INSTITUTIONALIZING GENDER IN EMERGENCIES

Case study of South Sudan

This case study describes implementation of the project Institutionalizing Gender in Emergencies: Bridging Policy and Practice. The project, supported by ECHO Enhanced Response Capacity and Oxfam, was implemented by Oxfam in South Sudan between September 2015 and March 2017 in collaboration with members of the Cluster Gender Focal Point Group (CGFPG).
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The Project in Context

South Sudan has an estimated population of 12.34 million as of 2015. \(^1\) It is the world’s youngest country and seceded from Sudan on 9 July 2011. However, independence did not bring the country the stability that so many had hoped for, and conflict has worsened since December 2013. In 2015, South Sudan ranked 169\(^6\) out of 188 countries on the UN Human Development Index and holds the same rank on the UN Gender Development Index (GDI), which compares disparities between women and men in three basic dimensions of human development – health, knowledge and living standards.\(^4\) As at 2016, the extreme poverty rate (percentage of population living below the poverty line) had increased to 65.9 percent,\(^3\) up from 51% in 2010.\(^7\) As of 2013, the country’s maternal mortality rate of 2,054 deaths per 100,000 births remained one of the highest in the world.\(^5\)

There are urgent humanitarian needs across South Sudan as a result of multiple and interlocking threats, including armed conflict and inter-communal violence, economic decline, disease and climatic shocks. Across the country, 1.9 million people have been internally displaced since 15 December 2013,\(^6\) including more than 900,000 children under 18 years old, as at June 2016.\(^7\) In 2017, more than 70% of refugees are children, while nationwide, over 276,343 children are likely to be affected by Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). At the same time, 51% of South Sudan’s children are out of school and only 40% of those who remain in school are girls.\(^9\) As of November 2016, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) estimated that the six Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites are currently sheltering more than 200,000 internally displaced people (IDPs). Currently, there are at least 1.6 million refugees, the impact of which is being felt across the region.\(^9\)

Since December 2013, some 3.4 million people have been displaced, including about 1.5 million who fled to neighbouring countries.\(^10\) Vulnerable people who are out of reach of life-saving assistance as a result of the conflict are paying the ultimate price. As so often in a crisis, women and children are the worst affected.

Nearly one in every three pregnant and lactating women is malnourished,\(^11\) and on 20 February 2017, famine was declared in parts of the country, with 100,000 people facing starvation and a further 1 million people classified as being on the brink of famine.\(^12\) By the height of the lean season in July, it is estimated that some 5.5 million people will be severely food insecure across the country.\(^13\)

Traditional gender roles have been altered, reversed, shifted or accelerated during the current crisis in South Sudan. Besides no longer having farms to cultivate or animals to graze, those settled among host communities are no longer able to enter the forests to cut poles or grass or to fetch firewood, for fear of harm by armed actors.\(^14\)

According to the South Sudan Gender Analysis,\(^15\) in both host communities and the PoC sites, men identified confinement and idleness as major negative consequences of the crisis, noting that these conditions had substantially eroded their roles as household heads and providers for their families. Across the country, families have been separated, leaving elderly and other vulnerable members behind, while children, especially boys, face the risk of recruitment by armed forces. Adolescent boys and young men fear violence and death when moving outside the camps and settlements.

The breakdown of the social fabric within communities reduces protection for women and engages them in multiple new roles. Women and girls observed that the crisis had brought about new responsibilities for them related to care work, which had led to increasing social acceptance of their participation in new productive roles such as petty business and working as hired labour. Nevertheless, the most significant increases in participation in paid labour and petty trade/business were observed among girls and boys, and levels of sexual violence are catastrophic, including harassment, rape and abduction.\(^16\)

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) articulated commitments to gender equality, which prompted the creation of the Cluster Gender Focal Point Group (CGFPG) in 2014. The group was established to support gender equality programming in the clusters. UNOCHA has been working in collaboration with UN Women to take this forward. This group has been supported by the ECHO-funded project Institutionalizing Gender in Emergencies: Bridging Policy and Practice between September 2016 and March 2017. It consists of a collaboration of UN agencies and international and local NGOs active in South Sudan (UN Women, Oxfam, Safer world, Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), CARE, UNMISS, Nonviolent Peace force (NP), South Sudan Development Agency (SSUDA) and Nile Hope Development Forum (NHDF), among others). As part of the ECHO–ERC project Institutionalizing Gender in Emergencies: Bridging Policy and practice, Oxfam has been strategically collaborating with UN Women and UNOCHA to support the work already being done by the CGFPG.
THE CHALLENGES

Globally, good policies and international standards on gender in emergencies do exist. However, the implementation of humanitarian assistance with a strong gender perspective remains ad hoc, with limited accountability of implementing agencies.

The ECHO-funded project: Institutionalizing Gender in Emergencies: Bridging Policy and Practice was designed to explore how to better institutionalize gender-related standards in humanitarian assistance. It was built on an analysis of policy and practice both at a global level and at country level, and piloted in four countries.

The project focused on the following issues in which significant gaps were identified:

- Insufficient gender analysis and evidence to inform humanitarian response planning and practice;
- Low technical capacity in gender in emergencies across sectors and organizations;
- A lack of coordination on gender across different agencies to support sector programmes;
- Lack of accountability for implementation of gender-related standards within organizations and across the humanitarian system.

OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGIES

The objective of this project was:

To catalyse change within the humanitarian sector by institutionalizing gender mainstreaming in emergencies and stronger accountability to enable an enhanced response capacity for adapted assistance to meet the needs of women, girls, men and boys.

The project aimed to deliver four results:

- Functioning Gender in Emergencies Working Group (GiEWG) established;
- Gender evidence base via a consolidated Country Gender Analysis for use by all actors, established;
- Technical capacity for gender in emergencies within humanitarian organizations enhanced;
- Workable Accountability Framework in coordination mechanisms tested.

This case study describes the implementation of the project in South Sudan, the strategies that were adopted and what needed to change in the context. It discusses the problems, achievements and significant events and draws conclusions that may be generalized at global level, for humanitarian situations – particularly protracted, complex crisis situations – as well as for consideration of next steps.

Figure 1: Project results diagram
2 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

Table 1 below summarizes the implementation timetable of the project in South Sudan and describes the key actors and targets involved at each stage. This summary is followed by a detailed analysis of interventions.

Table 1: Institutionalizing Gender in Emergencies Project – South Sudan implementation timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Key Milestone of the project</th>
<th>Targets/Actors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creation of the Gender in Emergencies Working Group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2014–2015 (pre-project)</td>
<td>The IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action issued a Gender Alert for South Sudan</td>
<td>HCT, UNOCHA, Clusters, GenCap, UN Women</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HCT in South Sudan made commitment on gender equality programming</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cluster Gender Focal Point Group (CGFPG) created CGFPG ToR developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>Official project launch</td>
<td>Humanitarian agencies and organizations (UN, INGO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>ToR of the CGFPG was revised</td>
<td>UN Women, UNOCHA, UNMISS, Oxfam ICWG, CGFPG, NPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July–September 2016</td>
<td>Some International staff, including members of the CGFPG, were evacuated when the July Juba crisis broke out. There were phased returns for a few months thereafter. Meetings continued in Nairobi with members joining online from across the region</td>
<td>CGFPG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October–November 2016</td>
<td>UN Women and Oxfam agree to support piloting of the Accountability Framework</td>
<td>CGFPG, UN Women, Oxfam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January–February 2017</td>
<td>Meetings arranged with UNOCHA, cluster heads and key INGO and UN members to seek support and the approval of its ToR by ICWG</td>
<td>UN Women, Oxfam and CGFPG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>CGFPG lobby Clusters, who then reviewed/reconstituted their seconded members to CGFPG</td>
<td>Clusters ICWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017 onwards</td>
<td>Monthly meetings and capacity-building initiatives continue, UN Women and Oxfam continue to chair and co-chair the CGFPG, respectively</td>
<td>UN Women, Oxfam, CGFPG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Improving the Evidence Base - Gender Analysis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>January–May 2016</td>
<td>Oxfam team, with CGFPG, undertake a Desk Review of evidence related to gender in emergencies in South Sudan</td>
<td>Oxfam, external consultant, CGFPG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>Data collection for Gender Analysis from five disaster prone areas – survey about 490 men and women, Focus Group and Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>Oxfam, external consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>A Gender Humanitarian support Personnel staff (HSP) is deployed to work on writing and editing the draft Gender Analysis report from Nairobi for three weeks</td>
<td>Oxfam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October–December 2016</td>
<td>Draft Gender Analysis report reviewed by CGFPG</td>
<td>CGFPG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Implementers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Sharing of key findings of draft gender analysis, with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare during the National Gender Coordination Forum facilitated through UN Women</td>
<td>UN Women, CGFPG members, National Ministry of Gender, state-level ministry of social development (directorate of gender), donors, various UN, INGO and NNGO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January–February 2017</td>
<td>Gender Analysis report finalized</td>
<td>Oxfam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>Gender Analysis report is published and launched</td>
<td>Oxfam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017 onwards</td>
<td>Gender Analysis will continue to be disseminated widely</td>
<td>Oxfam and CGFPG</td>
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### 3. Developing technical capacity in gender in emergencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Implementers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014–2015 (pre-project)</td>
<td>GenCap Advisor and UN Women conducted four trainings to strengthen the capacity of the CGFPG</td>
<td>UN Women, GenCap, CGFPG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July–September</td>
<td>Communiqué developed as a guide for gender analysis assessments and programming under different sectors following the break out of the July 2016 crisis</td>
<td>CGFPG (Oxfam, U Women, CARE, Nonviolent Peace Force, UN FAO, UNFPA, SSUDA, Nile Hope Development Forum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Self assessment tool showing gender gaps in practice and policy by different organizations completed and analysed by seven members of the CGFPG</td>
<td>CGFPG (Oxfam IBIS, WorldVision, Safer World, CARE International, UNFAO, UNHCR, UNFPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>The first ‘Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action’ Training course at National level (in Juba) UNFPA mobilized members of the CGFPG to co-facilitate a gender mainstreaming workshop for government gender focal points from different ministries and the National Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare</td>
<td>Participants included members and partners of the CGFPG; UN Women and Oxfam co-facilitated the sessions UNFPA, UN Women, Oxfam, NPA, CGFPG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>Second ‘Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action’ course in Wau State</td>
<td>Participants included members and partners of the CGFPG, UNFPA and IMC co-facilitated the sessions with Oxfam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td>UN Women conducted training on gender mainstreaming for officials of the National Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs in Juba</td>
<td>UN Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017 onwards</td>
<td>Training and capacity-building of members and Clusters continue, particularly of national non-government organizations and relevant government agencies</td>
<td>CGFPG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Accountability framework in coordination structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Implementers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Accountability Framework shared with key stakeholders for consultation and planning on how to pilot at Cluster level</td>
<td>CGFPG members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2017</td>
<td>Lobbied UNOCHA, different cluster and co-cluster leads and key cluster members for buy-in to, and piloting of, the Accountability Framework</td>
<td>CGFPG, ICWG, cluster leads and co-leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017 onwards</td>
<td>Accountability Framework presented to the WASH cluster, GBV sub-cluster and SNFI cluster for feedback and adaptation Accountability Framework will be presented to Education, Food Security and Livelihoods and Health clusters Commitment obtained from Cluster Focal points, cluster leads and co-leads to use the Accountability Framework to guide and monitor Cluster performance on gender mainstreaming Commitment from cluster leads to provide time during cluster meetings for cluster engagement on specific gender and gender mainstreaming issues arising</td>
<td>CGFPG members, cluster leads and co-leads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 COALITION-BUILDING

