

Lessons Learned:

Building Gender Equality Measures in Humanitarian Action in Jordan Reflections by the Gender Capacity Advisor to the IATF on 2013

Background

The humanitarian response to the Syrian refugees in Jordan is coordinated by UNHCR that ultimately reports to the UN General Assembly. The senior reporting officer in Jordan is the UNHCR Representative who chairs an Interagency Taskforce on Refugees (IATF). The Syrian Regional Response is a coordination of humanitarian assistance to those affected by the crisis within Syria (OCHA) as well as refugee responses provided in Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt (MENA UNHCR).

The Syrian Regional Response coordinated pooled funding appeals for the 6 countries (SHARP and Regional Response Plans with 5 country chapters which are projectless). In 2012, there were 4 RRP5s (one every 3 months) and there were 2 RRP5s in 2013. The rapidity of the funding appeals enabled frequent updates of a constantly evolving crisis.

Advocacy for Gender Equality Measures

Upon arriving in Jordan in March 2013, the Gender Capacity Advisor advocated for the inclusion of gender equality measures in the RRP5 by attending all sector planning meetings and advising ways to incorporate gender (e.g. articulation of needs of women, girls, boys and men; tailored strategies; and data disaggregated by sex and age). There was little evidence that this advocacy had influence on the inclusion of gender equality measures in the published RRP5: half of the sectors mentioned gender in a limited fashion in either the needs or activities. Conversely, in the RRP6, after months of engaging champions, building capacities, building strategic alliances and strengthening institutional directives and reporting processes, all sector response plans (and the country chapter) incorporate gender analyses, activities to enable equitable access to services, and at least one performance indicator per sector is disaggregated by sex and age.

Engaging Champions

The UNHCR Representative declared from the outset that he wanted the Gender Marker to be applied to the RRP process, in line with other funding appeal processes. He was also interested in measuring the progress towards achieving the gender equality measures and the impact this had for women, girls, boys and men. From the outset, the UNHCR Assistant Representative (Protection) was supportive of the use of gender as means to articulate the needs of refugees and address violence. The UNICEF Representative and Deputy Representative were particularly keen to promote the different needs of girls, boys and women as a member of the country team as well as within their agency. UNFPA was happy to have an ally against gender-based violence. WFP was interested in preserving the protection of its recipients. Senior staff from INGOs such as Care Jordan, NRC, IRC and IMC were helpful in promoting gender equality measures in executive and sectoral fora.

Building Capacities

The Advisor attended meetings of many of the sectors both in Amman and in Za'atari Camp and visited many services to build her own understanding of local factors and to build relationships. The Advisor drafted Gender Analyses for each of the sectors, to provide ready reference to sector members on the available data regarding gendered needs and issues as well as inform the IATF and visiting researchers. Some Sector Leads referred to these to formulate their sectoral needs analysis for the RRP6. The Gender

Marker Tip Sheets were distributed to all sectors and the IASC Gender Handbook provided to all members of the ISWG.

The *Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action* training was piloted in June in Jordan: 27 candidates attended and 19 successfully completed the training. This group formed the basis of the Sector Gender Focal Point Network, comprising 2 Gender Focal Points for each sector and selected agency Gender Focal Points from WFP, UNICEF and UN Women. Half of the Focal Points were employed by either INGOs or National NGOs. The UNHCR Representative endorsed the Action Plan to support sectors through either advocacy or providing technical advice.

The Network met on a monthly basis. This network is voluntary in nature and does not involve line management, although the line managers within each respective agency must agree to their staff's participation. These gender focal points exercise gender leadership within their technical sectors. The network provides a venue for sharing experiences, opportunities to draw meaning from these experiences, and collectively determine future actions based on potential processes and their likely outcomes. This type of learning is reliant on the dynamics of 'belonging, paying attention and practising'. One of the payoffs for the participants in the long term could be a new status within the sector and recognition of leadership skills and expertise: although this can only be achieved if the participant can successfully navigate the adoption of gender equality measures, which was sometimes regarded as an unwanted complication to program design.

