

Gender & Protection in Emergencies

THE WORK OF THE GENDER & PROTECTION CLUSTER IN VANUATU



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This briefing paper was commissioned by CARE Vanuatu and Save the Children Vanuatu for the Gender and Protection Cluster Localisation Project (funded by UN Women 2017-2018).

This paper tells the story of four years' work of the Gender and Protection Cluster in Vanuatu in order to share Vanuatu's experience with Pacific regional partners and humanitarian actors in other countries working on gender and protection coordination in humanitarian response. The paper documents and highlights promising practices of the Vanuatu Gender and Protection Cluster and identifies some challenges which will need focus in the future. For context, a brief overview of the global, regional and national cluster system is included, along with more detail on the history of the Gender and Protection Cluster in Vanuatu, its aims and objectives, and the Localisation Project. The paper draws largely from documents and reports, particularly lessons learned reports, as well as verified by interviews with key informants. Importantly, it is not an evaluative exercise.

It is hoped that this paper will inspire discussion and learning with similar clusters in other parts of Melanesia.

INTRODUCTION

Globally	Regionally	Nationally
<i>In 2015 disasters affected 108 million people across 574 reported disasters¹ - that's 54 million women and girls and 54 million men and boys.²</i>	<i>UNESCAP estimates that 17% of people in the Pacific live with a disability³. Using 2018 population figures, that's 391,000 people⁴. Women experience greater disability than men; disability increases with age; and children/people living with disability are less likely to go to school and access health services.⁵</i>	<i>In 2015 60% of Ni-Vanuatu women reported being experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by their husbands or intimate partners in their lifetime. Using 2018 population figures, that's 169,270 women⁶.</i>

In all disasters, in all parts of the world, it is true that men, women, boys and girls all have different needs, capacities and vulnerabilities – and that these will be determined according to their individual, family and community situations and by the nature of the disaster itself. These can also change with time, and circumstances. Just being a woman, a mother, or a child does not necessarily make someone vulnerable. This is true too for people living with disabilities and the aged.

Consider for example the different needs of someone living with a disability if they are a woman or a man. Was their disability pre-existing or a result of the disaster? What is the nature of their disability, and how is this different for physical, psychological and intellectual disabilities? How will their needs change according to their age? What if they are a mother? Or if they are a child? If a child, are they a boy or a girl; with or without family support? What are their family and community caring responsibilities? These are just some

¹ https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/201610/WDR%202016-FINAL_web.pdf.

² Note: simple 50/50 population split used as sex disaggregated data not provided.

³ <http://www.pacificdisability.org/About-Us/Disability-in-the-Pacific.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pacificislands/overview>

⁵ Vanuatu Disability Working Group, Women in emergency Response and Recovery Forum, June 2015

⁶ Vanuatu Women's Centre, Women in Emergency Response and Recovery June 2015

of the complex life and social circumstances that can impact upon how just one person and their family and community can be affected by a disaster.

Identifying issues like those described above and working with others to plan, coordinate and respond to needs and gaps is the work of the Gender & Protection Cluster (G&PC) in Vanuatu.

