



A meeting of the Gender Working Group, Dominican Republic, 2016

INSTITUTIONALIZING GENDER IN EMERGENCIES

Case study of Dominican Republic

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, has been implemented by Oxfam in Dominican Republic between September 2015 and March 2017.



Funded by
European Union
Humanitarian Aid
and Civil Protection

1 THE PROJECT IN CONTEXT

Dominican Republic (DR) is a country that has high economic growth and is ranked as having ‘high human development’ in 2015.¹ However, nearly half of the total population of 10.4 million suffer conditions of vulnerability to disaster.² A long-standing risk of earthquakes and tsunamis is exacerbated by extreme weather-related emergencies, hurricanes and droughts, which are increasing in frequency due to climate change.

The impacts of such disasters include crop diseases such as coffee rust, and epidemics such as dengue, zika and chikungunya. Cholera outbreaks occur when water systems are broken or flooded, or when there is a movement of people from Haiti across the long border. Up to 50,000 people in Haiti and Dominican Republic are also affected by the rising waters of the large Enriquillo salt-water lake, a slow-onset natural disaster that is displacing communities in both countries.

Since 2002, the country has developed a system of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and response. While preventing major loss of life, this system struggles to meet the differential needs and capacities of different segments of the population – including men, women, girls, boys, and people of different ages and abilities.³ Women and girls are particularly vulnerable during disasters due to the fact that Dominican Republic has a very high proportion of female-headed households, high levels of teenage pregnancy, and very high levels of violence against women and girls (VAWG).⁴ Haitians and those of Haitian descent are also especially vulnerable as a result of the imposition of stringent anti-immigration laws in 2013 that have left more than 200,000 persons of Haitian descent stateless and with limited access to services.

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.

This project: **Institutionalizing Gender in Emergencies: Bridging Policy and Practice** was designed to explore how to better institutionalize gender-related standards in humanitarian assistance. The project was built on an analysis of policy and practice both at a global level and at country level. The project was piloted in four pilot countries: Ethiopia, Pakistan, South Sudan and Dominican Republic from September 2015 to March 2017.⁵

The project in these four countries 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, STRATEGIES AND INTENDED RESULTS

The objective of this project was:

To enhance the capacity of humanitarian organizations to provide adapted assistance to meet the needs of women, girls, men and boys in emergency scenarios.

Two strategies were adopted by the project team to achieve the objective: (A) the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in emergencies, and (B) the creation of more robust accountability mechanisms within humanitarian organizations.

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;⁶
- Workable Accountability Framework in coordination mechanisms tested.

This case study describes the experiences of implementing the project in Dominican Republic for each of the four projected outcomes. This includes a description of the activities carried out, the results achieved, and important contextual factors affecting the success of the project. It also provides a reflection on key challenges, limitations and significant events, and key lessons that may be applicable at global level. It then draws conclusions and provides recommendations for next steps and future directions that will be led by Oxfam.

2 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

Table 1 below summarizes the implementation timetable of the project in Dominican Republic 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 – Dominican Republic implementation timetable

Timeline	Key milestone of the project	Targets /Actors
1. Creation of the Gender in Emergencies Working Group		
November–December 2015	Oxfam work to create a Gender in Emergencies Working Group (GiEWG)	Ministry of Women, National General Attorney, National Council of Elderly People, National Council of People Living with HIV, Dominican-Haitian Women’s Movement (MUDHA), Social and Cultural Haitian Workers Movement (MOSCTHA) and the Civil Defence
February 2016	Official project launch	Project is presented to the media by the Civil Defence as a part of a wider civil society consultative group Equipo Consultivo de Protección, Género y Edad (ECPGE) – Consulting Team on Gender, Protection and Age
2016–2017	Strengthening Collaboration (monthly meetings with the working group). Engagement in clusters and other coordination mechanisms	Gender Working Group (GWG) members
2. Improving the Evidence Base - Gender Analysis		
April 2016	Desk review of Gender in Emergencies Evidence in Dominican Republic	Shared in GWG and among the Consultative Group on Gender, Age & Disability
May–August 2016	Development of TOR and first study focused on zika, incorporating 400 respondents in FGD in four locations	Medicos De Mundos, Oxfam
November 2016	Dissemination of initial results relating to zika	Shared in GWG and among the ECPGE as well as Foro Feminista (Organisations working on Women’s Rights)
January–March 2017	Further research on gender dynamics and development of final gender analysis in English and Spanish	To be published end March 2017
February 2017	Presentation of formal proposal to National Emergency Committee for inclusion in Integrated National Plan	All stakeholders
3. Developing Technical Capacity in Gender in Emergencies		
February 2016	Self-assessment tool showing gender gaps in practice and policy	GWG membership
April 2016	The first ‘Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action’ Training course	GWG membership
May–December	Follow-up training and development of Manual for Training Unit in the Civil Defence	Two trainings where giving to MOSCTHA and MUDHA promoting minimum protocols in their institutional interventions. At this moment, MUDHA has designed a protocol and MOSCTHA is in the process.
4. Accountability Framework in Coordination Structures		
November 2016	Sharing common Accountability Framework with key stakeholders and consultation and planning	Civil Defence

