

Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR)
Localization Task Team:
Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop
August 27-28, 2019
-FINAL Report-

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



From August 27-28 2019, the Localization Task Team of the Gender- Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) facilitated an Asia regional workshop focused on the engagement of local and women-led organizations in humanitarian GBV prevention, response, and coordination. Held in Bangkok, Thailand, the meeting brought together 30 participants from Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines, as well global and regional actors. Included in this group were 13 representatives

from women- led organizations (WLOs) along with GBV Coordinators from each of the focal countries. An overview of participants is depicted in the graph below:



In order to support global commitments to localization, and to ensure the engagement of local actors within the context of humanitarian GBV prevention, response and coordination mechanisms, the Localization Task Team of the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) was formed, and is currently co-led by CARE USA and ActionAid International.

The Asia workshop sought to build upon previous activities of the GBV Localization Task Team, including a Global Mapping Study on GBV Localization, a global workshop in New York that took place in March 2019, and a Middle East and North Africa (MENA) workshop that was held in Jordan in June 2019. The mapping study and New York workshop sought to identify key challenges faced by local and women-led actors with regard to GBV localization in humanitarian contexts. The regional workshops sought to build on these issues by engaging in action-planning and identifying tangible ways forward to promote GBV localization at country and regional levels.

On behalf of the Localization Task Team, this workshop was organized jointly by CARE, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). In the lead-up to the workshop, CARE, IPPF and UNFPA developed guiding questions on GBV Localization that corresponded to the themes identified in the Global Mapping Study. Using these questions, GBV Coordinators held pre-workshop sessions with cluster members in order to gather feedback around these guiding concepts and to help shape the meeting agenda. By engaging in this process, participants came to the meeting prepared to discuss ideas related to GBV localization in their respective country contexts.

The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- Facilitate learning exchanges with regard to localization among actors involved in humanitarian GBV prevention, response and coordination initiatives in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Bangladesh
- Identify challenges and areas of promising practice with regard to GBV localization, and develop tangible action plans that can be implemented at country, regional and global levels
- Provide recommendations for the future of the GBV AoR and the Localization Task Team as well as other global processes related to GBV localization in the Asia-Pacific region

While much progress is yet to be made, the tangible action items identified during the workshop represent an important step towards informing wider country, regional, and global conversations related to the enhancement of GBV localization within the humanitarian sector. This workshop also represented an opportunity to identify ways in which the Localization Task Team of the GBV AoR can better support local actors and establish priorities for joint learning.

II. OVERVIEW OF KEY SESSIONS

The first day of the workshop included an overview of the Global Protection Cluster and the GBV AoR and how these broader structures relate to the country-level coordination system. The facilitators also provided background information on the Localization Task Team and initial findings of the Global Mapping Study on GBV Localization. In light of the pre-workshop

consultation activities that took place in each focal country, participants from Bangladesh, the Philippines and Indonesia shared key findings from these exercises and provided recommendations that emerged from their respective country-level coordination groups. As part of these exercises, participants also reflected on the various coordination structures that exist within each country, and identified key challenges to localization that they experience as well as potential solutions.

The second day of the workshop focused on identifying linkages between local, regional and global efforts—with an emphasis on ways to engage local actors with initiatives such as the Sindai Framework and the Call to Action. As a key activity, participants also worked in country groups to engage in action planning exercises, with GBV Coordinators working together with their respective country groups. As was the case in the Jordan workshop, the focus of this exercise was to identify tangible steps that can be taken to increase localization within the context of country-level coordination mechanisms.

III. PRIMARY THEMES IDENTIFIED ACROSS COUNTRIES

Although there was significant variation across contexts represented in the workshop, certain common themes emerged through the sessions. For example, funding for GBV programming was the most common challenge reported by participants --both in terms of the amount available as well as the typically short duration of available funding cycles. Participants also noted that local organizations are often used for data collection or activities at the initial stages of a project, but are frequently not included in decision-making around the design or implementation of corresponding programs. Participants also highlighted the fact that GBV programming was often not developed based on actual needs, which resulted in less than effective implementation. These issues supported a general sense raised by participants that local and women-led organizations are often not adequately involved in governance or decision-making processes with regard to GBV prevention, response or coordination. In many cases, these issues were described as being compounded by a lack of adequate infrastructure for response and referral services as well as harmful social norms that interfere with GBV interventions. WLOs shared that in some Asian countries presence of non-state combatants (ISIS-inspired groups) are impacting safety and security, there is threat of radicalization and extremism among youth in communities.

