



Department  
for International  
Development



# What works in addressing violence against women and girls?

Lessons learned from Typhoon Haiyan: Workshop Report



Picture: Simon Davis/DFID

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# 1. Summary of workshop

This document summarises the recommendations and discussions from a workshop hosted by the Department for International Development (DFID) on 9 June 2014. The purpose of the workshop was to build consensus on what did and didn't work to help prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan hit in November 2013. The concrete recommendations are:

1. The Gender Based Violence (GBV) sub-cluster should engage with the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to regain ground on including protection/GBV questions in early assessments for future responses
2. The GBV sub-cluster should prioritise sustained field presence for its surge staff, rather than the meeting of bureaucratic benchmarks at national level; in this case the deadlines for the new 'Level 3' commitments absorbed a lot of surge resources.
3. At the same time, the sub-cluster and the protection/GBV community should shift efforts towards practical support to mainstreaming. *Surge staff at the field* level could give direct mainstreaming support to sectoral clusters, and the use of *revised tools that are shorter and more pragmatic* (e.g. checklist-style) should support this.
4. International implementing organisations, particularly international NGOs, should take on more of a role to *connect local civil society organisations with the international community's* coordination structures and international protection/GBV actors. This could be as simple as accompanying local partners to cluster meetings, all the way up to providing consistent training on coordination structures.
5. Disaster preparedness in the high-risk Philippines is vital, and greater attention to *protection as part of preparedness investments* should be paid by organizations with a long-term presence in the country (which covers many UN agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent, and international NGOs). Where the government is delivering this already, agencies and donors should give funding support.

The major discussions that informed these recommendations centered on:

- The low representation of protection and GBV concerns in the major guiding documents of the international response (the first Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment and the Strategic Response Plan).
- The underrepresentation of local organisations (and in some cases local government) in cluster meetings. There was a related loss of understanding on the part of the international community as to what services were already in place, how referrals had been working etc. It may have meant that local organisations' understanding of how their work could be included, represented, and funded as part of the larger response was also lacking.
- The particular context of the Philippines, including strong disaster management practices, many positive indicators of gender equality, and an active women's rights movement.
- It has been noted elsewhere that the Typhoon Haiyan response was used as a 'test case' for the processes that the international system committed to in recent years (the Level 3 requirements). The focus on testing the Level 3 processes may have contributed to the disappointing results of attempts to influence other sectors to integrate GBV concerns, representing a reversal of gains made in previous responses in the Philippines. It's not clear if this represents a 'backlash' against GBV or not.

There were more discussions than clear recommendations on how to address the challenges of protection and GBV in future emergencies. An issue that might need more research and work is the question of how we can frame the *probable scale of protection needs* for the humanitarian community. This may be necessary to aid mainstreaming and integration of protection, but must still catch the window of opportunity for programming without waiting for verified evidence of violence.

## 2. Overview of the workshop

The workshop consisted of three parts:

1. A conference call with colleagues in the Philippines in the early morning;
2. A vote on the major topics that the participants wanted to cover in group work. This included some ideas from the pre-workshop survey that had been circulated;
3. A [presentation](#) by the author of a report on the GBV elements of the response, presenting her impressions from the field.

The topics chosen for group work were:

- accountability to affected populations
- capacity – is it supported in the right places?
- assessments and the Humanitarian Programme Cycle;
- local engagement
- the balance of mainstreaming, integrated, and specialized GBV programming. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Monitoring, service provision, and including men & boys were not selected for their own group.

# 3. Main content of the discussions

## GBV and strategic documents

The low representation of protection concerns in the major guiding documents of the international response emerged as one major discussion point. The documents in question are the first Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA I; there was a second phase known as MIRA II) and the Strategic Response Plan (SRP, also known as the Haiyan Action Plan).

The MIRA did not disaggregate data by sex and age, making it impossible to differentiate the protection needs of women & girls and from those of men and boys. The specific protection questions it asked were poor. Partly as a consequence, GBV concerns were not prominent in the SRP. Gender and GBV surge staff were asked for and gave substantial time to the development of the MIRA and the SRP, raising the points about the lack of sex and age disaggregation and the poor protection-specific questions. However, this had no visible effect on the MIRA I or the SRP.

