Addressing Gender-based Violence in Emergencies

Analytical Paper on WHS Self-Reporting on Agenda for Humanity Transformations 2D and 3D

This paper was prepared by:[1]

Executive Summary:

This paper reflects progress on World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) commitments related to gender-based violence (GBV) in emergencies using self-reports available on the Agenda for Humanity's Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformations (PACT). In total, 67 reports related to GBV. The dataset includes concrete steps to improve compliance and accountability of international humanitarian law (transformation 2D, 44 reports) and to empower and protect women and girls (transformation 3D, 24 reports) and was reviewed for substantive progress related to prevention and response to GBV.

The self-reports provided by different stakeholders point to the comprehensive approach that is required to ensure humanitarian response across sectors mitigates GBV risk, builds resilience, and lessens reliance on external actors. New research, guidance and initiatives to build capacity of local and international actors help to prioritize GBV prevention and response, improve service delivery and increase organizational accountability. Stakeholders pointed to other processes or initiatives that should help advance this area of work and support accountability, such as the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies,[2] the Women, Peace and Security agenda and new institutional policies. In the reporting period (June – December 2016), many entities noted adoption of the Inter-Agency Standing committee (IASC) Statement on Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and measures taken internally towards implementing the PSEA Minimum Operating Standards.

At this early stage of implementation of the Agenda for Humanity, the reports taken together help lay the foundation for progress in prevention of and response to GBV.

Most significant progress made across reporting on GBV prevention and response

In line with the Grand Bargain's emphasis on scaling up support for local responders, stakeholders reported progress on promoting women's leadership and strengthening capacity of local actors. ActionAid integrated women-led community based protection mechanisms as part

---

[1] This paper was authored by Emily Krasnor, GBV in Emergencies Specialist, UNFPA. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Secretariat.
[2] The Call to Action – a multi-stakeholder initiative launched in 2013 - aims to fundamentally transform the way gender-based violence is addressed in humanitarian operations via the collective action of numerous partners. The goal of the initiative is to drive change and foster accountability within the humanitarian sphere.

of its core humanitarian response programming. Austria initiated a project with Oxfam called "Ensuring accountability for SGBV and increased participation of women in Africa." International Rescue Committee supported 25 local organizations working across the Horn and East Africa with small grants and capacity development to advance GBV emergency preparedness. Ukraine, in order to respond to the needs of women and adolescent girls affected by the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, strengthened multi-sectoral coordination and enhanced access of GBV survivors to a range of services through 26 mobile teams. Many of these actions work to reinforce local systems without replacing them.

An effective humanitarian response depends on competent, qualified and skilled actors to carry out the critical role of GBV programming. A number of reports noted initiatives to increase available capacity for prevention and response to GBV, both of international and local actors in crisis-affected countries. Ireland and Switzerland added GBV experts to strengthen their rosters. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has fully integrated the core competencies developed by the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR) in trainings and in the job descriptions of GBV programme managers, information managers, and coordinators that are deployed on surge. Norway has supported the training of police officers to respond to GBV in several countries; in Haiti, the training has been systematized through incorporating GBV response in the curriculum for police cadets.

Stakeholders also indicated support for implementation of the *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies Road Map 2016-2020* and the monitoring of benchmarks. In 2016, Sweden, as chair of the Call to Action, welcomed 17 States and organizations that became new partners to the initiative (currently 66). The Women's Refugee Commission conducted missions to three countries to identify ways to strengthen the Call to Action in the field.

A range of organizations and states produced guidance oriented towards the prioritization of GBV prevention and response, improving service delivery and increasing organizational accountability. During the reporting period, the Women's Refugee Commission initiated a project that will look at optimizing cash-based interventions that enhance protection from GBV. UNFPA's Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies were rolled out to regional and country offices and included as an official policy document in UNFPA's Policies and Procedures Manual. International Rescue Committee, on behalf of the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) Steering Committee, finalized inter-agency GBV case management guidelines which will be disseminated globally in 2017.