The Development of a Gender in Emergencies Working Group (hereinafter called Cluster Gender Focal Point Group or CGFPG)

ISSUE

The analysis at global level revealed that gender issues are only addressed in a limited way in humanitarian coordination mechanisms, and are mostly confined to the gender-based violence (GBV) sub-cluster of the protection cluster. This limits the understanding and awareness of gender-related issues by humanitarian actors. It may mean that differential vulnerabilities, as well as the long-term social norms and underlying root causes of gender inequality are not examined or adequately addressed within programming. It also suggests that the discussion of gender within humanitarian response efforts may not benefit from the input of local actors, including women’s rights organizations.

This was initially addressed in 2014 in South Sudan, with the creation of the Cluster Gender Focal Point Group (CGFPG) in 2014 by UNOCHA, in collaboration with UN Women and a GenCap Advisor. This initiative requires further support to ensure long-term sustainability.

OBJECTIVE

The project design included the establishment of a national Gender in Emergencies Working Group (GiEWG). This collaboration was designed to bring together different actors in the humanitarian system to lead on project activities and encourage sustainable change in the humanitarian system. Important actors had been identified at global level as Cluster Lead organizations, including UN agencies and INGOs, as well as key local NGO partners and organizations/coalitions working on women’s rights. In the case of South Sudan, the project instead built on the CGFPG, expanding its original purpose. This project aims to fully back up UNOCHA, UN Women and the GenCap Advisor’s work and build on what was already organized as CGFPG.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The CGFPG was created in 2014, before the project commenced, as a manifestation of the HCT’s commitment to gender equality. It must be recalled that in January 2014, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action issued a Gender Alert for South Sudan. In 2015, the HCT then made commitments on gender equality programming, which outlines seven steps. One of them is accountability, which prompted nine clusters and three sub-clusters to second two to three members each to become gender focal points. UNOCHA and UN Women, through the GenCap Adviser, worked with cluster heads to convene all the gender focal points and established the CGFPG.

During the inception phase of the project, Oxfam South Sudan reached out to UN Women and UNOCHA. Instead of creating a parallel group, the project built on and supported the existing CGFPG. Oxfam secured the agreement from the HQ, Regional office and South Sudan Country Programme of both Oxfam and UN Women to enhance collaboration and co-leadership on the ground. It is noted that UN Women has the mandate to lead and coordinate the UN system’s work on gender equality, as well as to promote accountability, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress. The project was presented to the Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG) at two different forums by Oxfam, with the support of UN Women, UNFPA and the UNHCR-based Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster lead, and supported by other members of the CGFPG in February 2015. During these presentations, the importance as well as the accomplishments (and the gaps) of CGFPG was discussed. Important issues were raised including (1) CGFPG support to clusters should extend beyond training; and (2) it should simplify guidelines on gender mainstreaming so as to avoid confusion by the cluster members who are not usually gender specialists.

The CGFPG had a wider mandate than training. They were, however, focusing on training in the early stages as a result of demand from the Cluster leads, co-leads and members. In response to comments received, the CGFPG reworded their Terms of Reference (ToR) to broaden impact-based activities for Cluster Gender Focal
Points, and to broaden responsibility and accountability for cluster-level gender mainstreaming beyond the CGFPG. Training and capacity-building remain a key role due to high staff turnover at all levels in protracted humanitarian crises, and the mix of gender experts and non-gender experts within the Clusters and the CGFPG.

A key change was an expansion of the CGFPG’s role, to include advisory and advocacy roles for clusters, through the provision of a forum for gender experts from the organizations represented in the CGFPG to engage with the clusters. This is also to be implemented through the various focal points. Between November and February 2017, UN Women and Oxfam, acting on behalf of the CGFPG, met bilaterally with the cluster coordinators/co-coordinators and UNOCHA to discuss and build support for the sign-off of the reviewed ToR. In these meetings, UN Women and Oxfam and the CGFPG successfully lobbied for the inclusion of the mandate of the cluster leads and co-leads in gender mainstreaming in the clusters, so that these cluster leads then champion it at ICWG level and downwards to cluster level.

Composition of the CGFPG has remained the same, in so far as each cluster has chosen their gender focal points to second to the CGFPG. Having the cluster choose their members has its advantages, as the members of the CGFPG are agents of the clusters. This gives them space during cluster meetings to make presentations, carry out trainings, etc. It provides a voice for national organizations and small organizations who may otherwise find it difficult to voice their concerns about various issues at cluster level. The lead coordination role remains with UN Women, while Oxfam became the co-coordinator. Oxfam also plays a major secretariat role.