The second phase of the MIRA, the MIRA II, had more consideration of GBV issues. However, the push that GBV actors made to achieve this may have come at a high cost in terms of relationships between GBV actors and others.<sup>2</sup> In addition, this work kept many GBV surge staff in Manila, dealing with global and national coordination, and leaving field locations lightly staffed. Some staff that had been deployed to the field had to be recalled to work on input to the SRP. This had a knock-on effect – one group work participant noted that in Guiuan for example, in the first four weeks of response there was simply no mention of GBV issues,<sup>3</sup> and there was a sense that most trafficking incidents had already happened before GBV staff made it to field sites.<sup>4</sup>

It's been noted elsewhere that the Typhoon Haiyan response was used as a 'test case' for the processes that the international system committed to in recent years (the Level 3 requirements). This attitude meant that meeting the deadlines for these processes was prioritized over the operational response, across most sectors. This was not unique to GBV,<sup>5</sup> however the impact may have been felt more substantially on gender and GBV issues than other areas. Early on, the investment was made in improving strategic international response documents rather than supporting field-level programming – a decision that might have been justified if it had delivered improvements, but unfortunately it didn't.<sup>6</sup> Why not?

## Influencing the response

Based on anecdotal feedback, the DFID team was interested in whether the lack of influence on strategic plans, and difficulties in integrating GBV across the response, represented a 'backlash' against GBV concerns. In the afternoon there was a presentation by the author of a report on the response, giving her impressions on whether there is a backlash happening and if so why.

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<sup>2</sup> Hersh, Marcy (2014), *Backlash in Humanitarian Response in Typhoon Haiyan* (presentation made at workshop).

<sup>3</sup> Local engagement group work session 1

<sup>4</sup> Hersh, Marcy (2014), *Backlash in Humanitarian Response in Typhoon Haiyan* (presentation made at workshop).

<sup>5</sup> The UN Operational Peer Review notes that many felt the MIRA took resources that should have been directed to operations, but then did not provide useful planning information (especially the MIRA I). UN, (2014: 14) *Operational Peer Review: Response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines*

<sup>6</sup> Guidance on the MIRA process was released in February 2014 and does require sex and age disaggregation of data, as well as mentioning protection and gender-based violence considerations.

The [presentation](#) argued that there were indeed elements of a backlash. Many non-protection personnel seemed to think that the Philippines typhoon was not a 'protection crisis' – gender equality indicators are positive and there were no indicators that women were being explicitly targeted, although there were other concerns such as trafficking, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, etc.

The presentation highlighted that in natural disasters like Typhoon Haiyan, the term 'survivor' referred to the entire community, rather than (as in other crises, especially conflicts) specifically those that had survived violence, sexual or otherwise. There was a certain attitude among non-protection personnel that the GBV concerns were formulaic and baseless, because there wasn't hard data behind them. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines on GBV note that programming must start *without waiting for evidence* that violence is taking place – this is due to the sensitive nature of reporting GBV incidents. But non-protection personnel were not convinced of the need to act without evidence.

The backlash may have been fed by some specific factors, namely the strong surge of protection, GBV, and gender personnel who were often perceived as generic 'gender' staff by other actors, and the prominence of GBV because of the high-level ['Call to Action'](#) event that coincided with the early Haiyan response.<sup>7</sup>

In the discussion that followed this presentation, participants were not convinced that this backlash is really happening. Some considered that GBV advisers faced much the same situation in Haiyan as in any response i.e. having to repeatedly argue for the importance of GBV issues. It was agreed that the lack of GBV indicators in the MIRA was a step backwards from previous responses, but perhaps because of the push to deliver on Transformative Agenda commitments rather than a backlash.

The need for data was acknowledged – difficult though it is, it's always asked for. The comparison with the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) was made – this package rolls out to support reproductive health services automatically in emergencies (i.e. before definite data), but there is no equivalent package of interventions for GBV. An essential message to get across is that GBV integration and programming is an essential part of good programming rather than an 'add on', and more could be done to demonstrate this clearly.

The question of how to find a way to frame the scale and severity of the GBV problem, without making it contingent on up-front evidence is still a live one.

The participants considered that a major barrier in better acceptance and integration of GBV concerns really lies in the lack of attention by agency representatives on the Humanitarian Country Team. A better understanding and acceptance by these leaders of their own responsibilities to carry out protective gender programming would be an important step to improving the effectiveness of GBV and overall responses. True accountability against commitments already made would help realize this.