Gaps and challenges in GBV prevention and response persist, and research efforts are underway to address these gaps and ensure an evidence-informed response that best serves women and girls. The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves published *Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings: Cookstoves and Fuel* in 2016, which outlines evidence and highlights gaps in knowledge on how cookstoves and fuel projects reduce the risk and overall frequency of GBV. International Deaf Emergency partnered with several organizations including World Deaf Federation and International Disability Alliance to conduct research on reported crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse on victims or providers with disabilities during and post disasters. The Humanitarian Advisory Group in partnership with La Trobe University reported that it conducted the first global study to investigate the impact of sexual exploitation and abuse on the capacity of the international community to fulfill its obligations related to promoting security, stability and peacebuilding.

During the reporting period, many stakeholders noted their adoption of the IASC Statement on PSEA and measures taken internally towards implementing the PSEA Minimum Operating Standards. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), Japan, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNFPA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) developed operational tools and guidance, including web-based guided training, and elaborated commitments and policies to protect against sexual exploitation and abuse. UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) co-led the development of supportive policies and guidance related to PSEA, notably the development of standard operating procedures for community-based complaint mechanisms and the uniform protocol on sharing information and on victim assistance. IOM has also begun a PSEA capacity building project to provide technical assistance to Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) and PSEA networks to establish and/or strengthen joint PSEA initiatives. Report the Abuse published the first global statistics on sexual violence experienced by humanitarian aid workers, and a mapping of how major humanitarian organizations address the issue. This work seeks to address a dearth of information and good practices on the subject.

While the true extent of GBV in emergency settings is difficult to measure, organizations reported on efforts to gather quality data on the nature and scope of GBV in a safe and ethical manner. UNICEF and UNFPA supported the development of Primero, an open source software platform that helps humanitarian workers manage protection related data that also includes the next generation of the GBVIMS to enable incident monitoring and connect survivors to services. Belgium supported Eye Witness, a mobile app used in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo that allows GBV evidence to be gathered and safely stored in a cloud. In 2016, IOM integrated GBV risk indicators in 14 displacement tracking matrix operations.

All humanitarian actors have a duty to protect those affected by crisis from GBV. As noted in the IASC *Guidelines for Integrating GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Action* (referred to as the IASC GBV Guidelines), essential actions must be taken by all sectors in a coordinated manner and from the earliest stages of an emergency; the absence of concrete evidence or data cannot be an excuse for inaction.[3] To fulfil this duty, a range of organizations and UN agencies reported on incorporating the IASC GBV Guidelines in proposals, strategies and trainings. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) produced a guide aimed at reducing GBV in food security and agriculture interventions. The World Food Programme (WFP) launched its Guidance on Prevention and Response to Gender Based Violence, which places efforts to address GBV firmly in the context of food assistance while helping staff and partners identify and tackle GBV risks linked to hunger and malnutrition.

A few reports noted that it is essential to understand how GBV affects lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex (LGBTI) communities during and after disasters and how they access services. The Netherlands and Belgium noted that their development cooperation activities and support for humanitarian aid will emphasize special attention to LGBTI communities in efforts to address GBV.

A number of reports noted the importance of promoting the engagement of men and boys in preventing and responding to GBV. For example, Iceland launched the Barbershop Toolkit through the HeForShe platform which aims to engage men and boys to address negative

---

[3] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery (2015).

stereotypes of masculinity and to actively promote gender equality and eliminate violence against women and girls.

The main barriers/ challenges to progress

Dedicated financial resources are necessary to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV in emergencies, yet both states and humanitarian organizations mentioned that funding shortfalls are a major barrier to progress. Reports mentioned that predictable and sustained financing is needed to commission further research, evaluate current work, build capacity of key GBV actors, provide multi-sector services to survivors, and secure human resources with GBV expertise in humanitarian contexts.

Other challenges identified were the need for stronger accountability frameworks, and matching political commitments with concrete actions. Working on GBV in emergencies is particularly challenging due to limited knowledge and understanding of the concept of GBV, its causes and consequences, sensitivity of the topic itself in many cultures, and the misperception that addressing GBV is not a priority compared to other sectors of humanitarian response. The extremely shallow pool of GBV specialists that are qualified to work in emergencies also compounds the challenges discussed above.