The CGFPG supported the review of the IASC guidelines on gender mainstreaming in March 2016. It was co-facilitated by the Consultant from GenCap, UN Women and Oxfam. At the same workshop, UNOCHA and ICWG expressed the need for a brief gender mainstreaming guide for non-gender specialists which they felt should eventually be included in the reviewed IASC guidelines on gender mainstreaming.

When the July 2016 crisis broke out, many agencies evacuated international staff, followed by a phased return. In addition, many national staff relocated at least their families to neighbouring countries, and priorities for the international community at large were on life-saving activities. Consequently, monthly meetings, processing of the Gender Analysis, discussions of the ToR and training were all delayed. Meanwhile, from Nairobi, the CGFPG provided technical support for reviewing documents and processes in the project. An ad hoc meeting of gender experts and some focal persons from organizations represented in the CGFPG was convened. They coordinated across the capitals in the region and developed six communiqués, one general and five others offering guidelines for gender mainstreaming in the Education, Health, Non-Food Items (NFI), Food Security and Livelihoods, Protection and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) clusters. The communiqué incorporated guidelines and tools, including the IASC guidelines on Gender and GBV mainstreaming and various organizational assessment tools and policies. It is a one to two page guideline on key issues to take into consideration when mainstreaming gender in humanitarian initiatives, key aspects that make programming interventions gender sensitive, and a definition of gender analysis and why it is important. They were signed off by several UN agencies, international NGOs and national NGOs. They have been widely circulated among CGFPG member organizations and partners, and were particularly well used during a multisectoral rapid needs assessment carried out in former Eastern Equatoria State by various actors, immediately after the July 2016 crisis.

From September 2016, full-time activities resumed in Juba. However, cluster compositions, both coordinators and members, remained unstable. UN Women and Oxfam had to do repeated briefings where possible, while continuing to lead activities of the CGFPG. In February 2017, Oxfam deployed a Humanitarian Support Personnel (HSP)-Gender Adviser to support the CGFPG. Together with the relevant CGFPG members, the HSP organized a round of bilateral meetings with cluster coordinators and co-coordinators to conduct a comprehensive briefing and/or update and to lobby for support for the CGFPG and its activities — to secure support for the ToR, and to revive the mandate of seconded members to the CGFPG.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The key challenges in developing the CGFPG relate to the nature of crisis in South Sudan and the challenges of the humanitarian response. Because the work being carried out under the ECHO (Enhanced Response Capacity) ERC project primarily focuses on collaboration with the clusters, it has been important not only to engage with the work, but to integrate it with the UN system in-country. This informed the choice of partnering with UN Women and working with existing groups within the UN system.

The Protracted and Intermittent Nature of Crisis in South Sudan means that, occasionally, humanitarian actors (including most if not all the organizations comprising the CGFPG) are either affected by or involved in
priority humanitarian response. At the start of the project, the country was still reeling from the after-effects of the December 2013 crisis. Within this project period, three major crises occurred. First was the uncertainty and tension in April 2016 when the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) leader Riak Machar returned to Juba to work alongside the SPLM’s President Kiir as First Vice President under the Transitional Government of National Unity. This delayed the field work by the consultants by about a month, since they were unable to travel to the field during this time for security reasons. The second was the July 2016 crisis, the implications of which have been discussed above. Practically all the members of the CGFPG were evacuated. Some of them resigned and did not return to South Sudan. The same applies to the cluster leads and co-leads. The third is the famine that was declared in February 2017, which coincided with the planned bilateral meetings with UNOCHA to discuss the ToR of the CGFPG, as well as planned meetings with cluster coordinators to discuss the Accountability Framework.

High turnover of staff in South Sudan (common to conflict areas) is common, particularly among UN agencies and INGOs. During the crises periods, NNGOs either shut down or drastically reduce operations. This meant that the members of the CGFPG, along with the clusters they represent, were in a state of continuous change. The need to repeat project briefings, to (re)activate representation to the group, and to secure buy-in became a continuous process. The committed organizations have remained the same, but there is a constant stream of new personnel that require briefing. It often takes time simply to secure appointments and to conduct the briefing, especially with cluster leads, given competing humanitarian priorities. However, unless staff are properly briefed, they may not be able to fully contribute to the CGFPG.

Working on gender within the cluster system in the context of South Sudan is challenging. As stated in the Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) of 2015:

Implementing agencies’ treatment of gender within the response has varied considerably and seemed to depend on agencies’ mandates and the interests of individual managers. Some agencies successfully integrated gender into their programming, whereas others are struggling to do so or view gender as a subject for women’s groups. A similar mixed picture exists among the clusters. Only a few clusters, such as the Protection Cluster, evidenced active attempts to incorporate gender analysis in a meaningful way. 22

Many clusters mistakenly consider that the GBV sub-cluster represents gender issues adequately, and do not understand the need for a separate one. Meanwhile, the GBV sub-cluster had been rightly asking clusters to accept their appointed GBV focal points (sent out from the GBV sub-cluster to the different clusters) in their bid to roll out the IASC GBV mainstreaming guidelines. This is at variance with the CGFPG model of obtaining focal points from clusters to the group, and needs to be clarified with the various cluster leads, co-leads and members, because there is some confusion about it. In general, clusters are appreciative, but they often raised the concern of having too many focal points or sub-clusters, which led to multiple meetings. This is because the same members need to attend different meetings, which creates an overlap.

