total approximately \$18 million and are earmarked, as are other PRM-supported NGO refugee women's programs and activities. PRM and UNHCR regard these programs as outside the mainstream because the funding is not applied to UNHCR's core budget. PRM funds a large part of UNHCR and ICRC core budgets, a pool of money mixed with funds from other donors. Almost all of this money is earmarked at either the regional, subregional, country or functional level. PRM's general funding supports protection and assistance for women. A number of senior PRM officials stated that, at this point, both specially funded programs and programs funded through IO core budgets are needed to advance the agenda for women refugees and conflict victims.

OIG took a regional approach to reviewing PRM initiatives and programs overseas, selecting the two regions that received the most PRM funds in FY 2000: Africa, \$174 million, and Europe, \$188 million. The audit team consulted with senior PRM officials to determine which locations to visit. Field work was performed in the Great Lakes Region (Rwanda and Tanzania) and the Balkans (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo). Refer to Appendix B for projects OIG visited in the field. PRM funds women refugee and conflict victims' programs in many other countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma, and Thailand.

OIG's review found that the Department has advanced its humanitarian response efforts to provide women refugees and conflict victims with equal access to assistance and protection. Program areas reviewed under PRM's protection and assistance mandate include: sexual violence, reproductive health, psychosocial support, legal support, income-generation, skills training, self-sufficiency, and equal access to services.

Sexual/Gender-Based Violence, Reproductive Health, and Psychosocial Support

Sexual/gender-based violence (SGBV), reproductive health, and psychosocial support are important issues for refugee and returnee women during and after armed conflict. UNHCR defines sexual violence as a gross violation of fundamental human rights and, when committed in the context of armed conflict, a grave breach of humanitarian law.² Under international humanitarian law, the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 addresses the protection of civilian persons in time of war. Article 27 states that *women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honor, in particular against rape, forced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault*. PRM-funded programs help women who have been raped and are victims of domestic violence and physical abuse.

Psychosocial support usually includes, among many other activities, quality counseling by trained personnel, such as counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, or psychiatrists. These programs are important to help survivors understand what they have experienced, overcome guilt and anger, know they are not alone, and access support networks and services. SGBV and psychosocial programs offer counseling, medical services, and legal assistance for women who want to prosecute their offenders. In refugee camps, SGBV programs are imperative for women because of the high incident of rape and domestic violence.

Burundian and Congolese women fled their homes to refugee camps in Western Tanzania because of ongoing civil war and internal strife in their respective countries. Many Rwandan women have returned home since the 1994 genocide, and although no longer refugees, they still require postconflict support for the trauma they experienced.

Many Bosnian and Kosovar internally displaced women continue to return to their homes as armed conflict has ended. In the Balkans, returnee women attend psychosocial programs for counseling and support and to interact with women from other ethnic groups with similar needs and concerns.

² UNHCR, *Sexual Violence Against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response* (Geneva: 1995).

Sexual/Gender-Based Violence in Western Tanzania

SGBV programs are essential to providing adequate health care and services for the well-being of refugee women. SGBV and reproductive health programs are funded directly by PRM and through UNHCR's budget. NGOs that are directly funded by PRM are easier to monitor, as it is not always apparent where and how UNHCR funds are applied. The NGOs directly funded by PRM develop project objectives and indicators that are subject to PRM approval. In 1999 and 2000, PRM funded \$993,000 and \$1.2 million, respectively, for the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) proposal to provide health, SGBV, and community services for several refugee camps in Tanzania. PRM's cooperative agreement with IRC provides for almost half the project's funding. In FY 2000 and FY 2001, PRM provided UNHCR with \$1.6 million and \$2.5 million, respectively, in earmarked funds for worldwide SGBV efforts. In addition to the specific SGBV-earmarked funds, PRM supports other efforts that integrate SGBV into UNHCR's regular programming, such as in the educational sector.

One deterrent to domestic violence and rape is the arrest and conviction of perpetrators. Refugee women have been raped by men from the local Tanzanian communities, but frequently the perpetrators are refugee men. At camps with SGBV clinics or drop-in centers, refugee women can report incidences of violence to counselors. Perpetrators are arrested and taken to court, but cases take a long time to process. Under Tanzanian law, rapists receive a mandatory 30-year prison sentence upon conviction. According to PRM officials, refugee communities sometimes believe that the punishment is too stiff and does not fit the crime. Instances have been reported where families of the perpetrators have persuaded the victim to drop the charges. In other cases, wives have changed their minds and decided against the prosecution of their spouse. The intimidation of witnesses also causes numerous cases to be dismissed.

NGOs, such as IRC, that receive funding to provide SGBV services furnish adequate health care, sexual violence prevention, and counseling following established objectives and indicators. The women's forum, a weekly meeting where women gather to discuss reproductive health questions, sexual abuse, and coping strategies, is a unique IRC program. Its effectiveness in meeting the needs of women and providing information makes it a best practice that should be replicated at other camps. A monitoring and evaluation assessment completed by the PRM refugee coordinator found that IRC, which conducts SGBV in three camps OIG visited in Western Tanzania, has an exemplary program. OIG concurs that IRC's program addresses PRM's goals of ensuring the delivery of internationally accepted standards of basic care and promotes many of PRM's crosscutting policy issues,

including women and children's issues and reproductive health. In the SGBV area, IRC's main objective is to provide emergency services for survivors of sexual violence. IRC opened its first SGBV drop-in center in December 1999.

UNHCR's SGBV programs do not provide the same level of care or accountability as NGOs. UNHCR incorporates funding for its women's programs into a core budget process referred to as mainstreaming. OIG found that when SGBV programs are funded through the core budget, there is no guarantee that services will continue. For example, SGBV services for refugee camps in Tanzania were to be mainstreamed by FY 2000. In FY 1999 and 2000, the Ted Turner Foundation provided additional funding of approximately \$250,000 to UNHCR in support of its SGBV programs. In March 2000, an SGBV conference was held in the Kibondo region of Western Tanzania, where lessons learned and performance indicators were discussed. SGBV coordinators developed strategies to have their programs mainstreamed, but the foundation funds are no longer available to implement them.



International Rescue Committee Officials at an SGBV Drop-in Center

According to UNHCR's deputy representative in Dar es Salaam, his field representatives argued to retain all of their SGBV coordinators and complained that they did not have the ability to mainstream SGBV activities at this time. In his opinion, mainstreaming of SGBV activities should have already occurred. According to the deputy representative, the remaining foundation funds will be used to retain three lawyers to address the legal rights of sexual abuse victims and prosecute their perpetrators. If there is any left over, money will be used to fund SGBV coordinator positions.

In addition, OIG found that some of the foundation funds were returned because they were not properly distributed by the Tanzanian Red Cross. As a result, three camps do not have SGBV drop-in centers. OIG visited these camps and found that they did not adequately provide a confidential place for SGBV victims to receive counseling and assistance.

UNHCR's mainstreaming of SGBV programs needs concrete program objectives and indicators similar to those of NGO projects. In March 2001, UNHCR hosted a conference in Geneva on preventing and responding to SGBV issues in

refugee camps. Some of the expected outcomes are to strengthen coordination mechanisms in prevention plans to ensure mainstreaming into various sectors, such as education and public health, and to analyze the impact and accomplishments of SGBV programs.

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, should establish performance objectives and indicators and an evaluation mechanism for mainstreamed sexual/gender-based violence programs.

PRM agreed that program success and improvement depend on establishing objectives and indicators and using them in annual evaluations. In its comments, PRM states that it does this for the projects it funds, including the SGBV initiatives. Also, PRM mentioned that it has funded the Reproductive Health for Refugee Consortium for FY 2001 to develop a multisectoral assessment tool that will improve international and local capacity to respond to SGBV.