3 COALITION-BUILDING: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GENDER IN EMERGENCIES WORKING GROUP (GIEWG)

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. As a consequence, 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.

INTENDED RESULT 1

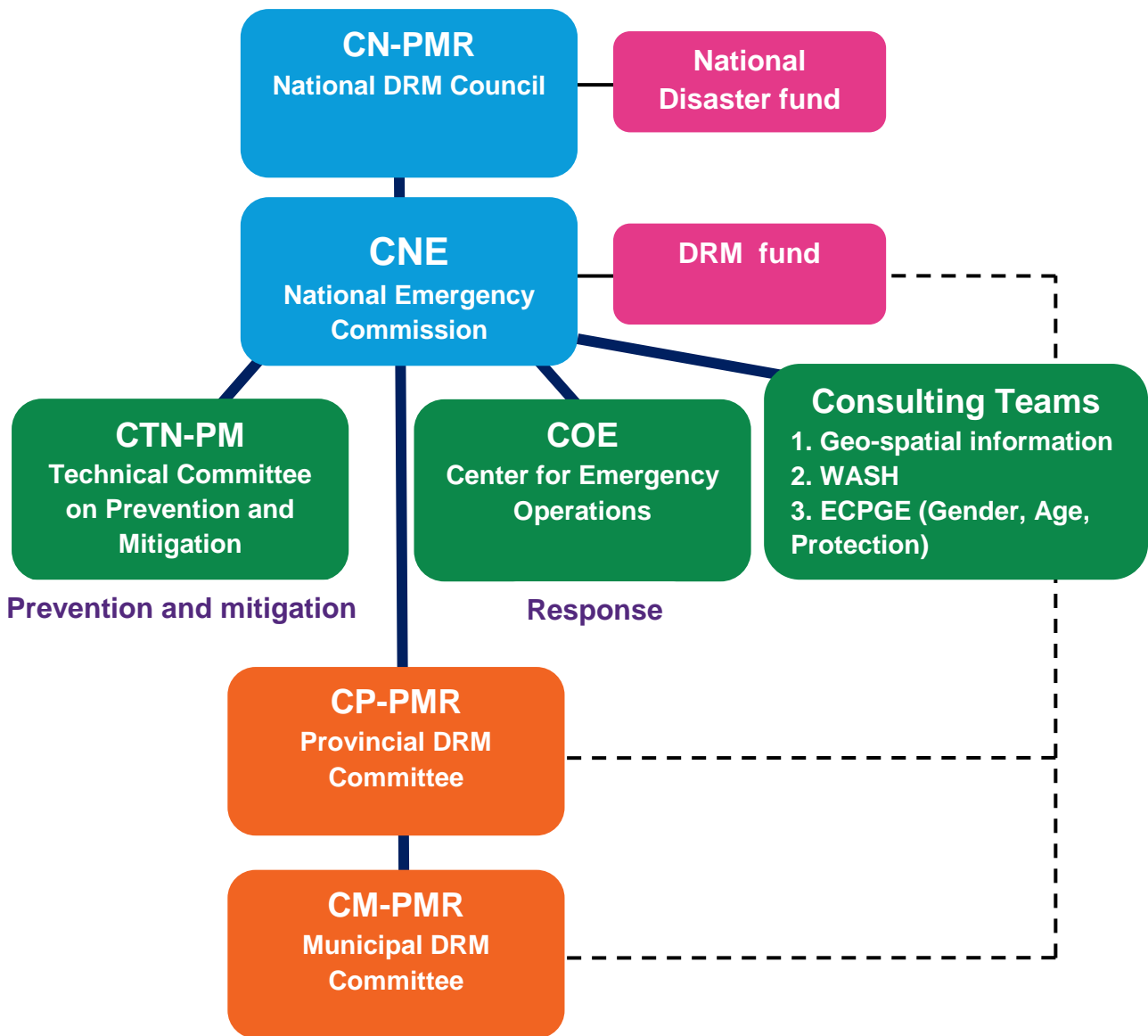
The project design included the establishment of a national Gender in Emergencies Working Group (GiEWG). This collaborative venture was intended to bring together different actors in the humanitarian system to lead on the project activities and create sustainable change in the humanitarian system.