Coordinating the group within the UN cluster system is not easy without a full time coordinating role for the CGFPG. The group is expected to support all the clusters (refer to ToR), but all its members, including the UN Women and Oxfam can only give partial time to the endeavour. Oxfam was able to give adequate attention to the CGFPG during the project. The members represent a particular cluster, and may give higher priority to their own clusters and organizational responsibilities.

By contrast, clusters or sub-clusters/working groups in the UN have full-time coordinators and co-coordinators, which enable them to focus on the project at hand and to conduct consistent follow-up. UN Women has a mandate to coordinate, and CGFPG is just one of the many coordination structures/processes it attends to. Having Oxfam as co-lead and secretariat has been helpful, but its gender coordinator has other priorities too. The presence of a gender adviser, and subsequent deployment of an additional gender adviser from Oxfam for a few weeks, helped with the finalization of some of the key outputs.

Gender vs. sectoral expertise. The CGFPG is expected to support gender mainstreaming of the clusters, which implies that members must have some level of gender expertise (hopefully higher than those they should support). Its composition as mentioned comprises seconded members of the different clusters who are experts in their sectors (e.g. WASH, health, etc.) but not necessarily in gender. This contradiction was a challenge but was partially solved by involving gender experts from the same organizations. This is the role of a network-based approach, which enables networks to draw on the skills of all members in a multiplier fashion so that the sum is greater than the parts. However, the original members subsequently relied on their gender-expert colleagues, ultimately reducing their own participation in the CGFPG. This may have resulted in a disconnect between the CGFPG and their sending clusters.
LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Contingency planning is important for project work in protracted conflict situations, in relation to activities, human resources, and budgets. Various scenarios should be considered at planning and risk-analysis level (e.g., expat evacuation, high turnover, inadequate gender expertise) in order to mitigate their impact on project implementation.

- There is also a need to better factor in the high cost of operating in South Sudan and ensure that a commensurate budget is allocated to support the presence of relevant human resources (including short-term experts) throughout the life of the project.

- It is important to engage UNOCHA and ICWG in projects relating to the clusters, and frequent meetings with them to discuss issues are advised, in order for the project to benefit from valuable and practical inputs as well as institutional support. For example, in one of the meetings with UNOCHA, the team benefited from clarifications about the accountability of Cluster Co-ordinators, the documentation of gender mainstreaming within the HRP and HNO, and an invitation to address the ICWG.

- It is recommended that the existing focal points are used to establish clear feedback mechanisms, in order to avoid excessive time spent securing appointments and hearings on various issues. CGFPG shall incorporate this in the ongoing revisions of their ToR.

- UN Women has provided active leadership, manifested in its dedicated staff coordinating the CGFPG, making available expertise and hosting monthly meetings. A coalition for gender work at this level is particularly important, given the mandate within the UN system, which is responsible for the Clusters.

- While the CGFPG is a national network, there are also coordination networks at state level, which also need support on gender mainstreaming, so similar initiatives, organized at state-level cluster meetings across the country, as applicable, would be an effective additional programming option.

- CGFPG is important in humanitarian crises because members collectively provide a platform for considering and providing technical and human resource support for Gender Mainstreaming in Rapid Needs, Baseline/Joint/internal multi-sectoral and sectoral humanitarian assessments, as well as programming. Without a focal point like the CGFPG, these factors are often forgotten.

- The fact that members of the CGFPG are drawn from the clusters gives the group additional influence. The CGFPG will still have to claim its space, but it is much easier to do so if its members are seconded from the clusters. However, since members are not all gender specialists, some lack the confidence to articulate gender issues in a sufficiently rigorous manner to embed it in the ‘conversations’ during cluster meetings. Given the high staff turnover in South Sudan, continuous capacity-building for CGFPG members, cluster leads and co-leads, with special focus on national non-government organizations and government staff, should be resourced and scheduled into programme activities.

- Linkages between the CGFPG and GBV sub-cluster should be institutionalized to encourage closer collaboration and reduce confusion regarding their respective roles. This has been incorporated in the reviewed ToR.
4 IMPROVING THE EVIDENCE BASE – GENDER ANALYSIS

ISSUE

At the international level, there is insufficient gender analysis and evidence to inform humanitarian response planning and practice.

OBJECTIVE

The process entailed the consolidation of available data on gender issues in emergencies at a country level (desk review), in order to undertake a gap analysis of areas of deficiency, and to use this to conduct a field study. Put together, this would form a consolidated country Gender Analysis. The aim was to support humanitarian actors in developing proposals and designing humanitarian programme strategies and contingency plans, and also to help to establish links with long-term development projects.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Desk Review. The project team first collated all the available evidence on gender in emergencies and worked with a consultant to produce a desk review (completed July 2016).

Data collection. Research for a countrywide gender analysis was undertaken during the period May–June 2016. The study targeted 450 individuals from both IDP and host populations in selected Payams and Bomas in Wau, Walgak and Panyagor counties and the PoC sites in Bor and Juba. There were also Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with more than 20 different groups of men, women, boys and girls, and Key Informant Interviews (KII) with more than 40 individuals representing affected communities, government representatives and national and international humanitarian agencies.