Another issue that emerged from participants was that coordination mechanisms are often not adequate at local or national levels. Participants also mentioned that local actors often are not adequately trained on global GBV standards and often have insufficient resources to recruit and maintain qualified staff—particularly without longer-term funding that could make sustained quality initiatives feasible. Workshop participants also emphasized the need for strong government engagement in order to humanitarian GBV interventions and coordination structures to be effective. Although participants felt that GBV coordination mechanisms should be government-led, there was a feeling that this was not currently in place in the majority of contexts in the region. Participants also described a disconnect between national and local coordination efforts.

In light of these issues, the following collective recommendations across countries can be identified:

- **Local leadership and participation:** GBV Coordinators should seek to expand opportunities for the leadership and participation of women and women-led organizations within the context of existing GBV coordination structures. In order to promote participation, coordinators and international actors should ensure that appropriate translation is available during meetings and of relevant materials and that other potential barriers to local participation are addressed. GBV Coordinators and international organizations should work to provide funding for local actors to participate in relevant national and regional meetings, and provide essential information in advance so that they can participate in meaningful ways. GBV Coordinators should also work to ensure that local and women-led organizations are involved in Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs).
- **Fair representation:** GBV Coordinators should establish clear criteria to ensure that existing meetings and coordination structures provide adequate representation of diverse or underrepresented groups (individuals with disabilities, LGBTQ persons, etc). Coordinators should work with local actors to ensure that those who attend meetings share information back with their colleagues and relevant networks. It is also important to ensure that selected participants are representative and not dominated by the “blessed few.”
- **Funding:** Donors who fund GBV initiatives should develop a specific approach towards localization and prioritize funding directly to local and women-led organizations. Donors should also prioritize capacity-building for local and women-led organizations in the areas of proposal development and fundraising. Donors should also make the participation of local and women-led organizations a criteria for funding to international organizations, and should increase opportunities for long-term funding to promote sustainability. GBV Coordinators should also consolidate and share information on available funding opportunities to ensure both local and international actors are aware, and that are aware of the application process for pooled funds.
- **Reporting Requirements and Bureaucracy:** Donors should simplify grant and reporting requirements to enable local and women-led organizations to more easily and apply for and implement competitive GBV projects
- **Local Staff Capacity:** International organizations and donors should enable local organizations to choose the types of capacity-building that are most-needed, and develop interventions accordingly. It is also important that adequate funding for capacity-building and staff retention be prioritized. To the extent possible, international organizations should avoid hiring the most qualified staff from local organizations to promote sustainability.

- **Partnerships:** International actors should work closely with local actors to create equitable partnerships—both within the context of program implementation as well within the context of participation in GBV coordination structures. GBV Coordinators should work with sub-cluster/working group members to establish and implement equitable partnership agreements. Within the context of GBV program interventions, local actors should be involved in all stages of programming—including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- **Government Engagement:** GBV Coordinators should work to promote government engagement in existing prevention, response and coordination structures. GBV Sub-Clusters/Working Groups should work with local authorities to ensure that GBV issues are adequately reflected in existing policies and procedures— including mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction (DDR) activities and an emphasis on the humanitarian/development nexus.

IV. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As previously described, the workshop provided the space for countries to work together in teams, in order to identify key challenges that are specific to their respective contexts, and identify examples of good practice as well as recommendations for future action. An overview of the key issues identified by each country is described in the following section.

The Philippines:

Participants from the Philippines stated that the nature of GBV localization varies significantly across various regions of the country. During the workshop, the country team made the decision to focus on the response to the Mindanao conflict as well as natural disasters throughout the country. Participants noted that they had not experienced prior engagement with the Global GBV AoR. Participants in this group identified coordination as a key challenge— both within and across organizations engaged in GBV programming.



Representatives from women-led organizations from the Philippines map context-specific issues and solutions.

Participants also described harmful social norms as a significant barrier to their work. The presence of non-state combatants as well as ongoing political unrest were also described as impediments to effective prevention, response and coordination activities.

Participants from the Philippines also identified gaps in local capacity around GBV prevention and response programming as a primary issue that needs to be addressed. They also described a need for greater engagement of local actors in GBV coordination structures, and for two-way interaction between international and local organizations to promote dialogue and sustainability. Participants also described the need to work through existing women’s networks to mobilize both resources and future action. Funding was also identified by participants as a key challenge. In particular, local actors mentioned that insufficient funds were available to their organizations, and that they were not able to access large, national-level funding schemes.

“We need to develop more women who will have the capacity to lead and participate in these groups.”