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.

However, in the case of the Dominican Republic, this project was implemented in a context in which government ministries and volunteers from the national Civil Defence provide the emergency response. As such, it differs from more typical responses in other countries where non-state actors such as INGOs and the UN provide front-line emergency response.⁷ This case study shows how the creation of the GiEWG was modified to accommodate the context.

The other contextual factor was that, as a result of a previous project, a long-term goal to increase civil society voice and participation in government decision making was achieved by Oxfam and partners, right at the outset of this project.⁸ There was therefore a synergy and overlap between the two initiatives. The outcome was the creation of the ECPGE (Equipo Consultivo de Protección, Género y Edad – Consulting Team on Gender, Protection and Age). The ECPGE is a legal entity which includes a range of civil society stakeholders, is chaired by the Ministry of Women and forms part of the government National System for Prevention, Mitigation and Disaster Response. The ECPGE provides policy advice directly to the National Emergency Commission.⁹

Figure 1: National System for Prevention, Mitigation and Disaster Response



ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

During the inception phase, the project team adapted the project approach to fit a context in which emergency response remains (largely) the remit of government ministries and volunteers from the national Civil Defence.

After a planning and inception stage, the aims of this project were shared at a launch for stakeholders and the media, in conjunction with the launch of the ECPGE. The serving army general who heads the National Emergencies Committee chaired the launch. His presence showed commitment to change at senior government levels.¹⁰

To drive project activities, the Oxfam project team then assembled a Gender in Emergencies Working Group, known as the Gender Working Group (GWG) that would support the ECPGE throughout. It consists of:

- **Two key government stakeholders.** The Head of Disaster Risk

Management within the Ministry of Women is chair of both the GWG and the ECPGE. She also sits on the internal government Centre for Emergency Response (COE).¹¹ The Head of Programmes at the Civil Defence is a key actor who drives how volunteers are managed and supported in disaster response.

- **National NGOs supporting the Haitian population.** MOSCTHA (Movimiento Socio-Cultural de Trabajadores Haitianos – Social and Cultural Haitian Workers Movement) and MUDHA (Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicano-Haitianas – Dominican-Haitian Women’s Movement). These NGOs connect to the most vulnerable community of stateless Haitian descendants and Haitian migrants who live largely excluded from other government services.
- **National Council for people with HIV/AIDS and National Council for Elderly People.** These national civil society organizations promote an understanding of vulnerable groups in disasters through the overarching humanitarian system.
- **INGO partners and UN agencies.** Oxfam, Plan International, Medicos Del Mundos, Unicef and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Representatives from UN OCHA advised the project throughout. They did not form a formal part of the GWG.

The GWG met monthly throughout the project. In addition, the GWG presented at the ECPGE to secure ratification of project results and incorporate feedback from a larger group of stakeholders. Besides driving all project activities (as outlined in the sections below), they have achieved some major positive outcomes.

Results

Project results were shared via the Disaster Risk Reduction management forum and the ECPGE. The project also contributed to the operation and the agenda of the ECPGE via the joint chair. It was formally mandated as a steering committee of the ECPGE.

The GWG, guided by the participation of the person from the Civil Defence, developed a detailed proposal for the creation of an internal Gender Unit. This has been presented to the Civil Defence leadership. The proposal included a draft terms of reference (ToR) and a first year work plan. Such a unit would provide a continuous budget and position within government for gender in emergencies. It would ensure induction for all staff in protection, gender and age guidelines and the development of specific proposals for training volunteers.¹²

The GWG created an atmosphere of trust between public sector and civil society through the simple effort of regular meetings and by creating a space for developing personal rapport. This led to a declaration from the Civil Defence that data collected by community Civil Defence volunteers would not be passed to the Department of Immigration in any circumstances. Due to the fact that Haitian people and people of Haitian origin are frequently deported by the Department of Immigration, this is a particularly important declaration in the context of emergency response.