OIG acknowledges in the report that for NGOs PRM establishes objectives and indicators and uses them in annual evaluations. However, PRM also provides UNHCR with earmarked funds for SGBV, in addition to other efforts to integrate SGBV into the IO's regular programming and budget. We did not find that UNHCR or PRM was using objectives and indicators to evaluate and monitor these efforts. Our recommendation addresses the need to systematically evaluate UNHCR's progress in mainstreaming SGBV.

Reproductive Health Issues in Western Tanzania

In 1996, PRM provided \$172,000 to establish a reproductive health coordinator at UNHCR, produce a field manual on reproductive health,³ and create an international working group to address reproductive health concerns for refugees. As a result, in 1997, UNHCR's emergency response in the Great Lakes Region included a reproductive health component for the first time. OIG visited medical clinics in seven refugee camps in Western Tanzania. (See table 1.) Three of the clinics were managed by IRC and supported by PRM funding, and UNHCR funded and supported the others.

³ UNHCR, *Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations, an Interagency Field Manual* (Geneva 1999).

Table 1: Medical Clinics Visited in Tanzanian Refugee Camps

Refugee camp	Region
Lukole A & B	Ngara
Karago	Kibondo
Mtendeli	Kibondo
Nduta	Kibondo
Muyovosi	Kasulu
Mtabila	Kasulu
Lugufu	Kigoma

All of the camps offered reproductive health and safe motherhood programs, including a maternity ward. Safe motherhood includes comprehensive services for prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care, including care of the baby and breastfeeding support. One of the key indicators is the infant mortality rate. In the Burundian camps, the infant mortality rate for children under five years is low, and maternal death during birth is uncommon. Many women prefer to give birth at home attended by traditional birth attendants. OIG observed that at some camps, the medical facilities were overburdened; two patients sometimes shared one bed.

With the exception of Muyovosi camp, routine HIV/AIDS screening is not compulsory for pregnant women, and the humanitarian community is not sure how many women have been infected. However, refugee officials said that the rate of infection among refugees is most likely comparable with the rate of infection among members of the local Tanzanian population. Safe motherhood programs need to incorporate an objective addressing the need for the protection against or treatment for HIV/AIDS because some pregnant women may be passing the disease on to their children.

Psychosocial and Reproductive Health Programs in the Balkans

The psychosocial and reproductive health programs are largely beneficial to women in Bosnia and Kosovo, many of whom lost their husbands and other male family members and need counseling and access to health services. The Balkans women's initiatives support local NGOs that provide reproductive health, psychosocial support, counseling, and legal support for women. These programs are essential to

contributing to the empowerment and mental and physical well-being of women. Unlike income-generating projects, health-related programs do not generate income and have limited opportunity to become self-sustaining. How to sustain health programs after funding has ended is a major concern. Part of the larger problem faced by the humanitarian assistance community is the gap in the transition from emergency and postconflict phase to the rebuilding phase. PRM and other donors cannot continue funding these programs indefinitely.

Programs in Bosnia-Herzegovina

BWI was mandated by UNHCR to assist returnee, refugee, and displaced women in rebuilding their lives and contribute to long-term reconstruction. When BWI started in 1996, funding was distributed among four UNHCR areas of responsibility: psychological support, education, income-generation, and community services.

OIG visited a refugee camp where women's health services were managed by a BWI-supported NGO funded through UNHCR. The NGO medical team consisted of 12 people: two gynecologists, one general practitioner, seven nurses, one assistant, and one doctor for internal medicine. There was also a separate psychological team comprised of four doctors. OIG spoke with a female doctor who visited the camp one day per month and attended an average of 20 people. A permanent health center was located in town for daily health issues that might arise for the population of almost 300 refugees. Families typically had five or six children, and many women used contraceptives only after they have had several children. The infant mortality rate at the refugee camp was low.

Another BWI-funded NGO located in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, provided psychosocial support for women and children, among other projects. The NGO operated a program called *Project House*, which is a center for domestic violence counseling, education, and psychosocial support. The women were required to complete a five- or six-month session in counseling, education, and psychosocial support before moving on to other services the program offers. Lawyers made visits three times per week to discuss domestic violence issues. Ninety, predominantly single and rural women participated in the psychosocial program in 1999. Another major project sponsored under BWI brings together internally displaced Bosnian and Serbian women from Srebrenica to talk about coexistence and non-violence after the war. The total number of direct beneficiaries include up to 150 Serbian women that currently live in Srebrenica and some 50 Bosnian women, displaced from Srebrenica and currently living in Tuzla.

Programs in Kosovo

In Kosovo, a KWI-funded NGO played a key role in meeting the psychological needs of women. This local NGO had nine centers located throughout Kosovo and served as a refuge and place for women to gather for open discussion relevant to their psychological, social, and economic well-being. In addition, a gynecological program offered reproductive health and counseling services for women. With the assistance and support of their counselors, women could file sexual abuse and domestic violence cases at the center against perpetrators. Many women throughout Kosovo knew about the center because of its affiliation with international NGOs.



International Medical Corps at Reproductive Health Clinic in Kosovo

In the area of reproductive health, the International Medical Corps has received direct PRM funding to provide service to 77 of the 300 rural medical centers in Kosovo. These centers are located in remote communities and are the only access to reproductive health services for most women. Many of these women have never been to a doctor. Before KWI, reproductive health services in rural Kosovo were nonexistent.

An objective for local doctors, including those working with the International Medical Corps, is capacity building. The Corps trains doctors and nurses at the primary care level to work in the rural medical centers. It also works with government agencies in developing reproductive health policy. Since March 1998, it has been helping to reconstruct primary health care services for mother-and-child programs.

Psychosocial Support in Rwanda

RWI, unlike the Balkans women's initiatives, had minimal funding to support psychosocial and counseling programs for returnees and victims of the genocide. BWI was the first women's initiative, and it contained a psychosocial support objective. RWI, the second women's initiative, did not receive a commensurate level of funding for the development of psychosocial programs. An RWI-supported study estimated that at least 200,000 Rwandan women had been victims of some form of

sexual violence during the genocide. RWI funding was used to train paralegal assistants for radio programs and some psychosocial counseling. However, some women's associations providing counseling found it difficult to reach women in rural areas because of poor roads and broken-down vehicles. Some officials stated other reasons for the lack of psychosocial programs in Rwanda, including translators were hard to find; Rwanda was relatively remote; educated populations, such as psychiatrists and doctors, were killed during the genocide; and similar services were not available before the genocide.

OIG visited a trauma center in Kigali. Two nurses who work there had received psychosocial training, but were not present during OIG's visit. These nurses had trained others in the community. RWI funding for this effort was only \$1,240. The program could not afford to continue transporting trained workers to the field and, consequently, ceased most of its activities. The local UNHCR representative accompanying the audit team noted that rape and sexual abuse is a taboo subject in Rwandan society, and men and women avoid open discussion of it. In her opinion, psychosocial programs might not work in Rwanda.

By contrast, for KWI, the third women's initiative, there were strong congressional expectations that the majority of the \$10 million grant be spent on rape counseling and psychosocial programs. PRM, UNHCR, and local NGO representatives in Kosovo successfully broadened the initiative to include other services requested by the Kosovo women in addition to rape counseling. It is estimated that 8,000 to 10,000 KWI beneficiaries have been victims of sexual violence, and approximately 5,000 have received direct psychosocial support. Similar to Kosovo, reproductive health and psychosocial services in rural Rwanda were not available before the war. These services were well funded as a result of KWI; however, funding was inadequate for RWI.

One of RWI's major accomplishments was legislative changes supporting women's property rights. A local women's legal organization played a key role in changing the law as well as ensuring its implementation at the grassroots level. This local NGO, one of the first to receive funding from UNHCR after the genocide, has also trained Rwandan women from different areas to assist women on legal matters.

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should require international organizations and nongovernmental organizations to submit a needs assessment with their funding requests addressing psychosocial services for targeted women.

PRM agrees that a needs assessment is critical to determine the appropriate level of psychosocial services and other services provided to women. PRM expects organizations to provide both evidence of need and appropriate, needs-based intervention strategies before any funding action. However, OIG did not find evidence of UNHCR's assessment before the PRM-funding of RWI and also found that donor funding was inadequate for psychosocial and other services.

