

Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week Event:
“Moving forward on gender equality and women’s participation”

RECOMMENDATIONS

6 February 2019

Geneva, Switzerland



The event ‘Moving forward on gender equality and women’s participation’ followed three similar recent discussions convened by IOM, The UK Mission in Geneva and CARE International, and UN Women. These events reflect both the urgency of the demand for change, and the growing frustration of humanitarians

seeing little high-level action to implement gender-equality resolutions of the World Humanitarian Summit, Grand Bargain, Whistler Declaration and others.

At this session, thematic groups of approximately 15 humanitarians each discussed one aspect of humanitarian gender equality programming. An invited rapporteur then summarized the group discussion and made recommendations in plenary.

Topic: GENDER ANALYSIS

Rapporteur: Maria Butler, Director, Global Programs at Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF)

Key points: Much of this discussion was about power analysis, and how gender analysis allows us to see things differently: to see power within communities, not only who’s being silenced, but also to ask questions about who is silencing. Gender analysis is political. We must also remember that NOT doing gender analysis is also a political act.

It is also important to recognize both individual and institutional bias, that as big organizations we bring institutional privilege and institutional power to humanitarian settings. We need to ask, “Who are we doing this for?” “How can we ensure that the communities and people we work for are at the center of our gender analysis?”

Gender analysis is also about accountability, and the framing of analysis not only as more efficient humanitarian action, but also to empower those who are living the experience.

- **Recommendation: Humanitarian actors must be accountable for as well as supported and properly equipped for conducting a participatory gender and power analysis throughout the project cycle.**
- **Recommendation: Donors should be responsible for increased recognition in their reporting requirements of accountability to women and girls and funding to ensure analyses undertaken are participatory and particularly inclusive of women and girls.**
- **Recommendation: Organizations must ensure that intersectional analysis of social and power dynamics informs all aspects of humanitarian response.**

Topic: LOCALIZATION

Rapporteur: Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, OHCHR

Key Points: Participation is fundamental to the localization agenda. Gender equality and the participation of women is a main purpose of localization and yet there is no systemic recognition of women’s participation in humanitarian settings; it is often reduced to empty rhetoric and box-ticking exercises.

Local women are already participating and many of them are empowered, but they remain unrecognized, not part of the discourse and not part of decision-making. Funding is necessary for women to have a role in the discourse, but this is often not accessible to local women’s organizations. Humanitarian information

and guidance is also often inaccessible to local organizations. We need to ensure that there is recognition, systemic acknowledgement, decision-making, and access to the conditions that are needed. In other words, the system itself will need to be changed to accommodate gender equal participation.

Gender participation and localization need to be clear objectives in humanitarian programming, as well as in the indicators measuring success, so that all projects and programs are assessed based on these criteria.

Platforms for sharing good practices operated by local organizations can help international humanitarians to learn. More programming – assessment, implementation, monitoring - must be jointly carried out with affected people themselves and local organizations.

- **Recommendation: Ensure the localization agenda is framed in terms of gender equality and participation.**
- **Recommendation: Address the systemic changes that are needed to accommodate gender equal participation.**
- **Recommendation: Ensure humanitarian action contains objectives and indicators for the participation of local women and young women and that these are reported against.**
- **Recommendation: Ensure program review by and learning from the experience of local organizations.**
- **Recommendation: Make information and guidance accessible to local partners.**

Topic: HUMANITARIAN STAFFING

Rapporteur: Joachime Nason, Head of the Humanitarian Aid and Migration Section in the EU Delegation to the UN; Howard Mollet, Senior Policy Advisor, CARE International, UK

There must be a review of Terms of Reference of humanitarian leadership in country, especially humanitarian coordinators. Humanitarian leadership has a key role in setting the right tone and culture with respect to gender, yet we hear a lot of excuses to avoid dealing with it. This must become part of what being a good humanitarian leader actually means, and an element of job performance to which people are held accountable. Gender equality must also be included in HCT indicators and guidance, and accountability of the response based on the perceptions of affected communities, including specifically women. To this end, **humanitarian coordination structures and programmes must have accessible gender and age sensitive channels to allow for feedback from all groups in the community, especially women and girls.**

There is a feeling that time is past when leaders should be informed, convinced, and “helped” to get on board and take ownership of gender equality, that we should also reflect and say, “Maybe this is not the right person for the job any more.” There needs to be a new generation of humanitarian leaders, inclusive of diverse women.

The G7 review of the Whistler Declaration on Gender Equality, the question of a gender indicator within the Grand Bargain process, and attention to gender equality in the Call to Action on gender-based violence in emergencies all offer opportunities to develop a model for organizational change. This requires investment, and the accountability for change.