The GWG created a detailed proposal to incorporate a gender perspective in the Integrated National Plan on Risk Management and Disaster Response. This document is the blueprint on which all planning decisions are made and updates the 2002 law in the country that governs humanitarian response.¹³

In February 2017 the GWG chairperson (Ministry of Women) presented the proposal to the National Emergency Committee (NEC), with all stakeholders and media present. This is a major step towards stronger recognition by government of differential gender needs and capacities in emergency contexts. This presentation was well-received and the vote taken to consider the proposal within the Integrated National Plan. The major elements of the proposal included:

- Incorporation of gender analysis in the process of design, implementation, learning and evaluation of risk management plans (prevention, mitigation and response).
- Information gathering to include media and academic studies on diverse populations.
- Inclusion of measures for the prevention of GBV and violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Incorporation of a gender perspective in the curricula of the training school of the NEC.
- The creation of the gender unit at the Civil Defence to lead gender-mainstreaming in the government system.

During the project, two women within the government system were empowered and supported to develop their leadership, through the creation of a separate space and a forum for them to discuss their own challenges and strategize prior to formal meetings. Such empowerment was also facilitated by the gender leadership in humanitarian action training and shared experience of the project. The results have included tangible proposals to build gender mainstreaming into the government response (as outlined above).

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Although it was necessary to adapt the project to the national humanitarian context, this was not perceived as a challenge in itself.

There was initial resistance to the novelty of talking about gender-related aspects of emergency response with government agencies.¹⁴ This challenge was gradually overcome during the course of the project, with particular success in relation to synergies developed with other initiatives. By bringing multiple stakeholders together for the Gender Leadership in Humanitarian action training course (see below), the project also achieved a breakthrough in encouraging participants to gain the confidence to speak about the issues concerned. The result has been the acknowledgement in a formal stakeholder meeting of the need to include gender in the revision of the national law.

The project was implemented during an electoral year, which risked changes to membership of the GWG if personnel were changed or transferred.¹⁵ This is a continuous concern and an important limitation on institutionalization in the Dominican Republic, where loss of important champions due to political changes can impede long-term goals of structural change to the system.

INGO partners are few in the Dominican Republic and other INGOs did not participate significantly in the GWG. This was because they perceived their involvement to be within the ECPGE, rather than the GWG. However, this did not prevent engagement in the training or other project activities that were shared with the ECPGE.

Similarly, UN involvement was limited – this was due to the capacity of UN organizations that were mainly small implementing offices for regional programmes. Engagement and participation was via the ECPGE. It was not felt that this impacted on project results.

The feminist movement in Dominican Republic is active, but has never been involved in emergency relief before. Although they had been a part of project planning, Feminist Forum did not play an active role in the GWG, owing to a belief on their part that the area of discussion lacked relevance to their agenda.¹⁶ However, the sharing of the data from the Gender Analysis about Zika was of interest, since it relates to their campaign for reproductive rights. They have therefore been involved in the dissemination of the Gender Analysis.

LESSONS

To achieve its objectives the project needed to involve public institutions more than it did agencies in the UN system. In planning initiatives to institutionalize gender in emergencies into government structures, it is necessary to undertake a particularly detailed analysis of who holds decision-making power, both formally and in a hidden/informal way.

The involvement of the Ministry of Women has represented a major opportunity for government ownership of the GWG and for the involvement of other governmental institutions.

At the outset of the project, it was necessary to have a meeting with this Vice Ministry to present the idea for the creation of the GWG and to propose that this institution lead it. At first there was scepticism, related to the fact that the project was about gender in a general sense, whereas the Ministry understood their focus to be solely on women. The work of the project to ensure a wider understanding of the gender dimension and accept a change in focus (from 'women' to 'gender') in the representation by the Ministry of Women to the NEC has been a major achievement of this project. The project has helped to significantly raise the profile of gender in the politics of prevention and response, including the implementation of training programmes that are currently taking place in the country.

By encouraging civil society organizations which work with people of Haitian descent, the project has fostered important lines of communication and collaboration, including higher awareness of the needs of people of Haitian descent by the Civil Defence.