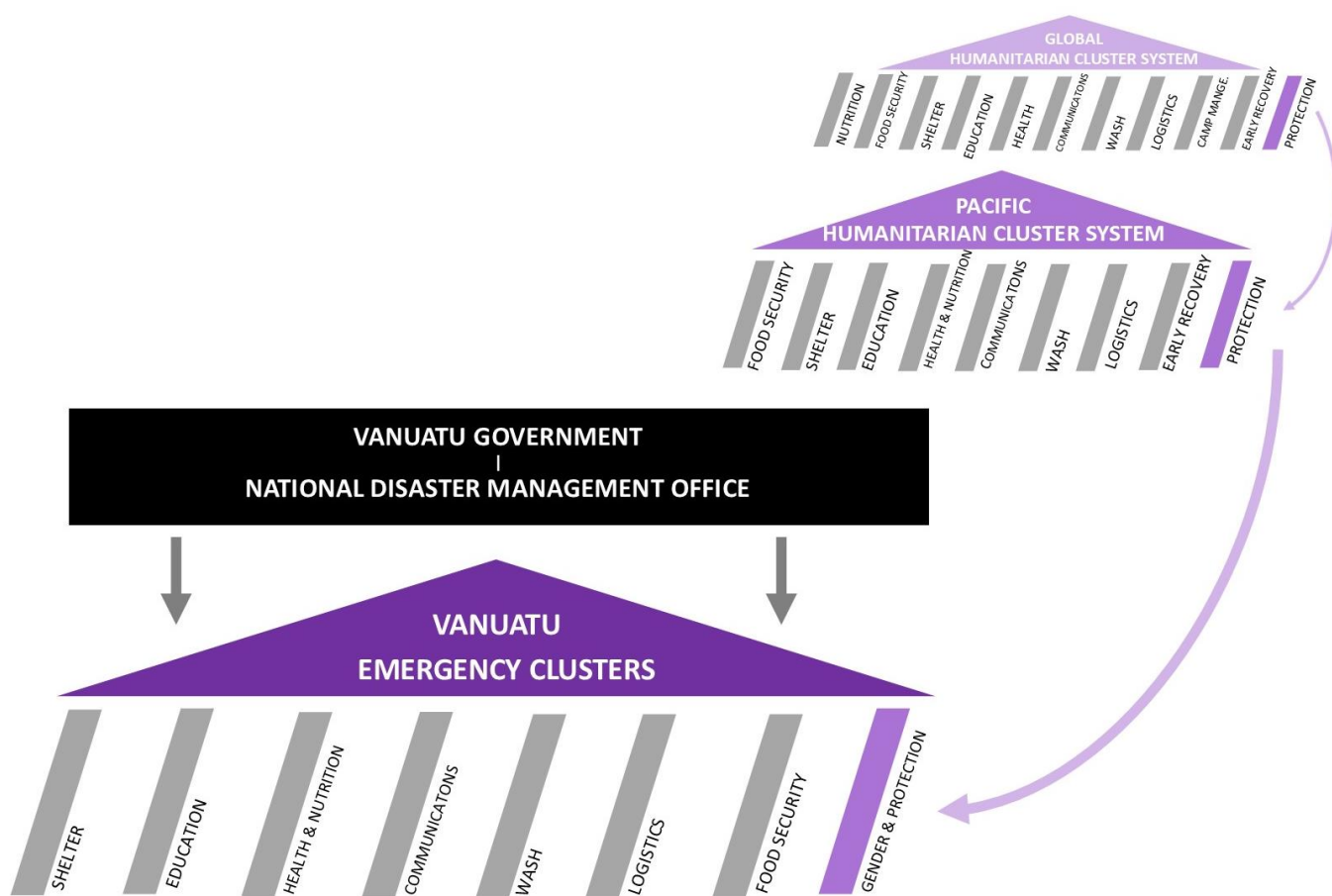
The overall aim of the G&PC is to increase coordination, collaboration, communication and advocacy for gender and protection.

It does this by:

- raising awareness, providing training and technical advice with a view to further developing knowledge and understanding of gender and protection issues in disasters
- working with others to plan and implement gender and protection measures in their disaster preparedness, response and recovery activities
- identifying service and response gaps, and advocating for these to be addressed
- coordination of gender and protection activities with all response organisations in times of disaster.⁷

THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM AND CLUSTER APPROACH

Importantly the G&PC does not work alone or in isolation: it is part of a global, Pacific regional and Vanuatu national framework: the **Humanitarian System and Cluster Approach**. Let's take a look at the key structures that make up the framework that direct, work with, and support the Vanuatu G&PC.



⁷ Aim and objectives summarised from Gender & Protection Cluster in Vanuatu Terms of Reference 2016.

The **Global Cluster System** was first activated in the 2005 Pakistan Earthquake and its role is to ensure that when emergencies occur, the response efforts are well coordinated. Good coordination means fewer service gaps and less overlap in the response assistance delivered by humanitarian organisations⁸. (See Annex 1 for more detail on the Global Humanitarian System and Cluster Approach.)

The **Global Protection Cluster** is just one of the Clusters that make up the global framework; others are Shelter, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), Logistics, Camp Coordination and Management, Early Recovery, Education, Emergency Telecommunications, Food Security, Health, Logistics and Nutrition. The Global Protection Cluster is a network of United Nations (UN) organisations, non-government organisations (NGO) and international organisations working to protect people affected by conflict and disaster.

The Global Protection Cluster's mission is to 'ensure that protection is central in humanitarian action ... and to act as a bridge between humanitarian actors'⁹. In doing so it's easy to see that the Global Protection Cluster has a role to play across many of the other clusters/sectors – for example, gender and protection are key considerations in the delivery of health, WASH, shelter and food security services, to name just a few. (See Annex 1 for more detail on the Global Protection Cluster.)

Because of the uniqueness of the Pacific as one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, with many small island states vulnerable to frequent and intense disasters, a regional approach – **The Pacific Humanitarian Team** – was established in 2008. The Pacific Humanitarian Team is tasked to support regional disaster preparedness and response, and to implement a regional stand-by arrangement to support national disaster management authorities in times of emergencies¹⁰. Like the 'arrangement' at the global level there are a number of Clusters operating under the umbrella of the Pacific Humanitarian Team: WASH, Education, Early Recovery, Food Security, Shelter, Health & Nutrition, Logistics and Protection. (See Annex 2 for more detail on The Pacific Humanitarian Team.)

The Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster (PHPC) is regional in its scope and works on an ongoing basis to enhance regional and national capacity for protection-sensitive disaster preparedness, response and recovery in Pacific Island countries. Because of its unique 'permanent standby' status the PHPC, it is also able to engage in long-term protection preparedness activities such as awareness-raising, advocacy and capacity building.¹¹ (See Annex 2 for more detail on PHPC).

Nationally, the **Vanuatu Government** has responsibility for coordination and management of all emergency response mechanisms in its territory. To fulfil this role, there is a National Disaster Committee, and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). Supporting the Government in this work is the Cluster System (Gender and Protection, WASH, Education, Food Security and Agriculture, Logistics and Shelter), an Inter-Cluster forum (hosted by the NDMO) and the Vanuatu Humanitarian team (VHT) (local and international NGOs, and the UN.) The work

"The overall goal of the National Gender Protection Cluster is to provide gender perspectives into climate change responses, recovery efforts and development programs so that the issues and perspectives of men, women, children, and persons living with disabilities become an integral part of national responses, planning, and implementation processes that address the impact of climate change and building resilience for sustainable development in Vanuatu."

Mrs Dorosday Kenneth Watson, Director
Department of Women's Affairs 2017

⁸ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach>

⁹ Quoted in the Gender & Protection in Emergencies Training Program developed as a component of the 'Increasing women and girls voice in the humanitarian sector: the localisation of the Vanuatu G&PC' 2018.

¹⁰ <http://pacifichumanitarian.info/about/>

¹¹ <https://www.cid.org.nz/assets/Key-issues/Humanitariandisaster/Fact-Sheet-25-Protection-Cluster.pdf>

of the Clusters is prescribed in the National Cyclone Support plan, and they operate under the Government's leadership with the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team. The Government also has provincial and community level committees and representatives that are part of its national coordination and management structure.¹²

All this makes for a detailed and well-coordinated approach to disaster preparedness, response and recovery at the national level, and it provides a clear mandate for the work of the G&PC in Vanuatu.

THE VANUATU GENDER & PROTECTION CLUSTER

The Gender and Protection Cluster (G&PC) was first formed in 2014 after several months of discussion facilitated by the VHT with the NDMO, UN agencies and NGO partners.

Set to be led by the Ministry of Justice and co-led by CARE Vanuatu and Save the Children Vanuatu, the formation of the G&PC coincided with the arrival of Tropical Cyclone (TC) Lusi. Subsequently the decision was made to 'test' the Cluster in the TC Lusi response.

Its early successes included the development of a gender and protection rapid assessment form, pre-deployment briefings for rapid assessment teams, appointment of females to the assessment teams, and high-level national advocacy (to the Prime Minister and the NDMO). As a result, gender and protection was, for the first time in Vanuatu, considered in the assessment, response and recovery phases.

As an outcome of this success and in response to the frequency and severity of disasters in Vanuatu, the G&PC has been an ongoing and permanent coordination mechanism from then until now.

The G&PC is led by the Vanuatu Government, the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) (Ministry of Justice and Community Services), with CARE Vanuatu and Save the Children Vanuatu as co-leads. Its membership is made up of Government representatives from national ministries, national community service organisations (CSOs) and NGOs, UN agencies, international NGOs, Vanuatu Red Cross Society, and other organisations with a focus and interest in gender and protection issues.¹³

In preparation, response and recovery, the G&PC has continued to refine and develop its tools, processes and systems. It has developed and implemented training packages that have in turn improved knowledge and skills within the G&PC and the wider Cluster system. It has also continued to advocate for improvements to the way in which gender and protection initiatives are both mainstreamed and targeted across the full cycle of disaster preparedness, response and recovery plans and activities, across all sectors (WASH, Food Security and Agriculture, Shelter, etc.).

"It's great to see that Vanuatu has taken the opportunity to copy the structure of the global system and contextualised the system to fit our national context. It [helps] our government to respond effectively to issue during disasters." Workshop Participant, WP

As co-lead of the G&PC, Save the Children Vanuatu was awarded a grant from UN Women as part of the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (GAI) in 2017. This project – the Localisation of the Gender and Protection Cluster (GAI Localisation Project) – aims to support and strengthen local civil society organisations and emergency response actors at the national and

¹² Cited in G&PC Terms of Reference (2016) and the Gender & Protection in Emergencies Training Program (more fully referenced above).

¹³ G&PC Terms of Reference (2016)

community level to increase their engagement and capacity in gender and protection focused emergency response work; and to promote women and girls affected by the crisis to lead, participate in, and benefit from relief and response efforts.¹⁴

Why Gender AND Protection when in other places, it's just a Protection Cluster?

At first, there wasn't a stand-alone Protection Cluster at all in Vanuatu. Instead, all efforts were focused on mainstreaming gender and protection across the other clusters – with “mixed success”. Most emerging protection issues involved women and girls. At the same time, there were limited ‘protection’ resources and skills both in the region and in Vanuatu to be able to address these issues.