Capacity Building: Income-Generation, Training, and Empowerment

A primary means of addressing the needs of refugee, returnee, and internally displaced women is through enabling them to generate income. Income-generating and microenterprise projects have become popular among international development agencies because of their potential benefits to program participants and long-term regional stability. However, some projects are only marginally rewarding, owing to ineffective implementation and inadequate funding, among other reasons. The goal of income-generating projects is to assist beneficiaries in becoming economically self-sufficient. In addition to self-sufficiency, some of these projects, such as water and grinding operations, save women and children substantial amounts of time and energy that would otherwise be spent carrying corn to mills. With the time these projects save, children (especially girls) can attend school, and women can accomplish other tasks.



OIG found that the largest part of the budgets for the three women's initiatives is directed toward income-generating activities. A major goal of these initiatives is empowering local women through economic activities. Because so many men were killed or imprisoned in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo, women now comprise the

majority of those populations, and it is imperative that their skills and labor power be fully used to rebuild their respective nations.

Performance Indicators Need To Be Used To
Monitor Project Viability

In its *Monitoring and Evaluation Workbook (2000)*, PRM identified six indicators to be used by its implementing partners in evaluating projects to ensure that they are meeting proposed objectives. These include income, labor and employment activities, viable production units, periodic evaluations, small business assistance, and efficient sector support and program management. OIG found that PRM did not use these indicators effectively in reviewing implementing partners' funding proposals or progress reports and in making subsequent-year funding decisions.

A basic measure of the impact made by an income-generating group is its ability to use its goods or services to earn income. OIG found that in some cases, income-generating groups were not earning an income, but providing women with skills training only. Although there is an obvious benefit to providing training, funding proposals should clearly state the objectives and the means of achieving them. Similarly, indicators for labor proposals should state that project beneficiaries will be actively and gainfully involved in producing goods or services and coverage of the four remaining indicators should be clearly described in the original proposal and in progress reports for PRM's evaluation.

Inadequate Allocation of Funds

A major problem arising from not having measurable indicators is repeated financing of projects that fail to meet stated objectives. For example, Africare, the PRM-supported NGO managing the Mtabila refugee camp in Western Tanzania, supports several income-generating projects, including a bakery, carpentry shop, handicrafts group, restaurant, and a soap-making project. There are approximately 58,000 refugees in the camp. Africare budgeted a total of \$16,200 for supplies for 12 income-generating projects for the period July 2000 to June 2001—\$700 allocated specifically for a soap-making project. PRM guidelines, aligned with indicators for viable production units, specify that funding for income-generating projects should not normally exceed \$500 to \$1,000 per refugee participant. With a group of 20 members, it would have been reasonable for the soap-making project to have been allocated from \$10,000 to \$20,000. However, even this level of funding may not guarantee the fulfillment of stated objectives or project success. Systematic monitoring would offer a greater chance to achieve sustainability, a major component of income-generation.

When OIG visited the project, group members displayed the one large block of soap they were able to produce. They also shared their frustration with the lack of sufficient materials and proper protective garments to make the project viable. There was no income being generated from this project; the beneficiaries received apprenticeship training only. In reviewing Africare's funding proposal and monthly reports, documents that serve as the primary points of contact between PRM and its implementing partners, OIG found that no specific indicators were identified for the project. When the audit team brought up this issue with Africare in Dar es Salaam, it found that the resident representative was unaware that the project was not producing or selling soap.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should review funding proposals to ensure that funds budgeted for income-generating projects are sufficient and support the overall objective of these programs.

See Recommendation 4 for PRM's response to both Recommendations 3 and 4.

Development of Project Timeframes

PRM's evaluation of projects is a crucial step in determining the effectiveness of funded projects. OIG reviewed project proposals under three women's initiatives as well as other women's programs. OIG found that PRM does not have guidelines stating the length of time to be given to an income-generating activity before it should demonstrate sustainability. OIG did observe one microenterprise endeavor operating under a designated 10-month repayment cycle. Women-for-Women International, a microenterprise project in Bosnia, received \$300,000 in FY 2000 from PRM. The program encourages women, in groups of five, to join together to undertake an income-generating project that they have researched and possess the necessary skills to operate. The motivating factor is a loan that starts at 1,000 deutsche marks⁴ and increases in increments of 1,000 deutsche marks until a group reaches the maximum loan of 10,000 deutsche marks. The rate of loan repayment is 98.5 percent and owes its success to the support provided by the local program staff, the encouragement the women give each other in the larger regional group meetings, and the built-in time frame for sustainability. Some of the microenterprise projects supported by PRM include livestock-rearing and traditional domestic activities, such as sewing.

⁴ One thousand deutsche marks converted to approximately \$460 in March and April 2001.



Income-generating Sewing Group in Kosovo

OIG believes that income-generating projects should have two years to demonstrate sustainability. During this period, members of income-generating groups should acquire the necessary skills to produce and market targeted goods. Refugee groups should be able to show they could sustain themselves after leaving the camp. Internally displaced persons and returnees should be able to meet the same guidelines once they are moved to a permanent domicile.

Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should establish a timeframe for income-generating projects to demonstrate sustainability, after which projects should no longer be funded.

PRM responded that recommendations 3 and 4, addressing income-generating programs, are worthy of further consideration. PRM agrees that loan size and duration are key variables in program success. However, PRM believes the report's underlying point is that it should have better technical capacity to evaluate the design of income-generating programs and to work with NGO implementing partners to shape these programs appropriately. PRM will work toward training its staff to understand the dynamics of these kinds of projects.

OIG agrees that technical expertise is important for the review of these projects. Of the income-generating projects OIG reviewed, several projects observed in Rwanda and Kosovo suffered from insufficient funding levels or were mislabeled as income-generating projects. This indicates the need for improved monitoring.

Equal Access to Assistance for Refugee Women

Access to food and other support items remains a concern for refugee women despite the level of assistance provided by major donor agencies and the emphasis put on women as a vulnerable group. Women become vulnerable when their protective network fails. Women who have lost husbands or other male family members to genocide and war must assume the role of provider for the family. The targeting of women by humanitarian organizations and donors, such as PRM, recognizes that, if not for special programs designed in support of women, some of their needs would go largely unmet. Guidelines have been written to assist UNHCR and its implementing partners to identify the specific protection issues, problems, and risks facing refugee women.⁵ Equal access to resources, as a measure of protection, is ultimately a process of making support available to all in need of humanitarian assistance. Particularly in Burundian refugee camps, women do not always recognize shortfalls because they were not accorded equal access in their indigenous culture. However, IOs have placed increasing emphasis on sensitizing refugee women to varying levels of inequality and having more women serve on committees and representational groups.

Access to Goods and Services at Refugee Camps in Western Tanzania

The condition of refugees was similar in each of the seven camps OIG visited in Western Tanzania with regard to shortfalls in the provision of food and other support items. PRM's Great Lakes refugee coordinator and the audit team reviewed the overall condition of camp facilities, such as the food distribution centers, health units, and family shelters. OIG spoke with camp officials and refugee women in their weekly forums and general leaders' meetings. In meetings held with UNHCR and camp officials, OIG learned that in most camps, food rations were reduced to 80 percent and cooking oil to 40 percent of SPHERE⁶ standards. The most common reason cited for the reduction in rations was donor fatigue. Rations were even

⁵ UNHCR, *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women* (Geneva:1991).

⁶ The SPHERE Project, funded and led by the Department, brought together a diverse group of IOs and NGOs to reach agreement on standards and to share best practices in the sectors of health, water and sanitation, food, nutrition, and shelter and site planning. The standards are available in five languages on the Internet at www.sphereproject.org.

lower over summer 2000. According to PRM officials, the U.S. government provided more than 70 percent of the total food supplied to refugee camps in FY 2001. PRM, itself, contributed \$4.1 million to the World Food Program to fill food gaps in Tanzanian camps. Food rations distributed bimonthly to most refugees in Western Tanzania included maize meal, beans, salt, and oil.