Although it has not been possible within the scope of this project, substantive engagement of women's rights organizations and feminist movements may be possible with the development of an evidence base on the differential impact and capacities of different population groups in disasters.

4 IMPROVING THE EVIDENCE BASE – GENDER ANALYSIS

ISSUE

There is insufficient gender analysis and evidence to inform effective humanitarian response planning and practice at global level. This applies equally to the situation in Dominican Republic.

INTENDED RESULT 2

The intended result for this part of the project was to create a Consolidated Country Gender Analysis. In order to undertake a gap analysis of areas of missing information, the process firstly entailed consolidating available data at a country level on gender issues in emergencies (as a desk review). The findings were then used to design and conduct a field study to address the information gaps. The desk review and field study formed the Consolidated Country Gender Analysis. The purpose of this was to support humanitarian actors to develop proposals, design humanitarian programme strategies and contingency plans, and help to create links with long-term development projects.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The desk review report provided evidence on how, during the major hurricanes of Noel and Olga in 2007, women and girls were affected by sexual abuse in shelters, and as a result were reluctant to enter public spaces.¹⁷ Sexual abuse and exploitation by emergency responders also took place after the earthquake in Haiti, when people fled into the Dominican Republic.¹⁸ The report presented evidence that female-headed households are more adversely affected in a drought. This is because women receive lower wages for agricultural labour in the Dominican Republic and therefore constitute a poorer group.¹⁹ Another reason is that there are many single mothers who need to combine caring and breadwinning responsibilities. This left them with less time to engage in paid work, and so earn lower incomes than if they worked full time.²⁰

The most important finding was that, throughout the system of disaster relief in the country, there is a lack of disaggregated data collection, which makes analysis by gender extremely difficult in emergencies.²¹

The focus of the analyses in the desk review was on the hurricanes and droughts that the Dominican Republic is prone to. The project therefore elected to assess epidemiological crisis – and in particular zika – as this is having an unknown impact on vulnerable populations. Diseases spread by mosquitoes are increasing as a result of climate change. The Dominican Republic has suffered from the impacts of dengue and chikungunya for more than ten years. There is a dearth of information about the gender aspect of these epidemiological crises.

This project partnered with the NGO Medicos del Mundo (Doctors of the World) to look at the impact of zika on women. The field study included focus groups with 400 women in four locations in Dominican Republic and revealed the following key findings:²²

- The feminization of the impact of the zika crisis: more than 74% of reported cases are in women.
- Zika in the Dominican Republic causes a higher incidence of microencephaly in newborns, as well as the debilitating Guillain-Barres Syndrome, than other

countries.

- The current public health campaigns may be stigmatizing women or exposing them to risk of violence.
- The zika crisis needs to be seen as a humanitarian emergency as well as a factor in other humanitarian crises.

Findings from the zika study have been shared with the Feminist Forum, so that they can be used to continue to advocate for increased access to reproductive rights and maternal services in the Dominican Republic, which remains one of the few countries in the world where abortion is illegal in all circumstances.

The project team returned to the project study area in February 2017 to conduct further research in the same location. These focused on how gender relations are affected. Further focus group discussions have taken place with men, women, girls and boys.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The implementation of the gender analysis field study presented a huge challenge. This was due to the fact that the impact of zika, about which very little is known, involved researching multiple factors including: epidemiology and incidence of the disease, incidence of related medical conditions, the role of public health programming, the availability of health services, the context of affected communities, and the anxiety experienced by whole communities as a result of the risk of children being born with birth defects. In order to undertake this kind of research it was necessary to work with experienced medical personnel in the design of the study.

In the end, what was analysed was the feminized impact of zika in the Dominican Republic. While this was useful in the context, it did not constitute a gender analysis as it did not explore the differential impacts on men, women, girls and boys, nor changing gender roles and opportunities for programming.

The project addressed this challenge by working with an international consultant to revisit the field to undertake further field research for a full gender analysis. However, this has meant a major delay to the delivery of the final project output.

LESSONS

In designing ToR for a gender analysis there needs to be focus on the changing needs and capacities of all population groups, including men, women, girls and boys and people of different ages. In the Dominican Republic, until the time of the study, most studies had focused on the additional vulnerability of women and girls in disasters. This understanding of gender – as a concept that is more than 'Women and Girls' – has been driven by this project, but knowledge and understanding among all humanitarian actors and in the general population is still limited.