According to the scheduling of the Sector Chairs, training was offered to sector members on the incorporation of gender equality measures and the application of the Gender Marker. The GenCap Advisor supported the Sector Gender Focal Points to deliver this training. The processes used were intentionally a mix of didactic and participatory processes. It was imperative that participants went away with improved knowledge, skills and a sense of fun regarding the use of gender principles. Through this process, individuals from approximately fifty agencies and six sectors were trained.

Several other processes were undertaken in order to strategically provide assistance. Technical advice was provided to UNICEF on how to monitor gender equality measures. The Advisor provided training on Gender Equality Programming at a regional CERF Training and at 2 Coordination Trainings (including support on facilitation techniques). Technical support was provided to the UNCT on how to establish a PSEA Network.

Strategic Alliances

The UNHCR Assistant Representative (Protection), GenCap Advisor, UNFPA Head of Office and Resident Coordinator worked together to instigate a PSEA Network. The Assistant Representative and Advisor also worked on integrated complaints processes. The Advisor selected to work with the Protection sector to utilize their alignment with AGDM principles. The Protection sector has articulated the gendered needs most clearly and integrated the gender equality measures throughout its plan. It is aligning itself to support other sectors to understand gender equality programming.

Upon arriving in UNHCR, the Advisor was invited to join the Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG). The Inter-Sector Coordinator promoted Gender Marker training, included the Advisor in regional and country planning processes, positioned the Advisor on the Peer Review Panel to code the Sector Response Plans and provide advice to

Sector Leads. This Coordinator also facilitated contact with the RRP Regional Coordinator, who in turn invited the Advisor to deliver an awareness session at the Regional RRP6 Planning Forum; determined to apply the Gender Marker to Protection Sectors in RRP6 and to all sectors in all countries in RRP7; and invited the Advisor to code all SRPs in the regional response and provide advice (consequently the codes for 10 out of 29 improved).

The presence of the champions and Sector Gender Focal Points in planning processes was enormously helpful: having several voices echo gender messages versus a lone voice was one of the factors that made a difference to whether the advice was incorporated.

Strengthening Institutional Processes

While some of the Sector Chairs were conversant with the principles of gender equality and ready to apply them, others struggled to prioritize it above other demands competing for attention. Clear messages from senior management of the Sector Chairs provided necessary incentives to ensure that gender equality measures were incorporated into the needs analysis, activities and performance indicators. Following the commitment of sectors to gender equality measures, reports on the progress of the measures will be monitored and reported to the IATF on a regular basis in 2014.

The humanitarian sectors gather information primarily through conducting agency needs assessments and direct service delivery. The GenCap Advisor worked alongside Sector Leads to strengthen the links between collated data, analysis and design of sector response plans. The Advisor supported UN Women and other humanitarian actors to reconsider a proposed model for civic engagement so that where preferred, women and men could have segregated committees. Many of the sectors, in particular the Protection Sector, are aiming to improve the voices and agency of women, girls, boys and men through participation in committees and disaggregated post-distribution monitoring.

Change Management

Transactional processes were largely in use by the sectors and agencies at the time of the arrival of the Advisor, whereby many agencies were operating primarily according to their mandate. The UNHCR Representative and IATF introduced more participatory processes through the ISWG and Sectors. At the same time the Advisor built the technical gender capacity of sectors, developed relationships, fostered strategic alliances and found champions, and garnered institutional incentives from the coordination structures and heads of agencies.

Further work will embed the transformative management processes: shepherding needs assessment processes into interagency needs assessments designed to queries generated by the sectors; agreed collective methods for analyzing the data gathered from monitoring and assessments; participatory (within sectors and inclusive of refugees) design of strategies and management of gaps; monitoring of gender equality measures; and review of strategies in light of feedback and resources. Using the gender lens will refine strategic development to match the needs of refugees more closely. This will in part be supported by reforms being introduced in 2014, including the rolling out of the *Interagency Emergency SOPs for the Prevention of and Response to GBV & CP in Jordan* and the application of a vulnerability framework to aid targeting of resources.