Gender Analysis Report Writing and Review. The Gender Analysis identified differential gender needs that are, or are not, being addressed, the reasons for the perceptions that communities and aid-workers have, as well as differential coping strategies and changing gender dynamics, suggesting, where possible, opportunities for improved and engendered programming by humanitarian actors.

Preliminary findings were shared with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and with the CGFPG in September 2016. Oxfam conducted a series of reviews and improvements and finally signed it off at both country and global level in March 2017. The report was published in March 2017.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Data gaps. The desk review took a long time to complete, particularly because there is a dearth of current data related to gender mainstreaming. The study was then conceptualized on the basis of a gap analysis of previous work undertaken on gender in South Sudan. Whereas other studies explored specific issues pertaining to gender in the country context, this study aimed to audit and understand the overall perceptions of communities and aid workers in relation to the performance of the humanitarian aid effort in gender mainstreaming in five different locations across the country.

Skills and knowledge to carry out gender assessments. The initial plan was to use a regionally based consultant to make use of regional knowledge of the South Sudan context. During the July crisis, the draft gender analysis was revised by an Oxfam Gender Humanitarian Support Personnel (HSP) working from Nairobi for a period of three weeks. The entire process of producing this gender analysis entailed many delays and considerable handover from one researcher/writer to the other.
**Contextual developments.** Whereas the original timeframe did include some flexibility, the impact of the crises in April 2016, and again in July 2016, coupled with the challenges in timely identification of a suitable consultant for the gender analysis, led to the overall delay of project outputs.

**LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Given the data gaps for desk review, primary data collection is a more useful approach, despite difficulties posed by the limited access to and around pre-identified field sites. For the future, it is recommended that additional resources be made available to support a bigger and more skilful team of researchers and add more research sites.

- In terms of personnel, Oxfam has global gender experts who can effectively undertake a gender analysis in an emergency context. While these are often diverted to work in ongoing emergencies, when available, staff from this cohort, in combination with a higher level global gender expert, may be the best combination to deliver this type of project.

- The preliminary findings of the Country Gender Analysis indicate that the national gender policy for South Sudan does not include any mention of gender in emergencies. As this was presented to the Ministry, it is recommended that a follow-up report be published and used for evidence-based advocacy to government.
5 IMPROVING TECHNICAL CAPACITY FOR GENDER IN EMERGENCIES

ISSUE

The issue addressed was low technical capacity across sectors and organizations on gender in emergencies.

OBJECTIVE

The objective was to create a baseline of capacity on gender in emergencies for participating agencies. This exercise was designed to raise awareness of capacity gaps that could then be fed into a training course, designed at global level and adapted at national level, focused on Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action. The training would lead to the creation of a national-level action plan, aiming to achieve concrete changes in internal guidance and policies as well as follow-on training by participating organizations.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The project (at global level) designed an organizational self-assessment as a tool for the CGFPG based on the Oxfam minimum standards for gender in emergencies.

The Oxfam rapid organizational self-assessment was carried out as part of the gender analysis study, to assess the degree to which gender mainstreaming was being institutionalized by humanitarian aid organizations working in South Sudan in their humanitarian programme activities. In total, seven organizations who are members of the CGFPG volunteered and completed the assessment: CARE International, FAO, Plan International, Oxfam IBIS, UNFPA, UNHCR and WorldVision International.

Overall, the organizations interviewed were slightly above the threshold, with scores ranging from 43 to 71 out of 100 (averaging about 60%) in terms of their gender institutionalization and mainstreaming practices. The results highlighted the need for further training and capacity-building in institutionalizing gender mainstreaming in their humanitarian programme activities.

The Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action course addressed developing gender leadership to drive change in the humanitarian system. Modules addressed technical capacity as well as soft skills in conflict management and how to lead change.

Figure 2: Sample modules of the Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action course

- What is gender?
- Managing conflict – Killman’s model
- CHS, IASC Marker
- Power walk in a disaster scenario
- External talks on leading change
- Gender Analysis, Feminist MEAL
- GBV/PSEA
- Full simulation from IASC online
- Feminist Leadership Diamond
The first training took place in Juba in October 2016. There were 29 participants (10 females, 19 male) from CGFP members. UN Women and Oxfam co-facilitated.

Key partners and staff from various organizations attended. For many, this was the first time they were attending training on gender in the humanitarian sector. For a few, it was a welcome refresher. All participants reported improved knowledge on gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian sector. Partners representing different clusters developed action plans for their cluster actions and promised to share them with other cluster members, as well as use the action plans within their own organizations.

The second training event was held in Wau in November 2016 for 19 participants (5 females and 14 males). UNFPA and International Medical Corps (IMC) co-facilitated the training with Oxfam. In Wau, there were representatives from the Directorate of Gender present at the workshop, since they are active at cluster meetings at state level. Like the participants in Juba, those in Wau also developed cluster-based actions and promised to share them with cluster members, as well as use the action plans within their own organizations. They also reported having gained increased knowledge of practical ways to mainstream gender in humanitarian action.

In a meeting with UNOCHA and the ICWG, ICWG members mentioned that, even though many had a good understanding of the importance of gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian sector, they needed tools that were simple, quick impact and ready to use, as alternatives to lengthy booklets of information on gender that were difficult to digest. Hence, CGFP developed the communiqués for different clusters. Knowledge transfers and informal trainings were conducted at cluster/organization level using the communiqués.