Upon arrival at camp reception centers, refugees were supposed to receive plastic sheeting, mosquito netting, blankets, water containers, cooking kits, and assistance in constructing shelter. The items were to be distributed according to family size.



Refugee Women Sewing Sanitary Pads

Families were also supposed to receive basic hygiene items, such as soap and sanitary napkins. At the time of OIG's visit, refugees had not received soap in over six months. Sanitary supplies, a commodity Western women take for granted, were only recently made available to some refugee women through an activity funded by the IRC. OIG found that, in many instances, families living in the camps for more than five years were not issued replacement articles, even when these items were clearly needed. For example, the deteriorated plastic sheeting and threadbare blankets could no longer provide protection against the rain and cold. Some families sold their non-food items to supplement food rations, especially when their rations were considerably reduced.

Access to Provisions in the Balkans

OIG visited two refugee camps in the Balkans. In Kosovo, the team visited the Plementina Roma Camp, and in Bosnia, the team visited the Rakovica Reception Asylum Center. At Plementina, which housed approximately 700 internally displaced persons in the Roma ethnic group, provisions were made using funds from KWI. These funds were used, for example, to provide materials for sewing classes and for cows to provide milk for personal consumption and to generate a small income. Families resided in dormitory-style facilities with running water, indoor plumbing, and heating units. Each housing unit was also equipped with tables and

chairs so that families could sit together for meals and with enough kitchen supplies to serve and prepare a complete meal.

The Rakovica Reception Asylum Center in Bosnia sponsors 292 people of mixed ethnic origin. The Center also accommodates 80-90 refugees from other parts of the world, such as Iran, Turkey, and Sri Lanka. Families receive food parcels and other support items, plus a stipend to purchase personal goods that camp management does not provide. The refugee community also receives medical services from a group funded by UNHCR. In particular, women receive services to help overcome the effects of the war, including rape intervention and other psychological support services.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING NEEDS TO BE USED MORE TO SUPPORT PROGRAM AND FUNDING DECISIONS

In a world with ongoing and numerous humanitarian disasters, PRM must make program and funding decisions in conjunction with its implementing partners to address the needs of victims. U.S. foreign policy for humanitarian response reflects the values of the American people and the concern for global security and well-being. PRM, as the largest donor to IOs and many of the international NGOs, should have considerable influence with all of its implementing partners and recipient countries. PRM needs to base initial program funding and subsequent funding decisions on accountability—not only to financial standards, but also to performance standards. PRM has started to address this area, but there is room for improvement.

Department's Strategic and Performance Plans

The three Department entities that manage the Government Performance and Results Act requirements are the Office of the Secretary, Office of Resources, Plans, and Policy; Office of the Under Secretary for Management, Office of Management, Policy, and Planning; and Bureau of Financial Management and Policy (now Resource Management). The five-year Strategic Plan (FY 1999-2004) articulates seven fundamental national interests, including humanitarian response, in terms of 16 long-range goals. The Department's FY 2001 Performance Plan covers short-term or one- or two-year goals. Bureau Performance Plans (BPP) also address annual or short-term goals. According to a senior PRM official, the Department's FY 2001

performance planning approach did not include any real effort to integrate the Bureau planning process. The Department's FY 2002 performance planning approach is more integrated. A separate team leader oversees each of 16 strategic goals. Two of the team leaders are from PRM, one for the humanitarian response strategic goal and the other for the world population growth strategic goal.

PRM has one policy officer who is responsible for pulling together the BPP and reviewing project proposals presented to the Policy and Program Review Committee to ensure consistency with BPP objectives and indicators. The Committee provides a mechanism for review of recommendations to the Assistant Secretary on funding and policy issues. Its meetings are strictly internal Bureau meetings. All proposals that involve either a commitment of funds or a significant policy decision are to be presented in writing. Policy papers are directly linked to the program plan section detailing monitoring efforts and identifying who is responsible for expenditures. According to the BPP policy officer, PRM-funded activities are diverse, and it is difficult to develop key indicators. PRM may request that NGOs or IOs provide specific data to measure overall performance objectives, such as health and mortality rates. One significant challenge is that organizations use different methodologies for collecting information. Some improvement has occurred in this area over the past 10 years. The SPHERE Project guidelines on minimum care standards have helped encourage more consistent reporting.

The BPP policy officer reviews the policy goals that apply to each project proposal, providing a quality control element based on personal knowledge. The funding document or transmittal memorandum is produced by a program officer or regional officer and is the mechanism to obtain money through PRM's Comptroller. The transmittal memorandum lists policy flags keyed into crosscutting policy goals, such as protection, women, children, reproductive health, capacity building, and sustainability. The policy officer checks off which goals apply to the project proposal and also estimates what percentage of money will be spent on each. In the policy officer's opinion, the BPP process is relevant, and the staff see that PRM management really uses it. Program officers can use the BPP and related materials as powerful tools to tell IOs and NGOs what PRM's priorities are in relation to specific project proposals and programs.

Annual Performance Reporting

In accordance with the legislative requirement for the Government Performance and Results Act, the Department has issued annual performance reports for FY 1999 and FY 2000. These reports compare baseline indicators and targets against actual levels

achieved, demonstrating Department progress in meeting annual performance goals. Under the humanitarian response strategic goal, the FY 2000 Performance Report addressed only the successful SPHERE Project. The Department's FY 2001 Performance Report is not due until March 2002. However, the indicators provided in the FY 2001 Performance Plan are too broad to provide conclusions with regard to the advancement of women's policy and program issues. (Refer to Appendix C.)

Specific performance indicators that address women's issues can only be extrapolated from PRM-funded project proposals. OIG spoke with the policy officer who reviewed field-based indicators for specific project proposals from NGOs. Indicators are used to assess progress toward meeting established objectives and goals. PRM officials acknowledge that end-of-year program reports do not clearly indicate whether the projects are meeting established objectives. A reason cited for this is that program officers are reluctant to criticize projects for fear they will be cut or lose funding altogether. PRM is trying to establish more of a discipline for objectives and indicators. It is trying to teach in-house officers that NGOs can control their own programs and should be held accountable for them.

Monitoring and Evaluation Reports

There are two primary types of PRM monitoring and evaluation reports: cables on cooperative agreements and annual program evaluations. According to a senior PRM official, during the last three years, the Bureau has been trying to get outcome or impact analysis into its reporting. He described the alternative as "management by anecdote" or the "CNN or media factor." There are other reports that PRM can draw upon for performance and funding information, including NGO reporting (quarterly and annual), UNHCR monthly reports (on women's initiatives), and independent humanitarian reporting from outside consultants and Human Rights Watch. PRM has limited coverage in the field and must rely on implementing partners for relevant information on progress to ensure that monies are being used effectively and best practices are implemented.

Monitoring and evaluation reports are closely related to NGO grants and how funds are expended. PRM works with IOs to ensure that policies are properly implemented. PRM had appointed one person to oversee the monitoring and evaluation effort. This officer was responsible for reviewing field-based indicators for NGO project proposals and ensuring that the right indicators were included. She also coordinated the monitoring and evaluation training course at the Foreign Service

Institute for new program officers and refugee coordinators. OIG attended this one-week course and found it useful. However, after traveling overseas to visit refugee camps and projects, OIG found that PRM officers are challenged to perform adequate assessments under tight timeframes.

In the coordinator's opinion, evaluations need to be conducted more rigorously. As part of the course, a *Monitoring Refugee Protection* tool guide was provided to refugee coordinators and officers. This guide drew heavily on existing guidelines for refugee situations and was produced by PRM in cooperation with its implementing partners, the refugee coordinator for the Great Lakes Region, and Tanzanian officials during field work performed in July and August 1999. The tool guide is a useful aid to a new refugee coordinator and also illustrates the broad range of culturally sensitive issues that confront a field officer.