In order to foster and grow this work in Vanuatu, founding Cluster members decided to emphasise both gender AND protection. By doing so, it was envisaged that there would be increased knowledge, skill and understanding of gender considerations in Vanuatu, and that this would in turn enable the Cluster to strengthen its protection work.

Founding members explain the decision like this: “Protection is a concrete concept, and easily understood by all. Gender is much more theoretical, and not so easily understood. But the theory of power dynamics is critical in understanding protection, and so by putting the two together the Cluster created the opportunity to enhance, improve, and advance its capacity to do gender work.

“We created the environment to think differently, and to work differently.”

THE GENDER AND PROTECTION CLUSTER'S WORK TO DATE

Since its inception in 2014 the G&PC has been active across a number of disasters including: TC Lusi (2014), TC Pam (2015), El Nino Drought (2016), TC Cook/Donna (2017), TC Hola (2018), Ambae Landslide (2018) and the Ambae Volcano (2017-2018). Lessons learned exercises have played a major part in many of these responses – informing what worked well and identifying successes, as well as highlighting gaps and challenges. The G&PC members and its member organisations have also documented the work of the group in many forums and in a number of related reports and presentations.

Here is what we have learned about how to progress gender and protection through the G&PC's work to date:¹⁵

Enabling Environment

At a macro level, there are three important, and interconnected, factors that underpin much of the G&PC's progress to date:

- Due to the G&PCs ongoing lobbying and advocacy work, the Vanuatu Government is now more committed to prioritising identifying and responding to gender and protection issues in all disaster responses. There is greater awareness within the NDMO and other clusters of gender and protection considerations.

“Government recognition, at a time when gender and protection was not necessarily a high priority, was a huge win.” Key Informant Interview, KII

¹⁴ The development of this briefing paper and resourcing for the Pacific region lessons learned forums are components of this project.

¹⁵ Refer to Annex 3 for a list of the key documents accessed as background for this Briefing Paper. Annex 3 also lists key informants interviewed for comment and input into this document.

- The G&PC has been ongoing since its establishment in 2014. Its good work is supported not just by the Government’s mandate, but also by its own well-developed processes and systems. Its practice of creating an open environment for all organisations to attend meetings and forums and to engage, learn, and contribute to discussions on gender and protection issues is also important.
- The commitment and contributions to the G&PC by its member organisations in terms of personnel and other resources have proven to be significant, especially in active emergencies. This is particularly true for the leadership and contribution of the lead and co-lead organisations.

“CARE and Save the Children’s support has been significant and valuable, as has the leadership and support of DWA and the Director.” KII

Together these factors create the conditions – an enabling environment – for the G&PC’s ongoing work.

Successes

In looking at the success of the G&PC’s work, it’s important to note that the Cluster’s achievements have been made without additional or designated funding from the Government – while the G&PC has continued to lobby for resources and to make submissions in times of emergencies, it has ultimately not had any success with these. Most resources have come from partners’ contributions of time, people, material equipment, knowledge and expertise.^{16,17} By exploring the G&PC’s progress towards achieving the objectives outlined in its Terms of Reference, we can see what the Cluster has accomplished over the last four years.

1. Increase Knowledge and Skills

Objective: Develop knowledge and understanding of gender and protection issues in Vanuatu through advocacy, awareness raising, capacity building and technical advice or relevant stakeholders.

The G&PC has successfully rolled out a range of formal training and development initiatives – some targeted, some general, some at the national level and others at the provincial and community levels. These formal programs, along with other less formal activities, have resulted in greater awareness of gender and protection issues across the sectors¹⁸. For example:

- Training and skill development across the sectors that underpins the G&PCs operational support, such as rapid assessments, assessment team training, G&P presentations at Cluster Contingency Planning workshops (e.g. Food Security and Agriculture)
- The development and implementation of major training programs, such as the five-day Gender and Protection in Emergencies Package developed as a component of the GAI Localisation Project. This

“So far I have been involved in assessments only, but now I see the whole picture of the work of the Gender and Protection Cluster in theory and action.” WP

¹⁶ Statement adapted from Key Informant Interviews and from discussion at G&PC meetings August, 2018.

¹⁷ It should be noted however, that G&PC did at one point have Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs approval for a AUD2m recovery project. However, acceptance of this grant was not approved by the Vanuatu Council of Ministers.

¹⁸ Gender and Protection Cluster Reflection and Learning Workshop Report, TC Lusi 2014

training was first delivered to a targeted group of national community services organisations and the G&PC in March 2018 with a view to increasing their knowledge of gender and protection, as well as their skills to become more involved in cluster work including conducting assessments, data analysis, report writing, proposal writing and budgeting, and handling disclosures and referral pathways. Similar trainings have been held at provincial level with Provincial Disaster Committees and community level with Community Climate Change and Disaster Committees (CCDC).

