

# Inter-agency Working Group (IAWG) on Reproductive Health in Crisis Situations

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

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

Since its formation, the IAWG has met annually (with the exception of 2005) to exchange information, identify challenges, gain from the experience of others, build partnerships and collectively work toward the institutionalization of reproductive health care for refugees and internally displaced persons. The IAWG is currently advocating for the institutionalization of reproductive health in crises by supporting regional IAWG networks in the Asia-Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2004 the IAWG conducted a ten-year global evaluation of reproductive health in conflict-affected settings to identify gaps and constraints so that UN agencies, governments and nongovernmental agencies can better target resources and interventions. Findings showed that services were generally favorable for refugees in stable settings but were lacking for the internally displaced. Some areas, such as gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS services, were found to be weak and critical gaps remain within safe motherhood, family planning and sexually transmitted infections programs.

Membership in IAWG is open to representatives of UN, nongovernmental, research and donor agencies interested to actively contribute in the advancement of the RH of women, men and youth in emergency situations. For more information, including on how to join IAWG, please go to [www.rhrc.org/iawg](http://www.rhrc.org/iawg).



*Burmese refugees in Thailand*  
(Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children)