> *"One of the main challenges seems to be how to translate the political rhetoric into implementation on the ground. There is a need to increase gender experts as well as financial resources in the implementation of gender policies in humanitarian aid and in the Women Peace and Security agenda."*
>
> **Spain**

While many organizations noted commitments made under the Call to Action and how they measure progress through its accountability framework established under the Roadmap, Sweden, who led the initiative in 2016, underscored the challenge of broadening the membership of the Call to Action beyond Europe and North America.

To enhance GBV risk mitigation, a few organizations reported a need for increased collaboration between protection specialists and non-specialists to understand risks, and to identify and take responsive actions to enhance the protection environment for women and girls.

Measuring progress

Stakeholders reported using their internal reporting, monitoring, evaluation systems or instruments to assess progress on WHS commitments related to GBV. In addition, donors are committing to allocating resources contingent on population data being disaggregated by sex and age and other pertinent variables. Some have gone further to require that data is complemented by a gender analysis or an explanation of how proposed actions will meet the needs of women and girls.

Progress of the PSEA capacity building project led by Report the Abuse is measured by the number of HCTs/PSEA networks which receive requested technical assistance, and emerge with increased capacity to conduct collective PSEA activities and to establish inter-agency community-based complaint mechanisms. Report the Abuse is assessing progress on PSEA by engaging with humanitarian organizations to improve their prevention and response strategies to address sexual violence experienced by their employees.

Highlights of good practice

- Reinforcing accountability: To set expectations and create accountability for staff and organizations, a few entities have incorporated GBV into the terms of reference of protection specialists and integrated GBV prevention and mitigation into the terms of reference or workplans of non-protection specialists (Danish Refugee Council, Tearfund, Netherlands).

- Strengthening referral systems: A number of good practices have emerged to strengthen referral systems to connect women, girls and other at risk groups to appropriate multi-sector GBV prevention and response services. Oxfam, UNFPA and IOM have begun consultations to seek ways of providing meaningful referrals in situations where there are few or no services for survivors.

- Prevention and risk mitigation: A few entities, notably international NGOs and cluster lead agencies, have initiated concrete actions to build a stronger understanding and inspire more concrete integration of GBV prevention and mitigation actions across their respective sectors using the IASC GBV Guidelines.

Recommendations

Based on an analysis of reports on progress towards transformations 3D and 2D that focus on GBV, the following recommendations are critical to strengthen progress and contribute to systemic changes that must be made to transform the humanitarian response to GBV.

1. Regardless of the presence or absence of concrete "evidence," all humanitarian personnel and donors to assume GBV is taking place, to treat it as a serious and life-threatening protection issue and not wait for numbers to justify GBV response measures or funding.

2. Build a stronger understanding of GBV prevention and mitigation across sectors and integrate GBV risk mitigation, in line with the IASC GBV Guidelines, into response plans and programming.

3. Ensure adequate multi-year funding for competent, qualified and skilled GBV actors and for the establishment of GBV services.

4. Increase investment in innovative information management processes that document the nature and scope of GBV to inform programming, policy and advocacy.

5. All donors to require that all proposals for funding address how the action proposed will contribute to GBV risk mitigation, in line with the IASC GBV Guidelines.

About this paper
All stakeholders who made commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in support of advancing the Agenda for Humanity were invited to self-report on their progress in 2016 through the Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation (PACT) (agendaforhumanity.org). The information provided through the self-reporting is publicly available and forms the basis, along with other relevant analysis, of the annual synthesis report. The annual synthesis report will be prepared by OCHA and will highlight trends in progress, achievements and gaps that need more attention as stakeholders collectively work toward advancing the 24 transformations in the Agenda for Humanity. In keeping with the multi-stakeholder spirit of the WHS, OCHA invited partners to prepare short analytical papers that analyze and assess self-reporting in the PACT, or provide an update on progress on initiatives launched at the World Humanitarian Summit. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Secretariat.

Photo credit: AU/UN IST/ Price

AGENDA FOR HUMANITY
5 CORE RESPONSIBILITIES
24 TRANSFORMATIONS