There was a discussion that contrasted the Typhoon Haiyan response with that of the conflict in South Sudan – another Level 3 emergency that broke out about six weeks later and has featured massive protection threats. The discussion first questioned whether the perceived 'backlash' in the Philippines was due to the perception that the problems were so much less severe than those in crises like South Sudan, and that the level of attention was therefore disproportionate. Others pointed out, however, that although shouting for inclusion of gender and GBV in the Typhoon Haiyan response was unpopular, it did yield results, whereas in South Sudan the GBV community has struggled to raise the issue. Finally, the challenges in implementing programming right from the start were perhaps more striking in the Philippines simply because the expectation was that the environment would be naturally conducive to such programming (positive gender equality indicators, strong civil society, etc.).

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<sup>7</sup> Hersh, Marcy (2014), *Backlash in Humanitarian Response in Typhoon Haiyan* (presentation made at workshop).

## Capacity and Tools

One of the group work topics was dedicated to discussing whether capacity support was going to the right places. It was agreed that there was both plenty of international surge capacity and national capacity; capacity existed at the local level but was severely disrupted by the typhoon. Local responders, like police officers, social workers, local NGO staff, were often either evacuated in advance or personally affected by the typhoon. There was considerable surge from other areas of the Philippines to try to balance this, but this couldn't fully replace the missing local capacity. The cluster system has been incorporated into Philippine national disaster management structures, so there was better than average understanding of how that worked, although local NGOs were not familiar with clusters. These issues are discussed in greater detail below.

The use of international surge personnel in Manila rather than in the field has already been discussed above. It was felt that a better use of their capacity would have been to work more directly with clusters in field sites, something which began to happen later in the response.<sup>8</sup>

The tools available for more direct support to mainstreaming and integration in other clusters were also discussed. The current IASC GBV guidelines are hundreds of pages long (as are some other guidance documents), and are unlikely to be used in the fast pace of responses. These guidelines are already being revised. Feedback from the workshop was that any revisions should go towards a greatly simplified format – checklists and one-page reference sheets were mentioned, as was cutting down on technical language.

One 'entry point' for capacity building that was discussed was the ongoing disaster preparedness work in the Philippines. The Philippines faces multiple disaster risks, so there has been increasing focus on building preparedness. Some of this preparedness work incorporates protection and GBV considerations, e.g. the inclusion of women-friendly spaces as standard for responses in advance. Linking further to preparedness work might also be a good way of reaching local actors, which was flagged as a possible gap in capacity.

## Local engagement

It has been noted in the Operational Peer Review and other sources that local engagement in the clusters was rather poor. Although government representation in the clusters was good, some of it was 'form' participation without the representatives playing a leading role. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) needed to co-lead in all clusters so their capacity, already reduced with staff affected by the typhoon, was stretched over all the response sectors.

The real gap was the very low inclusion of local NGOs and civil society (including faith-based organisations) in clusters, and the disconnection of private sector and non-Western NGOs from the mainstream response. It was pointed out in discussion that there may be gaps in local capacity – but international actors also don't necessarily know the level of capacity that exists locally. 'Lack of capacity' may be mostly local partners' lack of *familiarity* with the cluster system rather than any deficiency in ability to implement.

The private sector and non-Western NGO involvement in the response was very substantial – private sector/private philanthropy provided about a [quarter](#) of the total response funding, and a single non-Western NGO (Tzu Chi) channeled over [\\$25m USD](#) to the response. The contribution of local civil society is less easy to calculate, but it seems certain that their contribution was certainly much greater than their limited involvement in clusters would suggest.

Participants speculated that this lack of engagement reduced the collective GBV response understanding of what services were in place, how referrals had been working before the typhoon, and what support was needed where. There was some discussion of how the conduct of cluster meetings forms a barrier to local

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<sup>8</sup> Gender advisers attached to sectoral clusters might have been a 'mitigating factor' against clusters requiring proof of GBV incidents before dedicating attention. Hersh, Marcy (2014), *Backlash in Humanitarian Response in Typhoon Haiyan* (presentation made at workshop).

participation – e.g. they are held close to where international surge staff are based, are dominated in attendance and conduct by international staff, are full of technical language and acronyms – and how information requests are extended only to international actors rather than including local ones. Information-sharing past this central network of international actors is very limited.