PRM reporting is accomplished through its program officers in Washington, DC, and refugee coordinators and officers overseas. During the monitoring aspect of the field work, refugee coordinators and officers check that the project is correctly staffed and funds are used appropriately. In the evaluation stage, PRM representatives are looking to see whether NGOs have met their objectives. Evaluations of PRM-funded projects are done annually and range from broad policy issues or crosscutting issues to efficient use of resources.

There are only four PRM refugee coordinators for all of Africa and three in the Balkans. PRM's staff in the Balkans is currently phasing out and by summer of 2002 only one refugee coordinator will remain. Refugee coordinators are rarely refugee specialists and are not necessarily experienced in doing evaluations. Monitoring trips take anywhere from five days to two weeks. Refugee coordinators and program officers typically have only a few hours at a camp and need to know exactly what to ask in advance. Refugee coordinators usually have more time in the field than program officers because they are posted within the region. Once they are on site, it is difficult to find time to speak with refugees because there is a lot of activity and translators are usually needed. OIG found that refugee coordinators and officers in the field are pressed for time and must rely extensively on UNHCR for assistance.

OIG found that the monitoring and evaluation process is not automated. PRM cannot easily track policy goals or program objectives across project lines. PRM officials agree that the process needs to be automated. A FY 2001 effort to create a computer database and system to track and analyze information from reports was unsuccessful. Outside contractors have not produced the desired database to link

project results to funding. According to a senior PRM official, ideally the functional or crosscutting policy teams within PRM should tell program officers exactly what is being funded and questions they need to ask before going out into the field. However, the lack of an automated reporting system makes it difficult to draw systemic conclusions or trend data for crosscutting policy issues or regional or historical analyses. For example, PRM should be able to determine from this database the amount spent on women's projects and initiatives in Africa for several years. Currently, getting this type of information requires a manual search.

In addition to PRM-produced reports, the implementing partners also produce reports. A senior PRM official explained that there is no written agreement with UNHCR requiring monitoring and evaluation; it is simply understood that the donor has the right to know how funds are being used. In practice, UNHCR facilitates the monitoring and evaluation process and makes it possible. There is a relatively new PRM effort to perform more detailed country reviews and analyses jointly with implementing partners. PRM, along with UNHCR, reviewed Tanzania in FY 1999 and Guinea in FY 2000. The Director for the Office of Multilateral Coordination and External Relations is in charge of these country projects, including reviews of the budget and resources. Initially, UNHCR wanted to start with Tanzania because its refugee programs had established a good reputation. In FY 2001, the program was expanded to cover additional countries.

PRM officials recognize the need for better end-use evaluation to determine whether projects are reaching their goals and to make related program and funding decisions. PRM also acknowledges its limited ability to perform evaluations. A senior official supported the idea of hiring contractors with appropriate expertise to supplement evaluations by PRM officers in the field.

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should have on-line by the end of FY 2002 an automated monitoring and evaluation database system for analyzing funded projects. Projects that are not meeting established objectives should be reviewed to determine why, and subsequent funding decisions should be based on results.

PRM agrees fully with this recommendation and is working on establishing a database to assist in planning and monitoring programs and policies by the end of FY 2002. This database will help PRM track progress and ensure coherence with program objectives and indicators as well as those in the Bureau Performance Plan.

Policy Guidelines, Standards, and Implementation Issues

The former Director for the Office of Policy and Resource Planning noted that PRM has tried to develop standards with its implementing partners. UNHCR's *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women* (1991) and *Guidelines on Protection and Care of Refugee Children* (1994) are examples of this collaborative effort. According to the former Director, in the 1980s and 1990s, PRM's focus was on developing policy guidance and standards. Most of PRM's concerns now are with implementation issues: How does PRM integrate women's and children's issues into regular programming and still demonstrate that its funding is having an impact? Program design should take these issues into account. For example, as cited in the BPP, distribution must ensure that food actually gets to all refugees and is not diverted to the military or other political elements. The former Director told us that in some camps, only women are allowed to collect the rations, because when women receive food directly, the refugee community gets fed.

PRM is still grappling with how to collect better data for standards that the SPHERE manual lays out, such as basic information on mortality rates and water standards. PRM is trying to train refugee coordinators through its monitoring and evaluation training. In addition, PRM officials are working with their colleagues at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on improved ways to measure indicators, such as malnutrition for children under five and high or excessive mortality rates.

The more difficult question is how to measure humanitarian response indicators, such as psychosocial trauma occurring during genocide and its aftermath. What is the appropriate level or standard for these indicators as compared with the general or unaffected population? As the former Director pointed out, man does not live by food and water alone. The fastest developing humanitarian field in the international community is addressing psychosocial trauma. There is little in the way of guidelines and standards to follow.

PRM has funded an ongoing evaluation to review the use of UNHCR guidelines. The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, sponsored by IRC, received \$150,000 for field assessments. The Commission, in conjunction with UNHCR and PRM, is assessing what has worked and developing lessons learned.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should continue to work with the larger humanitarian community to develop standards to measure performance in such areas as psychosocial trauma.

PRM intends to continue its efforts to raise the bar of acceptable performance and outcomes, specifically for psychosocial interventions, and to develop more sophisticated methods of measurement.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

One of the Department's humanitarian response strategies for improving its operations is the collection and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned from PRM-funded women's initiatives and programs. PRM encouraged or contributed funds toward the following lessons-learned evaluations conducted by UNHCR and ICRC:

- *Women Transforming Themselves and Society. Empowerment through the Bosnian Women's Initiative* (October 1999);
- *You Cannot Dance If You Cannot Stand: A Review of the Rwanda Women's Initiative and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Commitment to Gender Equality in Postconflict Societies* (April 2001); and
- *ICRC's Women and War study* (Fall 2001).

The USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation has also studied gender issues in postconflict societies. Relevant articles in its July 2000 edition of *Aftermath* include:

- "Women in Postgenocide Rwanda,"
- "Women's Organizations in Postconflict Rwanda,"
- "Impact of Conflict on Women in Postgenocide Bosnia-Herzegovina," and
- "The Role of Women's Organizations in Postconflict Bosnia-Herzegovina."

OIG found that these lessons-learned studies are only useful when put into practice. This was not the case with the 1999 BWI report, *Women Transforming Themselves and Society*. UNHCR ignored the consultant's study recommending a plan to turn the program over to local NGOs or, conversely, a plan for phasing out the program altogether. BWI was mainstreamed into UNHCR's core budget in FY 1999; however, at the time of our field review, there were still no concrete plans to

turn over management to local NGOs. PRM officials noted that for both KWI and BWI they urged UNHCR, at an early stage, to incorporate the initiatives into UNHCR's regular budget, which has occurred in both cases. Nevertheless, during our visit, UNHCR requested an additional \$400,000 from PRM for transitioning BWI, which PRM subsequently provided. Another BWI study was more recently commissioned by UNHCR and produced similar findings to the first study. PRM has informed OIG that BWI is currently being turned over to local NGOs. UNHCR is in the process of conducting a study of KWI.

ICRC's Women and War project started out as an internal initiative. Although the original purpose for the project was to have an impact on ICRC's own delegation and improve its processes and methodologies, the study has become public. PRM has pledged \$1 million a year over a 4-year period toward the project. According to a senior PRM official, ICRC tried to avoid making this effort focus solely on women as victims of sexual violence, broadening the scope to look at all the roles of women in conflict situations, including widowhood and women as combatants. The ICRC official leading the study commented that detention of women post-conflict is also an issue. She mentioned that of approximately 10,000 female detainees in the world due to conflict situations, 8,000 are women in Rwanda. Men and women are dependent on their families to provide them with food in prison. This is a burden, especially on rural families.

