

UN Women ROAP

Evaluation of Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific

Annexes- volume 2

Date of the report	January 2022
Names of evaluation team	Sabrina Evangelista, Regional Evaluation Specialist Aleksandar Zivanovic, International Evaluation Consultant Arushi Pankaj Dubey, Evaluation Analyst Nabila Akter, Evaluation and Research Intern Dusan Zupka, Humanitarian Evaluation Consultant Bangladesh and Myanmar case studies Tazin Akter, National Consultant, Bangladesh-Cox's Bazar Case Study
Contact details for this report	Sabrina.evangelista@unwomen.org

Contents

Annex 13: Case study – Cox's Bazar	2
Annex 14: Case Study – Myanmar	29
Annex 15: Case Study- Fiji	50

Case study: Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh

Table of contents:

1. Acronyms
2. Introduction
3. Contextual background
4. Crisis Response Setting and UN Women’s Efforts in Cox’s Bazar
5. Findings
6. Observations/lessons learned and way forward
7. Appendix

Acronyms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
BRAC	Bangladeshi Humanitarian NGO
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERF	Central emergency Revolving Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GERAAS	Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System
GEEWG	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls
GEN CAP	Gender Capacity
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
GIHA	Gender in Humanitarian Action
HCT	Humanitarian Country team
HQ	Head Quarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IES	Independent Evaluation Service
IOM	International Organization of Migration
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ISCG	Inter Sector Coordination Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RO	Regional Office
SEG	Strategic Executive Group
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WG	Working Group
WPS	Women Peace and Security

Introduction

This case study is focused on UN Women's response to the humanitarian crisis in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. It is an integral part of a broader evaluation of UN Women's Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, led by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service. The overall evaluation focuses on UN Women's actions at regional and national level, along with corporate governance, policies, procedures and systems in place to support crisis response. It is expected to assist UN Women in strengthening crisis response and preparedness that meets the needs of women, girls and vulnerable groups in an effective, sustainable and efficient manner. This case study begins in 2018, with a particular focus on 2020-21. This is for in-depth learning about how UN Women responded to compounded crisis in Cox's Bazar of a **protracted humanitarian crisis** intertwined with **sudden onset crises** such as fire and the COVID-19 pandemic inside the camps. The case study also focuses on a specific intervention of UN Women – the Gender Hub, a three-year pilot project started in March 2019, supported by the Government of Canada, to strengthen capacity and accountability of humanitarian actors for gender equality and women's empowerment in the Rohingya refugee response as it aims to become a replicable effort for different crises around the globe.

Data collection methods included extensive desk review, meta-analysis of documents pertinent to the humanitarian situation and activities in Cox's Bazar. In total 57 individuals were consulted for the study. This included 20 online interviews (15 female, 1 male,) and 2 focus group discussions (2 each of females and males) of key stakeholders active in Cox's Bazar (UN Women personnel, UN partner agencies, NGOs, civil society organisations and Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GIHA) members). A field visit to three camps with and without UN Women's presence was also undertaken where 37 key informants, 18 males and 19 females, were consulted in face-to-face interviews and focus group sessions by a national consultant. Secondary sources of information included the "Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on gender equality and women's empowerment in Humanitarian Action" published in 2020.¹

1. Contextual Background

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with 160 million living in just 144,415 square kilometres. According to the World Bank, Bangladesh has been among the fastest growing economies in the world over the past decade, thanks to the demographic dividend – a large youth population, strong ready-made garment (RMG) exports, and stable macroeconomic conditions. As a result, Bangladesh reached lower-middle-income status in 2015. Number of people living below poverty declined from 24.3% in 2016 to 20.5% in 2019². Human development outcomes improved along many dimensions. However, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact Bangladesh profoundly. The assessment of COVID-19 impact completed by the World Bank showed that progress on gender equality that Bangladesh has made over the last few decades is under threat. The latest poverty report from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) shows that national poverty rose up to 29.5 per cent in June 2020. The pandemic may also have long term economic implications as a result of reduced female labour force participation, learning losses, and heightened financial sector vulnerabilities.³

Myanmar, which shares a border with Bangladesh, has a population of about 54 million people. In Bangladesh, most of the population is Muslim (89 percent), with a significant proportion that of Hindus (11 percent).⁴ In Myanmar, by contrast, most of the population is Buddhist (80 percent), and only 4 percent are Muslims. Rohingyas of Myanmar are among the Muslims.⁵ The Rohingyas are effectively stateless due to the 1982 citizenship legislation in Myanmar that defined them as illegal immigrants who arrived during the British colonial era. Rohingyas in Myanmar have been exposed to legal and religious discrimination and violence which culminated in 2017 when around a million Rohingya people sought refuge in Cox's Bazar, creating one of the largest refugee crises in the world. According to the UNHCR operational update of July 2021 there were 890,276 refugees in Cox's Bazar, including 854,024 refugees who had arrived since 2017 and are registered under the

1 Interagency Standing Committee, Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, 2020 ; <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/The%20Inter-Agency%20Humanitarian%20Evaluation%20%28IAHE%29%20on%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20the%20Empowerment%20of%20Women%20and%20Girls%20%28GEEWG%29-Annexes%20pdf.pdf>

2 Based on the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day, Asian Development Bank, <https://www.adb.org/countries/bangladesh/poverty>

3 The World Bank in Bangladesh, Update 21/9/2021

4 United Nations DESA, 2019

5 PEW Research Centre, Burma, 2010

Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR registration exercise, along with 36,148 refugees who had been residing in the two registered camps since the 1990s. UNHCR also reports that as of July 2021, the refugees include 52% female, 48% male, 51% children, 45% adults, 4% elderly and 1% persons with disabilities (UNHCR update August 2021). A 2018 UN Women assessment found that 16% of the families were headed by women. From the onset, the nature of this crisis has been particularly gender sensitive given that women and girls, who make up more than half of the refugee population, faced abuse, exploitation and violence. Since 2017 both, the Government of Bangladesh and international humanitarian community have intensified the provision of critical rapid humanitarian assistance as well as of rehabilitation and livelihoods support to Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar.

Despite these efforts, the humanitarian needs continue to be enormous and complex and rapidly changing challenges influence the nature of humanitarian lifesaving response, preparedness and rehabilitation activities. The 2020 ISCG Joint Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (J-MSNA) revealed a decrease in shelter maintenance and livelihoods, and deterioration in the protection environment. These challenges, and others such as COVID-19, monsoon and cyclone preparedness and response, required increased attention of the humanitarian community in 2020-2021. According to the UNHCR, as of 31 July 2021, 2,451 COVID-19 cases, and 27 COVID-19 deaths were confirmed in the camps. Women and girls were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic in Cox's Bazar. Self-isolation restricted women and girls' access to health care and essential services. The burden of care work, which traditionally falls on women, increased during the pandemic due to lockdown measures, including school closure. Unemployment increased, which impacted mainly women working in the informal sector and in small businesses. Overall COVID-19 pandemic led to a reported increase in GBV and domestic violence.⁶ Life-saving care and support to GBV survivors have been limited and were disrupted since front-line service providers and systems, such as health, policing and social welfare, were mostly focused on handling COVID-19 cases. A COVID-19 Outbreak Cox's Bazar Rapid Gender Analysis conducted by UN Women in April 2020⁷ showed that 33 per cent women did not know where to call for help in case of violence. Also, 49.2 per cent women, children and girls felt that safety and security had become a concern due to the lockdown and loss of livelihoods. The gendered disparities in these communities are further aggravated by age, disability, and sexuality.⁸ The implementation of Rohingya refugee crisis response programmes were also challenged by the unpredictable changes in government policy and continuation of restrictions in refugee camps including those that were COVID-19 related. Similarly, a concerted humanitarian action is ongoing to support host communities affected by the price increases and strained livelihoods. At present, the prospect of a safe and voluntary return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar remains unpredictable. Other sudden onset crises have struck the camp areas, such as monsoon rains and landslides and fires. For example, on March 22nd, 2021, a massive fire broke out in the Rohingya refugee camps in Ukhiya and quickly spread across three camps consuming shelters and personal belongings of more than 48,000 refugees as well as gutting essential facilities and affecting essential services.

2. Crisis Response Setting and UN Women's Efforts in Cox's Bazar

The humanitarian structure in Bangladesh is organized under a Strategic Executive Group (SEG) in Dhaka to support Bangladesh Government actions led by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the National Task Force chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The SEG is co-chaired by the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the UNHCR Representative and the IOM Chief of Mission. Soon after the initial response was organised, in April 2018, based on the IASC Policy and Accountability Framework, "Gender Equality Commitments: Key Actions on GEEWG in Humanitarian Action" were prepared by GIHA Working Group, co-chaired by UN Women and UNHCR and endorsed by the SEG. They have since then been mainstreamed into joint response plans. The annual Joint Response Plans for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis lay out the overall strategy of humanitarian partners and the Government of Bangladesh to respond to the situation, focusing on enhanced access to services which meet minimum standards and for all targeted people. Resource requirements for the implementation of the 2021 Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis are USD 943 million, of which 92 million are required for protection and GBV. This plan is based on the Joint Multi-Sector Needs Assessment.⁹ In Cox's Bazar, the humanitarian action is coordinated by the Inter Sectoral Coordination Group (ISCG), with around 50 organizations (eight UN agencies, 28 international NGOs and 14 national NGOs) engaged

6 Source UNHCR, 2021

7 Conducted by ISCG Gender Hub in collaboration with UN Women, CARE and Oxfam,

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Covid_outbreak_rapid_gender_analysis_-_coxs_bazar_-_may_2020.pdf

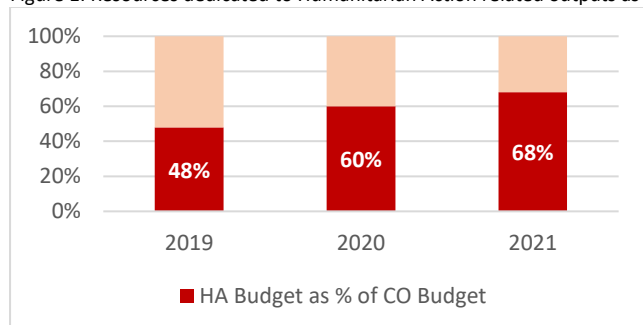
8 UN Women : Gender-responsive humanitarian life-saving response to the COVID-19 pandemic

9 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/bgd_2020_jmsna_preliminary_findings.pdf

in the response efforts. The ISCG Coordinator is supported by the ISCG Secretariat, which covers information management, communication, external relations and field coordination. In addition, there are four thematic units: Gender Hub, PSEA Unit, Transfers and Emergency Preparedness. Besides the clusters/sectors and two sub-sectors established in line with the IASC cluster approach, there are six Inter-Sector Working Groups. One of them is the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GIHA) Working Group, co-chaired by UN Women and UNHCR. Gender-based violence (GBV) sub-sector is led by UNFPA.

Following the unprecedented influx of refugees from Myanmar in 2017, UN Women actively engaged to respond to the increased need for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action assisting refugees. The size and capacity of the UN Women Country Office in Bangladesh at the time of the influx limited their involvement. In 2018, UN Women established the sub-office in Cox’s Bazar to be closer to the field and better positioned to engage with other humanitarian actors and respond to the needs for coordination on gender equality and to the needs of refugee women and girls in the camps. UN Women developed a response programme in partnership with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to meet the specific needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized Rohingya Refugee women and girls and the women and girls in the host communities affected by the refugee influx in Cox’s Bazar, to ensure protection, equitable and safe access to and benefit from the humanitarian and development assistance promoting women’s participation and leadership. UN OCHA facilitated deployment of a Gen Cap advisor, who collaborated with UN Women. The budget for humanitarian and disaster risk reduction activities in Bangladesh constituted a significant portion of the overall Country Office budget (Figure 1 and Sub Annex 3): in 2019, 48% was dedicated to humanitarian action budget (USD 4,529,891), in 2020 this increased to 60% of the overall country office budget and in 2021 it constituted 68% (HA budget USD 8,443,217) of the budget amounting USD 12,241,458 including DRF and OEEF¹⁰. UN Women financial resources dedicated to humanitarian and disaster risk reduction activities were heavily dependent on non-core resources with 98.6% of the total constituting non-core budget (table 1). UN Women humanitarian actions cover the areas of coordination, technical assistance, capacity building trainings, livelihoods, advocacy, gender-based violence prevention & response and leadership & economic empowerment through its multi-purpose women’s centres (Sub Annex 3 has an overview of types of activities and % of budget).

Figure 1: Resources dedicated to Humanitarian Action related outputs as part of overall Bangladesh Country Office Budget

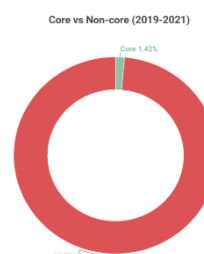


Source: RMS, Annual report SN-AWP 2019,2020, 2021, 6th, October, 2021.

Table 1: Humanitarian action related outputs core Budget vs non-core budget

	Core	Non-core
2019		4,529,891
2020	1,630,12	6,960,936
2021	1,222,78	8,320,939
Total	2,852,90	19,811,766

Source: RMS, Annual report 2019,2020, 2021, 4th, October 2021.



The rapidly growing needs led to the establishment of the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GIHA) working group as a coordination mechanism for gender equality. In line with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Humanitarian Action and its Accountability Framework, with

¹⁰ Based on UN Women Annual Work Plans.

funds from Global Affairs Canada, UN Women launched the Gender Hub in March 2019 to further strengthen accountability of humanitarian actors for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Gender Hub budget is approximately USD 1.6 million for a duration of March 2019 - 31 March 2022. The Gender Hub and GIHA Working Group collaborate to promote and mainstream gender sensitivity in humanitarian activities carried out in Cox's Bazar across all humanitarian sectors. The Gender Hub's mandate is to support all actors, including local agencies and government, to plan, implement and monitor the intersectional gender responsive humanitarian programme through technical assistance, capacity development and knowledge generation on mainstreaming gender across the UN, INGO and national stakeholders engaged in the joint response. The Gender Hub also seeks to ensure integration and collaboration with Protection, GBV and PSEA sectors and experts to build on the existing evidence, interventions, analysis and guidance from other related sectors. The Gender Hub was established as a team of five full-time personnel, including three gender specialists and two programme associates sitting at the level of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) Secretariat from 2019 to 2020 then in early 2021, it came under the overall leadership of UN Women, as support and staff contractual management comes from UN Women.

Given that Bangladesh regularly suffers from climate disasters (cyclones, floods, landslides, etc.), UN Women Country Office has been supporting the Bangladesh Government and civil society partners with disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Efforts have also been carried out in Cox's Bazar host community.

3. Findings

3.1 Relevance/Appropriateness Is UN Women's response to crisis relevant and appropriate in the context of the international standards, needs and priorities of the affected populations, particularly those left furthest behind (women with disabilities, LGBTQI+)?

Finding 1: UN Women's work in Cox's Bazar is aligned with international standards.

Desk review concluded that UN Women humanitarian response activities and interventions implemented in Cox's Bazar are relevant and well aligned with the priorities and recommendations in key international conventions and declarations such as, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Agenda 2030, SDGs, Sendai Framework, the World Humanitarian Summit, New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Global Compact on Refugees, Grand Bargain, Global Compact on WPS and Humanitarian Action. Similarly, the UN Women interventions implemented in Cox's Bazar were aligned with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG) in Humanitarian Action.

UN Women work also aligns well with the priority areas stipulated by the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021: *Outcome 5: Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action.*

With respect to alignment with the most vulnerable populations priorities and needs, UN Women through the Gender Hub and GIHA working group reported a concerted effort to include women with disabilities, transwomen, and LGBTQI+ organizations in events and gender analyses undertaken to facilitate their voices, needs and priorities being heard. UN Women also partnered with Bandhu, an LGBTQI+ organization, to roll out rapid assessment on SOGIESC inclusion for its Multi-Purpose Women's Centres. Further, UN Women through the GiHA working group supported establishing a Gender Diverse Populations working group focused on LGBTQI+ inclusion linked to the GiHA working group and the Protection Sector.

Finding 2: The UN Women response to the Rohingya refugee crisis has been maturing over the last three years. UN Women's approach is largely meeting the expectations of stakeholders and aligned, to a good extent, with the needs and priorities of Rohingya women and girl refugees and responsive to dynamic needs in the camps.

At the beginning of the Rohingya refugee crisis, UN Women Bangladesh Country Office was not recognized as a humanitarian actor and considerable efforts went into addressing questions raised by the humanitarian agencies to become a member of the Humanitarian Coordination Team. Stakeholders noted that because UN Women was not at the table during the initial surge, they did not have a chance to advocate gender considerations in

the appeal and there was no coordinated effort to analyse gender in the Joint Response Appeal. Agencies conducted their own individual gender analysis. Several reports have indicated that the initial humanitarian system response did not adequately address gender specific needs as reflected in the 2017 Joint Response Plan¹¹.

After establishing the Cox's Bazar sub-office in 2018, UN Women aimed to position itself as the agency that has knowledge about women and girls' needs and one that could directly reach women and girls to build their leadership skills, help strengthen their voices and bring about their empowerment. Prior to the 2017 Rohingya refugee influx, UN Women's focus was disaster risk reduction and management (floods, cyclones, landslides are frequent in the country) work with CSOs and Government entities. Shifting to the refugee crisis response brought about the need for shifting the UN Women humanitarian action strategy, programming and implementation approaches. UN Women personnel said they believed that they would not be credible and respected without having tangible involvement in the camps and that humanitarian action addressing gender mainstreaming cannot be adequate without hearing the voices of women and the most vulnerable in the camps. According to consulted stakeholders, the major humanitarian actors did not easily accept the establishment of the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GIHA WG), partly because UN Women is not a member of IASC and some considered that gender in humanitarian action is only an optional issue. Stakeholders reported that this attitude has changed, due to several reviews and evaluations identifying weaknesses in the gender response of the initial overall humanitarian response¹².

The establishment of the Gender Hub was considered relevant because of its focus on three pillars — technical assistance, capacity development and knowledge management — where no other entities were providing the service despite the huge need for gender responsive humanitarian action. There was a high demand expressed by stakeholders for gender induction, gender budgeting, GAM support in proposal development, and feminist leadership training.

UN Women was responsive to the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. When the global COVID-19 pandemic started, a gender responsive COVID-19 training was organized. Sectoral training approach included WASH, health, food security and education. During the COVID-19 crisis the UN Women personnel in the CO dedicated their time almost exclusively to that emergency, rated at level 3. With UN Women support, Rohingya women served as front-line workers to protect their families and communities against COVID-19. UN Women partnered with BRAC, Action Aid and OXFAM to produce protective masks to fill a gap of personal protective equipment in the market. UN Women also reported organizing awareness raising and outreach sessions through 75 community volunteers to ensure the community, particularly women, were informed on infection prevention and control to stop the spread of COVID-19. UN Women continued its work to ensure that Rohingya women and girls are safe and receive psycho-social support, basic health consultations and emergency services, life-saving information, and skill development support. Through door-to-door visits, UN Women's volunteers shared information with women on how to protect themselves and what to do in case of infection.

UN Women reported consulting Rohingya women directly to feed into the design of efforts to ensure they were meeting the demands of women. Several stakeholders consulted thought that UN Women was successful in establishing a network of Rohingya volunteers, these volunteers were also women leaders in the Rohingya community. UN Women reported that the network played a significant role in creating direct channels to reach refugee communities, promote awareness on gender issues and making crisis response activities swifter and more realistic in addressing the urgent gender related needs. For example, the Women Empowerment Leadership Technical Working Group (WELTWG) under GIHA in coordination with the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) Site Management Community Representation Group consulted 800 Rohingya women and adolescent girls, including women volunteers and elected women, across 16 camps on women's preferences, demands, and issues in community leadership and representation. The findings helped UN Women provide inputs to develop the Guideline and Risk Mitigation Strategy of the Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner on camp elections as a response to the challenges of women's participation and leadership in community management and decision-making. UN Women reported this also led to women being elected as community leaders in camp elections and other women forming their own (Rohingya women led) community based organizations (CBOs) in the camps.

11 Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls: Bangladesh Case study, 2020.