- **Recommendation: Make gender equality programming part of the Terms of Reference for senior humanitarians to which they are held accountable.**
- **Recommendation: Include perceptions of affected women and men, boys and girls in evaluating the effectiveness of humanitarian response, and the HCT specifically.**
- **Recommendation: UN agencies and donors should expand investment in the acceleration of diverse talented female humanitarians.**
- **Recommendation: Continue to discuss, identify models and provide funding aimed at organizational change in the humanitarian system.**

Topic: HUMANITARIAN DECISION-MAKING AND MANAGEMENT

Rapporteur: Dylan Winder, Counsellor & Team Leader, Humanitarian, Protracted Crises & Migration, UK Mission to the UN

Global initiatives such as the G7, Whistler, and Call to Action etc. amply demonstrate political buy-in for women in humanitarian decision-making and management. The failure is in operationalizing this: gender in decision-making and management is currently very ad hoc and we need to systematize it much more.

In preparedness and DRR, humanitarians need to look at the risks and exclusions facing particular groups, and to ensure their processes are inclusive of women. Linking more with development actors, especially local women’s groups may be helpful, and donors often have relevant financial incentives for gender equality activities in programming.

It is problematic that during emergencies, Humanitarian Coordinators and Resident Coordinators do not have objectives or performance indicators around the inclusion of women, and that HCTs often only give lip service to gender equality. There is a need to make Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs), Joint Assessments, and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) more inclusive, to systematize and measure the involvement of women throughout project management processes. There must be a middle ground between overburdening people with gender requirements and reducing it to a tick-box exercise.

Post-emergency, there is currently no shared, systematic collection of best practices on women in humanitarian decision-making and management, including how leadership teams and HCTs have involved women in their processes. We need to reward individuals who demonstrate that they are inclusive, to focus promotion and recruitment on creating a new generation of leaders. These responsibilities are shared by OCHA, donors and agencies themselves.

- **Recommendation: Ensure risk analysis is undertaken with an intersectional gender analysis, with the active participation of women and girls.**
- **Recommendation: Review HCT objectives to they have an accountability to include women and girls in their processes.**
- **Recommendation: Make HC/RCs accountable for including women and girls in processes that determine humanitarian response, including HNOs, JNAs, and HRPs.**
- **Recommendations: Use the HC retreat in Montreux to specifically share experiences on the engagement of women and girls. Use the peer-to-peer mechanism and multipurpose reviews, and have specific criteria on the involvement of women and girls in humanitarian decision-making and management.**

Topic: GENDER EQUALITY AS A HUMANITARIAN OBJECTIVE

Rapporteur: Hong-Won Yu, Counsellor, Humanitarian Affairs, Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN

There is still discomfort in the humanitarian community in talking about equality, power, transformative change and about gender equality as a humanitarian objective. This is partly a result of lack of awareness and understanding of the IASC definition of gender equality being, “equal access to human rights.” Without gender equality approaches, we clearly won’t have good programs. There is need for the IASC principals to re-publicize the IASC definition of gender equality and translate this down.

Gender equality is a long-term, transformative objective that addresses culture, systems, and behaviours not be best addressed by humanitarian timeframes and short planning cycles. It can be addressed by breaking down silos and working with more closely with development colleagues, better linking Humanitarian Response Plans and Development Assistance Frameworks to address it that way. At the same time, meaningful participation of women and girls and their empowerment in humanitarian action is a good step.

Donors have a role in accountability for this and need to coordinate better, but accountability of the system and partners is also needed. Donors need to invest in new and innovative ideas at country level that can drive operations to change a little bit. We also need to fund initiatives work with men on positive expressions of masculinity more sensitive to gender equality.

It would be useful to see a published IASC report on implementation of the Accountability Framework to know that this is being tracked and monitored. Most indicators in the Accountability Framework are at global level, with only two or three indicators looking at country level. We need to examine the TORs of Humanitarian Coordinators (HC), Country Directors (CD) and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) to measure and hold them to account for this agenda.

- **Recommendation: IASC to re-publicize, translate and widely disseminate its definition of gender equality.**
- **Recommendation HRP and UNDAFs should harmonize their gender equality objectives.**
- **Recommendation: Better coordination among donors on gender equality issues and approaches.**
- **Recommendation: Publish an IASC report on implementation of the Accountability Framework.**
- **Recommendation: UN agencies in charge of coordination should identify specific areas of accountability for HCs, CDs, and HCTs on gender equality and monitor these.**
- **Recommendation: Identify and invest in positive initiatives and innovations for gender equality at country level.**
- **Recommendation: Continue to work with men and boys on positive masculinity for gender equality.**