- Representative from a women-led organization, Philippines

Another key challenge identified by the Philippines team was engagement with the government. Participants mentioned that issues of safeguarding, trust, and consistency frequently emerged and that there was often a disconnect between government structures at the local and national levels, which created

confusion within the context of GBV Coordinator mechanisms. In many cases, participants noted that the government was comprised primarily of former government officials, which led to a militarized approach to leadership--- creating added challenges for women and local organizations. With this context, issues of GBV were reported to be widespread without adequate institutions in place to respond. Women’s reproductive health issues were also described as under threat in this environment. Participants noted that GBV Sub-Clusters/Working Groups should lead advocacy around these issues, and seek to increase effective coordination mechanisms.

In the Philippines, the GBV Sub-Cluster is led by UNFPA, and then national and sub-national clusters exist that are led by the Department of Social Welfare. Participants noted that there is also a GBV Sub-Working Group led by international organizations, with monthly meetings held. Participants mentioned that local actors often are not able to participate effectively in these meetings light of language issues or other factors that interfere with their involvement. In light of these issues, the group mentioned that GBV coordinators should share information on upcoming meetings and events in a timely manner and to ensure that there is appropriate translation in place to facilitate the participation of local actors.

Group members noted that there is a joint coordination mechanism for GBV and Child Protection, which refers cases that are identified. This system exists at local and national levels, and a system is in place to coordinate information management, advocacy and case management. Although this system is in place in Mindanao, there is a need to increase the involvement of local actors within these processes. Participants noted that there is a need to embed GBV response mechanisms within existing government structures, and that there is a particular need for greater

engagement with local women’s groups in rural areas and across various islands to identify barriers and challenges they are experiencing and develop solutions.

Participants in the Philippines group also discussed the issue of the humanitarian-development nexus, noting the linkages between these types of interventions. In addition to natural disasters, participants described mining activities as creating added vulnerability among affected communities. In light of these issues, participants emphasized the need for GBV

In Mindanao, DRR coordination is led by the government, which also carries out assessments along with GBV sub-clusters. Once assessments are complete, reports are shared to all cluster members—including local and international organizations so that they can coordinate responses and resources. Within this context, UNFPA also responds through WASH activities and education. UNFPA also provides GBV education in IDP settings and host communities. A referral system to handle reported cases of GBV has also been established in coordination with village leaders, police, schools, and hospitals.

- **Good Practice Example, Philippines**

coordination structures to work with local governments to invest in long-term prevention and response mechanisms rather than focusing solely on those designed for emergencies.

Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, and is heavily impacted by climate change and natural disasters. Although the current Rohingya refugee crisis has escalated international attention, 41 areas within the country are currently deemed disaster-prone by the national government. A strong national GBV coordination structure exists, although participants reported that it is not well-functioning in urban disaster zones. Participants also mentioned that the involvement of local or women-led organizations is minimal within these structures at national or regional levels. Participants mentioned that language barriers inhibited the involvement of local actors in meetings, as they are often held in English, and that power is



Local actors and the GBV Coordinator discuss the state of GBV localization in Bangladesh.

often concentrated in the hands of international actors. In order to address these issues, participants identified a need to increase coordination structures and address barriers to the participation of local actors. Within the context of the Rohingya response, however, participants describe GBV Coordination structures as more functional, and that efforts are in place to provide training and capacity-building among those involvement in camp-based interventions.

Organizational capacity, funding and human resources were described as the primary barriers to localization by participants in the Bangladesh country group. Participants noted that funding was often short-term in nature, making it difficult to retain qualified staff, and that there rarely were linkages between emergency and longer-term development funding opportunities. Adding to these challenges are gaps in capacity in the areas of proposal development, resource mobilization, or donor engagement, which places a further burden on local organizations. In light of these issues, participants advocated for longer-term funding opportunities, and for donors to make partnerships with local organizations a requirement in order to international organizations to receive funding. Group members also described a need for capacity-building in the areas of proposal development and fundraising, as well as for additional funds to cover core operational costs associated with the functioning of local organizations.

“The short-term funding means we cannot retain the capacity that we build. We need longer-term funding to sustain the GBV response.”

- Participant from a local NGO, Bangladesh

Participants also mentioned social norms as a barrier to effect GBV programming, as it often makes it difficult for these issues to be explicated discussed, which also interferes with reporting and service utilization. Government actors were also described as interfering at times with GBV prevention, response and coordination activities, with government actors at times interfering with cases from being appropriately handled. Perpetrators also often have political connections, which leads to impunity. In light of these issues, participants emphasized the need to work closely with government forces and raise awareness on GBV issues as a way to influence both the ways in which cases are handled as well as larger policy change.