- Targeted and specialist training for particular organisations and groups, such as the prevention of violence against children training with the Ministry of Justice and child protection training with communities, and community/local disaster committees.
- Ongoing advocacy to increase awareness among assessment teams of the importance of including information and data on children living with disabilities, people living with disabilities, maternal and child health issues, sexual and reproductive health, and the identification of emerging risks and hazards (e.g. damage to kindergarten and school buildings may mean children have a greater exposure to potentially unsafe environments).¹⁹ In the 2017 Ambae Volcano response, for example, it was found that ‘children’s schooling was disrupted with schools closing for safety or because they [were] being used as evacuation centres. This leads to children being left at home or in evacuation centres unsupervised.’²⁰
- Building the G&PCs own internal knowledge, skills and capacity through training and reflection. For example, greater awareness through lessons learned events can help clarify what work lies within the scope of the G&PC and where it may have ‘insufficient influence’ to affect change, so that over time, it can more purposefully direct energy and resources.

“Of course, when the Cluster provides information, education and training, people take this into the field as responders – that’s the purpose. But what we don’t often see is all the other parts of their lives that are influenced by this work. Their thinking is expanded; their scope is broadened. They become better informed and stronger advocates for gender and protection in all aspects of their lives. Importantly, this includes their peacetime work roles, and presumably they also take the information and skills back into their families and communities.”

Jocelyn Loughman, Ministry of Justice

- Encouraging and developing future leaders through school-based programs as part of the GAI Localisation Project, where secondary school students in the provinces of Sanma and Tafea were trained on disaster preparedness and response with a particular focus on the importance of girls’ leadership.

2. Operational Support

Objective: Actively encourage other clusters/sectors of the humanitarian community to mainstream gender and protection into their planning and activities, and to provide technical support for this process.

The G&PC has developed and approved many key guiding documents to support the work of other Clusters and Vanuatu organisations, including:

- gender and protection assessment forms
- gender and protection briefing notes for assessment teams
- key gender and protection messages
- checklists and guidance notes for other clusters

¹⁹ Gender and Protection Cluster Reflection and Learning Workshop, Tropical Cyclone Lusi 2012.

²⁰ Ambae Monaro Volcano Response Lessons Learned Workshop November, 2017

- referral pathway resources
- guidance on the contents of dignity kits for women & girls and people living with disabilities
- response and recovery strategies.

In addition, the Cluster has provided operational support in a range of ways. For example:

- Continued review and revision of the gender and protection assessments forms, and the translation of these into Bislama.
- Pre-deployment briefings delivered to members of G&PC and other clusters.

“The short training program delivered ahead of deployment has proven to be very beneficial – especially for people new to the Cluster and to humanitarian work.” KII

- Identifying and supporting gender and protection focal points in other clusters, such as education, food security and WASH.
- Embedding women into assessment teams to increase the efficacy of the data collection process and ensuring that the voice of affected female community members is also captured.
- Working with the Government and other clusters to ensure gender and protection is included in emergency preparedness and in pre-determined emergency and contingency plans.
- Representation of the G&PC as widely as possible at other cluster meetings, inter-cluster meetings and relevant forums.
- Dissemination of real time information and reporting on emerging gender and protection issues, such as situation reports and G&PC reports on the Ambae emergency (2017 and 2018).
- Using assessment data and/or observations by assessment teams/other organisations to inform Cluster plans and reports, such as the TC Pam Gender Rapid Assessment by CARE International (2015).

3. Influence and Advocacy

Objective: Identify protection issues and gaps (in times of preparation for and response to emergencies) and advocate to the relevant authorities and other actors for action to address them.

One of the primary mandates of the G&PC is to increase awareness and prioritisation of gender and protection in emergencies, and it has been highly effective in this area, also becoming a recognised voice for gender and protection in Vanuatu beyond the scope of emergencies. For example:

- Continuously advocating for focus and attention by the NDMO and other clusters on gender and protection issues, both on the ground and in the Emergency Operations Centre. For example, after a G&PC assessment of the Gambule school on Maewo, the identified issues were raised with the NDMO and other clusters (Shelter, WASH, Food Security and Health). This led to action by all clusters²¹.

²¹ Gender and Protection Cluster Security Mission Gambae School, June 2018

- Conducting timely lessons learned exercises after each emergency to feed into and inform the NDMO lessons learned events. To date, lessons learned exercises have been conducted and formally reported on for TCs Lusi, Pam and Donna, and the Ambae Volcano Response (after the first evacuation.)
- Ensuring the voice of affected communities is included in lessons learned and that this information is used to inform the G&PC's advocacy, such as through women's forums like the Women in Emergency Response and Recovery Forum, June 2015.
- Writing to, meeting with, and ongoing liaison with the NDMO to reinforce the message of the importance of a gender and protection lens in all preparedness and response work.