12 Women's Refugee Commission, "We Need to Write Our Own Names": Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Rohingya Humanitarian Response in Cox's Bazar, Gender Operational Review Report, 2019.

3.2 Coherence/Coordination: To what extent are crisis response efforts more gender responsive due to UN Women coordination efforts?

Finding 3: UN Women GIHA Working Group and Gender Hub are contributing to enhance the gender responsiveness of coordinated efforts through technical advice, convening role, resources and capacity building across humanitarian sectors. Nevertheless, there is limited understanding about how enhanced gender responsiveness at the planning stage is translating into direct benefits for women and girls in the camps. At an overall humanitarian response level, accountability for reporting on how funds are used to enhance the lives of women and girls is still a major gap.

Several stakeholders consulted noted that in a sudden onset crisis, gender issues are more often than not sidelined because an understanding within the humanitarian community is still being built about how and why including a gender perspective can be “life-saving”. This was also noted in the Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation on GEEWG. As explained by UN Women personnel, the “traditional” approach to humanitarian action focuses on tangible items, such as food and shelter. Stakeholders noted that UN Women brings technical expertise, networks and their convening power to influence other actors, which is not the typical humanitarian organization response. At the beginning of the Rohingya refugee crisis, UN Women was not invited to participate in the Strategic Executive Group and Heads of Sub-Office Group because, according to some respondents, it was not yet fully operational and not perceived as a humanitarian actor due to its non-member status with IASC.

Subsequently, the Inter-Sectoral Coordination Group was set up for the assistance to Rohingya refugees, with the participation of UN Women and establishment of the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GIHA WG). The GIHA has around 200 members officially, including gender focal points from INGOs, government, UN and local NGO’s. Sector coordinators nominate their gender focal point to participate in GIHA. One of the key challenges identified by stakeholders and by the IAHE GEEWG is that gender focal points, while a positive effort, is often delegated to individuals who do not have gender expertise and are not senior enough to influence decision-making within their sector and organization. On the other hand gender advisors, whenever appointed, do not always have the technical expertise and generally remain in Cox’s Bazar for short periods of 2-3 months. This limits the potential influence that gender mainstreaming messages might have on decision-making.

Interviews with the key stakeholders confirmed that GIHA was instrumental in collating of information across sectors which helped identify gaps in addressing special needs of women, girls and other highly vulnerable groups in the humanitarian response.

In 2018, and subsequently in 2019 and 2020, the GIHA and Gender Based Violence (GBV) Sub-Sector Coordination Group collaborated in organizing events during the 16 Days of Activism where more than 200 activities took place with more than 20 national and international partners across the 34 camps – to promote positive messages about GBV and highlight the myriad of challenges facing Rohingya women and girls. This raised the visibility of UN Women and gender in humanitarian action. Stakeholders consulted noted that UN Women’s consistent advocacy, public awareness, technical assistance, capacity building events and, knowledge sharing and publications contributed to strengthening the overall humanitarian responsiveness to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in the refugee camps as well as within the host communities.

UN Women, through GIHA WG and Gender Hub’s leadership, provided inputs to the annual Joint Response Plan and provided technical assistance in use of Gender with Age Marker while promoting it too. The Gender and Age Marker was promoted in UN Women’s and partners’ needs assessments, planning, implementation and monitoring and reporting on humanitarian assistance activities to enhance gender and social inclusion in crisis response and preparedness. The Gender Hub provided technical guidance to the different humanitarian sectors during the development of proposals for the Joint Response Plan.

As reported by UN Women, this resulted in an increased use of the Gender with Age Marker in the projects from 86% in 2019 to 91% in 2021. In 2020, project proposals Gender with Age Marker score was at least 3 out of a total score of 4, indicating that projects address gender difference in key programme actions but not always age. Also, Gender Hub initiated and supported development of Gender and Inclusion Action Plans for different humanitarian sectors — there were 5 of them in 2020 and 9 in 2021. Most of the partners consulted also confirmed that the Gender Hub actively supported gender mainstreaming in project proposal development, providing analysis and technical advice, gender scoring of the proposals and advisory support, if needed, in

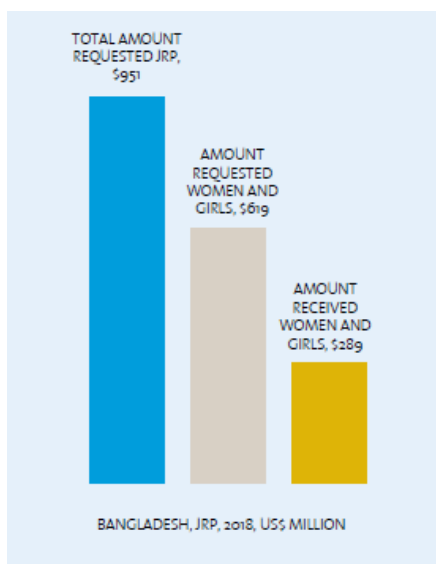
implementation and achieved significant results in raising gender awareness within the overall response. Still, several stakeholders said they felt there is further space to sharpen the gender perspective in needs assessment.

Through the Gender Hub and the GiHA WG, UN Women started raising awareness on the gendered impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) to ensure gender equality commitments were central in the COVID-19 preparedness and response at all stages. This included reviewing the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) sector proposals using the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender with Age Marker, developing a Call for Urgent Gender Actions, Rapid Gender Analysis in partnership with OXFAM, CARE and ACAPS. Additionally, an advocacy brief — Rohingya Women Speak Up: Concerns, Demands and Solutions — was developed based on consultations with Rohingya women leaders, CSOs and volunteers. The Gender Hub along with the sectoral gender focal points supported five sectors in the development of Sector Gender Action Plans, ensuring gender was at the core of the sectors’ COVID-19 response.

These efforts may have contributed to a reduction in gender disparity prevalent at the onset of the outbreak in March 2020 when according to UN Women, significantly more men than women accessed testing services. In December 2020, the number of women accessing testing services was equal to men. UN Women through the

Gender Hub and the GiHA WG further developed key guidance documents and tools for training all health staff: a gendered protection guidance and checklist, a behavioural protocol, and an information leaflet for patients on COVID-19 quarantine, isolation and treatment facilities.

Figure 1. Funding Requested and Received for Tailored/Targeted Programming for Women and Girls, as Compared with the Overall Response (2018)



Source: UN Women and UNFPA, Funding for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Programming, June 2020.

While results of the gender mainstreaming efforts during joint response plan preparation were widely confirmed, there is still not enough evidence of Gender Hub impacts in the subsequent stages of humanitarian response, such as resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and reporting, other than the occasional analyses. Some stakeholders noted it would require additional financial and human resources to ensure adequate capacity.

A 2020 study by UN Women and UNFPA on funding for gender equality in humanitarian action, which included an analysis of humanitarian response in Bangladesh¹³, the number of projects which could be classified as gender targeted or tailored was significantly overstated¹⁴. The study also found there was a substantial difference between the amount of funding requested for these projects and the amount that was eventually received. For example, in 2018 the Bangladesh Joint Response Plan indicated that USD 619 million was requested for projects with a targeted or tailored focus on women and girls, but actual amount that was received was only USD 289 million – less than half of what was requested. Further, projects that had been classified as

“targeting/tailored” for women and girls were overstated by 25-30%. In Bangladesh, the analysis identified that only 3% of the programmes could be classified as targeting women and girls, whereas it had been reported that 26% targeted women.¹⁵ This demonstrates the importance of providing support not only in the design phase, but throughout the project to ensure that gender perspective is integrated into the entire project cycle through implementation and monitoring.

Monitoring and reporting present another challenge in understanding how coordination is influencing the work on the ground. Although monitoring and reporting on sex and age disaggregated data has improved over time, as shown by the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

13 The study provided data for Bangladesh, Somalia, Nigeria and Jordan. Funding for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian programming | Digital library: Publications | UN Women – Headquarters

14 The study defines “tailored” support to women and girls as those efforts where the project aims to contribute significantly to outcomes for women and girls and indicate that they not only assessed the specific needs of women and girls, but tailored activities towards those needs; “targeted” support includes where the principal purpose of the project is to primarily and explicitly target women and girls with relevant activities.

15 UN Women and UNFPA, Funding for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Grils in Humanitarian Programming, June 2020.

and Girls¹⁶, there are challenges in tracking how programming success translates into benefits for women and girls. Benefits for other groups, such as men and boys, the elderly, certain ethnic groups, or persons with disability seem to be even less represented. Reporting is largely dependent upon the commitment and capacity of the humanitarian actors themselves and there is a high turnover of staff and not all staff prioritize reporting on those indicators – particularly when it is not required. There were attempts by the Gender Hub to collect data on achievements, for example Gender Reflections: Two Years of Rohingya Refugee Response: Achievements, Challenges and Recommendations (2019)¹⁷. But systematic and regular follow up will require additional capacity and resources, as well as accountability at the IASC level, which has also been raised by the Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation on GEEWG.

Finding 4. Past overlap among UN agencies is improving through concerted efforts to clarify coordination mechanisms roles and responsibilities, yet clarity on the division of labour between the GIHA WG and Gender Hub requires further attention.

The decision to establish the Gender Hub was based on previous reviews and evaluations¹⁸ that identified the need for streamlining gender coordination mechanisms to enhance coherence and effectiveness of response to Rohingya refugee crisis with respect to gender. While the situation has improved due to more gender experts on the ground, some overlap between the GIHA WG and Gender Hub persists and, as identified in the evaluation interviews, causes confusion. There is also a risk of multiple coordination bodies combined that have a low number of personnel dedicated to gender on the ground causing gender fatigue among humanitarian actors. The division of responsibilities between GIHA WG, GBV sub-sector, and the Gender Hub was unclear to some partners due to some overlap or duplication. As can be seen in Table 1, the mandates of the three groups dedicated to gender are similar – particularly between the GIHA WG and Gender Hub. UNFPA and UN Women have worked on clarifying roles and reducing overlap by ensuring that UNFPA takes the lead in GBV response and prevention while UN Women takes the lead in capacity development, training and awareness raising in all facets of gender mainstreaming in crisis response and preparedness including women’s leadership and empowerment. Stakeholders noted improved collaboration between UN Women and UNFPA in 2020-2021, as demonstrated through joint needs assessment, research, preparation of a joint advocacy note, etc. Concerning protection, stakeholders noted that the cooperation and division of responsibilities is well defined and functioning smoothly. In the interviews and documentation, it was also confirmed that the UN Women - UNHCR relationship has evolved over time. In 2020, UN Women and UNHCR signed a memorandum of understanding on strengthening gender-responsive site management in the refugee camps. It aims to reinforce collaboration, gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women and girls in all site management and capacity building activities - integration of UN Women Gender Officers and the Rohingya gender volunteers into the site management team at 13 camps, joint UN Women and UNHCR's training for site management staff, monitoring and analysis of situation and community engagement etc. While UN Women and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) relations started to develop through their work in food safety, cooperation with WFP fostered through marketplace collaboration where economically empowered women sell their products.

The Inter Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on GEEWG case study on Bangladesh published in 2020 characterized the Gender Hub as “a very important resource and was considered to fill gaps on four different levels: influence (sitting at the ISCG Secretariat), expertise (full-time focus of gender experts), resourcing (available dedicated budget for capacity development and gender analysis), and timing (longer-term project of three years versus the standard six-month deployments).” Still, some interviewed stakeholders, including UN Women personnel, have different perspectives on whether Gender Hub manages or, rather, serves the GIHA WG and whether Gender Hub is better positioned under ISCG or under UN Women. Some of the stakeholders, who were

16 Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls: Bangladesh Case study, 2020. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/The%20Inter-Agency%20Humanitarian%20Evaluation%20%28IAHE%29%20on%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20the%20Empowerment%20of%20Women%20and%20Girls%20%28GEEWG%29-Case%20Study%20Bangladesh.pdf>

17 The following review identifies that previous reviews also identified the need for streamlining of gender coordination mechanisms. https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/iscg_gender_hub_-_gender_reflections_-_september_2019.pdf

18 Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls: Bangladesh Case study, 2020. Women’s Refugee Commission, *We Need to Write Our Own Names”: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the Rohingya Humanitarian Response in Cox’s Bazar*, Gender Operational Review Report, 2019.

consulted, thought that the Gender Hub is becoming more of an ISCG service than UN Women's, on the other hand, some see this as a strategic way to influence the overall response. Some also see competition among gender coordination bodies for their place and influence in the crisis response setting. As reported by one UN Women personnel, from a communications standpoint, the Gender Hub struggles with its brand positioning and unique value proposition, as partners are unclear about which organisation runs the Gender Hub. In response to these issues, in early 2021 the ISCG and UN Women recommended moving the Gender Hub from the ISCG to GIHA oversight, the results of which are yet to be understood and this issue should remain in focus moving forward. Gender Hub is expected to be seen as a capacity building unit of UN Women/GIHA. UN Women has been managing the Gender Hub with the funds from Global Affairs Canada with no shared costs from ISCG. It should also be considered that GIHA WG is part of standard operating procedures for humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar but without dedicated funds, and Gender Hub is the first of its kind - piloted in Cox's Bazar to further strengthen and operationally support gender capacities of humanitarian actors.

Table 1. Roles and responsibilities of the key gender coordination structures

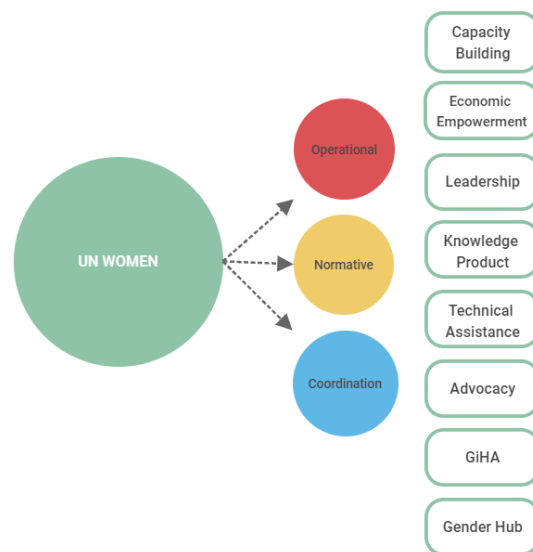
	GIHA	Gender Hub	GBV Sub-sector
Leadership	UN Women and UNHCR co-lead, UN Women maintains secretariat role.	ISCG with UN Women as project manager	UNFPA lead, operates alongside the Child Protection Sub-Sector (led by UNICEF) within the Protection Sector (led by UNHCR)
Key Roles and responsibilities based on TOR	<p>The Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG) for the Rohingya Refugee crisis response in Cox's Bazar will provide cross-sectoral and inter-organizational support to ensure the integration of gender aspects in humanitarian action with the following key focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Coordination, o Technical advice, o Guidance and o Capacity Development with support from Gender Hub, Advocacy, o Assessment, analysis and monitoring, Information sharing and management. 	<p>Gender Hub will support all actors, including local agencies and government, to plan, program and implement the humanitarian response in a gender and diversity sensitive and responsive way. The Gender Hub ensures robust integration and collaboration with protection, GBV and PSEA sectors and experts to build on the existing evidence, interventions, analysis and guidance from other related sectors. All work and materials will be in line with the IASC Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Humanitarian Action and the Accountability Framework. The Gender Hub provides three types of services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Technical assistance, o Capacity building and o Knowledge management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Strengthening community based GBV programming. The key strategic objectives of the Sub-Sector include Ensuring access to quality multi-sector GBV response services for survivors, o Building capacity of GBV service providers and other stakeholders to deliver quality care in line with best practices and minimum standards for humanitarian settings; o Enabling active participation of affected communities in GBV awareness raising response, prevention and risk mitigation. o Enhancing GBV risk mitigation across humanitarian sectors and with the government, and o Strengthening co-ordination and planning for sustainability of the GBV response.
Membership	200 UN, INGOS, NGOs, Government.		More than 50 standing member organizations; including, UN, INGO, NNGO and government agencies.

Source: IES team developed based on desk review

3.3 Effectiveness: What does UN Women's performance look like in crisis response?

Figure 3. Overview of UN Women efforts in Cox's Bazar

Finding 4: Since the establishment of the Sub-Office, UN Women applied various strategies (research and knowledge generation, advocacy, public information, capacity building, etc.) and contributed to an enabling environment to reach out to women and girls with humanitarian support and strengthen their leadership and active engagement in crisis situations. A menu of services and models have emerged that can support future definition of UN Women’s role in protracted crisis response.



Source: IES team developed

UN Women reported that its presence in the field and a growing portfolio allowed for more systemic support to the humanitarian actors in gender mainstreaming and gender related capacity building and to women and girls in camps in leadership, protection, psychosocial support and economic empowerment and more substantial engagement with the host communities. Key features of UN Women’s support in Cox’s Bazar response include the following areas.

The evaluation team identified several areas where UN Women is contributing to results:

- **Gender Hub: Building and strengthening capacity of humanitarian actors**

The assessment of capacity building strategies of the Gender Hub applied the model developed for the UN Women’s Country Portfolio Evaluation in Pakistan in 2021. It observed the extent of capacity building based on appropriate diagnosis, appropriate design and delivery, creation of enabling environment for beneficiaries to apply knowledge and skills and facilitation of synergy with other similar activities and follow up support.¹⁹ It also observed how capacity building was tailored to the needs and affected changes in individual knowledge and skills (individual change), humanitarian stakeholders’ coordination and effectiveness (organizational change) and ascertain, as much as possible, how it impacted Rohingya women. The assessment found that the Gender Hub applies most of the key capacity building management interventions, such as capacity needs assessment, development and delivery of basic and tailored training, follow up through refresher courses, learning circles (networks of practitioners), advisory support in programming as well as operations, to some extent. Consequently, the effects of these interventions are seen in more gender-responsive programming, improved coordination and cooperation among UN and other stakeholders. However, information on how this all translates into actions by capacity building beneficiaries and how it benefits women and girls in the field (gender-sensitive reporting) is difficult to capture.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise; • Capacity needs assessment; • Annual review of training results (2020). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic insight into effects of support and absence of impact assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further efforts in knowledge generation from across humanitarian stakeholders. • Further tailoring and adjustment of training to the participant’s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited human and financial resources; • Turnover of humanitarian action staff.

¹⁹ The framework was based on a combination of: 1) UN Women’s evaluation framework used for the Regional Evaluation on UN Women’s capacity development initiatives in East and Southern Africa, focusing on criteria of diagnosis of the problem to be addressed with the training, design and delivery of the training and follow up to support application; 2) Capacity Development Evaluation Framework of the FAO, observing design, implementation and changes caused at individual and organisational level, the extent to which enabling environment was created for application and sustainability of the results; 3) Kirkpatrick’s model exploring participant’s reaction to the training, learning of knowledge and skills, ability to apply them and cause impact and 4) COM-B model emphasising that behavioural change requires developing capabilities and existing opportunities and motivators.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and networking of gender professionals. • Contribution to response planning. • Tailored training and follow-up in programming and operations. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> needs and the situation in the field; • Further advancement of monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes and tools to identify how learning is being applied and translated into results for women and girls; • Providing internal capacity development opportunities for the Gender Hub personnel. 	
--	--	--	--

Diagnosis The Gender Hub tailored its capacity building approach based on the capacity needs assessment among humanitarian stakeholders in Cox’s Bazar conducted in 2019, learnings from the training events and ad hoc requests from the organisations. The assessment showed that the capacities are less developed in the local NGOs in Cox’s Bazar than in the UN, INGO and national NGOs. Key areas where capacity gaps were identified were use of gender disaggregated data for analysis, gender analysis and mainstreaming in programme activities, development of gender transformative programmes and gender responsive monitoring and reporting. The assessment concluded that the capacities of humanitarian stakeholders varied and that it should be taken into account in the capacity development plan in terms of tailoring the trainings as well as in knowledge generation and using the capacities of the other organisations to transfer their knowledge and experience. Diverse approaches should be used, such as workshops and trainings, coaching, mentoring, experiential learning and exchange. The assessment proposed four thematic modules for delivery on sectoral basis: 1) Gender analysis for programme development, 2) Strategy development, 3) Monitoring and documentation and 4) Gender responsive organisations.