The ICRC official heading up the Women and War study explained to OIG that the Swiss organization has avoided "women-only programs" and does not identify such problems as reproductive and maternal health as solely women's issues. However, ICRC has recognized in this study that war may affect women differently from men. At the time of our review, the field work portion of the study had been conducted in 14 of the 56 countries that ICRC covers. Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo already have been visited. The plan is to cover all 56 countries by the end of 2003. Every ICRC field employee coming through headquarters in Geneva is being systematically briefed on the project. This approach is in keeping with ICRC's philosophy that this is primarily an internal study and that it will be implemented within the organization.

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should track an international organization's implementation of lessons learned and best practices from U.S.-funded studies. The Bureau should establish a policy that only organizations implementing lessons learned and best practices continue to receive U.S. funds to perform studies.

PRM concurs that organizations should act on lessons-learned and best practices that are identified through PRM-funded studies. Through its support and monitoring of the evaluation functions of its implementing partners, PRM actively seeks to promote the wide dissemination of findings and the necessary organizational changes based on these lessons learned.

IMPROVED COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS NEEDED

PRM's mandate requires extensive coordination and communication with all of its implementing partners: IOs and NGOs, U.S. government agencies, other donor countries, and beneficiaries. The way PRM communicates and coordinates its foreign policy mandate reflects America's core values. The United States is the largest donor to UNHCR and ICRC. Mainstreaming of gender issues into these organizations' regular program — funded through the core budget — is a long-term goal of PRM. Although some progress has been made, the results have been mixed, and accountability for mainstreaming is not well-defined. Specific women's programs and initiatives may also suffer from a lack of defined purpose and objectives.

PRM-funded women's initiatives for refugee returnees and conflict victims have vague statements of purpose and differing expectations. OIG found that transitioning these programs from UNHCR management to management by local women's organizations is at best an afterthought. A senior PRM official acknowledged that each time the Bureau has run into difficulties with a women's initiative like KWI, it has reservations on whether they should ever fund another one. Currently, UNHCR has a Sierra Leone women's initiative proposal and an Afghan initiative has been discussed in the past. PRM officials have asked whether OIG supports funding another such initiative. Although acknowledging that women's initiatives have had their share of problems, OIG found that these programs contribute to the mission of humanitarian response. Future funding of women's initiatives for refugee return and reintegration must take into account lessons learned and incorporate best practices for long-term success. PRM and its implementing partners should develop a set of guidelines and milestones for women's initiatives that transcend regional boundaries.

According to PRM officials, some reasons for differences between humanitarian funding and services provided to Africa and Europe are remoteness, donor fatigue, and national security. PRM is aware that the imbalance is not fully justified and has been trying to address the problem. As PRM officials have noted, the funding for

the KWI came from a congressional supplemental that allowed substantial additional resources for programs in the region. The recent conflict in Afghanistan prompted a congressional supplemental appropriation of over \$35 million for humanitarian activities. Some of this money is to be used to continue funding refugee and displaced women's needs.

Coordination With the International Humanitarian Community

PRM's Office of Multilateral Coordination and External Relations oversees policy coordination and management issues with UN agencies, the ICRC and its affiliates, USAID, and other donor countries. It takes a proactive role in promoting U.S. foreign policy. For example, PRM's Assistant Secretary and senior staff met with key officials from other countries in Geneva before the appointment of the current UN High Commissioner to discuss the change in leadership. PRM conducted meetings with other donor countries, refugee hosting countries, and international organizations. According to a senior PRM official, the Department sent letters to the UN Secretary General regarding the transition of the new High Commissioner, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing policies in three key areas: women, children, and the environment. Other big donor countries voiced similar concerns. UNHCR budgetary reductions and its plans to reorganize have drawn attention to earmarked funding and programs that may be cut. PRM officials note that the budget for women's programs, such as SGBV, may be viewed as expendable.

Financial support for women's issues and programs vary, as do the funding mechanisms applied to these efforts. Earmarked funds for women's programs and initiatives are clearly intended to address women's issues. The visibility and accountability of these programs make it easier to attract funds from other donors. The downside is that officials associated with activities funded through IO core budgets, including mainstreamed programs, may resent the attention and resources devoted to earmarked activities or ignore the gender issues, assuming they have been addressed already. PRM officials acknowledge that humanitarian field personnel often view women's needs as peripheral to the basic mission of providing food, shelter, and protection. At the same time, PRM officials believe that women's needs must be taken into account to accomplish the overall mission. In the opinion of several UNHCR and PRM officials, participation in women's initiatives helps sensitize all humanitarian field personnel to gender disparities.

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PRM's three women's initiatives are good examples of how communication and coordination are paramount to the success of an international humanitarian effort, including fundraising activities. RWI did not receive the significant financial support from the United States that the Balkan women's initiatives received, even though its postgenocide needs were great. As a result, RWI did not realize its potential and fell short of its original expectations. On the positive side, in Rwanda, UNHCR and its local NGOs had become more resourceful in donor fundraising, and they received additional funds from other countries and entities.

There was limited donor support from other countries for BWI and none for KWI. As PRM officials noted, KWI was absorbed into UNHCR's regular budget more quickly and benefited from unearmarked donor contributions to the Balkans and Kosovo programs, respectively. According to PRM officials, UNHCR's planned budget for KWI in calendar year 2001 was \$2 million and it did not have sufficient funding to cover this amount. OIG found that as of April 2001, KWI had a \$650,000 balance remaining. PRM provided an additional \$600,000 earmarked for KWI in FY 2001, specifically to support transitioning to local NGO management. In the opinion of a senior PRM official, congressional pressure to spend money quickly under KWI worked against the longer term goals of capacity building and empowerment. Long-term goals cannot be achieved in six months in a society that was not advanced in these areas before the war.

The approximate number of women's initiative beneficiaries to date are 60,000 in Bosnia, 50,000 in Rwanda, and 27,000 in Kosovo. Table 2 provides general PRM funding data for earmarked women's initiatives.

Table 2: Earmarked Funds for Women's Initiatives, FY 1996-2001

Fiscal year	Initiative	Amount (in millions)
1996	Bosnia	\$5.0
1997	Rwanda	1.0
1998	Bosnia	1.0
1999	Kosovo	2.7
2000	Kosovo	7.3
2001	Bosnia	.4
	Kosovo	.6
Total		\$ 18.0

The monies associated with these earmarked programs for women are not large amounts compared with the approximately \$250 million and \$100 million PRM contributes annually to UNHCR and ICRC, respectively. However, these programs are highly visible, making them targets of scrutiny. Studies devoted to women's initiatives suggest that:

- a strong central coordinator who can articulate objectives is important;
- mainstreaming women's programs into the IO regular or core budget has to be monitored and evaluated properly;
- plans for transitioning sustainable programs to local NGO management have to be in place from the beginning; and
- interagency communication and coordination on returnee and reintegration activities must improve.

The RWI report published in April 2001 by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children highlighted funding difficulties and their negative effect on rural women. RWI was launched with a pledge of \$7 million. PRM contributed \$1 million in 1997. However, funding amounts from all sources have fluctuated dramatically from year to year. In the 1997-2000 period, a total of \$4.8 million was received from various donors: from a high of \$2.6 million in 1997 to a low of \$300,000 in 2000. The report states that part of the problem was the lack of a shared understanding and agreement within UNHCR about the potential and role of women's initiatives in transitioning societies. Furthermore, the report notes that UN and bilateral funding programs each supported separate gender projects without strong coordination or collaboration between them.

In the opinion of the Women's Commission consultant, funding cutbacks by UNHCR were proportionally greater for gender programs such as RWI. UNHCR did not see them as a priority vis-à-vis other kinds of programs. The consultant stated that the lack of emphasis is not encouraging for gender mainstreaming. She also observed that RWI was supposed to be mainstreamed within two years, but this objective was not stated in writing. No performance indicators or mechanisms were established to track mainstreaming or gender equity issues. Thus, five years later, it is difficult to tell what happened.