"The work of the G&PC is changing mindsets within government." KII

- Including gender, protection and disability content into post disaster needs assessments (PDNA), such as in the TC Pam response.²²
- Highlighting protection as a strategic priority in both humanitarian action and aid distribution plans.
- Continued and ongoing advocacy for priority protection matters with partners and relevant bodies. For example, advocating for women/gender and protection representatives to be embedded on assessment teams.

"Getting gender and protection input into assessment teams was a huge win for the G&PC. Getting women into the teams was amazing." KII

- Sharing information between agencies on key issues, such as on custom/customary practises – which can of course be both negative and positive, and if negative may pose a safety risk. (Cited as a focus of discussion at the TC Lusi Lessons Learned Workshop 2014).

4. Operational Coordination

Objective: Play the lead role in the coordination of agencies involved in gender and protection activities to share information and respond to identified gaps.

Providing a coordination function both in emergencies and in preparedness has been key to the G&PC's effectiveness. For example:

- Mobilisation of people and resources. For example, allocated budget in the Humanitarian Action Plan(s).
- Ongoing improvements in planning, coordination, implementation and information management.
- Sharing information on gender and protection issues collected from other clusters so that information/data can then be utilised for planning by clusters and other organisations.

²² Gender and Protection Cluster Tropical Cyclone Pam Lesson Learned Workshop May, 2015

- Active engagement by the G&PC across clusters by identifying and/or establishing gender and protection focal points in other clusters, in government departments, and by participation of disability advocates in other clusters. This was noted as one of the areas that the G&PC worked well in during the TC Pam response.²³
- Provision of personnel to provide technical advice and join response and assessment teams – a practice which was first initiated, along with the development of gender and protection assessment forms, in the TC Lusi response in 2014, and has continued to be further developed over time in subsequent emergencies. Deployments have included National Youth Council volunteers, Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities staff, government staff from the Disability Desk, Child Desk and DWA, and international NGO staff from Save the Children and CARE Vanuatu. The success of the G&PC cluster in the area of assessments and assessment teams feature in all the lessons learned exercise to date.

“It’s great to see that more and more local members of the G&PC are involved in assessments. This already showing localisation.”

“Other cluster members do not necessarily know about protection issues, therefore it is important that G&PC members are on all assessment teams to advocate for protection issues.”

“We need to train other cluster members on how to mainstream gender and protection in their sectorial assessments.” WP

- Identification of evacuation centre risks and communicating these to the relevant parties, such as increases in gender-based violence and sexual exploitation (actual cases and risks), child protection, lack of services for people living with disabilities, general safety and protection, health service issues and gaps in relation to sexual and reproductive health and maternal health.²⁴
- Coordinated engagement by all G&PC partners, in all locations, and across all phases of an emergency. The 2017 Ambae volcano response was a recent example of this coordinated effort, notably in forming

*“Provincial level training brings people together who have never worked together before. As an outcome of the August 2018 training (as a component of the GAI Localisation Project) there was more networking; sharing of contacts; and better knowledge about who to contact on what issues. A G&PC sub group of the provincial disaster committee has now been formed.”*KII

monitoring teams, establishing child friendly spaces, putting together and distributing dignity kits, response and recovery planning, and developing situation reports.

Challenges

As with all organisational evolutions, the G&PC faces a range of challenges which the Cluster is continuing to work to overcome, in order to maximise its impact in emergency operations in Vanuatu. Here, we will look at the themes that run across the G&PC’s reviews, recommendations and reflections on the key challenges that the Cluster needs to address.

²³ Gender and Protection Cluster Tropical Cyclone Pam Lessons Learned Workshop May 2015

²⁴ As this is an example of the G&PC work in both ‘co-ordination’ and ‘advocacy’ it has been repeated in both sections of this paper.

The G&PC's challenges can be summarised as: complexity, resourcing, ownership, communications, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, national vs provincial, participation/engagement and focus on training.

1. Complexity

Emergencies are by nature complex; their frequency and the geography of Vanuatu makes them even more so. All that 'gender and protection' encompasses can also be complex – it can range from child protection, gender-based violence and health to sexual reproductive health.

Language, terms and concepts can be complex, and difficult to talk about, and to disseminate information about. Sensitive issues such as sexual and reproductive health, violence against women and girls, menstruation, and sex are not everyday conversations in Vanuatu society and communities.

Diversity, whether in terms of age, ability/disability, life situations and circumstances can also add layer of complexity to the work. So can the operating environment – and across all of the G&PC's work are the other clusters, and the national, provincial and community organisations, with their sometimes competing priorities.

2. Resourcing

All review discussions and lessons learned exercises identify that resourcing of the G&PC is an ongoing and major challenge. Resources such as more staff, more time, better systems and processes, and different or specialist skills are the often-stated gaps.

“Resourcing is always going to be a challenge; there will always be an element of relying upon international partners.”