Design Based on the capacity needs assessment a menu of capacity building services was developed including 1) technical assistance, guidance and support 2) training courses, 3) knowledge generation on gender-responsive humanitarian interventions. This evaluation confirmed satisfaction with relevance and the design of most of the Gender Hub service users contacted through this evaluation. But some participants, who were consulted, found some trainings too general and not always adjusted to the context or helpful in preparing the staff sufficiently to address the challenges in diverse sectors. Some also mentioned that the global norms and gender equality messages need to be contextualised and adjusted to culturally diverse actors in the crisis response on the ground. In this respect, it was noted that there is opportunity to strengthen focus on gender – meaning how women, girls, and also boys and men are affected differently, in addition to the special needs of most vulnerable groups. It was also confirmed by UN Women Gender Hub personnel that the Gender Hub needs to invest more efforts in regularly updating training/learning modules and materials. Learning circles were designed as a follow-up activity to enable exchange and generate knowledge directly from the humanitarian stakeholders and UN Women’s operations in the field.

Delivery Generally, based on the evaluation interviews, training sessions seem to have provided an adequate learning environment and corresponded to what was envisaged by the training design. The trainings were delivered by the Gender Hub staff and national and international consultants. Gender Hub led a review of the training results²⁰, but the response was very low and cannot be used with confidence. Both the evaluation interviews and the review showed positive feedback on capacity building efforts. Some of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned the need for engagement of more diverse and senior gender experts, which consequently would require additional financial resources. Some respondents assessed the Gender Hub to have sufficient capacity to deliver group trainings and provide technical assistance in programming. The need for buy-in of senior management staff in the training, more in-depth practical application was also mentioned. Capacity development activities were delivered in person and since the breakout of COVID-19 pandemic, on-line sessions were introduced. Altogether, there was significant interest among humanitarian stakeholders: 224 humanitarians were trained in 2019 (GiHA and UN Women trainings included) and 994 people (535 men and 459 women) were reached in 2020.

	Type of capacity development activity	Number of participants	
2020	Learning Circle (Bangla & English), Tailored Training for SMSD & WASH in sectors, MSNA Gender orientation, Mentoring scheme, Gender mainstreaming session with NGO Forum, Learning circle- Women as first responder, Learning circle-expression of Racism, Online session on GAM for Child Protection and CWC, Gender induction training for new staffs, Gender Induction for ActionAid and	Men	535
		Women	459
		Total	994

	BRAC, Gender Leadership/Budget Training, Gender induction for WASH Sector etc.		
	Type of capacity development activity	Number of participants	
2021	Lessons learned Workshop, Learning circle on Education (Mixed language), Gender Mainstreaming Training for ACF, Gender Mainstreaming Training for FAO, Gender Mainstreaming training for FSS sector 1st Batch/Education/Nutrition sectors, Gender and PHS Training for UN Women, Orientation of Disability for UN Women, Training to EKOTA, Gender Orientation for CP SS, Gender Mainstreaming in WASH, learning event on Women's participation in Community election, Learning Circle on Feminist voice etc.	Men	477
		Women	427
		Total	904

Synergies and follow-up

The Gender Hub's menu of services already envisaged follow-up through learning circles, mentoring, coaching and tailored advisory support upon request, which was assessed as beneficial by those consulted for this evaluation. This particularly relates to support in engendering the joint response plan and individual projects, support in gender assessment of the projects and development of gender sensitive operational guidelines (for example guidance to address intimidation of volunteers and staff in the camps with the protection cluster). As reported by UN Women, interest of other organisations to cooperate is increasing and one of the examples is GIZ support providing an expert to support Gender Hub efforts in gender mainstreaming in WASH sector. Existing human and financial resources are not sufficient for systemic services to respond to the requests of individual agencies and continuous follow up to support trainees in application of knowledge and skills. Still, the Gender Hub managed to respond to some ad hoc requests and tailored advisory support which was particularly appreciated. Knowledge generation on how trainee's follow-up efforts translate from programming into the implementation and what the effects are for women and girls on the ground, needs further strengthening.

Enabling environment

While the efforts of Gender Hub in synergy with overall UN Women and GiHA working group efforts contributed to improvement of enabling environment in terms of increased buy-in of humanitarian sector coordinators, strengthening cooperation and partnership among key humanitarian stakeholders requires continuous engagement with UN senior management, government and other stakeholders' leadership.

Individual change

Based on UN women personnel consulted, and the limited number of training beneficiaries consulted for this evaluation, the training conducted by Gender Hub seems to have raised awareness, provided better understanding of gender concepts in humanitarian action and the needs of the women and girls in the camps. For application of knowledge, follow up advisory support and learning cycles were essential. Gender Hub's review of the trainings in 2020 also mentions that nearly 10% participants became mindful to collect SADD data, prepare gender analysis and analyse the situation of diverse vulnerable groups.

Organisational change

There is evidence of organizational buy-in and initial change. As reported by UN Women and several humanitarian stakeholders consulted, main effects at the organizational level were the contributions to more gender responsive Joint Response Plan and individual projects and Gender and Inclusion Action Plans for different sectors in Cox's Bazar. Humanitarian stakeholders reported high turnover of staff in the field and the need for continuous gender related training to sustain the organizational capacity. Examples of raised interest for gender mainstreaming within organizations include training participants and sharing their knowledge within their organizations. Annual Review of Gender Hub's training shows participants supporting development of sectoral action plans with their gender related knowledge, rolled out the gender training and orientation of gender sensitization sessions for new staff within their own organizations, while one participant conducted gender analysis of the organizational budget and one advocated for better working conditions for female staff in terms of rights on maternity leave.

Impact

While there is evidence of change within the humanitarian community, the Gender Hub has not yet invested much to ascertain whether and how all the capacity development support is utilized by the participants. Even more challenging is linking these efforts with actual impact on women and girls on the ground. There is space to engage in strengthened monitoring for outcome and impact level change. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation/impact assessment tools require upgrading. UN Women services to humanitarian actors could be expanded to monitoring and reporting, which will also impact the ability of UN Women to capture how the results from programming translate into better lives for women and girls in the field. This and other additional services mentioned in the Gender Hub analysis would require continuous investment in internal human resource development.

• **Engaging and empowering women through leadership and voice**

UN Women engaged women in leadership opportunities directly within the camp management architecture to influence change for women and girls. Several structures exist: the Camp in Charge (CIC) appointed by the Government of Bangladesh, religious leaders, civil society networks, the Bangladesh Army-appointed majhi system, and a pilot election of community representatives of refugees in at least one camp.²¹ In 2019, UN

21 Women's Refugee Commission, "We Need to Write Our Own Names": Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Rohingya Humanitarian Response in Cox's Bazar, Gender Operational Review Report, 2019.

Women led the roll-out of women's leadership training for over 1,000 Rohingya women across all camps through 30 UN agencies, I/NGOs, member organizations of the GiHA WG. In advance, over 100 trainers from GIHA WG member organizations were trained as trainers by UN Women on women's empowerment, participation, and leadership, based on a module developed in consultation with Rohingya women and men. One of the key demands of the network was to increase women's participation in camp level community representation structures. In 2019, 4 Rohingya women stood as block-leader candidates for pilot elections in one of the camps and were successfully elected by their community. UN Women reported supporting Rohingya women leaders to establish a collective platform for joint advocacy and action to raise the voices and demands of women and girls. This umbrella network consists of over 50 elected, self-organized and mobilized Rohingya women leaders and groups representing women and girls from across 25 camps. This was confirmed by the Inter-agency humanitarian evaluation, which identified the UN Women project for the promotion of women in governance as an initiative to increase women's representation among the elected leaders for camp governance and noted that "the involvement of volunteer women's groups was seen as empowering, and the women volunteers themselves reported increased self-esteem through their contributions to sector activities." Based on the lessons learnt, in 2020, UN Women reported that they partnered with OXFAM to develop new transformative leadership modules based on joint research on transformative women's leadership (Oxfam) and on changing social norms for women's leadership (UN Women and IOM). The new transformative women's leadership modules are to be rolled out in trainer of trainers format with local women leaders and women's civil society organizations in camps and host communities, combined with parallel community engagement initiatives to build an enabling environment.

In the observed period, 6 gender field officers were seconded to the camps-in-charge (Government appointed official managing the camps) which had reportedly facilitated UN Women's work in the camps, identification, direct and indirect communication of women refugees' needs to the camp management, monitoring of humanitarian response from gender perspective and organizing events marking the international women's days. Gender field officers have also served as PSEA reference points of UN Women in the camps and did case referrals to the respective sectors such as site management, legal aid and GBV actors. They allowed for wider UN Women's participation in partners and sector meetings such as site management, protection, GBV, child protection, health, WASH and food sectors to minimize the gap, develop greater coordination, collaboration at field level. Some of those consulted in the field noted that while the gender officers are a good initiative, they require more support to ensure a strong understanding of gender mainstreaming and be able to address the complex and high number of demand within the camps.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Women volunteers supported overall COVID-19 outreach and awareness raising among the refugee population, disseminated key points of PSEA along with hygiene and prevention messages. Volunteers assisted by serving those in need at the service points and helping address their diverse range of problems. During the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers consulted refugees including women, men, adolescents and other key beneficiaries regarding isolation and treatment centres for men and women to gather their feedback. UN Women reported that its activities have contributed to refugee women in vulnerable conditions getting access to critical information. During 2018-2021, UN Women reported reaching at least 33,000 Rohingya women and girls with lifesaving information and services through five Multi-Purpose Women's Centres and outreach activities.

UN Women and stakeholders consulted reported that engagement in gender specific issues with the refugees and camp management has improved over time thanks to UN Women efforts at the camps. Yet, stakeholders consulted in the camps during the evaluation field visit, identified persisting challenges in engaging with the religious leaders and camp leaders, saying that they do not always trust the leaders to have their or their community's best interest at the heart, but are rather driven by their own self-interest. Engagement of men was highlighted as a priority given the power dynamics and social norms within the community. This indicates that more should be done to build trust between the community and its leaders to ensure transparency and reassure the people that they are being heard and their demands acted upon.

- **Supporting Women's Economic Empowerment**

UN Women actions focusing on women's empowerment and well-being were implemented in partnership and coordination with NGOs such as BRAC, OXFAM and Action Aid. These NGOs have dedicated components addressing livelihoods. Refugee women and girls were trained in a number of income generating activities like producing COVID-19 protection masks, embroidery, gardening and mobile phone servicing as suitable to their

context and needs. UN Women reported that Rohingya women who participated in the livelihood trainings are earning money for their families thanks to the skills they learned. UN Women reported that this is enabling them to purchase essential items beyond what is distributed as relief, and improving their quality of living, however the data is unclear. The Women's Centres are also a hub of connectivity, which Rohingya women view as sanctuaries amid the chaos of congested camps — as confirmed by the evaluation team. In addition to training, NGOs provided grants to purchase seeds, gardening equipment, sewing machines, etc. Multipurpose Centres supported by UN Women were instrumental in moving the economic and social well-being activities forward. According to reports, special attention was given to pregnant and needy women and girls. GEEWG related activities by NGOs were supported by training from UN Women. However, UN Women reported that empowerment activities were not implemented with the same success everywhere due to the number of camps and resource limitations.

During 2018-2021, the UN Women Cox's Bazar DRR officer was actively working with Rohingya communities focusing on preparedness for natural disasters. However, the organization's capacity of to respond to major sudden-onset disasters continues to be limited. Moreover, the Rohingya refugee crisis, that started in August 2017, diverted the attention of government counterparts as well as that of the UNCT.

- **Contributing to Protection from Gender Based Violence**

Beginning of 2021, women volunteers experienced security issues: intimidation, pushback, and violence. Gender Hub and GIHA, together with protection cluster/UNHCR, developed specific guidance to address these issues, not only for women volunteers, but for all personnel who were intimidated. In 2021, UN Women reported that the following mechanisms and initiatives were in place to protect women and girls from violence and exploitation in the refugee camps:

- Collaborating with Bangladesh Police, UN Women has established three Women and Children Police Help Desks at police stations in camps 4, 5 and 9 operated by female police officers
- Supported strengthening community policing systems in host community and camps to address GBV
- Supported gender capacity strengthening of Camps-in Charge and site management staff to enhance gender-responsive service delivery and site management
- Supported gender capacity strengthening of Bangladesh Police and Armed Police Battalions to enhance gender-responsive policing and GBV response
- Gender Field Officers and community volunteers supported by UN Women are leading community engagement, mobilization, and awareness raising on GBV prevention and PSEA case, as well as GBV and PSEA identification and referral mechanisms
- Multi-purpose women's centres provide basic GBV case management and referral services
- Specific guidance to address protection in camps, for not only women volunteers, but also personnel who were intimidated during their activities
- Engage with faith leaders and faith-based organizations to leverage their influence in the communities and to disseminate information around GBV services

Challenges raised by stakeholders consulted in the camps

Although the evaluation was conducted mostly virtually, it aimed to capture insights into current needs and priorities and how UN Women and other humanitarian stakeholders' efforts particularly in case of sudden onset crisis response were perceived or translated into benefits for women and girls. The team visited 3 camps — 2, 4 and 13 — among which UN Women has presence in one (camp 2), and its civil society partners work in the other two. Although the evaluation team spoke directly with a limited number of individuals in the camps (34 with 18 females and 16 males and this cannot be generalized, their feedback provides important insight into some of the issues that are important to the refugees who were interviewed. They noted that they do not feel prepared for sudden-onset crisis such as fire or floods. This worries them and they would like further support in this area. Another concern is trust in community leaders. They expressed a lack of trust that the community leaders are indeed representing their needs and priorities. The stakeholders noted that they do feel that the NGOs they

work with are able to meet their needs, however, they were unaware of UN Women’s specific efforts in the camp. During site observation, it was noted that in Camp 2 only some of the facilities had locks and the showers were not always separate. At least one female respondent noted not feeling safe walking alone in Camp 2. Further, concerns over the security of adolescent girls were raised by the majority. Several respondents noted that there are high security risk in sending girls to school in the host community given the high number of girls being trafficked or married off. Rohingya refugees mentioned the curriculum in the camp is limited and sending children to the host community is a better option, yet there were security risks particularly for adolescent girls, which necessitates enhanced learning opportunities in the camps. Other alternatives would mean costlier education which is not feasible. Also, due to negative social norms within the Rohingya community, menstruating girls are kept home, and some believe that girls are “ruined” after visiting the host community and attending school. This results in many families keeping the girls at home and not allowing them to attend school. Several identified these security and protection concerns as priority issues that needed to be addressed.

Overview of enablers and barriers to UN Women’s performance identified by stakeholders consulted

Enablers	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective engagement with the local NGOs, CSO and the women’s groups and volunteers active directly in the camps. • After four years of the UN Women active engagement in HA in Cox’s Bazar, the agency built its space and is seen as a legitimate humanitarian partner. • Long-term contracts for personnel to provide capacity building to humanitarian actors and ensure institutional memory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent refugee movements and work engagement limitations imposed by the national government. • Communication barriers - finding personnel that can speak Rohingya. • Limited human and financial resources with short-term contracts. • Common view that UN Women is not a humanitarian agency and its legitimacy in this domain is questioned. • COVID pandemic created a major obstacle to activities of all humanitarian actors in Cox’s Bazar, including restrictions in movements and provision of assistance. • Personnel turnover and transitions in humanitarian organizations at all levels created a need for continual re-orientation and capacity building on gender principles, including orientation on existing gender tools and guidance for individual sectors. • Social and cultural norms that are difficult to address in camp setting.

3.4 Organizational efficiency: To what extent is UN Women responding in a timely manner and with sufficient capacity in recent crisis response situations?

Finding 6. Despite the initial challenges in positioning itself in the humanitarian response system in Cox’s Bazar and navigating around the limited corporate support for crisis response, the Country Office has adjusted its internal setup for engagement in a protracted crisis. Capacity development efforts through the Gender Hub still require further financial and human resources to be able to support humanitarian actors beyond the planning stage.

During the early stages of the refugee crisis, the Country Office responded through a patchwork of personnel on the ground. The Country Office initially relied on the newly established Rapid Deployment Roster which was not as efficient as expected. Each of the deployments from this Roster were too short (2 to 3 months). UN Women benefitted from a rapid-deployment of a high-level professional who had experience in other complex humanitarian situations, which several respondents pointed out as facilitating UN Women’s visibility and enabling UN Women to have a seat at the table and make an in-road in establishing itself as a humanitarian agency in Cox’s Bazar.

Another bottleneck noted at the beginning of the crisis was the absence of adequate corporate crisis response strategy and policy. At the beginning of the crisis, the Regional Office (ROAP) did not have enough personnel with humanitarian experience and the support from the ROAP to UN Women in Bangladesh was limited. The regional humanitarian specialist at the time had several hats that reduced time available for humanitarian

response. Since then, the situation has evolved positively with a dedicated regional humanitarian advisor and a team established in 2019 and increased support/leadership of ROAP. Division of responsibilities between ROAP and HQ was and continues to be unclear. On the other hand, HQ was able to deploy a mission to assist Cox's Bazar staff in developing women's leadership, empowerment and protection model for the camps. At present, the coordination and information flow between Cox's Bazar based UN Women staff, the Country Office and ROAP is functioning well, and feedback required by the field office are provided within a reasonable time. HQ's level of engagement is less evident for personnel working in Cox's Bazar. More efficient support is expected from RO and HQ in fund-raising.

The Sub Office has established a Crisis Management Team responsible for coordination of humanitarian action and serve as a communication focal point for all response and subsequent recovery activities. The Sub Office Crisis Management Team is activated based upon an initial assessment of the Head of Sub Office. In 2020, UN Women Sub Office in Cox's Bazar set up Crisis Response and Business Continuity Plan. This plan identifies the responsibilities, processes, and resources for responding to emergencies and business disruptions and restoring business operations.

According to UN Women, the recruitment of 6 national gender field officers and engagement of more than 40 volunteers from the refugee community boosted the efficiency of UN Women activities in camps particularly in terms of timely needs assessment, information sharing and referral of various issues to the responsible stakeholders. As monitoring and capturing results and impacts of the actions remain challenging, communication of results also insufficiently demonstrates the value of the overall gender coordination function, for which some partners and donors interviewed in this evaluation have high interest. Furthermore, since UN Women activities in Cox's Bazar receive funding from several donors, a lot of time was reported to be spent on monitoring and reporting issues, which reduced the time available for crisis related assistance. More efficient project management and results monitoring systems are needed to address this efficiency gap in monitoring and reporting.

Total coordination efforts of the Joint Response Plan 2021 were costed at USD 5,000,000 (0.53% of the total Joint Response Plan budget of USD 943,123,350). This figure includes coordination costs of IOM, UNHCR, UN Women and Helvetas Swiss International cooperation. The Gender Hub budget falls within that budget line and it was USD 1.6 million (0.087%) in comparison to USD 1.82 billion of the overall joint response funding over the period 2019-2021. The Gender Hub has its own dedicated budget for capacity-building activities. However, the expenditure reported for training in 2019-2021 was, USD 20,548.87 against the personnel related expenditure of USD 850,740.77; the low expenditure on training workshops was primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic which moved most activities online during 2020-2021. Both UN Women and some UN partners assessed the budget to be sufficient to cover coordination and gender mainstreaming in the programming stage, related capacity building and group training and occasional research and deeper gender analyses of humanitarian response. More systemic support to gender mainstreaming in resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and learning impacts from humanitarian response and continuous internal human resource development would require further investment.

Finding 7: While UN Women does not have adequate corporate systems or personnel capacity to respond to sudden onset crises operationally through delivery of goods, it can quickly mobilize and engage its technical expertise and networks to provide rapid gender assessment of the crisis and contribute to engendering overall humanitarian response through coordination mechanisms. At country level, the systems are clear, yet more needs to be done to ensure clarity and coherence within UN Women corporately.

With regard to the fire in the camps (sudden onset crisis) in March 2021 UN Women had no corporate system nor efficient capacity as major humanitarian agencies did (trained emergency first responders, stocks of emergency items, etc.) to engage operationally in the immediate response. However, its well-established relationship with community workers in camps was instrumental for efficient rapid assessment of the emergency needs of women and other vulnerable groups of population (elderly, children, disabled etc.).