In some instances, joining GBV coordination with other protection coordination mechanisms, child protection for example, proved to be a good practice that allowed for improved coordination and participation of local organisations.

The lack of local inclusion is more puzzling because many international organisations have a long-term presence in the Philippines (UN Agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent, and international NGOs) and so are linked in to the cluster system *and* have a good network of partners, affiliates, member organisations etc. based in the Philippines. It was suggested that it is easier for local organisations to join the cluster system when their international counterparts accompany them. Particularly considering the sensitive nature of GBV, utilizing the knowledge and reach of local actors may have potential to improve assessments, implementation, and monitoring of protection/GBV interventions. There is a clear overlap in the opportunities presented by linking GBV considerations into ongoing preparedness work, and reaching out to local actors to better include them in future responses.

## Other points

The workshop was aimed at understanding what did and didn't work for protection of women & girls, but the participants reminded that it is necessary to include men and boys in any GBV plans as well.

# Annex A: Participant list

## Participant List

Name	Organisation
Alex Beattie	DFID
Alexander Economou	Care International
Catherine Cowley	Cafod
Cathy O'Connor	HelpAge
Claire Devlin	DFID
Clea Kahn	DFID
Courtney Blake	USAID
Gulshun Rehman	Save the Children
Elizabeth Drew	US State Department
Fleur Pollard	International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
Gareth Walker	Doctors of the World
Heidi Lehmann	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Helen Richards	DFID
Ingvill Tveite	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
Jessica Izquierdo	Child Fund
Joanne Dunn	GBV Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR)
Laetitia Rougeron	DFID
Sonya Ruparel	Action Aid
Lara Quarterman	DFID
Patrick Sooma	World Vision
Romina de St. Clara	International Organisation for Migration
Ruchi Baxi	DFID
Sian Rowbotham	Christian Aid
Tess Dico-Young	Oxfam
Ugochi Daniels	UN Population Fund (UNFPA)

## Remote participants dialling in

Name	Organisation
Alexina Rusere	UNFPA
Alyssa Cybelle Tiangco	IOM, Tacloban Hub
Annastacie Olembo	Plan, Tacloban Hub
Delbert Marquez	UNFPA, Borongan Hub
Devanna de la Puente	Former Rapid Respons Team Member, GBV AoR
Gina B Ogay	Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Tacloban
Graciela Van der Poel	UNFPA, Tacloban Hub
Irene Quizone	UNFPA, Borongan Hub
Lotte Claessens	Plan Sweden
Marcy Hersh	Refugees International
Mark Makong	UNFPA, Borongan Hub
Miguel Camacho	UNFPA, Tacloban Hub
Penina Gathuri	UNFPA, Borongan Hub
Roy Dimayuga	UNFPA, Borongan Hub
Sandra P. Gani	UNFPA, Tacloban Hub

# Annex B: Programme

Time	Sessions	Speakers
08:30	Registration at front desk	
09:00	Introduction	Dylan Winder (DFID)
09:10	Presentation of the survey findings and plenary discussion	Claire Devlin (DFID)
09:30	Dialogue with the Philippines Government and Civil Society Organisations in the Philippines: reflections on the response to Typhoon Haiyan	Philippine DSWD Philippine CSOs
11:00	Selection of themes for group work – vote in plenary and all participants select two topics. Themes selected were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability to Affected Populations</li> <li>• Mainstreaming, Integrated, Specialised Programming and Service Provision</li> <li>• Assessments and the Humanitarian Programme Cycle</li> <li>• Capacity – is it supported in the right places?</li> <li>• Local Engagement</li> </ul>	Claire Devlin (DFID)
11:15	Break	
11:30	Group Work One	Groups
12:30	Lunch	
13.30	Group Work Two	Groups
14:30	Plenary review of group discussions	Claire Devlin
15.15	Break	
15.30	Backlash? Is there a perception that the focus on protection/GBV in the Typhoon Haiyan response was disproportionate to the level of need? How could this be addressed?	Clea Kahn, Humanitarian Adviser, DFID Marcy Hersh, Senior Advocate, Women and Girls' Rights Refugees International
16.30	Plenary feedback on presentation and workshop as a whole	Claire Devlin
17:00	Close	

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