The design of consultant ToRs needs to consider capacities, resources and audience and go through a more rigorous review process, as the understanding necessary to undertake a gender analysis requires certain skills that are not always easy to find in a specific context.

5 IMPROVING TECHNICAL CAPACITY FOR GENDER-FOCUSED RESPONSE IN EMERGENCIES

ISSUE

The issue addressed by this part of the project was low technical capacity across sectors and organizations with respect to the implementation of a gender perspective in emergencies.

INTENDED RESULT 3

The intended result for this part of the project 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 used to devise training courses, designed at global level and adapted at national level, focused on Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action. The purpose of the training was to lead to the creation of a national-level action plan, which would aim to achieve concrete changes in internal guidance and policies, as well as follow-on training by participating organizations.

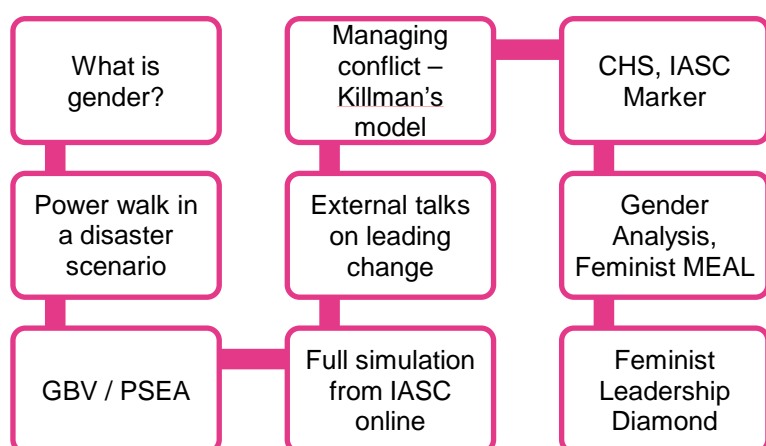
ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

This part of the project took place in two stages. The first involved an organizational self-assessment, and the second leadership training.

The project (at global level) designed an organizational self-assessment as a tool for the GiEWG based on the Oxfam minimum standards for gender in emergencies. This was then applied in all four pilot countries.²³

The Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action course then followed up this assessment, addressing 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



Results

The organization self-assessment was carried out by ten agencies in the Dominican Republic in an open peer-reviewed session. It revealed that international agencies (Plan, UNFPA, Unicef and Oxfam) had strong organizational policies related to gender in emergencies. However, all local and government agencies in the Dominican Republic were lacking in confidence when called upon to address different needs and impacts of disasters. It was a very useful session to set the scene for substantive training on the issue.

The 'Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action' training took place in April 2016 and was led by an international gender consultant. The training included all members of the GWG, including the Civil Defence and the Ministry of Women, as well as other key actors including the Ministries of Education and Health, International Organisation for Migration, UN OCHA and the Disaster Risk Management forum. A total of 15 people participated in the training, and case studies and experiential aspects were adapted to context in a participatory manner. Participants stated that this was the first gender in humanitarian assistance training that they had participated in, and were able to benefit from international practice.

As a result of the training, the GWG created a Country Action Plan.

Results since the training have included:

- Follow-on training at the Ministry of Women for 32 Provincial delegates.
- The project developed and presented a simplified version of the 'Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action' training manual for the Civil Defence – for use within training and to support the development of a training unit.
- Supporting the work of national NGOs, including those working with people of Haitian descent, to have specific protocols and minimum standards in emergencies, including follow-on training for all staff of MOSCTHA and MUDHA.

CHALLENGES

It was necessary to adapt the training material to the requirements of the group. This included an adaptation of the case studies to the national context, and adding into role play scenarios Haitians and people of Haitian descent, as well as LGBTI, as groups subject to additional vulnerability. However, this was not a challenge per se. The self-assessment and training was well achieved and there were no significant challenges in implementing the capacity-building activities.

LESSONS

Training is more successful if it is adapted for the context and course participants. There is a strong demand and interest in training on gender in emergencies frameworks. There is an interest in follow-up training and the adaptation of training materials to context.

6 TRIALLING THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

ISSUE

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

INTENDED RESULT 4

The intended result was to trial a global accountability framework with cluster organizations. The purpose of this framework is to support the clusters to develop action plans aimed at improving accountability for gender in their sector coordination.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The project (at global level) examined accountability for gender at all levels, and from this developed an Accountability Framework. The project 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

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

The GWG shared and discussed the Accountability Framework and decided that it would be most relevant for the Civil Defence. A meeting was held with the Civil Defence to discuss the ten measures that a coordination body should engage in to support the gender accountability of different actors.