Several stakeholders consulted noted that information provided by UN Women through coordination mechanisms in a crisis was beneficial to their programming. Still, UN Women personnel confirmed the need to mature in sudden-onset disaster management models and be able to respond more quickly. UN Women

personnel identified that the procurement procedures and tools are not compatible with the requirements for supporting timely crisis response.

UN Women has demonstrated that it is responsive to feedback from evaluations. For example, in 2020, the UN Women global “rapid assessment tool to evaluate gender equality and women’s empowerment results in humanitarian contexts” was piloted in Cox’s Bazar. The rapid assessment identified the need to address issues related to GBV and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) response and referral mechanisms. In response, UN Women partnered with UNFPA to conduct a training for all UN Women and partner staff, and further finalized the roadmap for piloting a UN Women Community Feedback Mechanism in Rohingya refugee camps, which the Country Office reported in 2020 to be the first of its kind corporately.

In 2020, based on the findings of a Management Review, the Country Office prioritized the recruitment of additional Finance and Procurement staff for both Dhaka office and the Sub-Office in Cox’s Bazar. This helped increase the delivery of the overall programme, but further efforts are required to clarify the roles and responsibilities, delegation of work and workflows within the team and between Cox’s Bazar Sub-office and Dhaka office. Further, it was noted that personnel directly involved with GIHA WG functions have a lot of sector-related responsibilities that reduce their time for GIHA WG functions. Moreover, GIHA WG has limited resources considering the funds for overall response and there is a big question about its future sustainability if funding for the Gender Hub is not available beyond March 2022.

Summary of key internal bottlenecks to UN Women action in crisis response were identified as:

- At the beginning of the crisis, it was unclear whom to reach out to at RO and HQ.
- Absence of a standard crisis response and preparedness toolkit and standard operating procedures.
- Absence of strategy, structure and operational guidelines for crisis response; particularly the role of the head of sub-office and key programme staff.
- Challenges with the fast-track system for procurement and recruitment.
- Rapid deployment roster was new and had limited number of personnel. It exclusively depended on internal staff (in early years of the roster)
- Surge capacity and fast track procedures were not up to the challenge presented by the Cox’s Bazar crisis due to insufficient number of staff available for immediate deployment and lengthy procurement procedures.
- COVID-19 hampered implementation of several activities in 2020. These include bringing host community and Rohingya refugee women together to develop positive relations, leadership, and livelihoods training for host community women.
- UN Women personnel in Cox’s Bazar, at the beginning of the crisis, were working on short-term contracts and their turnover continues to be a challenge.

3.5 Contribution to Impact / Connectedness: What crisis response strategies have the highest potential to result in benefits in the lives of women and girls, and the most marginalized groups, that are connected with longer term resilience building efforts?

Finding 8: UN Women’s efforts have been embedded in a nexus and localization approach. Particularly UN Women’s engagement of Rohingya refugees as volunteers and organizing at the grassroots level is an important means for building long term resilience and reaching the most marginalized.

UN Women reported strengthening the capacity of 56 women-led civil society organizations (CSOs) on gender responsive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in three cyclone-prone and two flood-prone districts in Bangladesh. These CSOs were at the forefront of the refugee crisis and COVID-19 response. Being the representative of their localities, UN Women reported that these CSOs were not only instrumental in reaching the most vulnerable, marginalized and the hardest hit people e.g. gender diverse people, sex workers, female headed households, with life-saving information and assistance in the form of cash and necessary response and preparedness messages on COVID-19 and refugee crisis, but was also effective in putting them at the centre of response as decision maker, leader and implementer. Humanitarian response activities in Cox’s Bazar also received a financial grant from CERF managed by UN OCHA. The positive factor for

sustainability of UN Women crisis response activities was that 30 % of this contribution was earmarked for women-led organizations.

Working with grassroots women organizations was of critical importance for achieving connectedness and sustainability. Such approach led to strengthening the voice and leadership of Rohingya women and host community women that in the end opened the door for sustainability. The positive results were observed in an increased number of work opportunities for female refugees and women from the host communities (police service). By working with women at the grassroots level, the organization was enhancing social cohesion and connectedness in bringing both, the Bangladeshi women and Rohingya women together. Another example of UN Women contribution towards impact and sustainability is that in addition to advocacy and knowledge management, UN Women provided training to help refugee women defend their rights and interests in the future.

UN Women activities in the camps focused on providing information and services to adolescent girls and single mothers, who are not well informed due to conservative attitudes in the Rohingya community that dictate women should not be seen outside of homes. UN Women reported that within the refugee community, female headed households make up 16% of all households, and are vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and marginalization. Single women heads of households face more challenges because without a male family member, it is difficult for them to access critical relief and essential services. Compounding the problem, adolescent girls are at risk of being forced into early marriage as a protection mechanism from falling prey to trafficking.

UN Women informs through a monthly monitoring template about the situation of different groups of populations, male, female, disabled, transgender, sex workers, etc. However, not all partners (mainly NGOs) use these disaggregated data. The inter-agency humanitarian evaluation on GEEWG identified that limited work has been done in the areas of age, disability, ethnicity, men, or LGBTIQ, stating there was just one study on the experience of men and boys as victims of sexual violence carried out at the end of 2018. This led to a UN Women-IOM joint study recommending increased emphasis on social norms programming.²²

Government of Bangladesh's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in disaster management has been evident in the last decade. Since 2010, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief has been developing five-year plans for disaster management but for the first time, in 10 years, UN Women reported that the National Plan for Disaster Management 2021-2025 has been made gender responsive. Gender and social inclusiveness issues have been integrated throughout the plan and the plan adopted a twin track implementation strategy i.e., gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment for all the actions listed in the plan. UN Women reported contributing directly to ensuring the integration of gender equality in the plan with technical support to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. The governance system for disaster risk management has been further reinforced by incorporating gender components. At the end, UN Women reviewed the entire plan from a gender lens to ensure gender considerations were properly integrated throughout the document. "Leaving no one behind" and "Gender and Disability Inclusion" have been the central transformative promise of the National Plan for Disaster Management 2021-2025. Stakeholders, who were consulted, identified the need to continue strengthening efforts to enhance gender mainstreaming and capacities of the relevant government entities, given that they are the ones that hold the power and are taking camp management forward.

4. Observations/lessons learned and way forward

Observations/Lessons learned:

- Gender coordination mechanism must be included in the humanitarian architecture from the beginning of humanitarian crisis. Currently, standard operating procedures for humanitarian response do not involve the establishment of GiHA WG, nor deployment of gender specialists at the frontline of any response, but only after an initial response has been stabilized and there is no accountability

²² UN Women and IOM, Honour in Transition: Changing gender norms among the Rohingya. Consultation Paper; May 2020; <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/bangladesh/document/honour-transition-changing-gender-norms-among-rohingya-consultation>

mechanism for not reporting on gender, age indicators either, in the assistance provided to vulnerable groups²³.

- UN Women capacities available in Bangladesh at the beginning of Rohingya refugee crisis were not sufficient to ensure that Humanitarian Country Team mainstreams gender considerations into the humanitarian action consistently. Over the years and by efforts of UN Women and gender experts in diverse humanitarian actions, the situation has improved. However, it seems that this path would have been easier if sufficient gender coordination had been present from the beginning.
- Good connection with the government, army and camp management, refugee and host community, local NGOs and volunteers and development of the network of partners enabled UN women to promptly assess the needs of women and girls in the field, while improved relations with UN partners allow this information to feed the response plan and operations on the ground. Such information is often not available to other international humanitarian actors and is a valuable contribution from UN Women.
- Long term presence of UN Women in Cox's Bazar's protracted context provides valuable learnings that can help UN Women develop its own menu of services in similar humanitarian context: Gender coordination / Gender Hub, gender mainstreaming in joint response plans, capacity building for gender in humanitarian action, engagement with national stakeholders including camp management to create an enabling environment for gender equality and empowerment of women, multipurpose women's centres, support to women's leadership and economic empowerment in crisis, operational guidance and tips to humanitarian clusters. This is even more important considering the expectations raised among humanitarian actors that UN Women arrives to a crisis response with ready-to-apply package of services.
- Gender Hub is emerging as a replicable modality for technical assistance, capacity building and gender coordination, which could be a signature service for UN Women humanitarian action, particularly in a protracted setting. Yet, the overlapping mandates of GIHA WG and the Gender Hub and questions related to its mandate and positioning (within UN Women or ISCG) persist within both UN Women and its partners. Prior to any replication, remaining confusions around Gender Hub relations with other coordination bodies, such as ISCG and GIHA WG and UN Women's role itself, should be assessed and clarified. This situation raises a question about the possibility for shared responsibility to sustain Gender Hub or a similar structure in Cox's Bazar.
- Despite significant progress in gender responsive programming and resource mobilization, the requested and approved funding for gender equality in humanitarian response do not follow the overall trend of the response plan's funding coverage. There are high expectations from UN Women (by humanitarian stakeholders and the donors) to stay engaged in monitoring resource mobilization and also operational implementation and results of the successes achieved in programming. Also, further efforts are needed in communicating the results.
- The more the technical guidance/checklist/written evidence is available, the better the chances to drive the gender agenda. Similarly, the strength of gender mainstreaming is coming from building alliance within UN agencies both bilaterally and through continued lobby, negotiation, and advocacy at the level of HCT and at ISCG in Cox's Bazar.

Way forward for enhancing UN Women's overall crisis response based on Cox's Bazar experience

Learnings from Cox's Bazar are relevant beyond the local context to overall UN and UN Women's engagement in crisis response. The following observations are based on those learnings:

- UN Women should advocate to ensure high level humanitarian and gender expertise can be deployed at the on-set of a crisis to establish UN Women engagement and to stimulate its humanitarian partners to integrate the gender coordination mechanism (GIHA WG and Gender Hub services) into the humanitarian architecture from the beginning.

23 Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls – Case Study Cox's Bazar

- Clarity on the roles and positioning of the Gender Hub vis-a-vis the GIHA WG should be deliberated upon since GIHA WG is a coordination body (facilitating exchange, avoidance of duplication, knowledge generation from members involved) and Gender Hub niche is supporting humanitarian actors, including GIHA WG members, with strategic and operational capacity building, advisory support, mentoring, coaching, research, and knowledge generation. The title “hub” might imply rather a central management role and could be reconsidered. Whether to position Gender Hub within ISCG or within UN Women may depend on the context. Sustainability perspective of the model should be considered to examine whether UN Women is able to raise funds for such a mechanism on its own or there is potential for shared responsibility for resourcing the hub, with the ISCG, for example.
- UN Women should consider supporting the Gender Hub to go beyond gender mainstreaming of joint response plans and project development, to provide tailored follow up, such as reviewing the extent to which gender was mainstreamed into project implementation, while systemically engaging in capacity building for gender responsive implementation, monitoring and reporting and ensuring knowledge generation. If those services are considered, an appropriate increase of human and financial resources should also be envisaged.
- UN Women should define its menu of services for crisis (which can be further defined against different types of contexts like sudden onset, protracted, compounded crises), including clarifying the role in gender coordination, particularly between GiHA WG and Gender Hub (see Sub Annex 4).

UN Women corporately should consider:

- Establishing a corporate emergency fund or facilitate understanding of field offices on how to access emergency funds to support rapid engagement in crisis response.
- Devising stronger indicators and a monitoring system to measure and track how the coordination and capacity building efforts are translating into results for women and girls.
- Exploring the feasibility of building the Gender Hub concept into a signature organizational model in countries facing major humanitarian crisis.
- Advocating to become a full member of IASC structures. In this context draw attention of decision makers to the recommendations made in the context of the Inter Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on GEEWG issued in October 2020.²⁴
- Stepping up efforts in holding IASC accountable for gender responsiveness of humanitarian actors, particularly related to monitoring and reporting in line with IASC gender policy.
- Ensuring that lessons and good practices learned during the humanitarian response in Cox’s Bazar feed into the finalization of the organization-wide crisis response strategy, policy, tools, and procedures.
- As part of its crisis prevention and response country level efforts, continue supporting national authorities in gender mainstreaming activities for natural disaster response, preparedness, and risk management.
- Strengthening the capacity of women’s CSOs and promoting them within the humanitarian community as the critical agent to reach the most vulnerable groups.

Sub Annex

Sub Annex 1. List of Key Informants

#	Organization, Title	Method (interview/FGD etc.)	Male	Female
UN WOMEN				

²⁴ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-humanitarian-evaluations/inter-agency-humanitarian-evaluation-iahe-gender-equality-and-empowerment-women-and-girls-geewg-2020>

1	Gender & Humanitarian Specialist (Jordan) BANGLADESH & MYANMAR	Interview		1
2	Bangladesh CO as the Program Specialist DRR Climate and Humanitarian focal point	Interview		1
3	Capacity Development Specialist, Gender Hub , CXB	Interview		1
4	Focal point / Operations Manager Focal Point/ HR & Executive Support Assistant	Group Interview		2
5	Head of Sub-office, CXB	Interview		1
6	National Gender and Capacity Development Sp ecialist, Former UN Women gender hub communications specialist	Group interview		1
7	Deputy Director, PPID	Interview		1
8	M&E specialist	Interview	1	
9	Gender Hub Manager, CXB	Interview		1
Civil Society Organization (CSO)				
10	Shelter Coordinator, gender focal point WASH Sector with GiHA,	FGD		2
11	Head of WASH, Shelter coordinator	FGD	2	
UN System				
12	Associate protection officer, UNHCR	Interview		1
13	Head of UNFPA, CXB	Interview		1
Donor				
14	Senior Program Officer, Global affairs Canada	Interview		1
Field Visit				
15	Head of Rohingya Response, YPSA	Interview	1	
16	Project Manager, CNRS	Interview	1	
17	Senior Site Management Officer, ACTED	Interview		1
18	Group 1 (Camp 2W)	FGD	6	
19	Group 2 (Camp 2W)	FGD		4
20	Group 3 (Camp 4)	FGD	6	
21	Group 4 (Camp 4)	FGD		6
22	Group 5 (Camp 13)	FGD	6	
23	Group 6 (Camp 13)	FGD		6
Total			23	31
Total Key informants			54	

**sub Annex 2 Activities reported (extracted from case study)
Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group Reported Activities:**

Year	2018 & 2019	2020	2021
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIHA and Gender Based Violence (GBV) Sub-Sector Coordination Group to implement a collaborative 16 Days of Activism where more than 200 activities took place with more than 20 national and international partners across the 34 camps – all to promote positive messages about GBV and highlight the myriad of challenges facing Rohingya women and girls. The events were captured in 6 social media posts including one video and a photo album with 161 photos which reached more than 163,000 people globally, and 7 tweets on Twitter which reached 72,318 people globally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On World Refugee Day, an advocacy brief “Everyone can make a difference, every action counts” by GIHA Working Group highlighting the experiences of women as first responders to COVID-19 in Cox’ s Bazar. In Cox’s Bazar, to mark Intl’ Women’s Day on 8th March 2020, UN Women in coordination with (GiHA) Working Group organized various events across camps and host communities including games, competitions, arts and crafts, theatre and dialogue sessions. The local theme chosen in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, for International Women’s Day 2020 is Realizing All Women’s Rights / Beg Maifuandor Hoq Khiyal Goron. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 March 2021, (GiHA) organized a “Women’s Networking Event” in collaboration with UN Women, UNHCR, and the Education Sector in Cox’s Bazar to celebrate Intl’ Women’s Day and to promote women leadership in the humanitarian sector. The objective of this event was to create a community to build solidarity, to support women’s rights in crisis, to mobilize women’s agency to create opportunity, to offer peer support and to learn from each other
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two capacity enhancement trainings on Gender and Age Marker for cluster and working group members. Total 46 (Male-19, Female-27) participants attended the training held on 20-21 November 2019. On behalf of the GiHA WG, UN Women organized Gender in Humanitarian Action themed training sessions for approx. 45 Camps in Charge (CiCs) support staff on 2-3 December across all camps, as part of a joint capacity sharing Initiative of site management sector, Cox’s Bazar. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIHA WG led by Gender Hub held a Learning Circle for the feminist collective on self-care on 4 April. The Learning Circle series represents one of the participatory learning modalities identified by the members of the feminist collective and initiated by the GIHA WG to promote networking, capacity-building and peer support for staff working on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
Knowledge Product			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, the GiHAWG produced three rapid gender analysis reports on COVID, Cyclone Amphan, and the monsoon flood. The GBV cluster has been supporting the most vulnerable women and girls with dignity kits and the HCTT has driven humanitarian projects exclusively focusing on supporting female-led households Contributed in reviewing and updating of Joint Need Assessment (JNA) tools from gender lens during COVID -19 , AMPHAN, Flood response in 2020 and during YAAS in 2021;

Source: UN Women In brief January – March 2020

* UN Women Cox’s Bazar Update January – March 2021

* UN women in Brief, April – June 2020, Updates from Cox’s Bazar

*UW women in Brief, October-December 2019, Updates from Cox’s Bazar

Gender Hub Reported Activities

	2019	2020	2021
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In total 33 (Female 14 and Male 19) HAs were trained on Gender mainstreaming and 18 (Female 7 and Male 11) in food security. A Training of Trainers (TOT) on ‘Rohingya Refugee Women's Empowerment, Participation and Leadership’ in Cox’s Bazar was held for HAs engaged in the Rohingya refugee crisis response. The participants were provided with training modules and a set of tools developed by UN Women with inputs from Rohingya women to strengthen Rohingya women’s leadership and decision-making skills at the individual, household and community levels. Over 100 participants attended the TOT from over 25 different local CSOs, NGOs, INGOs, and UN agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Circle (Bangla & English), Tailored Training for SMSD & WASH in sectors, MSNA Gender orientation, Mentoring scheme, Gender mainstreaming session with NGO Forum, Learning circle- Women as first responder, Learning circle-expression of Racism, Online session on GAM for Child Protection and CWC, Gender induction training for new staffs, Gender Induction for Action Aid and BRAC, Gender Leadership /Budget Training, Gender induction for WASH Sector etc. In total 994 (535 men, 459 female) stakeholders participated in those trainings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learned Workshop, Learning circle on Education (Mixed language), Gender Mainstreaming Training for ACF, Gender Mainstreaming Training for FAO, Gender Mainstreaming training for FSS sector 1st Batch/Education/Nutrition sectors, Gender and PHS Training for UN Women, Orientation of Disability for UN Women, Training to EKOTA, Gender Orientation for CP SS, Gender Mainstreaming in WASH, Learning event on Women's participation in Community election, Learning Circle on Feminist voice etc. In total 904 (Male 477, female 427) stakeholders received the trainings.
Knowledge Product		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid Gender Analysis was developed by the Gender Hub, in collaboration with UN Women, Oxfam and CARE. This was based on secondary data review and was published in May 2020, providing overall and sector specific recommendations on how to ensure gender considerations are mainstreamed in the COVID-19 response. In the 2nd quarter the Gender Hub led the completion of a primary data Rapid Gender Analysis that was conducted in partnership with UN Women, CARE, Oxfam, and ACAPS-NPM. Following the publication of the Rapid Gender Analysis, the Gender Hub published an Advocacy Brief of the RGA, along with 6 Sector Briefs and a summary translation in Bangla. These documents were also printed for further hardcopy distribution. The Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) was published online and the final presentations of the Rapid Gender Analysis were completed: 7 Sector Presentations (Food Security, Protection, Child-Protection Sub-sector, Health, WASH, CWC, and Education) NGO platform. 	