Natural disasters were also described a primary challenge by participants, who noted that frequent migration as a result of storms was also associated with an increase in GBV cases. Participants described setting up women-friendly spaces and children’s reflection groups as

“Women-friendly spaces and children’s reflection groups are used in evicted areas. Within these groups, the leadership capacity of women is developed. In turn, they also face challenges, including managing recurring GBV cases, working with elite local authorities and challenges related to continuation and sustainability .”

- Good Practice Example, Bangladesh

positive solutions within settings of displacement, and noted that in addition to these services providing support for affected survivors, they also represented a key area of engagement for women-led organizations. Participants also described a need for GBV Coordination groups to focus on DDR activities, and to develop a strategy for government engagement within these contexts.

Within the context of the Rohingya refugee response in Cox’s Bazar, participants identified good practices in the form of joint response plans that are developed by international and local organizations along with United Nations (UN) agencies. Within the context of this response, participants mentioned that local organizations are working on conflict resolution between host communities and refugee populations, although mentioned that there are often challenges in

accessing camps due to barriers put in place by local authorities. Participants mentioned that local authorities are often not well-informed of GBV issues, and that this interferes with effect responses. As a result of these dynamics, participants advocated for a need to provide training to local authorities on issues of GBV and to increase collaboration between local and international organizations. As additional positive examples of good practice, participants mentioned that some local organizations are training volunteer case managers and providing funds for emergency response interventions.

Indonesia:

As the world's largest island country, Indonesia is affected by unique challenges that impact the nature of GBV programming in humanitarian contexts. The country has experienced numerous natural disasters, conflict, and political unrest—all of which impact the climate within which GBV actors engage. Participants mentioned that international aid is often provided in a manner that is not conducive to the needs of organizations, and that local actors did not always feel familiar with international standards of service provision. In addition, short-term funding was described as a significant barrier to the sustainability of local organizations.

The issue of participation was also identified as a primary issue by participants, who mentioned that local organizations were often not adequately involved in program activities, and expressed a need for their comprehensive engagement in the full program cycle- ranging from design, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation. Regarding the issue of partnerships, local actors described that they were often used to collect data or engage in various start-up activities for international organizations, but were not given full credit for their work or involved in follow-up activities. In order to address these issues, participants described a need for more equitable partnership arrangements between international and local actors.

Participants in this country group mentioned that existing coordination structures do not allow for equal participation among local and international actors. For example, meetings were described as taking place frequently in English, with limited the involvement of local actors. Participants described the national GBV Sub-Cluster as serving a primary role, as it coordinates activities across sectors. When cases are reported, consultation takes place between respective



A representative from a local organization shares findings from the Indonesia country team with the larger group.

government units along with service providers and local or traditional leaders. In the case of domestic abuse situations, participants also described the need to work closely with local leaders in order to ensure that cases are handled in a culturally-sensitive and contextually-appropriate manner. Cluster meetings are held weekly, and includes direct discussion with relevant government agencies. Participants

“When compiling data, we will be engaged regularly by INGOs-- sometimes engaged in the assessment, but we do not get credit for our work, nor do we get follow-up information... This is not about our sponsors (UNFPA) but our partners (INGOs) who want total ownership over the final product.”

- Representative from a women-led organization, Indonesia

emphasized the need to continue to advocate for effective GBV programming with government actors, and to work with local authorities to influence larger policy change.

Regarding climate change, participants advocated for the importance of DRR activities before disasters occur in order to build community resilience. Participants described local actors as key players in this process, as they have the contextual knowledge and ability to engage effectively with communities. Participants highlighted the need for local organizations to work together with international actors to engage in preparedness and response activities. As examples of good practice, the group highlighted a public kitchen (aka Sikola Mobine) that provides support services and space to help identify and respond to cases of GBV. As a standard practice, participants advocated for the need to mainstream issues of GBV into existing DRR activities and plans.

V. COUNTRY ACTION PLANS

As previously described, a primary focus of the workshop involved the development of country-level action plans. GBV Coordinator worked alongside participants from their respective countries, using the pre-workshop consultation exercise as well as the challenges and recommendations identified above as a basis for their discussion. The purpose of this exercise was to identify key priorities that each country group hoped to take forward, with the intention that the action plans would be further refined and elaborated on following the workshop, in consultation with broader cluster/working-group membership. In addition to identifying priorities for action, country groups outlined initial indicators for progress as well as possible timelines for implementation.