Employing the performance rating proved difficult, as it was necessary to explain certain terminology and the Civil Defence did not have any of the ten measures in place at the outset. Findings of the assessment included:

- There are no specific institutional strategies directly related to a gender analysis.
- The gender perspective is incorporated in its strategic plan, but they don't have overview of special needs, transition plans and others.
- Advances have been made as a result of work with the GWG and the ECPGE.
- There is no single list of institutions with gender experts. There is resistance to the fact that the institution aims to include female techniques in training, even when there are more men among its staff.
- There has been an increase of female volunteers, who are mapping information based on gender, their studies and capacities.
- The institution does not use Gender and Age Markers.

CHALLENGES

The Accountability Framework included a set of best practice examples that referred to Cluster plans and Cluster meetings, but these required reinterpretation in the Dominican Republic context because most of the response intervention is coordinated from the executive branch and militaries corps headed by the president of the country. The government council is called, and civil society organizations are not allowed to participate in this meeting; there is even a very limited participation of the NEC. The application of the accountability framework was considered to be a key factor in the coordination of the prevention and response plans with other such plans.

LESSONS

The instrument constitutes an excellent tool to follow through actions from the gender unit, when it starts its operations, to the NEC or the planning programme. Some of the guidelines presented in the proposal for the Integrated National Plan were taken from the Accountability Framework. For instance, adapted assistance should take into account: communication, participation, integration, education, prevention, resilience, and other more strategic interventions.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The project was designed to work with coordination mechanisms, yet these are lacking in the Dominican Republic, where the Executive branch of the government leads all humanitarian interventions.

It was therefore necessary to envisage the project as using civil society resources to foster internal demand for change within the government system.

The project was successful in fostering collaboration, developing evidence, raising the level of understanding and technical capacity, and recognizing and developing accountability structures in operation in the Ministry of Women, the Civil Defence and the National Emergency Committee via the ECPGE.

The overall country baseline for disaster response capacity was low, given that the Dominican Republic is a preparedness context, rather than an ongoing humanitarian emergency. This meant that global outputs – the training manual, the accountability framework, the self-assessment – needed not only to be translated into Spanish but also simplified and contextualized to be understood.



Providencia Matos, Ministry of Women, chairing a Meeting of the Gender Working Group, November 2016

'I think the project has helped to position the issue of gender in humanitarian aid within the structure of the system. It has created a 180 degree turn to the previous operating system for disaster risk management. It will completely transform it. The system needs to respond to different population segments, especially in the quality and warmth of the intervention. From the Ministry of Women we are focusing and disseminating information at an internal and external level.'

– Providencia Matos, Head of Disaster Risk Management, Ministry of Women



Esther Quezada, Head of Programmes, Civil Defence

'Promoting interagency agreements between State institutions working with different populations has been important for improving gender mainstreaming. Due to the creation of the GWG, it has been the first time in 14 years that the Civil Defence has had space to work with so many governmental and non-governmental actors. If there is no awareness, nor tools, nor people willing, the work is not well done.'

– Esther Quezada, Head of Programmes, Civil Defence

8 NEXT STEPS

The project has outlined next steps that Oxfam and other members of the GWG intend to deliver at country level. These include:

- To promote the strengthening of the Civil Defence gender unit.
- To continue to advocate for the creation of the new law and the new Prevention, Mitigation and Respond in Disaster Integrated National Plan.
- To promote gender accountability practices in different organizations.
- To promote the incorporation of a gender perspective at the Civil Defence curricula training.
- To advocate within the military corps for the incorporation of a gender perspective or gender analysis in its humanitarian intervention.
- To promote women's leadership in humanitarian intervention at regional, provincial and municipal level.

NOTES

1 DR is ranked 101 out of 188 countries in the HDI, and 104 in the Gender Inequality Index (Human Development Report, UNDP, 2015).

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf

2 49% of the population are vulnerable to disasters (World Risk Report 2015, United Nations University, 2015) <http://bit.ly/1Wt09th>, p. 64.

3 Oxfam & Plan (2013) 'Mujeres y niñas en contexto de desastres. Tres Estudios de Caso sobre Vulnerabilidades y Capacidades en la República Dominicana'.