UN Women Reported Activities

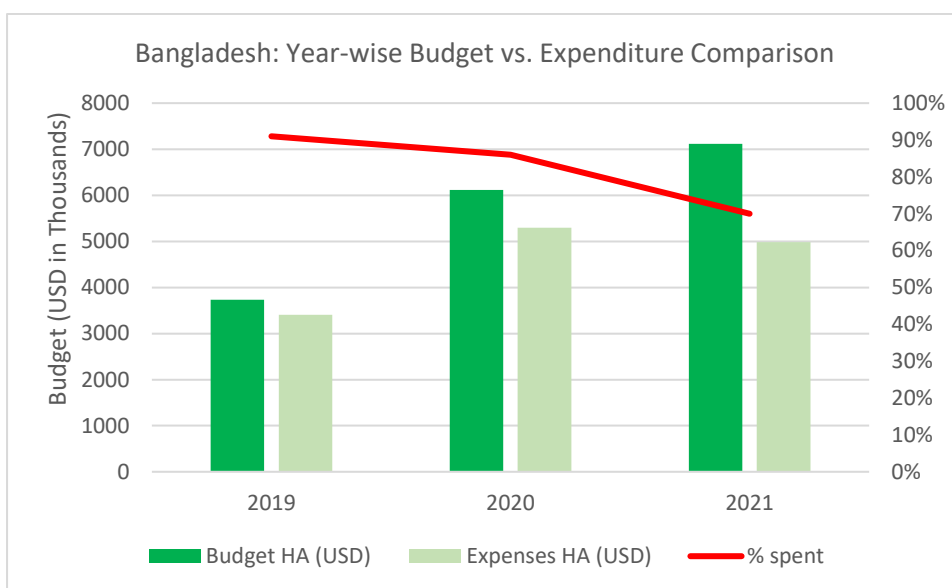
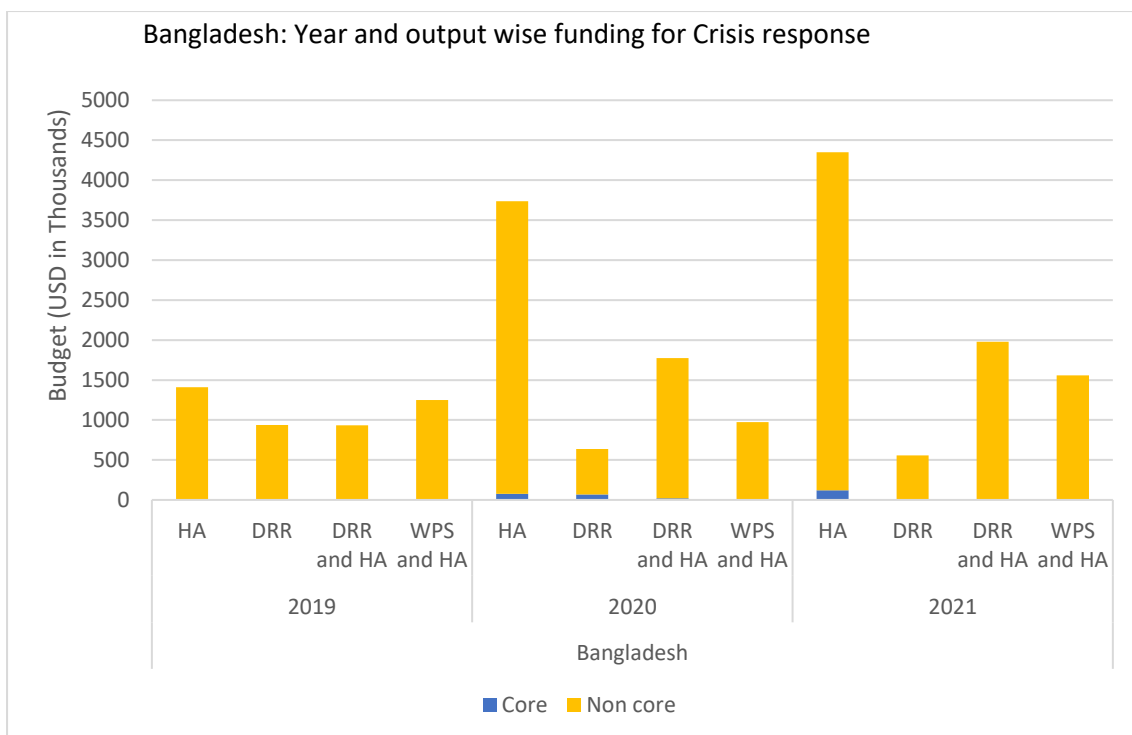
Year	2019	2020	2021
Advocacy / raising awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In total, 261 awareness-raising activities to promote social cohesion were held for 2,800 host community women and 253 sessions for 2,344 Rohingya women. An iftar (a cultural and religious event) brought together 42 Rohingya and 10 host community women in a manner which enabled constructive engagement with each other and increased their awareness on pertinent social matters. Discussions covered women's empowerment, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) issues, self-management, gender-based violence (GBV), protection, child marriage, women's participation in the public sphere, and leadership topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To strengthen the protection and resilience of women and girls in Rohingya refugee camps and host communities, Over 108,851 (28,725 men, 31,190 women, 25,068 girls, 22,038 boys and 523 persons with disabilities) Rohingya refugee community members were reached through community awareness, engagement and mobilization sessions (door-to-door visits and FGDs in women, men and adolescent groups) conducted by 46 Rohingya refugee women and men community leaders, working as UN Women volunteers and gender equality champions. Another 36,157 community members from camps and host community (out of which approximately 1824 are from host community) were reached through UN Women's partners on awareness raising on COVID-19 prevention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the Women's Market in Camp 5, UN Women, in collaboration with the World Food Program (WFP), United Nations Food and Agriculture Program (FAO) and partner organization BRAC, organized a fair and a dialogue session to uphold women's rights and fully leverage the potential of women's leadership in pandemic preparedness and responses.
Capacity Building / training			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Women, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Police, organized three trainings from January to March 2021 on gender-responsive policing for the Bangladesh Armed Police Battalion (APBN) in Cox's Bazar who manages the security in the Rohingya refugee camps. A total of 51 police officers have received training and will be deployed in the Rohingya camps.
Multi purpose women's centres (leadership, economic empowerment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2267 women and girls benefited from psychosocial support including counselling basic health consultations, and referrals for Gender Based Violence (GBV) reaching 2172 recipients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 691 women and adolescent girls (223 (118 adolescents and 105 women) from the Rohingya community and 468 beneficiaries (58 adolescents and 410 women) from the Host community) were enrolled in second-chance education activities based on needs assessment. A total of 33,944 Rohingya women and girls (including 20 LGBTI and 169 pregnant women) benefitted from sexual reproductive health and rights knowledge and services provided in 10 Rohingya refugee camps. 50 women leaders as members of the UN Women supported Rohingya women leaders umbrella network and who have previously been trained on UN Women women's leadership module 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In response to the devastating fire outbreak, UN Women is working jointly with other humanitarian actors. They are supporting distribution of food and non-food items (NFI), prioritizing women, adolescent girls, children and older persons in receiving distribution

		are now working as self-organized, self-mobilized grassroots and CBO women leaders as well as UN Women volunteers supporting Gender Field Officers seconded to Camps-in-Charge by regularly engaging in dialogue sessions with camp level actors and decision makers and leading community engagement and mobilization activities across camps to address gender issues and make sure women's voices are heard.	
Host community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 450 host community women received livelihood skills training over a duration of about 5 months. Due to early project closure, there was not adequate time available to reach the planned target. Hence, in the end, only 450 host community women received the training, while 457 received seed funds to undertake livelihood activities within a short period of time. 	

*UN Women in brief January–March 2021, Cox's Bazar update

Sub Annex 3 Portfolio Review

Year	CO Budget (USD) (DRF+OEEF)	Budget- HA (USD)	HA Budget as % of CO Budget
2019	9,381,848	4,529,891	48%
2020	11,755,234	7,123,948	60%
2021	12,241,458	8,443,217	68%



Bangladesh

Activity	Budget (%)
Livelihoods	45%
Capacity Building of HA Actors	28%
Technical assistance	21%
Advocacy	4%
SGBV prevention & response	2%
Coordination	0.01%

Potential menu of services:

Normative	Coordination	Operational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support to gender mainstreaming of IASC Policy and Accountability Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordination of GIHA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Management of the Gender Hub, including gender mainstreaming of joint response plans, capacity building of humanitarian stakeholders including training, technical assistance and mentoring, keeping the roster of gender experts, crisis context research and gender responsive needs assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support to gender mainstreaming of humanitarian actors policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participation in sector groups and sub-groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Empowering women and vulnerable groups for leadership and engagement in the communities affected by crisis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support to crisis prevention, management and response policies development at national and subnational level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordination with the communities affected by crisis, national counterparts, civil society organisations ○ Capacity needs assessments of various humanitarian actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic empowerment of women affected by crises ○ Psycho-social empowerment of women (MPWCs) ○ Support to prevention and protection from violence (information sharing, advocacy campaigns, case referrals)

[Annex 14: Case Study – Myanmar](#)

Case study: Myanmar

Table of contents:

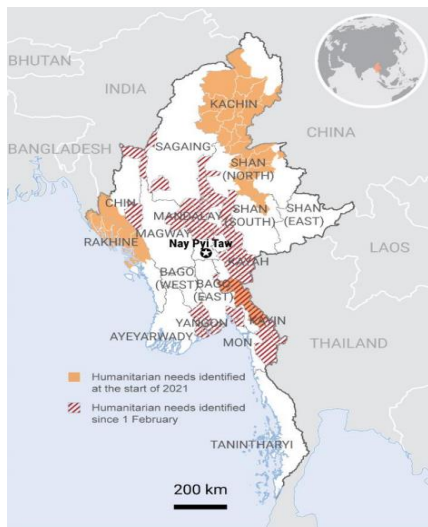
1. Acronyms
2. Introduction
3. Contextual background
4. UN inter-agency crisis response setting and UN Women in Myanmar
5. Findings
6. Observations/lessons learned and way forward
7. Sub annex

Acronyms

CRPH
AWP
CDM
CEDAW

Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw
Annual Work Plan
Civil Disobedience Movement
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CERP	COVID-19 Economic Response Plan
CO	Country Office
CP	Child Protection
CPG	Co-operation Partners' Group
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEM	Gender Equality Marker
GIHA	Gender in Humanitarian Action
GTG	Gender Theme Group
HCT	Humanitarian Country team
HRTG	Human Rights Theme Group
HQ	Head Quarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordination Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ISCG	Inter Sector Coordination Group
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
REDR	International NGO
RO	Regional Office
SBA	Sexual Based Violence
SERF	Socio-Economic Resilience Framework
SERRP	Socio-Economic Resilience Response Plan
SN	Strategic Note
TWG	Thematic Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCG	United Nations Communication Group
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNGTG	United Nations Gender Theme Group
UNHCT	United Nations Humanitarian Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VAW	Violence Against Women
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women Peace and Security



Map of Myanmar/Source: OCHA 16/07/2021

Introduction

This case study looks at UN Women’s actions in Myanmar in enhancing gender equality and empowerment of women and girls during 2020 and 2021. The Myanmar case study is about UN Women’s response to the ongoing compounded crises in the country caused by increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), COVID-19 consequences and the February 2021 military coup and its consequences. Those include a protection and socio-economic crisis requiring a gendered approach to human rights and humanitarian assistance.

The case study is an integral part of a broader initiative focusing on the Evaluation of the UN Women’s Crisis Response in Asia and The Pacific. This initiative is led by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service. The overall evaluation focuses on UN Women’s actions at regional and country level, and the corporate governance, policies, procedures and systems in place to support UN Women’s crisis response. It is expected to assist UN Women in strengthening crisis response and preparedness that meets the needs of the women, girls and other highly vulnerable groups in an effective, sustainable and efficient way. The case study is a method for in-depth learning about how UN Women responded to **compounded crises** in Myanmar. The case study also focused on UN Women efforts in United Nations Country Team (UNCT) coordination mechanisms (member of UNCT, Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), UN Communications group (UNCG), Covid-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP), UN Gender Theme Group (UNGTG), Co-operation Partners’ Group (CPG), co-chair of Human Rights Theme Group (HRTG), co-lead of GIHA workstream. UNGTG and GIHA were established to strengthen capacity, relevance and accountability of development, peace building and humanitarian actors for gender equality and women’s empowerment in the compounded crises response. UN Women has been mainstreaming gender into UN corporate frameworks in Myanmar (Socio Economic Recovery and Response Plan, Humanitarian Needs Overview of the HC, Human rights framework, the COVID-19 public health response).

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and security situation in Myanmar, participatory methods were not fully employed, and travel restrictions limited the possibility of in-person data collection. Therefore, the evaluation team relied on the accuracy and completeness of the provided documents by the UN Women Country Office and the interviews with limited number of other UN counterparts and a CSO. Data collection method included extensive desk review, meta-analysis of documents pertinent for compounded crises and activities in Myanmar. Interviews involved 10 key informants (5 female, 5 male), including UN Women personnel, UN partner agencies, NGOs, Civil society and Gender in Humanitarian Action workstream (GIHA). The full list of the key interview informants is found in Sub Annex 1. The information was triangulated to the extent possible against documents and different stakeholder types consulted. Secondary sources of information included the Country Office annual reports, the “Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on gender equality and women’s empowerment in

Humanitarian Action” in 2020²⁵, the “Gender Profile for Humanitarian Action and Across the Humanitarian-Peace-Development Nexus”²⁶ endorsed by ICCG as of 24 January 2019 and the “Gender Profile for Humanitarian Action: Rakhine, Kachin, Northern Shan and Kayin states, Myanmar”²⁷, issued in June 2021.

Contextual background

Myanmar has a population of about 54 million people. Most of the population is Buddhist (80 percent), and only 4 percent of the population are Muslim. The Rohingya people of Myanmar are among those who are Muslim.²⁸ The Rohingya are effectively stateless due to the 1982 citizenship legislation in Myanmar that defined the Rohingya as illegal immigrants who arrived during the British colonial era from South Asia. The Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces, hereinafter MAF) staged a coup on 1 February 2021. Insecurity and armed clashes continue to be reported in Myanmar across much of the country since the military coup. The military promised that new elections would be held one year after what they labelled “fraudulent elections” held in November 2020. This coup transferred all legislative, executive, and judicial powers of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Commander in Chief of the Defense Services.²⁹ At the same time, the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) was established as a parliament, primarily by democratically elected members of the 2020 general elections. CRPH recognized itself as the only legitimate government (CRPH 20/02/2021). By mid-April, the National Unity Government was established (CRPH 16/04/2021).

Myanmar’s political turmoil and waves of COVID-19 cases severely impacted the economy that had already been weakened by the pandemic in 2020. According to the World Bank³⁰, the economy was expected to contract around 18 percent in Myanmar’s 2021 Fiscal Year (Oct 2020-Sep 2021), with damaging implications for lives, livelihoods, poverty, and future growth. It is estimated it would mean that the country’s economy was around 30 percent smaller than it would have been in the absence of COVID-19 and the military takeover of February 2021. According to the ILO Brief issued in July 2021³¹, in the second quarter 2021, an estimated 18.5 million women and men were employed, which is 1.2 million (6 per cent) less than in the fourth quarter 2020. During the same period, 580,000 women are estimated to have lost employment, with job losses of more than 7 per cent, compared to less than 6 per cent for men. Relative to the fourth quarter 2019, 3.2 million or 15 per cent of all workers are no longer employed, following the onset of the pandemic and subsequent military control of the country. The share of Myanmar’s population living in poverty is likely to more than double by the beginning of 2022, compared to 2019 levels. Economic activity has been hit by reduced mobility and incomes, protests, and labor shortages, as well as the ongoing disruption of critical business services, including logistics and telecommunications, and public services such as health and education. Despite bank branch re-openings and several interventions from the Central Bank of Myanmar, physical currency continues to be in short supply and access to banking and payment services remains limited. As of mid-July 2021, the Myanmar currency depreciated by around 23 percent against the US dollar since late January, which combined with trade disruptions has led to rapid price increases for some imported products, including fuel. Farmers have been affected by lower wholesale prices for some crops, higher input prices, and limited access to credit.

Since the military coup there has been systematic violence against opposition, civil society organizations (CSOs), human rights defenders and the Civil Disobedience Movement, as well as the armed conflicts between Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations and the newly established people’s defense force have been increasing. Volatile situation and people displacements resulted in a notable rise in humanitarian needs, as well as population movement requiring humanitarian assistance. According to UNOCHA (OCHA Humanitarian Snapshot October 2021) there are estimated 370,000 people remaining internally displaced due to conflict before 2021, 219,000 people newly internally displaced by insecurity since February 2021 military coup and 470,000 non-displaced stateless people in Rakhine, (OCHA 2021) Peri-urban areas, such as Hlaing Tharyar township in Yangon and Myingyan township in Mandalay, are still under martial law following mass crackdown of protestors

25 <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/inter-agency-humanitarian-evaluation-gender-equality-and-empowerment-women-and-girls-0>

26 <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/02/gender-profile-for-humanitarian-action>

27 <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/gender-profile-humanitarian-action-rakhine-kachin-northern-shan-and-kayin-states>

28 PEW Research Centre, Burma, 2010

29 Myanmar Times 02/02/2021, Reuters 01/02/2021 and 16/02/2021

30 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/07/23/myanmar-economy-expected-to-contract-by-18-percent-in-fy2021-report>

31 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-yangon/documents/publication/wcms_814681.pdf

in March 2021. In Shan, Kachin, Kayin states and the Bago the conflict has been ongoing for years³². In these areas, free movement is constrained – worsened by the violent crackdown by the Tatmadaw – and access to basic services, livelihood activities, and food has been threatened. Humanitarian and human rights protection operations have had to adapt their response quickly to establish support networks in new locations.

In areas under martial law, food shortages have been reported as a result of limited-service provision, disruptions in supply chains, market closures, and loss of livelihood opportunities. Access constraints persist in many areas as a result of the crackdowns with aid organizations and CSOs providing operational support including gender-based violence protection and services supporting women. Increasing risks in locations requiring humanitarian and protection assistance cause a need for shifting locations where aid is provided. Natural hazards, such as floods, landslides have further exacerbated the poverty and overall vulnerability of population. Additionally, challenges to already strained or disrupted health services are being experienced particularly with the surge in COVID-19 cases mid-year 2021. Since the onset of the pandemic, more than 460,000 COVID-19 cases and almost 18,000 deaths have been reported in Myanmar, with 318,249 cases and 14,422 deaths occurring since May 1st, 2021. At present, only 6.8 per cent of the population has received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine, while an additional 13.1 per cent has received at least one dose. Until broad coverage of COVID-19 vaccination is achieved, the situation is unlikely to improve.³³

The crises in Kachin, Northern Shan and Rakhine States have different impacts on women, girls, boys and men among crisis-affected populations based on gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, sexual orientation and gender identity, and other diversities. The crises disproportionately affect women and girls, as well as the most vulnerable and marginalized population groups, by perpetuating and exacerbating pre-existing, persistent gender and social inequalities, gender-based violence, and discrimination. These gendered barriers lead to their lower ability and opportunity to survive and recover from crises as well as lower resilience against and influence in preventing future shocks and conflict escalation. The most vulnerable and marginalized groups include older persons, persons with disabilities, children (especially unaccompanied or separated), adolescents, female-headed households, single women, pregnant and lactating women, single parents, ethnic/religious minorities, persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. Women and girls, and the most vulnerable and marginalized, are thus the first to experience additional access barriers to scarce and overstretched humanitarian relief services, as well as restricted humanitarian access. Notably, pre-existing gender norms of roles also shape the differential impact of the crises on men and boys, who have been exposed to human rights violations due to performing their gender roles as heads of households and breadwinners (forced recruitment, arbitrary arrests, landmines etc.).

In such a context, the UNCT activities in Myanmar are guided by the common guidelines for managing the UN's work in Myanmar (developed by the UNCT and the Permanent Monitoring Group on Myanmar in the UN Headquarters). The guidelines, (which are reviewed and updated as the situation evolves) specify that under the current context the UN will suspend all policy work, technical assistance, capacity building and institutional strengthening with the de facto authorities and associated government body and focus instead on its life-saving humanitarian and COVID-19 health response mandates as well as on programming that benefits directly the population of Myanmar and does not require working through the de facto authorities. The UNCT guidelines define when and how the UN engages with the de facto authorities: it comprises of humanitarian action but also development work under certain conditions, such as COVID-19 related Socio-Economic Resilience and Response Plan (SERRP) includes both humanitarian and development perspectives. Space for work is very limited for UN and UN Women, with limited access to the field and scrutinized by the authorities. Therefore, the UN humanitarian response largely relies on CSOs present in the field.