- CARE International led the clusters in using the communiqués to do a gender sensitive multi-sectoral assessment in Eastern Equatoria State
- Oxfam shared the communiqués with colleagues in FSL, WASH and Protection. Oxfam Protection team has committed to start using the communiqués for their assessments and work this year (already used for DFID HARRIS Protection Assessments)
- UNFPA shared to the Protection Cluster and GBV sub-cluster
- UNFAO shared to the FSL cluster
- The Communiqués were shared with and used by UN Women partners. During the week beginning 1 October 2016, they were shared at a workshop in New York on Humanitarian aid, Peace and Security, hosted by UN Women.
- In Wau, the communiqués have been presented to the Protection Cluster and GBV sub-clusters and used in various assessments.
- Oxfam is hoping to spearhead their use by various clusters during assessments, and during programme design

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Few gender experts. There is an extreme shortage of gender experts in South Sudan, and most UN agencies, particularly those working in humanitarian situations, were not hiring gender experts. Since the commencement of this project, however, UNFPA, WFP, FAO and UNDP have hired dedicated gender specialists, three of them international. At the time of publication, UNICEF was hiring one at P4 level, and UNHCR and UNESCO were in the process of hiring specialist support as well.

During the project briefings with UNOCHA and ICWG members, there was a reluctance to engage and host further GenCap advisors. They indicated that they have been hosting numerous GenCap Advisors but that their presence and efforts have failed to translate to sufficient support towards gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian sector. They were also sceptical about the CGFP training roles, as they had failed to obtain reports and feedback after the training. The explanation given was that the CGFP conducted training as a response to a specific need, and that the role of GenCap Advisors was to provide training. In response to these comments, the CGFP have engaged with UNOCHA to review the ToR and ensure that the roles and outputs of the CGFP meet the needs of the Clusters. Meanwhile, the gender self-assessment revealed the need for capacity-building. The seven organizations who volunteered to do the self-assessment are UN agencies and large INGOs, yet they expressed gaps in gender mainstreaming capacity.

High staff turnover. The high turnover of staff in humanitarian settings, particularly in areas of protracted conflict, remains a challenge and a severe limitation to the institutionalization of best practice in gender in
emergencies. It is also difficult to track the outcomes of training programmes that have been carried out, especially when those trained leave the country after a short contract.

**LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The ICWG meeting which debated the role of the CGFPG (even GenCap Advisors) is valid but also reveals that gaps exist in understanding the importance of continuous and repeated capacity-building in a country like South Sudan. The results of the organizational assessment and this case study can be used to influence the ICWG and other humanitarian actors to continue to invest in their staff, especially national or local ones. It is recommended that the CGFPG continues to ensure capacity-building on gender mainstreaming, with a clear strategy on how to transfer knowledge and skills to local actors for sustainability.

- The partnership of UN Women (who have the mandate as well as gender expertise) and Oxfam is an important facilitating factor in organizing trainings at this level. The support of other gender staff from other organizations is good practice which should continue.

- There should be sustained investment to ensure that a greater number of gender experts can be hired, and continuous and repeated gender training to non-gender personnel can be made. Donors, UN agencies and INGOs should regard this as a priority, especially in South Sudan.

- The CGFPG should have a clear capacity-building plan for its own members as well their respective clusters. Cluster meetings should be used as an opportunity to capacitate cluster members by encouraging CGFPG members to informally share knowledge and advice or by bringing in experts to discuss gender topics relevant to the cluster.

- Despite the challenging environment in South Sudan, it is still imperative to enact the above recommendations, especially given the degree to which the challenges faced by the country impact on gender dynamics (e.g., high prevalence of GBV, exclusion of women in political and peace processes, maternal mortality, etc.).
6 TRIALLING THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

ISSUE

The issue addressed was the lack of accountability for implementation of gender-related standards within organizations and across the humanitarian sector.

OBJECTIVE

The intended result was to trial a global accountability framework with cluster organizations. This framework was intended to support the clusters to develop action plans that would improve accountability for gender in their sector coordination mechanisms.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The global project team examined accountability for gender at all levels and developed an Accountability Framework. It identified specific actions to be taken by coordination mechanisms that would promote gender equality (outlined below). The framework included key elements and best practice examples to support self-assessment.

Table 2: Outline of Global Accountability Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten things we want Clusters to do on gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Quality gender analysis</td>
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<td>2. Gender-responsive strategic planning documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Contextualized minimum gender commitments</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Adequate gendered competency of agency expertise and staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Inclusive and participatory cluster/sector meetings</td>
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<td>6. Learning spaces on gender-responsive implementation</td>
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<td>7. Gender-responsive cross-cluster/sector coordination mechanisms</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Continuous review and adaptation of ways of working with affected populations</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Recurrent monitoring of the IASC Gender and Age Marker</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Enhancement of linkages between humanitarian and development interventions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Rating

- Very Good
- Good
- Unsatisfactory
- Weak
The CGFPG discussed the Accountability Framework (AF) during the monthly meetings in September and October 2016. It has also been shared with UNOCHA, as well as other actors during the National Gender Coordination forum in September. During the two briefing sessions, members agreed that the AF gave them a framework for engaging the clusters, and keeping the issues of gender mainstreaming alive. Trialling it would also provide them with an indication of cluster priorities on gender mainstreaming and hence an entry point in impactful intervention, as requested by the clusters. It was also agreed that the intervention would be prioritized by the clusters.