<http://dipecholac.net/docs/files/caribe/mujeres-y-ninas-contexto-desastres-16.pdf>

4 More than one-quarter of Dominican women (aged 15–49) have experienced physical violence, and 10 percent sexual violence. The Dominican Republic has the third highest rate of femicide in the Latin America and Caribbean region (Dominican Republic Demographic and Health Survey, ENDESA, 2013).

<http://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/dominican-republic-demographic-and-health-survey-2013> 27% of households are female-headed households (La evolución de las estructuras familiares en América Latina, 1990–2010: Los retos de la pobreza, la vulnerabilidad y el cuidado, Unicef, CEPAL, Serie Políticas Sociales, 2014).

5 For global analysis see DARA (2011) 'Humanitarian Response Index: Addressing the Gender Challenge', see http://daraint.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/HRI_2011_Complete_Report.pdf and DFID (2011)

'Humanitarian Emergency Response Review', see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67579/HERR.pdf

6 To meet Oxfam minimum standards for gender in emergencies (2013), see <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/oxfam-minimum-standards-for-gender-in-emergencies-305867>

7 There is no UN cluster system operational in the country and Oxfam is one of just eight operational INGOs in the country. When a disaster such as a flood or hurricane strikes, it is the Civil Defence which is often the first responder. Apart from 12 employees at the national level and 32 directly elected directors at provincial level, the Civil Defence is a body of around 9,000 volunteers countrywide who relate directly to members of the public.

8 This project, Strengthening Urban Resilience through Humanitarian Protection, Shelter and Communication in San Cristobal, Dominican Republic was funded by European Commission Humanitarian Aid department's Disaster Preparedness Programme (DIPECHO) and implemented by Oxfam, Plan International and Habitat for Humanity.

9 The National Emergency Commission is the legal body responsible for all prevention, mitigation, preparedness, recovery and emergency response in Dominican Republic.

10 The National Emergency Commission directs policy into the presidential office.

11 The Centre for Emergency Operations (COE) has five 'tables' (health, shelter, logistics, infrastructure & electricity, and agriculture) made up of line ministries. These are attended by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) but not civil society.

12 This will now be considered by the National Emergency Commission as a part of the proposal to the Integrated National Plan, mentioned below.

13 Oxfam (2017) 'Propuesta para la incorporación del enfoque de género en el nuevo Plan Nacional Integral de Gestión de Riesgos de Desastres'.

14 For example, in initial discussions about the project, a senior government official asked, with genuine concern, 'Do you mean we should divide up families in an emergency and take them to separate shelters?'

15 The implementation of the project coincided with presidential, congressional and provincial elections in the month of May. The results of the election were disputed by international observers and there was insecurity regarding the permanence of the government. The Ministry of Women was redesigned and the posts of several employees who supported non-government political parties were cancelled. However, staff in the emergency unit of this ministry remained in post, so the project was not negatively

impacted in this respect.

16 'Foro Feminista Magaly Pineda' (Feminist Forum) is an important coalition of more than 40 women's rights organizations in the country.

17 Oxfam (2016 Unpublished) 'Levantamiento de información sobre género en contextos humanitarios en República Dominicana'

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Oxfam (2016) 'Aproximaciones epidemiológicas al dengue y zika virus desde la perspectiva de género en república dominicana'.

23 This simple questionnaire of 20 questions allowed participants in the GWG 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. 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>

© Oxfam International March 2017

This case study was written by Zobeyda Cepeda and Eliza Hilton. Oxfam acknowledges the assistance first and foremost of the members of the Gender Working Group in the Dominican Republic. Advisory comments were received by Carlos Arenas, Julie Lafreniere, Tess Dico-Young, Steph Avis and Karen Iles in its production. It is part of a series of papers and reports written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email ehilton1@ght.oxfam.org.

This publication is copyright but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. Email policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk.

The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International under ISBN 978-0-85598-925-5 in March 2017.

Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.



Funded by
European Union
Humanitarian Aid
and Civil Protection

This initiative is funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (DG ECHO).

This document covers humanitarian aid activities implemented with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein should not be taken, in any way, to reflect the official opinion of the European Union, and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

OXFAM

Oxfam is an international confederation of 20 organizations networked together in more than 90 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty. Please write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit www.oxfam.org.

www.oxfam.org



OXFAM