The two UNHCR-commissioned studies of BWI provide useful lessons learned for both Balkans women's initiatives. The first study, published in 1999, highlights some of the problems encountered and suggests a course of action to put the program back on track with its original mission and objective: empowerment of women through their reintegration into social and economic activities. Several of the study's statements on mainstreaming illustrate a need first to define and then to monitor the steps taken to achieve the overall objective:

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- In 1998, the decision to mainstream BWI in UNHCR's standard programming was taken without a clear definition of what this entailed, beyond focusing work in areas of ethnic minority return. In addition, this decision was taken among UNHCR and umbrella agency staff without consultation with the women's associations for which the fund is intended.
- Mainstreaming BWI was not reconciled with UNHCR Bosnia-Herzegovina's stated commitments to mainstream a gender perspective in standard programming. In other words, how the initiatives to include women and gender analysis in standard programming complemented the integration of BWI was not elaborated upon. As a result, a consistent number of UNHCR respondents involved in protection and programming stated they were not clear how BWI contributed to the overall UNHCR mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- The decision to mainstream BWI has subtly shifted the original goals of the fund away from a focus on women's empowerment to the goal of promoting the return of ethnic minorities, which resulted in a new pattern in project selection.

The second BWI consultant agreed, in principle, with all of the observations and recommendations from the first study. She also agreed that BWI lacked a strong central coordinator initially and that the impact of this was detrimental over time. One continuing problem for transitioning BWI over to its beneficiaries is that local NGOs have no legal status. Kosovo also had this problem, but it was solved early. Embassy Sarajevo's Ambassador is aware of the problem and stated to OIG that he would pursue the matter further.

There had not been a comprehensive program evaluation or study of KWI at the time of our review, although UNHCR is in the process of conducting one now. According to UNHCR officials in Kosovo, KWI faltered early on owing to a breakdown in communications between the coordinator and local women's leaders. Part of the problem was the expectation by local women's leaders and groups that the program and its funds would be turned over directly to them. As KWI officials in Kosovo stated, UNHCR was responsible for ensuring that these funds were used properly and for monitoring proposals. PRM officials agreed that UNHCR was not in a position simply to hand out checks. KWI officials also acknowledged that the initial coordinator's time was divided between KWI and other immediate needs, such as providing shelter. The communication problem was acute and a dedicated coordinator was eventually hired by UNHCR. PRM also provided funding for a reports officer to articulate better the mission and results of KWI. The current situation is much improved, as OIG noted from its conversations with local NGOs and women's leaders.

Recommendation 8: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should coordinate with its implementing partners to develop comprehensive guidelines for women’s initiatives, addressing: (1) empowerment objectives; (2) integration with other refugee returnee and conflict victims activities; and (3) the framework for transition to local women. Proposals for funding new initiatives should be based on adherence to these guidelines.

See Recommendation 9 for PRM’s response to both Recommendations 8 and 9.

Women’s Initiatives and Programs Contribute to Broader Foreign Policy Objectives

There is a perception in the humanitarian community that women’s initiatives and programs are short-term efforts lasting only a few years. This view detracts from the contributions local women make to stabilizing their communities in the postconflict stage and to promoting reconciliation and lasting peace. Women’s initiatives need to be viewed in the context of other postconflict efforts, such as providing shelter. PRM and its implementing partners should establish a link between women’s initiatives or programs and other humanitarian activities and foreign policy objectives. In the May/June 2001 issue of *Foreign Policy*, “Women Waging Peace,”⁸ OIG found support for the article’s premise that “... *through moral suasion, local women often have influence where outsiders, such as international human rights agencies, do not.*”

At a Tanzanian refugee camp visited by OIG, UNHCR field officials spoke of the Burundi refugee women’s peace accord. This effort, supported by UNHCR and initiated by refugee women, taps into their desire for reconciliation and return to Burundi. The first phase of the program began in January 2001 with UNHCR funding a core group of women leaders’ training in peace and conflict resolution. Community awareness is part of the second stage of the project.

UNHCR’s senior field representative in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, explained to OIG that BWI has been instrumental in helping achieve the goals of reintegration of not only women, but also the whole population. One BWI-supported

⁸ The article was written by Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa. Swanee Hunt is director of the Women in Public Policy Program at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. As the U.S. Ambassador to Austria (1993-97), she founded the “Vital Voices: Women in Democracy” initiative. Cristina Posa, a former judicial clerk at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, is an attorney.

multiethnic project, which brings together displaced women, has made progress in addressing reconciliation and nonviolence in the region of an internationally publicized massacre.

According to PRM officials, a direct benefit of women's initiatives is on-the-job training for resident women hired by international organizations and local NGOs. Some of these women may have been active in local women's organizations that existed before the war, and they bring their leadership skills with them. In Rwanda, many women's grassroots organizations existed before the war. A few of these organizations operated at the national level. One indigenous umbrella organization expanded from a base of 13 member groups in the early 1990s to 35 NGOs by the end of 1996. These groups were supported by the Rwandan Ministry of Gender and Promotion of Women's Development and by RWI. In Bosnia, there were over 40 women's organizations that remained organized and active across ethnic lines throughout the war. Unfortunately, none of these groups was invited to participate in the Dayton Peace Accord, which established ground rules for the resolution of the conflict.

In Pristina, Kosovo, OIG met with the director of an independent local radio station, who is one of the more vocal Kosovar women leaders. She spoke frankly of KWI's startup problems. She expressed the sentiment that funds should go toward more empowering activities than traditional women's work, such as hairdressing. Her opinions were echoed by others, who called attention to the problem of advancing women's economic and political status given the fact that many women were effectively disenfranchised before the war. An example of this is the low education rate of rural women. Even though children in rural areas were required by law to attend school before the war, girls were usually not participating at the same rate as boys.



Bosnian Women Representing UNHCR Field Office and Local and International NGOs Visit Income-generating Handicrafts Project

According to the director, KWI projects are empowering for women who now have an opportunity to earn money to support themselves. These women are role

models, earning the respect of their families and communities. Between May and December 2000, a series of half-hour programs spotlighting the activities of women's groups involved with KWI were aired. These radio programs were balanced, with both the negative and positive aspects of KWI explored. The radio station has also established a journalism and conflict resolution project for girls, partially supported by KWI. Various ethnic groups are represented in radio programming.

One of the lessons from the women's initiatives, especially KWI, is that discussions with local women must occur at every stage of the process. The success of an initiative depends not only on adequate funding, but also on the support and integration of local women from various ethnic groups, rural and urban. The opportunity to empower women has great potential only if it can be sustained after the international humanitarian community leaves. All international postconflict and development activities should have this goal in mind from the outset.

Recommendation 9: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should coordinate with its implementing partners to establish guidelines for women's initiatives that encompass not only the needs of vulnerable women, but also the leadership role that women play in the reconstruction of war-torn societies.

PRM agrees that women play a key role in postconflict reconstruction, and its programs set out to help them in the initial stages of their contribution to this process. But it is also important to recognize that many other agencies, including USAID and the many multilateral agencies involved in reconstruction and development, have far more direct responsibility for post-conflict reconstruction activities. PRM should not be seen as the primary entity for addressing such important needs.

OIG acknowledges that PRM's primary mandate is the protection of and assistance to refugees during emergency and conflict situations. Humanitarian response encompasses both short and long-term refugee and conflict victim situations. Examples of this are the relatively quick return of refugees and internally displaced persons in the Balkans contrasted with the long-term refugee situation in Western Tanzania. PRM's lead role in the emergency and conflict stages places it in the position to help coordinate and advance the Department's humanitarian response goals during the transition periods. All of PRM-funded programs for women address key concerns, such as health and equal access, and benefit from PRM's relationship with its implementing partners.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, should establish performance objectives and indicators and an evaluation mechanism for mainstreamed sexual/gender-based violence programs.

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should require international organizations and nongovernmental organizations to submit a needs assessment with their funding requests addressing psychosocial services for targeted women.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should review funding proposals to ensure that funds budgeted for income-generating projects are sufficient and support the overall objective of these programs.

Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should establish a timeframe for income-generating projects to demonstrate sustainability, after which projects should no longer be funded.

Recommendation 5: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should have on-line by the end of FY 2002 an automated monitoring and evaluation database system for analyzing funded projects. Projects that are not meeting established objectives should be reviewed to determine why, and subsequent funding decisions should be based on results.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should continue to work with the larger humanitarian community to develop standards to measure performance in such areas as psychosocial trauma.

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should track an international organization's implementation of lessons learned and best practices from U.S.-funded studies. The Bureau should establish a policy that only organizations implementing lessons learned and best practices continue to receive U.S. funds to perform studies.

Recommendation 8: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should coordinate with its implementing partners to develop comprehensive guidelines for women's initiatives, addressing: (1) empowerment objectives; (2) integration

with other refugee returnee and conflict victims activities; and (3) the framework for transition to local women. Proposals for funding new initiatives should be based on adherence to these guidelines.

Recommendation 9: The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration should coordinate with its implementing partners to establish guidelines for women's initiatives that encompass not only the needs of vulnerable women, but also the leadership role that women play in the reconstruction of war-torn societies.

ABBREVIATIONS

BPP	Bureau Performance Plan
BWI	Bosnian Women's Initiative
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IO	International Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KWI	Kosovo Women's Initiative
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
RWI	Rwanda Women's Initiative
SGBV	Sexual/Gender-Based Violence
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

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January 22, 2002

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Mr. Clark Kent Ervin
Inspector General
U.S. Department of State
Office of the Inspector General
Washington, DC 20520-6817

Dear Mr. ^{Clark} Ervin:

Thank you for offering the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) an opportunity to comment on the draft *Program Review on Department of State Humanitarian Response Efforts for Women and Conflict Victims*. We are pleased that your office undertook to evaluate our work in this area. Your recommendations will assist us in more effectively addressing the needs of women refugees and conflict victims. The following are our general comments on the report and its recommendations.

While the report offers many valuable reflections on programs for women in post-conflict situations, it is important to recognize that such programs represent only one type of women-focused activity supported by PRM. PRM primarily contributes to a wide array of programs for women in emergency refugee and conflict situations. The report is less comprehensive in its review and evaluation of these activities.

It should also be noted that the report does not acknowledge the important distinction between PRM's funding relationships with Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) and our funding relationships with International Organizations (IO). Although generous in our contributions and powerful in our role, the nature of PRM's funding relationships with IO's precludes us from exerting the sort of "contract authority" we might with NGO's. Nonetheless, PRM works diligently with our multilateral partners to steer programs and policies in positive ways.

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On the first recommendation, PRM agrees that program success and improvement depends on the establishment of objectives and indicators and using them in annual evaluations. Indeed, PRM does this for the projects it funds, including the sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) initiative. Furthermore, PRM has funded the Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium for FY01 to develop a multi-sectoral assessment tool that will improve international and local capacity to respond to SGBV.

Recommendation Two urges PRM to require a needs assessment from organizations seeking funding for psychosocial services for targeted women. We agree that needs assessments are critical to these and other programs. We expect organizations to provide both evidence of need and appropriate, needs-based intervention strategies prior to any funding action by PRM.

Recommendations Three and Four regarding income-generating programs are certainly worthy of further PRM consideration. Loan size and duration are key variables in program success. We believe the report's underlying, but unstated point is that, PRM should have better technical capacity to evaluate the design of income generation programs and to work with NGO implementing partners to shape these programs appropriately. PRM will work toward training our staff to better understand the dynamics of these kinds of projects.

We agree fully with Recommendation Five, and we are working on establishing a database to assist PRM in planning and monitoring programs and policies in operations by the end of FY 2002. This will help us track progress and ensure coherence with the objectives and indicators in these programs and in our Bureau Performance Plan.

Recommendations Six, Eight, and Nine collectively suggest that PRM and our partners should continue to develop common guidelines for women-focused programs, specifically for psychosocial interventions and women's roles in post-conflict reconstruction. We appreciate your recognition of the many efforts PRM is making to measure performance through standardized indicators. We intend to continue these efforts to raise the bar of acceptable performance and outcomes, and to develop more sophisticated methods of measurement. We agree that women play a key role in post-conflict reconstruction, and our programs set

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out to help them in the initial stages of their contribution to this process. But it is also important to recognize that many other agencies, including USAID and the many multilateral agencies involved in reconstruction and development, have far more direct responsibility for post-conflict reconstruction activities. PRM should not be seen as the primary entity for addressing such important needs.

Finally, PRM concurs that organizations should act on lessons-learned and best practices that are identified through PRM-funded studies, as suggested by Recommendation Seven. By supporting and monitoring the evaluation functions of our partner organizations, PRM actively seeks to promote the wide dissemination of findings and the necessary organizational changes based on these lessons learned.

We welcome your recommendations on the complex realm of humanitarian assistance and programs designed to target the needs of women. PRM will certainly follow up and benefit from these recommendations. The Bureau would also like to express its appreciation to Linda Kyte and her team for their commitment and their keen interest in refugee women.

Sincerely,



Alan Kreczko
Acting Assistant Secretary

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Women's Programs Visited by OIG

Country	Program
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Rakovica Reception Asylum Center
	Amica/Project House
	Bosnian Handicrafts
	Bos Fam Tuzla
	Women-for-Women International
	ZZIPO Tuzla
Kosovo	Center for Protection of Women and Children
	Norma (legal group providing assistance)
	International Medical Corps
	Plementina Roma Camp
	Jehona Group Women's Center
	Sweetbreeze Café
	Fantasia Hairdressing
	Breeze Studim Cow Farming
	Radio 21
Rwanda	Mamans Sportiv, sewing and literacy
	Grinding Mill, widows commune
	Girls Boarding School, Secondary
	Trauma Center
	AVEGA, organization for widows
Western Tanzania	Water Project
	International Rescue Committee
	Mtabila Camp, income-generating projects

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**Indicators for Department of State's Performance Goal
Addressing Equal Access to Protection and Assistance**

Indicator	Baseline FY 1999	Target Level FY 2000	Target Level FY 2001
Number of states party to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol	138 (as of 9/99) nations are party to the 1951 CSR and/or its 1967 Protocol	Increase by one state party	Increase by one state party
Alternative Indicator No extraordinary suffering in refugee situations, as demonstrated by excessive mortality rates of refugee population as compared to that of surrounding population.	Baseline FY 1999 Mortality rates in refugee populations are an accepted indicator of the extent to which the international community is meeting minimum standards of care. The Department does not regularly collect and maintain mortality rate information, but relies on, and normally receives, reports when excessive mortality threatens to become a problem.	Target Level FY 2000 Successful: Establish links to existing data collection efforts to monitor mortality rates and take measures to address any problems of excessive mortality. Evaluate the need for additional data collection mechanisms. Develop target for FY 2001.	Target Level FY 2000 Successful: Depending on outcome of FY 2000 effort, support efforts to improve data collection and, if necessary, take other measures to address any problems of excessive mortality.
Alternative Indicator Number of UNHCR repatriation programs ended 2 years after the majority of refugees return or find other durable solutions.	Both Guatemalan and Malian repatriations were concluded in 1999, but only after extensions that pulled UNHCR further into reintegration and development than is preferred. Rwanda might have made the 2-year-cut-off, if funding in FY98 had been sufficient.	Successful: Conclusion of at least one-third of the repatriation programs where refugees have been home for 2 years or more. Minimally Effective: Conclusion of less than one-third, but still a decrease in the number of repatriation programs for which funding has been required for more than 2 years. Unsuccessful: No decrease in the number of repatriation programs for which funding has been required for more than 2 years.	Successful: Conclusion of one-half of the repatriation programs where refugees have been home for 2 years or more. Minimally Effective: Conclusion of less than one-half, but still a decrease in the number of repatriation programs for which funding has been required for more than 2 years. Unsuccessful: No decrease in the number of repatriation programs for which funding has been required for more than 2 years.