1. UN inter-agency crisis response setting and UN Women in Myanmar

A primary responsibility for the coordination of the United Nations activities in the country is with the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) as a designated representative of the UN Secretary

32 OCHA 25/3/2021

33 Source: WHO

General to Myanmar. This is in view of long-term crises caused by conflicts, displacements, natural disasters extending over years and worsened by the recent coup.

The Myanmar HCT, is a key coordination structure that is composed of organizations that undertake humanitarian action to alleviate suffering of the compounded ongoing crisis in Myanmar and that commit to participate in coordination arrangements. Humanitarian action, including assistance and protection activities is undertaken in responding to all kinds of crisis (civil strife, consequences of military actions, natural hazards, population movements etc.). Terms of reference of the Myanmar HCT, issued in October 2013 defines this mechanism as “the primary international humanitarian decision- and policy-making body in Myanmar, seeking to optimize the collective efforts of the UN, other international organizations, nongovernmental organizations and the Red Cross Movement to strengthen the overall humanitarian response by maximizing its coherence with government arrangements to the extent possible for the provision of assistance to and protection of populations affected by emergencies”.³⁴ The role of the HCT is to provide guidance on major strategic issues related to humanitarian action in country, including by developing a strategic vision, setting strategic objectives and priorities and developing a comprehensive strategic response plan. The HCT decides on major policy issues related to international humanitarian action in the country and ensures that humanitarian principles, international human rights and international humanitarian law, the Principles of Partnership are respected.³⁵

UN OCHA office in Myanmar serves as the secretariat of HCT. The HCT oversees the work of the Inter-Sector/Cluster Meeting. When created in 2013 the membership of the HCT was as shown in Figure 1:

Table 1: Members of the UNHCT in Myanmar:

United Nations	NGOs	NGOs alternates	Observers
IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, WFP, FAO,	ACF, DRC, LWF, NRC, MSI, Save the Children, Oxfam, Trocaire, World Vision, International, Mercy Corps, Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS), Joint Strategy Team (JST)	IRC, IFRC, Malteser, Medical Emergency Relief International (MERLIN), CDN	Humanitarian Advocacy and Communications Group (HACG), IFRC, ICRC, MSF, OHCHR, UN Habitat, UN DSS, Japan, SDC, UKFDCO
Support: RCO	Support: INGO		
Secretariat: OCHA			

Source: List of participants of the UNHCT meeting, 25 June 2021

UN Women has been present in Myanmar as a project office since 2013 with oversight by the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. However, the office transitioned into a fully-fledged Country Office in 2019, repositioning and better aligning its resources to be able to support Myanmar in its commitment to ensuring gender equality and women’s empowerment. UN Women’s team has gradually expanded, as was the office’s operational capacity, to ensure greater efficiency in delivering results in line with its mandates and corporate responsibilities. Its strategic note 2019-2021 included three impact areas: 1) women in leadership and political participation, with technical assistance to the Government in gender responsive policy development, monitoring and reporting, translation of international gender equality commitments into national legislation, in particular those related to ending violence against women, development of support services to gender-based violence survivors, and capacity development of CSOs to advocate for and monitor policies; 2) women’s economic empowerment, providing women with entrepreneurial and business development skills building, supporting them to access

³⁴ UNHCT TOR, 2013

³⁵ The Principles of Partnership include: equality, transparency, a result-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity

finances, developing partnerships and inclusion in value chains; and 3) women, peace and security, focused on gender responsive policy development in security sector, gender mainstreaming in UN humanitarian response and capacity development of CSOs in the field to provide humanitarian, protection support and peacebuilding activities. The Strategic Note had been implemented as such all until the coup in 2021, when the actions by all UN agencies were reduced to those life-saving. UN Women’s engagement with networks of CSOs through GBV and women, peace and security actions allowed for its actions to continue in the field and help those most affected in a deteriorated context.

With a developed women, peace and security portfolio, UN Women’s contribution to gender mainstreaming in the HCT was well acknowledged. UN Women Myanmar collaborates closely with relevant stakeholders including UN agencies, international and local NGOs, as well as other humanitarian and development partners in promoting gender related aspects. There are other country-wide coordination structures established at capital level – Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and GIHA (Gender in Humanitarian Action) that provide UN Women with possibility to mainstream gender aspects into sectoral activities. Finally, UN Women is a member of GBV Technical Working Groups that exist at state and national level and play an important role in GBV prevention and protection. UN Women is a member at state and national level.

GIHA was established as a workstream under the premise that the effective, equitable and participatory humanitarian action (including assistance and protection) cannot be achieved without understanding and responding to the specific needs, priorities and capacities of diverse women, girls, men and boys in different age groups and context. GIHA workstream is co-led by UNFPA and UN Women.

The number of personnel of the Country Office increased to 31 in 2021 from 22 in 2019. The budget for humanitarian and disaster risk reduction activities in Myanmar was USD 7.05 million, constituting close to 39% of the overall Country Office budget for the period 2019-2021 (Table 1). UN Women financial resources dedicated to humanitarian and disaster risk reduction activities were heavily dependent on non-core resources with 97.6% of the total constituting non-core budget (table 2). UN Women actions take place across humanitarian/development/WPS nexus. The portfolio review categorized actions of the HA area in Myanmar to include: technical assistance, capacity building and trainings, economic empowerment/livelihoods, advocacy, monitoring and coordination.

Table 2: HA a part of CO Budget

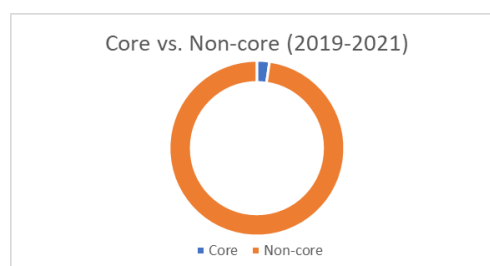
Year	CO Budget (USD) (DRF+OEEF)	Budget- HA (USD)	HA Budget as % of CO Budget
2019	5,159,665	2,450,742	47%
2020	6,250,585	1,903,037	30%
2021	6,739,890	2,697,557	40%
Total	18,150,140	7,051,336	39%

Source: RMS, Annual report SN-AWP 2019,2020, 2021, 6th October, 2021.

Table 2: Core vs Non-core

	Core	Non-core
2019	33,900	2,416,842
2020	81,148	1,821,889
2021	48,574	2,648,983
Total	163,622	6,887,714

Source: RMS, Annual report 2019,2020, 2021, 4th, October, 2021.



1. Findings

3.1 Relevance/Appropriateness: Is UN Women's response to crisis relevant and appropriate in the context of the international standards, needs and priorities of the affected populations, particularly those left furthest behind (women with disabilities, LGBTIQ+)?

Finding 1: UN Women's work in Myanmar is aligned with international standards and the UN Women Strategic Plan, consistently integrating a LNOB perspective.

Desk review and interviews confirmed that UN Women crisis response activities and interventions as outlined in the Strategic Note for Myanmar 2020 and 2021 are relevant and well aligned with the priorities and recommendations contained in the key international conventions and declarations. These include, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Agenda 2030, SDGs, Sendai Framework, the World Humanitarian Summit, New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Global Compact on Refugees, Grand Bargain, Global Compact on WPS and Humanitarian Action and IASC policy on GEWE in Humanitarian Action and Universal Periodic Review. The LNOB principle is consistently integrated in the UN Women strategy in Myanmar and is guiding program implementation. Although the evaluation didn't reach the end beneficiaries, both UN Women and external sources of information recognized UN Women has brought the needs of diverse groups (e.g. conflict affected women, survivors of violence, LGBTIQ+ persons and others) to the response planning.

UN Women Myanmar women, peace and security and humanitarian work aligns well with the priority areas stipulated by the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and its Outcome 5: Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action. Beyond the Outcome 5, the current Country Office Strategic Note aligns with other outcomes of the Strategic Plan (2, 3, and 4) related to women political participation, women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women.

Finding 2: The Country Office efforts to listen to, analyze and raise awareness about the needs and priorities of women and girls in Myanmar were identified by stakeholders consulted as a means for enhancing the relevance of overall response efforts.

In general, gender equality considerations in all sectors are widely recognized as crucial for achieving adequate response in crisis situations. In Myanmar, there are enormous obstacles which affect progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment, e.g. in Myanmar distinct gender roles and power dynamics, particularly between different ethnic groups, increase women and girls' vulnerability during crisis responses and involvement in crisis mitigation actions. The CO works across UN corporate frameworks (Humanitarian Country Team / Humanitarian Needs Overview, Socio Economic Resilience and Response Plan, Human Rights protection framework and humanitarian response plans. After the onset of COVID-19 and more recently the political crisis, UN Women activities have shifted to crisis response activities, including humanitarian assistance and protection in line with the humanitarian principles and human rights, but also peacebuilding and livelihoods support at the community level. After the MAF took power, the Country Office cooperation with government entities has been considerably reduced and refocused on cooperation with NGOs and CSOs. In this new context the CO human rights protection work and institutional capacity building of WRO (Women Regional Organization) and WLO (Women Local Organization) has also gained in importance. The CO identified new areas of work based on the understanding that whatever direction this country takes UN Women's work will remain relevant and broad. However, UN Women partners consulted noted that UN Women was a relatively small player in humanitarian action when it comes to operational activities. On the other hand, the Country Office's important role in mainstreaming gender considerations into humanitarian response plans and voicing the needs of women and girls in the field through partner NGOs was fully recognized.

Based on the desk review and consultations with stakeholders, there is evidence that the Country Office took concrete steps to ensure that its work was informed by the voices of women and girls they aimed to serve and that the Country Office proactively shared this information with UN and HCT members.

Stakeholders noted that the gender profile in humanitarian/crisis context for each conflict affected region, which was produced on a yearly basis since 2018 in cooperation with UNFPA and GIHA workstream members, boosted the awareness of the major gender equality and empowerment of women and girls needs in the areas most affected by the compounded crisis. Monthly sessions of the groups of friends of GEWE/WPS under the

Development Partners Group were also initiated a few months after the coup took power focusing on women's needs during the compounded crisis, with good participation of the members of the UNCT and several international NGOs. Gender Alert Briefs were published to highlight effects of crisis on women, women's rights violations, the role of women in the civil disobedience movement and common gender equality and empowerment of women issues. In view of the ongoing crisis and sensitivity of information Gender Alert Briefs were disseminated internally to the UN and humanitarian NGO stakeholders. Those stakeholders who had access to this document found it useful and relevant for awareness raising on the situation, however no examples were provided on how this information was further used.

3.2 Coherence/Coordination: To what extent are crisis response efforts more gender responsive due to UN Women coordination efforts?

Finding 3: The Country Office used its coordination mandate for advocacy and capacity building activities aimed at enhancing its partners' efforts in integrating gender in crisis response activities with a special attention to ensuring that women and girls affected by crisis lead, participate and benefit from relief, response, peace and development efforts in Myanmar. This approach helped to enhance the gender responsiveness of the Annual Humanitarian Response Plans and COVID-19 related Joint UN Socio Economic Response and Recovery Framework.

During 2020 and 2021, the UNCT and UNHCT relied on the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 in 2020 and Socio-Economic Resilience and Recovery Framework and the UN Humanitarian Response Plan 2021. The Country Office co-leads several coordination mechanisms, which facilitated its efforts towards more gender responsive UN response in Myanmar. Prior to the coup, in 2020, the Country Office intensively coordinated with the Government and its institutional gender mechanisms and coordinated with them on gender mainstreaming in the international development assistance to Myanmar. UN Women was also co-chairing the Development Partners Coordination Group with the Representative of the Government of Canada, which post military takeover continued to meet and exchange updates on the situation and potential future responses. The Country Office was also elected by CSO and INGOs as co-chair of the government Technical Working Group on WPS and started convening an informal group of friends of WPS, which brought together senior staff members from the Embassies of Australia, Canada, the EU, Finland, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK as well as representatives from the two main pooled funding mechanisms on peace and security.

The Country office co-chairs the Gender Theme Group (with UNFPA), co-chairs the UN Human Rights Theme Group (with OHCHR as chair) and co-chairs the working group on Prevention of sexual exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) with UNFPA and UNICEF. UN Women is also a member of UNCT Communication group and contributes to joint UN communications on gender equality and human rights in humanitarian response (more under effectiveness). Stakeholders noted that they perceived the appointment of UN Women as co-chair of the Human Rights Theme Group, a highly strategic position considering the Myanmar context, an attestation of its strong positioning within the UNCT. UN Women was part of the UN SERF core group and co-chaired the pillar groups of the SERF 2021 and SERRP in 2021

Also, during 2020-2021 UN Women was an active actor in the GBV sub-sector which is led by UNFPA. In a context of limited mobility and access to face-to-face services due to COVID-19 and the military coup, GBV partners continued investing in remote service provision. Particular attention was paid to ensure inclusiveness and consider special needs and vulnerabilities of persons with disabilities, older persons, adolescents, female-headed households, ethnic minorities and persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities. Regular gender responsive safety audits/assessments were conducted. These assessments were complemented by awareness raising sessions about risks mitigation and available services. In 2021, gender-based violence sub-sector reported targeting 260,000 persons in need. The main challenge identified was some confusion between UN Women and UNFPA about who is doing what in GBV, but this has reportedly been resolved by enhanced dialogue.

While there is no dedicated Gender in Humanitarian Action (GIHA) working group in Myanmar, there is a “GIHA workstream” co-chaired by UN Women and UNFPA. Stakeholders consulted noted that gender aspects were also well addressed by the protection sector, which was coordinated by UNHCR. As the GIHA workstream co-leads, the Country Office and UNFPA supported the HCT and the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group on integrating gender into cluster/sector-level programming. HCT endorsed Gender Mainstreaming Checklists for humanitarian and development practitioners. The Country Office reported contributing to engendering the Myanmar humanitarian needs overview (HNO) and the humanitarian response plan and led with OCHA and UNFPA the development of the latest Gender in Humanitarian Action Profile, which was endorsed by the HCT in March 2021.

As reported by the Country Office, efforts were focused on providing technical support to engendering the Myanmar activities funded from the Socio-Economic Response Framework (SERF) in 2020 and the Socio-Economic Resilience and Response Framework in 2021 and related processes as a member of the UNCT core group on the SERF. The Country Office advocated to ensure that needs assessments and project formulation activities applied the gender marker. The Country Office reported that thanks to these efforts gender has been mainstreamed into the design and implementation of the UN Socio-Economic Response Plan 2020 and the UN Socio-Economic Resilience Response Plan-SERRP. The SERRP includes programming aimed at supporting transformative change by addressing structural gender inequality, including improving access to care services; gendered macro-economics, preventing and responding to gender-based violence; and improving participation of women and girls in decision-making.

While the evaluation team confirmed that gender was mainstreamed in the SERF and its action plan, some of the UN partners consulted expect the Country Office to support partners in implementation and monitoring and reporting. One step in that direction was the learning and analysis session on gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation for the GTG and the UN Monitoring and Evaluation Group organized jointly with the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. The session aimed to support the GTG in developing an M&E framework for the UN SERF. This indicates space for ensuring gender equality and women’s rights are integrated in UN agencies workstreams and reporting.

The co reported that its advocacy for the application of the Gender Equality Marker (GEM) in the UNCT resulted in all proposals submitted by the UNRCO to the global COVID-19 MPTF with a GEM score of 2 or 3 (which is very high). The GEM was successfully used as a means for enhancing gender mainstreaming in the UN system efforts, building in accountability of UNCT’s actions on GEWE, and positioning GEWE in UN’s COVID-19 response.

Coordination efforts also contributed to resource mobilization for the Country Office through UN joint programming. A total of 10 Joint Project proposals were developed in 2020 involving UNESCO, UNODC, FAO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNCDF, ILO and IOM. The CO has partnered with UNFPA, OCHA and RCO to advocate for a special allocation of CERF funding to Myanmar under a OCHA, UN Women and UNFPA global initiative and has developed with WFP a joint project proposal to support comprehensive gender protection programming for local resource mobilization. The Country Office is currently engaged in 4 joint projects: The Project for Humanitarian and Development Assistance in Rakhine and Kachin (phase 3-2020-21) with UNDP, UNHCR, and RCO; The Women’s Empowerment and Resilient Inclusive Communities in Rakhine project with UNDP; The Safe and Fair Project (2018-2021) with ILO; The Accelerating COVID-19 Socio-Economic Recovery in Myanmar through Resilient and Gender Transformative Enterprises with UNDP and UNCDF, the Urban Resilience Programme (with UNDP and UN Habitat) in design phase. Moreover, the joint UNFPA/UN Women project funded by CERF is being implemented to support women-led organizations that prevent and respond to gender-based violence in humanitarian settings. UNFPA/UN Women have been asked to channel at least 30 per cent of the funding to organizations run by women that prevent violence against women and girls and help victims and survivors with access to medical care, family planning, legal advice, safe spaces, mental health services and counselling.

Overall, stakeholders consulted indicated that the Country Office was effectively using its lead in these coordination mechanisms to raise awareness and increase engagement of the members of these mechanisms in activities focusing on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, special needs of marginalized groups of populations and most vulnerable groups affected by the crisis. The technical expertise of the Country Office in mainstreaming gender in crisis response was acknowledged.

BOX. 1. UN Women and UNFPA worked closely as the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GIHA) workstream in Myanmar. The workstream reported the following activities in 2020:

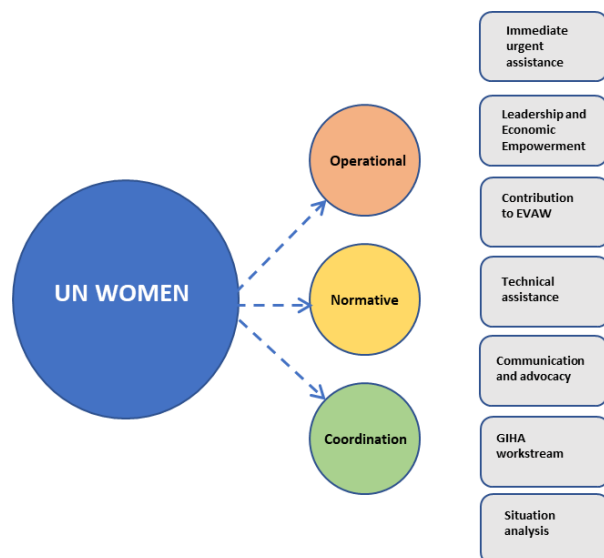
- Together with OCHA led the GIHA Profile creation, a yearly gender assessment covering Kachin, Northern Shan and Rakhine areas. The latest document was endorsed by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT);
- Developed 11 Gender Mainstreaming Checklists endorsed by the HCT. The tools build on the IASC GIHA Handbook and incorporate sector-specific elements of the GIHA Profile. The localized checklists provide practical, sector and cluster specific guidance on strengthening gender mainstreaming efforts, ensuring that gender issues, gaps and needs are adequately addressed, and provide tips for gender-transformative outcomes in humanitarian programming;
- Ensured that the engendered aspect of the pandemic is integrated in the 2020 COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan Addendum and its revisions;
- Contextualized the IASC Gender Alert for COVID-19, with sector specific recommendations for gender integration;
- Participated in developing the UNCT Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 and ensured its operational plan actions were gender responsive;
- Upheld the engendered impact of COVID-19 during regular national health sector led meetings on COVID-19;
- Developed gender guidelines and a code of conduct for safe COVID-19 quarantine spaces for women and children with support from PSEA Network, ICCG and Migration Task Force. Both tools were used as reference documents by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in formulating volunteer worker guidelines for quarantine facilities. The Ministry of Health and Sports Central Epidemiological Unit approved the tools in late 2020.

3.3 Effectiveness: What does UN Women’s performance look like in crisis response situation?

Finding 4: The Country Office technical expertise, capacity building efforts and gender analysis was its key added value in crisis response efforts, yet the menu of services that the Country Office can provide in crisis situations could be clarified.