Participants also carried out an advocacy mapping exercise to brainstorm on various events that could be used as opportunities to advocate for increased GBV localization. At global and regional levels, the following potential opportunities were identified: Beijing +25; UN General Assembly; Child Rights Convention; ICDD@25; IAWG Technical meetings; The Call for Action; The UN Convention on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting; Global Humanitarian Policy Forum; Global Humanitarian Day; 16-days of Activism. Participants from each country also listed relevant national events.

After discussing potential issues for inclusion, the following is an overview of the key areas prioritized by country teams:

Indonesia

Participants from Indonesia prioritised capacity-building in the area of the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) as well as safeguarding among local organizations. They also prioritized capacity-building in the area of resource mobilization and proposal development— with a plan for international organizations to provide support to local organizations. The group also focused on participation by seeking to increase the involvement of local actors with the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection, and to increase the engagement of local organizations in the GBV Sub-Cluster.

The Philippines

Participants from the Philippines sought to engage in capacity-building for local actors with regard to the Grand Bargain as well as other global structures such as the GBV AoR. The group also identified training on gender-responsive and survivor-centered service provision as a priority, as well as building capacity on the GBV in Emergencies (GBViE) Minimum Standards. The team also identified a need for community-based training on legal issues pertaining to GBV as well as the core elements of existing referral systems. Fundraising represented another key priority identified by the Indonesia team, with a goal of increasing available financial support to local actors and to GBV humanitarian programming in general.

Bangladesh

Participants from Bangladesh prioritized fundraising as a key issue for engagement, seeking to increase the allocation of funds to local organizations as part of joint response plans. The group also suggested a need to conduct fundraising workshops for local organizations as a way to increase their capacity. The group also focused on participation, seeking to ensure that the meaningful participation of local organizations is included in national plans as the objectives of existing coordination bodies within the country.

Additional details on the action plans can be found in Appendix I.

VI. CONCLUSION

This workshop provided the space for knowledge-sharing and discussion between local, regional and international actors involved in GBV prevention, response, and coordination activities in the Asia-Pacific Region. By focusing on the issue of localization within the context of these interventions, the workshop identified key challenges as well as areas of promising practice. The action plans that were developed represent a key step forward that can be monitored and further developed. Findings from this workshop also provide valuable recommendations to inform the future work of the Localization Task Team and the GBV AoR more broadly.

APPENDIX I: COUNTRY ACTION PLANS

Country	Priority	Indicator(s)	Who	Timeline
Indonesia	Capacity-building on PSEA and Safeguarding	# of organizations with increased capacity on PSEA/Safeguarding # of organizations with PSEA/Safeguarding policy, SOPs, or reporting mechanisms in place		
	Capacity-building for institutions on resource mobilization and proposal development	As above	International organizations to provide training to local organizations	
	Participation: advocacy	# of meetings with Government Ministries Aspects of diversity and inclusion included in policy # of organizations involved in discussion Reviewed indicator tolls for meaningful participation- relate to disaster contexts	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, GBV Sub-Cluster	
The Philippines	Capacity-building:	# of organizations	National and international NGOs to government agencies (UNFPA, GBV AoR, OCD, DSWD, PSW and CSOs)	1 year
	Orientation on Grand Bargain, localization and mainstreaming GBV	# of trainings conducted with service providers # of community-based leaders trained, young people and women		
	Training on gender-responsive and survivor-centered approach to GBV; protection mainstreaming and GBViE minimum standards	# of referral systems and functional VAW desks and plans (+a score card)	Civil-society organizations to the GBV Working Group	
	Funding: lobby for 5% of GAD and calamity fund			
	Policy and Advocacy			

Bangladesh	<p>Funding:</p> <p>Advocate for more allocation of funds to local organizations on the joint response plans (2020 planning)</p> <p>Conduct fund-raising/resource mobilization workshops and consultations with local organizations</p>	<p># of local organizations that are direct funding recipients of JRP funding in 2020</p> <p># of workshops (4) by mid-2020</p>	<p>Local organizations to the GBV Sub-Cluster</p> <p>GBVSS partners</p>	
	<p>Participation:</p> <p>Ensure the meaningful participation of local organizations in strategic advisory group (SAG)</p> <p>Make recommendations and discuss with GBVSS for a local coordination of GBVSS</p>	<p># of local organizations in the SAG (3)</p> <p>Representatives of local organizations in the GBVSS (?)</p>		