“Not everyone who works in an emergency response has a humanitarian background and training.” KII

One example of where the time available is insufficient is when more time is needed develop and build rapport when collecting sensitive assessment information or data on gender and protection issues, e.g. rape, incest, and family violence.²⁵

A key challenge for mobilising resources is that gender and protection issues are often seen as 'soft' issues, and not as tangible as WASH or Shelter, which makes it more difficult to attract funding for this work. As a result, there are currently high expectations that the co-leads, CARE and Save the Children, will continue to actively support G&PC coordination, particularly in terms of administration and secretariat support, for example drafting response strategies, funding proposals, etc.

“Cluster Coordination is a huge task, and unlike other Clusters, there is no UN support for administration and management in the gender Cluster. It's resource intensive work!” KII

²⁵ Gender and Protection Cluster Lessons Learned Workshop Tropical Cyclone Lusi, 2014

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

Currently there is no formal and documented process to keep track of and continue to monitor the G&PC's progress against the recommendations arising from lessons learned exercises/reports. Nor is there any formal measure of progress.

"[Unfortunately] it sometimes feels like we are not learning the lessons." KII

"We need an M&E framework!" KII

Monitoring and evaluation activities do however require resources – resources to facilitate, to develop, to monitor and to report on. This is perhaps an important example of one of the emerging gaps in the G&PC's work and is tied to the issue of resourcing.

4. Capacity Building

With the ongoing nature of emergencies in Vanuatu generally, as well as the specific challenge of the protracted Ambae Volcano response (two evacuations, and the unpredictability of what lies ahead), it is difficult to prioritise and implement capacity building projects like the GAI Localisation Project, while continuing to respond to an ongoing emergency.²⁶

"We need to be ready when disasters strike. All our training needs to be undertaken in peacetime; it's too hard to do at the same time as an emergency." KII

5. National vs Provincial

There is an identified disconnect between national and provincial planning process, and while the Cluster System generally (i.e. not just the G&PC) has been well supported at the national level, this is not yet the case at the provincial level. There are long standing plans within DWA to set up provincial working groups on gender and protection and initial steps to discuss what these might look like have been taken as part of the GAI Localisation project in both Tafea and Sanma province. While this is an important step, the lack of a fully functioning working group presumably has implications for the G&PC 'acceptance' and capacity to respond quickly in an emergency at the provincial level.²⁷

6. Participation and Engagement

Regular, consistent and ongoing participation in the G&PC – its meetings, its work, and in distributions – is necessary for the Cluster to be well positioned to maximise its use of resources and fulfil its mandate, and yet this is a key challenges. Getting the right people to meetings to represent their organisations or to receive information about gender and protection issues is difficult. Organisational representatives don't always report back on the Cluster meetings; and people who do not sit on the Cluster don't receive emails. (WP)

²⁶ GAI Third Quarter Report, August 2018 p8. The ongoing and protracted Ambae response is noted in this report as both a challenge and an opportunity, i.e. 'the disaster creates and opportunity for 'real time' mentoring of the four national CSOs ...'

²⁷ As per 16 above.

7. Focus on Training

Training education and information dissemination can sometimes be seen as a major and ongoing commitment that requires constant resourcing. There is also the risk that the focus is on capacity building for individuals, and

“... in many cases, the same individuals. The transfer of knowledge isn’t always evident.” KII

“Training is resource intensive ... and it doesn’t always translate into follow-through and implementation.” KII

However, embedding gender and protection work into the work of other Clusters and organisations without ongoing training and sensitisation can also be a challenge.

CONCLUSION

There is much to celebrate in the work the G&PC has achieved since its inception in 2014 – but the Cluster also faces challenges in continuing to strengthen protection for the most vulnerable members of Vanuatu’s communities in emergencies.

Some of the challenges may be outside the scope of the G&PC to address. Some may be more important than others. In considering what future action to prioritise, there is a series of questions that can be asked, not only by Vanuatu’s G&PC, but also any other cluster groups and networks working in gender and protection:

- How important is it that we address this?
- Can we, as the G&PC, do anything to turn this challenge around? If yes, what?
- If no, is there anyone else, or another body/organisation that can assist us?
- If we can’t change this for the better, what are the implications for our future, and our future work?
- What are our priorities? How do we work through these?

In peacetime and in emergencies, a focus on gender and protection is critical. As champions of the most vulnerable, Vanuatu’s G&PC is committed to progress this work so that all women and girls, men and boys – regardless of their individual situation and circumstances, and their individual capacities – can be assured of support, protection and equality in times of great need.

“Gender equality is a critical step towards achieving sustainable development. Crisis situations radically affect social and cultural structures, changing women and men’s status. They often provide a window of opportunity for addressing gender-based discrimination and rights violations. If humanitarian interventions are not planned with gender equality in mind, not only do the chances of doing greater harm increase, but the opportunity to support and promote equality in livelihoods between men and women can be lost.”