It was planned that the CGFPG members would present the AF to their respective clusters. However, they expressed reluctance, citing a lack of confidence to do so, so a course was planned for March 2017 to train at least two per cluster to be able to present to their own cluster. UN Women and Oxfam (coordinator and co-coordinator) will initiate the first presentation to demonstrate best practice.

Meetings were arranged by Oxfam in February 2017 with cluster coordinators, co-coordinators and some members, with the aim of securing approval to present the AF to the cluster. This resulted in the scheduling of presentations during cluster meeting in March 2017 for the WASH, NFI, Education and GBV clusters/sub-cluster.

**CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS**

**Knowledge to use the Accountability Framework (AF) effectively.** Feedback on the AF is that it seems to be simple, but for those who do not specialize in gender, it requires additional knowledge to fully comprehend, and higher motivation to appreciate and adopt. UN Women and Oxfam have the gender expertise, but they cannot be available to attend every cluster meeting, and gender experts in other organizations who have been supporting and present in the activities of the CGFPG are not present in the cluster meetings. CGFPG members will engage with their organizational gender advisors, and training on the AF will continue.

**High turnover of staff.** Briefing on the use the AF was done in October 2016. However, some of those trained have left the project/area.

**Ownership of the process** of measuring accountability at the cluster level is a challenge. One cluster member (in one of the AF presentations) commented that the cluster should be the one to decide which tool to use. One cluster head also indicated that the accountability lies with the gender focal point to report on this.

**LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The AF can be an intimidating document, as it holds to account UN agencies as well as INGOs and some big NGOs. The process of meeting organizations individually is an important step to first secure the buy-in of these NGOs before presenting to the wider group.
- The document which articulated the HCT commitment to gender equality programming is an important reminder to involve clusters, as well as the entire humanitarian response system. It is recommended that the full endorsement of the ICWG is secured on the use of the AF by the clusters. It is also recommended to clarify who is accountable to lead on this, which, according to UNOCHA, are the cluster leads and not the gender focal points.
- On the issue of inadequate expertise, the same recommendation to hire more experts and to continue training personnel on gender is put forward. UN Women has the mandate, which should be supported by other (like-minded) agencies, organizations and individuals in order to pool resources for building capacity in South Sudan in a more sustainable manner, including institutionalization of national organizations and staff.
- Meanwhile, the gender focal points in the respective clusters must fully establish their role, so that they can continue to build knowledge and awareness in the cluster.
7 CONCLUSION

The CGFPG is established in South Sudan to enhance the gender equality programming and mainstreaming throughout the humanitarian response. It is a group embedded in the UN Cluster system under the leadership of UN Women. Its members are drawn from the different clusters. As a cluster member, s/he is available to support cluster coordinators and be a ready resource, as well as advocate on gender mainstreaming at cluster level. As a collective, they are a pool of human resources on gender for the entire cluster system and its partners.

The role can advocate for both strategic and tactical approaches to influence and capacitate the clusters. However, this demands high capacity (and confidence) to engage in gender mainstreaming both as a capacity builder and advocate, two distinct skills. The high turnover of staff and the rapid and competing needs for emergency activities as a result of the protracted and intermittent crisis are not conducive to the development of sufficient capacity in this respect. South Sudan therefore presents a challenging context, but the space to develop capacity has already been initiated with the creation of the CGFPG, while the mandate to do so emanated from the high-level commitment of the HCT itself.

The project was undertaken at the right time to back up and build on steps that had already been taken under the auspices of the CGFPG. In just over a year, the project helped to realize what has been already committed to strengthen gender programming by supporting the CGFPG (ToR), providing evidence (gender analysis, case study), improving capacity, simplifying tools (e.g. communiqués), and raising accountability at cluster level. The processes as well as the outputs of the project shall inform the entire South Sudan humanitarian response, in order to ensure that gender is mainstreamed within the entire Cluster and humanitarian system.
8 NEXT STEPS

Oxfam and UN Women:
- To publish and disseminate the Gender Analysis, as well as share the experience of the project through the case study;
- To continue to support the CGFPG as co-coordinator;
- To explore funding opportunities to continue the initiatives led by the CGFPG and sustain the gains made by the project;
- To explore the secondment of full-time staff to support the CGFPG.

CGFPG:
- To refresh membership and secure the commitment of cluster members seconded as an organization and not as individuals;
- To use/review the gender self-assessment, and encourage other organizations to undergo the same assessment;
- To build capacity to continue to promote compliance with the AF;
- To popularize the communiqués;
- To consolidate an action plan (integrate those initially developed during the training workshop and the one which will be developed during AF presentations and follow ups);
- To establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms at the CGFPG level.
1 World Bank data on South Sudan (2015).
2 UNDP, Gender Inequality Index: http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII
3 World Bank data on South Sudan (2016).
13 UN OCHA, South Sudan, http://www.unocha.org/south-sudan
15 Ibid.
19 Humanitarian Country Team.
20 Inter-Cluster Working Group.
23 This simple questionnaire of 20 questions allowed participants in the GiEWG to score their own organization, investigating and comparing their work in four areas: exploring internal practices, gender analysis through the project cycle, ensuring dignity and empowerment, and preventing GBV/PSEA. For the full Oxfam minimum standards for gender in emergencies (2013), see http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/oxfam-minimum-standards-for-gender-in-emergencies-305867
This case study was written by members of the Members of the CGFPG South Sudan. It is part of a series of papers and reports written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.

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