The Country Office reported that the scaling up of its presence and investment in Myanmar and its transition to a Country Office has strengthened UN Women positioning amongst partners and its effectiveness in the field. Stakeholders consulted acknowledged the Country Office’s technical expertise in gender mainstreaming in humanitarian response programming, women’s economic empowerment efforts and provision of data on the gender aspects of the crises and needs of women, girls and various vulnerable groups in the field. It should be considered that some of the support was provided as a response to COVID-19 crisis and was not possible to continue or it was significantly hindered by the military takeover in early 2021 due to limited operational space for UN agencies and the UN system’s decision to only engage with the de-facto authorities for humanitarian assistance and COVID 19 public health response. The information on the effects of these efforts after the military takeover is limited as the field work was done by the implementing partners and UN Women relied on their reporting.

Figure 1. Overview of UN Women efforts in Cox’s Bazar



Source: IES team developed

Overall, the stakeholders consulted are aware of some of the Country Offices services, usually those in which they have direct cooperation and engagement. However, further efforts are needed for a comprehensive

understanding of what menu of services UN Women can offer in a response to a crisis and what benefits and results can be achieved through that. Types of support included:

- **Normative support to the Government**

After the outbreak of COVID-19 the Government requested the Country Office support to engendering the national COVID-19 socio-economic policy response (MERRP) and the 2020 Myanmar Development Assistance Policy. The Country Office reported that it raised awareness of decision-makers and the public on the gender dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic, public health related restrictions and provided advisory support to the Government on including a gender perspective in its COVID-19 response and relief plans. UN Women facilitated for the Myanmar women's movement to issue a joint statement on the need to engender the CERP. The Myanmar Covid-19 Emergency Response plan was finalized at the end of 2020, not endorsed because of the coup and as reported by UN Women, had a stronger focus on gender than the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) passed in April 2020. The support also resulted in the approval of the guidelines and code of conduct for gender sensitive management of COVID-19 quarantine centers. This was a joint effort of the Country Office and UNFPA, also supported by PSEA Network, ICCG, and Migration Task Force. As reported by UN Women, in late 2020, the guidelines were used as reference documents by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in formulation of volunteer worker guidelines for quarantine facilities. Both tools were also approved by the Ministry of Health and Sports Central Epidemiological Unit. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, UN Women also supported the development of Women, Peace and Development Plans in Kayah, Kayin and Mon States (as an effort to support implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the National Strategy for Advancement of Position of Women 2020-2022), providing space for wide multi-stakeholder consultations on policy development, support to implementation after the plans were adopted and advocating for allocation of public funding for implementation. Although the progress was stopped by the political crisis, this demonstrated the ability of UN Women to provide normative support in slow developing and protracted types of crises. Nevertheless, as the local stakeholders were not involved in this evaluation, it was not possible to assess to what extent the Country Office was or would be effective in translating those documents into results for the end beneficiaries.

- **Situation analyses and rapid needs assessments**

Soon after the COVID-19 outbreak, the Country Office invested efforts on needs assessments and produced its own analyses (gender alerts and the CSO rapid assessment) as well as supported other UN agencies and development partners to engender their analysis and assessments on how the pandemic and the health protection measures affected women and girls. According to the Country Office and some of the partners, publications were a useful resource for programming and also to inform the Country Offices' efforts to engender UN and the Government's programs. Publications included: "Gender Alert for COVID-19 Outbreak Myanmar", "Gender Profile for Humanitarian Action: Rakhine, Kachin, Northern Shan and Kayin states, Myanmar", "Myanmar and COVID-19 impact on the Private Sector", "COVID-19 Pandemic Mekong Sub-Regional Report Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam"³⁶. Even after the coup, the Country Office published a series of gender analyses on the human rights situation. The information on how those alerts were used by recipients is limited, however some interviewed stakeholders reported that they might have shaped some general messages of the public communications. Cooperation with CSOs and women's groups provided reflection on the needs and situation in the field and was instrumental in ensuring the reports relevance.

- **Immediate urgent assistance**

Since the coup in 2021, UN Women provided its support directly and through implementing partners to women's rights organizations and women's local organizations and women's rights defenders to ensure their safety and enable continuing operations. The support also targeted women's rights organizations in providing humanitarian assistance related to COVID-19 response and prevention as well implementing gender equality and women's empowerment work. As reported by UN Women, since the beginning of 2021, hygiene and COVID-19 protection

36 https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2020/10/20200826-iw_unw-myanmar-report_final.pdf?la=en&vs=4925

kits were distributed to over 20,000 women and over 3,500 men in these two states. Women's hygiene and COVID-19 protection kits were distributed in 2020 as well after the COVID-19 outbreak, directly and through the partners together with health related awareness raising to the most vulnerable households and crisis-affected women in IDP camps and areas of Kachin and Rakhine States.

- **Supporting Leadership and Women's Economic Empowerment**

The Country Office contributed to the ability of many women to sustain small income-generating activities during the COVID-19 crisis in different states across the country, prioritizing vulnerable groups such as survivors of gender-based violence, displaced women in the camps and women headed households providing them with income generating activities. In 2020, the Country Office reported reaching 6,657 women in Rakhine State with leadership, skills training and resources for climate-resilient agriculture, agricultural entrepreneurship, weaving and handicrafts and business development to enhance access to income security, decent work and economic opportunities. It also supported an additional 200 women-heads of households in IDP camps in Kachin State by training them on livelihood activities such as making and selling masks and hand sanitizers, and on food production. It also provided 20 women from the camps in the Kayin State with sewing training and start-up materials. This activity was part of the Kayin State Women Peace and Development COVID-19 specific priorities. As reported by UN Women, in Rakhine State 100 beneficiaries were surveyed and they reported they had gained access to new markets, while 72% of them stated that they were able to sell the products they produced and 62% of the women reported an increase in income. The Country Office also showed quick adjustment to COVID-19 crisis by training women's groups in Rakhine and Kayin on mask production and reported that over 50 women have produced and sold over 80,000 masks by the end of the year managing to generate income for themselves and their families. Even in 2021, after the initial challenges and adjustment to the news post-coup situation, UN Women continued to support displaced women and migrant workers, with entrepreneurship training, cash-transfers for livelihoods and small businesses; training in handicrafts production, climate-smart agriculture.

- **Contributing to Prevention, Protection and Raising Voices Against Gender Based Violence**

Both UN Women and its partners interviewed in this evaluation were clear that UNFPA takes the lead on the work to prevent gender-based violence in Myanmar. While the Country Office does not have *ending violence against women* integrated as an outcome area in its Strategic Note, prior to the military takeover it had taken actions related to research, awareness and policy advocacy related to the safety of women migrant workers (prevention and protection from trafficking and other forms of GBV) together with ILO. With regards to GBV issues it collaborated closely with UNFPA. For example, it participated in strengthening the capacities of women's organizations together with UNFPA, worked on registration of migrant women victims of violence, mapped available protection services in several cities, as well as contributed to consultations around policy development related to GBV and trafficking in human beings. During COVID-19 crisis response the Country Office contributed to capacity development of frontline workers on GBV issues to improve case referral and dissemination of information on GBV to women at risk in the field, including the camps. The Country Office also co-led the trainings for the police forces to address GBV, jointly with UNFPA, UNICEF and UNODC. The Country Office connected livelihood support and economic empowerment with prevention as well as included GBV survivors as priority beneficiaries of such programs, which was noted by partners. For example, in Mon state, it implemented COVID-19 response and prevention activities that were directed to women headed households and GBV survivors.

- **Communications and advocacy on the rights of women and girls in crisis**

From the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the Country Office and its partners raised awareness and provided technical support to the Government stakeholders, public and through interventions in the IDP camps on the gender dimension of the pandemic, including the dedication of the National Women's Day in 2020 to raise awareness on the gender dimension of COVID-19 and gender responsive pandemic management policies.

The Country Office also took initiative to issue its own statement 10 days after the coup raising concerns about violence and violations of the rights of peaceful civil disobedience protesters in the country.³⁷ Statement was

³⁷ 11 February, 2021: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/2/un-women-calls-upon-all-stakeholders-to-listen-to-the-voices-of-myanmar-women>

issued as a reaction to the first victim of the coup, a 19-year-old young woman³⁸. The Country Office through its communication's specialist provided key messages to the Secretary General's Spokesperson's noon briefing on related to the coup. The first communication from the Executive Director of UN Women was issued almost 6 weeks after the military takeover.³⁹ Although other UN Agencies took action around the same time³⁹ the reaction from the higher levels of the organization was assessed as a bit late.³⁹ The Country Office continued to participate in joint UN communications, such as a statement with UNFPA on the impacts of the compounded political and health crisis on women and girls in Myanmar⁴⁰

Nevertheless, according to stakeholders consulted, UN Women is perceived to be very vocal on the rights of women and girls in Myanmar. The Country Office proactively developed updates which covered human rights, gender analysis of the impacts of the military takeover, and women's role in protests and conflicts in the field with an aim to help inform gender responsive programming and interventions.

Overview of enablers and barriers to UN Women's performance identified by stakeholders consulted

Enablers	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective engagement with the local NGOs, CSO and the women's groups and volunteers active directly in the field; • Intensive cooperation of the Country Office with humanitarian and development partners resulting in acknowledgement of its added value in gender mainstreaming across all sectors; • Upgraded status from project to Country Office; • Commitment and technical expertise of personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to conflict affected areas and movement restrictions imposed by the military; • Vast areas affected by crises, end beneficiaries dispersed countrywide; • Collapsing financial system in Myanmar and interruption in online communications; • Poor internet coverage and connection / Digital gap; • Staff turnover due to UN Volunteers on several key positions; • Difficulties to obtain visas to return to the country • Overall security in the country.

3.4 Organizational efficiency: To what extent is UN Women responding in a timely manner and with sufficient capacity in recent crisis response situations?

Finding 5: UN Women efforts in the humanitarian space and related coordination activities have increased since the office was upgraded to a Country Office, which has facilitated its engagement in different coordination structures. While UN Women Myanmar Country Office overall portfolio and funding increased, during the crisis response period, several aspects limited the organizational efficiency of the Country Office, and insufficient corporate procedures and mechanisms for rapid response to crisis (e.g. limited capacity of rapid response roster, lengthy procurement procedures, etc.).

With more personnel on the ground the number and quality of UN Women Country Office's efforts improved, which reportedly facilitated better acceptance from its partners of the Country Office efforts in the humanitarian space. Over the last three years the Country Office budget had increasing trends and the portfolio raised interest of multiple donors, such as Canada, Germany, Japan, Norway, Finland and Australia. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Country Office mobilized resources from the Peace Building Fund and the COVID-19

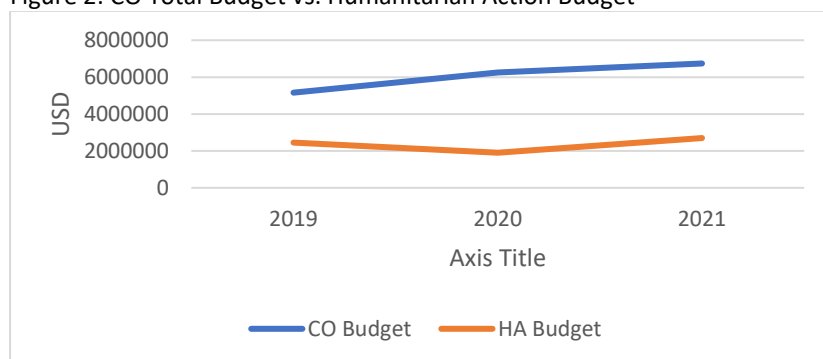
38 12 March, 2021: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/3/statement-ed-phumzile-myanmar>

39 UNICEF Myanmar statement was issued 9/10 February 2021: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/press-releases/unicef-calls-greater-attention-protection-childrens-rights-myanmar-during-time> ; while its Executive Director Statement was issued on 28/29 Marc; UNFPA Executive Director issued a statement on 15 March 2021: <https://www.unfpa.org/press/executive-director-statement-myanmar>

40 8 August 2021 : <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/8/statement-impacts-of-the-compounded-political-and-health-crisis-on-women-and-girls-in-myanmar>

MPTF. Discussions are ongoing with the United Kingdom Department for International Development, Sweden, Switzerland, and Australia for future funding and increased joint programming and implementation with other UN organizations (involving UNESCO, UNODC, FAO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNCDF, ILO and IOM).

Figure 2: CO Total Budget vs. Humanitarian Action Budget



Source: UN Women RMS

The number of personnel also increased to 31 in 2021 from 22 in 2019. The CO personnel consulted noted that current human and financial resources available for the Country Office are insufficient. Although resources have increased since a 2019, an Internal Audit Service audit⁴¹ of the office at the time also raised this issue highlighting the need to increase the capacity of the office to allow it to engage efficiently across its triple mandate. Consulted stakeholders raised concern about the size of the Country Office and about UN Volunteers performing key functions such as planning and coordination analyst, monitoring and evaluation analyst and communication officer. While their knowledge and expertise were not put into question, it is not sustainable and the institutional capacity and memory is at risk of being lost, which may be challenging in terms of crisis response. Also, the Country Office reported that that in order to be credible as a member of the UNCT and the HCT within this complex context, UN Women needs to be able to engage simultaneously in Yangon (where most of the UN and all the development partners are based), in Naypyidaw (where the government is based) and in Rakhine State (where parallel development and crisis coordination arrangements are in place), which would require additional investments by the organization to ensure personnel with the adequate level. Currently, Myanmar CO has one Program Specialist on Temporary Appointment and one Program Analyst (NOB-FTA) dedicated to humanitarian functions. Due to vast geographic area and dispersion of those affected by conflict, sub-offices are necessary to operate in the conflict areas to be able to deliver to those in need.

In 2020, the Country Office started using the same implementing partners in different geographic locations and building on their existing expertise. Operations also used the long-term agreements of other UN agencies to procure goods and services. The Country Office reported that these efforts led to a more efficient use of time and financial resources. The Country Office developed its own databases to support monitoring efforts, however Country Office personnel consulted noted that existing tools such as corporate Results Management System were not useful for dynamic and complex crisis contexts. Country Office personnel consulted would appreciate further capacity building to enable better capturing of the impact level results from the field. In the COVID-19 context, the Country Office adapted its processes to online work for training, capacity building and meetings with the Government and other partners and built capacities of the local personnel to use IT in their work. Corporate challenges in slow procurement were also raised as an issue, however the Country Office realized that the procurement could be done under the flexible mechanism developed corporately to support response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Country Office also utilized UNDP's procurement system for about 70 per cent of its needs in the recent crises. For example, for setting-up safe-heavens for personnel, office adjustments and joint premises, sleeping facilities, emergency supplies and medical kits for personnel, goods for CSOs' program implementation, which saved time. Although UN Women is not explicitly mentioned as a beneficiary of the joint UN system procurement, UNDP made it possible in this case. However, when the Country Office used UN Women's rapid procurement procedures to purchase telephones and laptops for the government during the

41 UN Women Internal Audit Service, UN Women Audit: Programme Presence in Myanmar <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20us/accountability/audit-reports/2019/un-women-audit-report-2019-008-myanmar-pp-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5446>

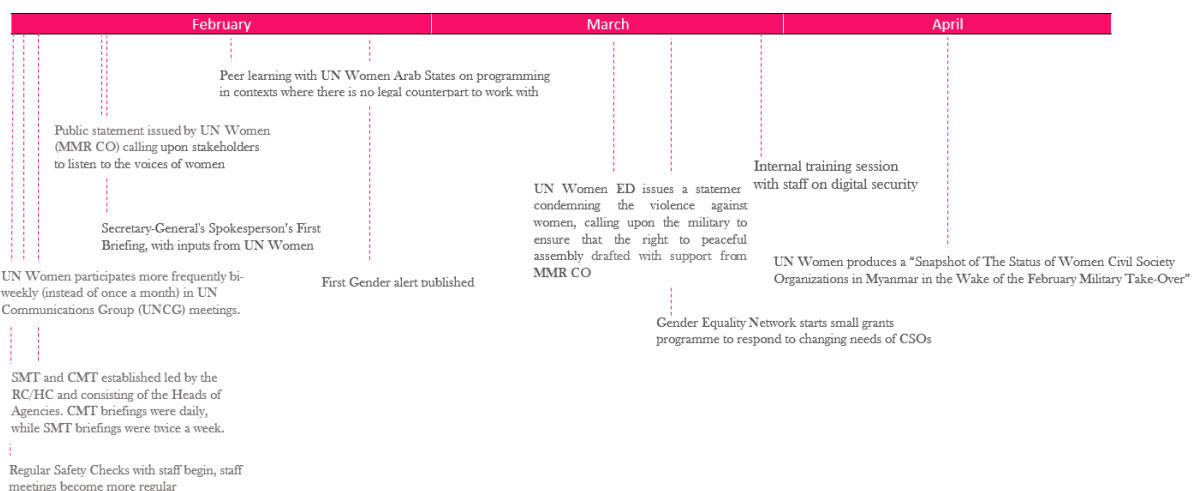
COVID-19 outbreak, it took close to three weeks, which was perceived to be faster than with usual procedures, but still not fast enough.

After the military takeover, the operations have been considerably hampered by a collapsing banking system and frequent interruptions in online communication systems in Myanmar. Following agreement with HQ, salary payment of national personnel was allowed to be carried out in cash. Another challenge is transfer of funding to CSOs. After collapse of the banking system, the Country Office proposed smaller amounts (up to USD 10,000) cash transfers to partners as an option which was not approved by UN Women and bank transfers were the only option. Reportedly, that required 4-6 weeks for the funding to reach the account of the partners, which is not a suitable solution for crisis and continuity of support to field actions. As a substantial portion of the portfolio is implemented through the partners, another challenge is that the registrations of several CSOs – implementing partners are going to expire. In a current situation most local organizations are unwilling to renew the registration with de facto authorities or are unable to do so, which can make them not eligible partners for the UN.

The Country Office was able to secure the duty of care of UN Women personnel and proactively engaged with units from the headquarters. UNCT guidance was followed with respect to personnel safety and the Country Office also ensured that all health and safety protocols decided by the UN Security Management Team were applied and personnel were supported to respect them. The Country Office supported its personnel with flexible work arrangements as a measure to facilitate work life balance and guarantee safety during the COVID-19 pandemic and following the military coup (staff received financial support to secure their premises, flexibility to relocate temporarily in case of need), local protocols were developed on internet safety guidance, communication safety, and authorization for highly reliable internet was also obtained for personnel. UN Women in Myanmar utilized core resources and obtained US\$ 10,000 from the headquarters security unit to ensure food stock for the office, provide additional financing to secure staff premises, and also relocated staff from areas more at risk, and provided family medical kit (basic medications, oximeter, blood pressure monitors etc.). Oxygen concentrators were available at other UN agencies and could be borrowed in case of need. UN Women Myanmar also noted that it was challenging to find adequate resources to pay for drivers and cars (even when shared with other UN agencies) to support safe transportation of personnel particularly considering that the sub-offices are in conflict zones and require a higher level of security to implement programming. Special attention was paid to the safety of the personnel working in conflict-prone zones.

Although the crisis management was assessed as positive by the Country Office, the personnel raised an issue of the lack of a clear procedures and lines of communication with the regional office and Headquarters as one of the priorities that needs to be addressed, noting that the coordination and support largely depended on personal connections, commitment and engagement of the Country Office senior management and specialists in the Regional Office and Headquarters.

Figure 3: UN Women Myanmar Country Office coup response timeline



Source: IES and Myanmar CO based on evaluation evidence.

Some additional challenges were reported by the Country Office, that had not yet significantly affected the work. For example, de facto authorities, in addition to Standards Basic Country Agreement (which UN Women has signed), request to approve programmatic documents for the country in a form of Memorandum of Understanding or Letter of Agreement which has not been done. In addition, the Country Office was not able to secure in-country travel authorizations for international staff since March 2020, and the movement of national staff was strongly restricted due to extensive lockdowns and stay at home orders and continued cancellations of all flights within the country. Also, UN Women Country Representative was not allowed to re-enter the country, according to the Ministry of Social Welfare “due to the COVID19 crisis”. The Country Office was able to have the head of Rakhine sub-office re-entering the country before that. The problem is pertinent to all agencies and programmes struggling to obtain new visas.