The Basics of Gender in Emergencies, WHO 2006

GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM AND CLUSTER APPROACH

What is the Cluster Approach? When emergencies occur, coordination is necessary. Good coordination means less gaps and overlaps in the assistance delivered by humanitarian organizations.

The foundations of the current international humanitarian coordination system were set by General Assembly resolution 46/182 in December 1991. Almost 15 years later, in 2005, a major reform of humanitarian coordination, known as the Humanitarian Reform Agenda, introduced a number of new elements to enhance predictability, accountability and partnership. The Cluster Approach was one of these new elements.

Clusters are groups of humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action, e.g. water, health and logistics. They are designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and have clear responsibilities for coordination.

The Cluster Approach was applied for the first time following the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. Nine clusters were established within 24 hours of the earthquake. Since then two evaluations on the Cluster Approach have taken place. The first, finalized in 2007, focused on implementation. The second, conducted in 2010, focused on the outcome of the cluster approach in improving humanitarian assistance. The learning from these evaluations led to the IASC Transformative Agenda (TA), a series of actions aimed at simplifying processes and outcomes.

The IASC Principals “agreed there is a need to restate and return to the original purpose of clusters, refocusing them on strategic and operational gaps analysis, planning, assessment and results”. The aim of the cluster approach is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies and provide clear leadership and accountability in the main areas of humanitarian response. At country level, it aims to strengthen partnerships, and the predictability and accountability of international humanitarian action, by improving prioritization and clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian organizations.

For more information: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach>

GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER

The Global Protection Cluster coordinates and provides global level inter-agency policy advice and guidance on the implementation of the cluster approach to Protection Clusters in the field, supports protection responses in non-refugee situation humanitarian action as well as leads standard and policy setting relating to protection in complex and natural disaster humanitarian emergencies, in particular with regard to the protection of internally displaced persons.

The Cluster’s Vision: All people affected or threatened by a humanitarian crisis have their rights fully respected in accordance with international law and their protection assured by relevant and timely actions through all phases of the crisis and beyond.

For more information: <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/en/about-us/who-we-are.html>

PACIFIC HUMANITARIAN TEAM

What is the Pacific Humanitarian Team? The Pacific is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Small, vulnerable island states are isolated by vast expanses of ocean. They experience frequent and intense disasters with disproportionately high economic, social and environmental consequences. To support disaster preparedness and response, a regional 'stand-by' arrangement was needed to support national disaster management authorities in emergencies.

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) was established by OCHA in 2008 to ensure that regional responders work together to deliver timely and appropriate humanitarian assistance to disaster-affected people across the Pacific.

The PHT operates under the co-leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinators in the Pacific, based in Fiji and Samoa, and consists of UN agencies, Red Cross, regional and bilateral organizations, national and international non-governmental organizations, faith-based and community based organizations, and donor partners. There is a commitment from participating organizations to prepare for, and act quickly to provide resources on the ground when requested.

The PHT's objective is to ensure a coordinated international humanitarian response that is effective, predictable, accountable, and achieved through partnership. A regional cluster approach is used to support national-led disaster management when requested. The PHT clusters were formally recognized in 2012 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. If emergencies exceed the regional capacities of the PHT, a request for global cluster support can be made.

OCHA acts as the Secretariat of the PHT and provides an online platform to share disaster response and preparedness information.

For more information: <http://pacifichumanitarian.info/about/>

PACIFIC HUMANITARIAN TEAM PROTECTION CLUSTER

What is the PHPC? The regional Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster (PHPC) Support Team is a group of regional and international humanitarian organisations working together to assist Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) in preparing for and responding to disasters and emergencies.

The PHPC was established in 2012 and is based in Suva, Fiji. The PHPC meets quarterly in non-disaster times, and as often as needed during a crisis.

UN Women is the lead agency of the PHPC (elected by PHPC members in Feb 2016 and approved by the PHT in April 2016).

For more information: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/pacific-humanitarian-protection-cluster-phpc-support-team-factsheet-january-2018>

KEY DOCUMENTS

- Reflection workshop Cyclone Lusi (2014)
- Reflection workshop Cyclone Pam (2015)
- Women In Emergency Response and Recovery Forum (2015)
- Gender and Protection Cluster Terms of Reference (2016)
- Gender and protection cluster PowerPoint presentation (2016)
- Reflection workshop Ambae Monaro Volcano (2017)
- Ambrae Volcano Gender and Protection Cluster Plan (2017)
- TC Donna Lessons Learned Reflection (Summary) (2017)
- Workshop Report (2018)

KEY INFORMANTS

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Note on key informant interviews: the purpose of the informant interviews was to verify that the meta-analysis of the background documents was on the right track; to ensure that the success and challenges identified in this material were in fact the successes and challenges as perceived by those people who work most closely with the G&PC.