3.5 Contributions towards Impact and Connectedness / Sustainability / Gender Equality and Human Rights: What crisis response strategies have the highest potential to result in immediate benefits in the lives of women and girls, and the most marginalized groups, that are connected with longer term resilience building efforts?

Finding 6: The Country Office is well positioned for contributing to the humanitarian, peace development nexus given its efforts promoting gender equality and empowerment of women across these areas. However, the compounded crises in the country has made engagement in the field is very challenging and limited and long-term development planning is a major challenge.

For years before the current political conflict, the Country Office was well connected with both Government and civil society in the country supporting participatory creation and updating of development, humanitarian, and peace policies in Myanmar. As reported by the Country Office, significant contributions were made to development of the National Indicator Framework (NIF) for Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) by strengthening the gender related indicators, supporting the annual implementation plans of the National Strategic Plan on Advancement of Women (NSPAW) (2013-2022), development of Women Peace and Development Plans (WPDP) in Mon, Kaya and Kayin States. Government officials were provided trainings on gender-responsive budgeting, gender mainstreaming in public finance management, gender mainstreaming in policy development. Simultaneously, UN Women and its CSO partners supported women’s leadership and economic empowerment on the ground and participation of women’s leaders and voicing of the needs of the vulnerable groups in those policy development efforts. This way alliances were built that lasted in the crisis times and provided UN Women a solid position to continue this engagement in COVID-19 pandemic context.

As previously mentioned, the positioning of UN Women within UNCT and UN HCT has strengthened overtime. Thanks to this strengthened position, even in the context of the military takeover, the Country Office remained well connected to those representing the most vulnerable on the ground and informed about the situation for women’s CSOs, of which many were part of the public protests after the military takeover. In the areas most affected by the IDP movements, Rakhine, Mon State and Kachin, with significant humanitarian consequences, the CO supported the mainstreaming of gender considerations In humanitarian assistance to IDPs. A specific focus was on the gender dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic with the roll out of the advocacy and capacity building activities. Both UN partners and CSOs are critical partners for continuing advocacy and action to protect human rights and respond to the humanitarian needs on the ground, but these will also provide important linkages for supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and longer-term development as soon as the situation allows.

Considering these assets, lessons learnt from previous work with the government in this politically sensitive context and recognizing that the situation in Myanmar is unpredictable, the Country Office embraces adaptive programming, informed by continuous risk analysis and scenario-building. The Country Office has proactively outlined the different possible scenarios for the future work and how the CO will adapt accordingly. The CO strategy is to ensure it provides a bridge between the humanitarian, peace and development nexus to ensure that resilience is built.⁴²

42 UN Women Myanmar Country Office, draft Strategic Note 2022-2025

Finding 7: UN Women’s cooperation with civil society and women’s groups on the ground was its added value within the broader UN system and critical for capturing the needs of diverse groups (e.g. conflict affected women, survivors of violence, LGBTIQ+ persons and others) and to reflect these needs in its efforts in times when access to the field is limited. While these needs are mainstreamed into programming, the current situation presents significant challenges for capturing information on how these efforts are directly impacting women’s and girls’ lives in the field. Furthermore, UN Women corporate procedures for engaging civil society aren’t adequate for effectively supporting them in this complex setting.

Thanks to the long-standing and well-developed cooperation with civil society, gender needs assessments, the implementation of GEWE programming and humanitarian assistance was possible in times of COVID-19 restrictions and after the military takeover. The presence of strong women led organizations and networks at the grassroots levels was largely facilitating the Country Office interventions during the crisis by providing first-hand data on the needs and facilitating reach to the most vulnerable women and girls with empowerment programs. Access to the Country Office local partners in the field in this evaluation was not possible, but reportedly one of the partners managed to include people with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ persons in the economic activities and to provide a grant to one LGBTIQ+ organization. Through the civil society groups in the field the Country Office reported that it manages to stay informed of the needs of various vulnerable groups and uses this information to directly feed into the overall humanitarian effort.

The CO continued in 2020 and 2021 to train women’s groups, networks and CSOs on leadership and advocacy and to promote strategic dialogues between government at different levels and civil society. For example, it supported trainings on the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, health, social cohesion and women, peace, and security to 27 local CSO leaders in the Kachin State and followed up with support to CSOs to advocate for gender mainstreaming in the Government of Myanmar COVID-19 response and in peace processes. In Rakhine, UN Women supported 15 CSOs to advocate for their participation in humanitarian, development, and peace processes with the Rakhine State Government. The Country Office worked with a partner organization, Spectrum, on training curriculum on gender leadership, women’s participation in peace dialogue and peace mediation. Its implementing partners Oxfam and Yaung Chi Thit (YCT) have developed a capacity training curriculum for women camp management committee members and Village Tract Administrators in 16 villages in 4 townships to promote their awareness on gender equality and to enhance women’s participation in decision making. CSOs are actively engaged in preparation and implementation of the “16 Days of Activism” campaign.

The Country Office also raised awareness at UNCT level about issues concerning the LGBTIQ community. Through the Gender Theme Group and Human Rights Theme Group, as a joint effort with OHCHR a meeting was organized with the representatives of the LGBTIQ organizations to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 response on the LGBTIQ organizations’ constituencies and their participation in the national response and discuss potential for longer partnership building between the UNCT and the LGBTIQ+ networks in identifying opportunities for joint action.

The CO produced a *“Snapshot of The Status Of Women Civil Society Organizations In Myanmar In The Wake Of The February Military Take-Over, April 2021*, which is a great step in the right direction as it outlines the capacity needs of CSOs in order to continue operating within the complex context. The CO reported that there was a need to diversify the organizations that the CO and other development partners usually work with, particularly as the civic space has reduced and many CSOs were finding it increasingly difficult to operate while in contrast, an increasing need for the CO and its partners to implement humanitarian interventions in the most affected parts of the country. UN Women modalities for engaging CSOs should also be explored given the requirements are burdensome for grassroots organizations and lack flexibility in terms of engaging CSOs in times of crisis when bank transfers are not possible. Moreover, according the Snapshot of the status of women CSOs in Myanmar in the wake of the February 2021 military take-over, produced by the UN Women Myanmar in April 2021, over 70% of them had concerns for the security of their staff, 52% had to stop their work altogether while 38 % more were only able to implement part of their portfolio and under severe constraints. In addition to security issues, loss of legal registrations, loss of funding and limited access to cash were some of the most important hurdles identified by women CSO for their work going forward, with many at risk of collapsing entirely. It needs to be stressed that the CO Strategic Note 2022-2023 also includes a strong focus on CSOs. Women’s CSOs will be prioritized as both beneficiaries under the SN 2022-2023 and as key partners for the implementation

of the SN in line also with the Grand Bargain. To this effect the MCO will seek to broaden the scope of women's CSOs it works with, especially at the local level.

Observations/lessons learned and way forward

Observations/Lessons learned:

- Exclusion in Myanmar occurs along many lines including gender, ethnicity, and citizenship. This, coupled with widespread under-development and limited respect for human rights means that gender considerations are particularly limited in the country and therefore the gender equality and empowerment of women and girls and upholding of rights of vulnerable population requires increased attention. The future political situation is uncertain and the prevailing view is that the number of IDPs in Myanmar may double in the coming years.
- UN Women proactive leadership in coordination structures has strengthened its positioning with other UN humanitarian stakeholders and resulted in increased interest to jointly work with UN Women. The Country Office provided much needed technical capacity and contributed to increasing the awareness and strong gender mainstreaming in UN response frameworks in Myanmar aiming to ensure those most affected by crises equally benefit.
- While great strides have been made in integrating the GEM into project development, there is still little known on the effects of these efforts. Focus should extend to promoting gender responsive monitoring and evaluation to understand how these efforts are translating into results.
- UN partners are aware of some of the strategies the Country Office employs, such as research and needs assessment, communication and advocacy on women's and human rights in crises, but overall there is limited awareness on what menu of services UN Women can provide in a crisis context. Enhanced communication of UN Women's potential and results in crisis response is expected.
- The Country Office's continuous engagement with the Government enabled UN Women to be recognized as a resource in development of the national COVID-19 Response Plan and adjust the programmes on the ground to the new context.
- The presence of strong women-led organizations and networks at the grassroot levels was a highly relevant strategy for the Country Office interventions during the crisis to reach the most vulnerable women and girls, and to apply the Leave No One Behind principle in the context of Myanmar.
- Upgrading of the UN Women programme presence to fully fledged Country Office and continued investment increased the UN Women Myanmar potential of fully harnessing UN Women's mandate and demonstrate its added value to the UN system in Myanmar. Corporately, UN Women requires more robust policies, systems, procedures and capacity building of personnel to ensure readiness for crisis response and to ensure safety of personnel.
- Results monitoring, particularly in crisis response requires enhancement so that UN Women can systematically capture steps taken, results achieved, and lessons learned that can inform future response efforts.

Way forward for enhancing UN Women's overall crisis response in Myanmar:

- To reinforce UN Women presence/resources in Myanmar with appropriate expertise in and tools for crisis management, UN Women staff assigned to crisis prone countries should receive a comprehensive training on how to adjust the activities in these kinds of situations.
- Establish a clear menu of services that can be provided to the country as well as to humanitarian stakeholders and communicate this with all stakeholders.
- Clear corporate protocols on external communications post crisis should be established between all levels of the organization, including with respect to donors and resource mobilization. A template could be developed corporately that could be a "go to" when there is a crisis response and adapted as appropriate to the country context.
- Adoption of the "Gender Alert Brief" as a corporate approach for informing and engaging senior management on status of a crisis and response efforts.

- To promote the establishment of the GIHA as a permanent working group and continue strengthening GEEWG coordination mechanism.
- To continue refining a joint strategy for strengthening the capacity of the women’s CSOs and NGOs as the critical agent to push for GEEWG and to reach the most vulnerable groups at field level, and advocate within UN Women headquarters to establish more flexible arrangements for engaging in partnership with civil society during complex crisis response recognizing that grassroots organizations and civil society organizations that have not been approved by the de-facto authorities or have access to bank accounts will require support to defend women’s human rights, mobilize and voice the needs from the field. This may require exploration of other options, such as cooperation with non-registered CSOs and informal groups and transfer of funds to third party accounts or agreements with other UN Agencies that have more flexible arrangements during times of crisis.
- Enhance resources for monitoring and assessing results related to coordination and programming in crisis response, ensuring they are fed back into learning and decision-making for future crisis response efforts.
- Lessons learnt from the Myanmar post-military situation related to movement restrictions for staff and partners, shrinking space for CSOs, banking system collapse and absence of appropriate solutions in UN Women to efficiently continue funding of its partners on the ground should be taken into account in any potential considerations of standardization of the UN Women’s approach to crisis situations.
- UN Women HQ to speed up the finalization of the organization-wide crisis response strategy, policy, tools and procedures. Lessons learnt from Myanmar post-military takeover should be considered.
- UN Women HQ should expand the pool of staff in the Rapid Deployment Roster and develop a stand-by arrangement with external personnel, like many other humanitarian organizations have, if UN Women intends to expand its engagement in crisis response globally.
- UN Women HQ should continue actively advocating for becoming a full member of IASC structures. In this context draw attention of decision makers to the recommendation made in the context of the Inter Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on GEEWG issued in October 2020. In this regard, UN Women HQ should step up its efforts to hold IASC members accountable for adherence to the Gender Policy.

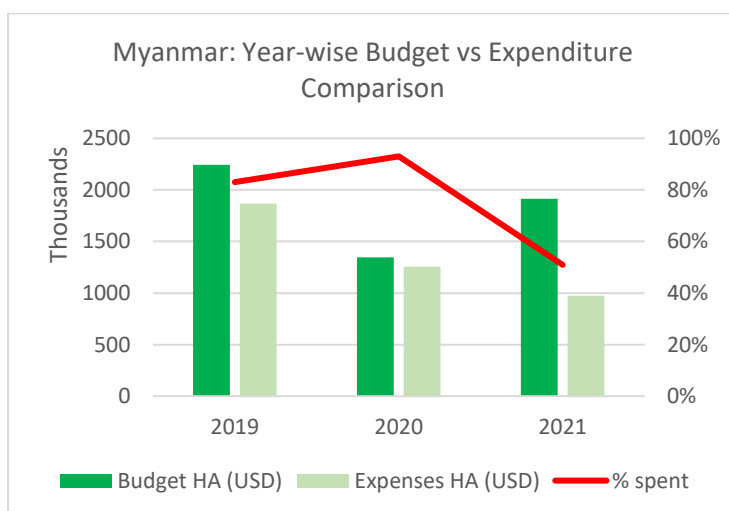
Sub Annex

Sub Annex 1. List of Key Informants

#	Organization, Title	Method (interview/FGD etc.)	Male	Female
UN WOMEN				
1	Gender & Humanitarian Specialist (Jordan) BANGLADESH & MYANMAR	Interview		1
2	Operation Manager	Interview	1	
3	Country Representative	Interview	1	
4	Planning & Coordination Analyst	Interview	1	
5	Communication Officer	Interview		1
6	Executive HR Associate	Interview		1
Civil Society Organization (CSO)				
7	Head of Gender Equality Network	Interview	1	
UN System				
8	Peace & development adviser to the office of UN Resident coordinator, Myanmar	Interview	1	
9	Humanitarian response specialist, UNFPA	Interview		1
10	Humanitarian affairs officer, OCHA	Interview		1
Total			5	5
Total Key informants			10	

Sub Annex 2. Portfolio Review

Year	Budget HA (USD)	Expenses HA (USD)	Spent
2019	2,242,554	1,866,228	83%
2020	1,345,630	1,255,591	93%
2021	1,913,264	974,398	51%



Activity	Budget (%)
Technical assistance of HA actors	43%
Livelihoods	29%
Advocacy	13%
Capacity Building of HA Actors	12%
Coordination	2%
SGBV prevention & response	0%

Case study: Fiji

Table of contents:

- Acronyms
1. Introduction
 2. Contextual background
 3. Humanitarian Response Setting and UN Women’s Response
 4. Findings
 5. Observations/lessons learned and way forward
 6. Sub annex

Acronyms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EVAWG	Ending Violence against Women and Girls
FTA	Fixed Term Appointment
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBV-iE	Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies
GEEWG	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls
GiHA	Gender in Humanitarian Action
HDI	Human Development Index
IEC	Information Education Communication
IES	Independent Evaluation Service
INGOs	International non-governmental organizations
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, & Intersex
M4C	Markets for Change
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MWCPA	Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation
NDMC	National Disaster Management Council
NDMO	National Disaster Management Council and the National Disaster Management Office
PHPC	Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster
PHT	Pacific Humanitarian Team
RM	Resource Mobilisation
RO	Regional Office
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics

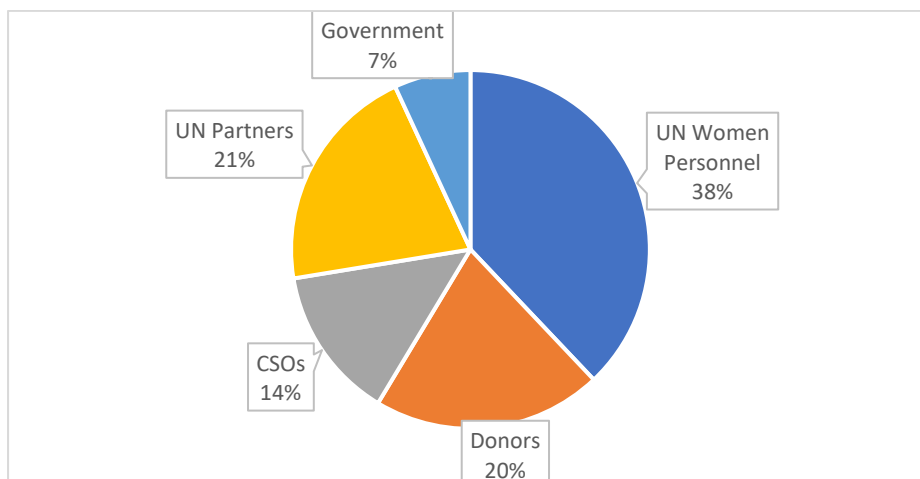
TC	Tropical Cyclone
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund,
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WASH	Water, Sanitation And Hygiene
WPHF	Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

I. Introduction

This case study is focused on UN Women’s crisis response efforts in Fiji. It is an integral part of a broader evaluation focusing on UN Women’s Crisis Response in Asia and the Pacific, led by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service. The overall evaluation focuses on UN Women’s actions at regional and country level, and the corporate governance, policies, procedures and systems in place to support UN Women’s crisis response. It is expected to assist UN Women in strengthening crisis response and preparedness that meets the needs of the women, girls and other highly vulnerable groups in an effective, sustainable and efficient way. The Pacific islands are one of the most disaster-prone areas in the AP region. In December 2020, Fiji was affected by Tropical Cyclone Yasa, which was the second Category 5 severe tropical cyclone in 2020 –while at the same time the country was grappling with the ramifications of the global COVID-19 pandemic. This case study aims to provide lessons learned from Fiji MCO response to the compounded crises of climate induced disaster and the global COVID-19 pandemic.⁴³

Data collection methods included extensive desk review, meta-analysis of documents pertinent for humanitarian situation and activities undertaken for the crisis response in Fiji. 29 individuals were consulted (24 female and 5 male), through online interviews and group discussions of key stakeholders active including UN Women personnel, UN partner agencies, Civil Society Organisations, donors and government stakeholders (Figure 1). The detailed list of Key Informant Interviews is presented in sub annex 1.

Figure 1: Type of stakeholders consulted



⁴³ UN Women’s Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO) works with governments and civil society organisations across 14 Pacific Island countries and territories to address gender inequality, empower women and build more inclusive societies. The focus of this case study, however, is confined to UN Women’s crisis response in Fiji only.

II. Background

Fiji, a country in the South Pacific, is an archipelago of more than 300 islands — of which about 110 are permanently inhabited. With an area of 18,270 Km², it is one of the smallest countries in the world. Fiji has a population of 896,444 people out of which 49.4% are females.⁴⁴ Its latest HDI value (2019) is 0.743— which puts the country in the high human development category— positioning it at 93 out of 189 countries and territories. However, according to latest estimates, almost 30% of the population lives below the national poverty line.⁴⁵ Fiji has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.370, ranking it 84 out of 162 countries in the 2019 index.⁴⁶ Some of the key gender statistics related to Fiji are presented in Figure 2.

Women and girls in Fiji continue to face some of the highest rates of violence in the world. According to the National Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Fiji (2010/11) survey, as many as 64% of women reported facing lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence.⁴⁷ The statistics of rape and sexual offences documented by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions show an increase in the incidents of violence year-on-year. For example, the monthly average rate of incident reporting has increased over a three-year period, from 40 in 2017 to 50 in 2019.⁴⁸

A large proportion of the population is engaged in informal employment, comprising 48% of the population, with over two thirds of all informal workers coming from rural areas (67%).⁴⁹ 19% of businesses are registered by women, most of which focus on micro and small businesses.⁵⁰ Young women's participation is half that of young men, with women (15-34 years) having a labour participation rate of 33% compared with their male counterparts at 67%.⁵¹ While 62% of Lesbian Bisexual and Trans women and gender non-conforming people are unemployed and in precarious work.⁵²

⁴⁴ World Bank Data.(reported for the year 2020). Accessed from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.ZS?locations=FJ>

⁴⁵ World Bank. (2021). Poverty & Equity Brief, Fiji. Accessed from : https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/AM2020/Global_POVEQ_FJI.pdf

⁴⁶ The 2010 Human Development Report introduced the GII, which reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent birth rates; empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by women and attainment in secondary and higher education by each gender; and economic activity is measured by the labour market participation rate for women and men. The GII can be interpreted as the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in the three GII dimensions. Accessed from : <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/FJI.pdf>

⁴⁷ Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, 2013. National Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Fiji (2010/11): A Survey Exploring the Prevalence, Incidence and Attitudes to Intimate Partner Violence in Fiji. Suva, Fiji. Accessed from : <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/oceania/fiji#1>

⁴⁸ Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions Media Releases. Accessed from <http://odpp.com.fj/media-updates-2/>

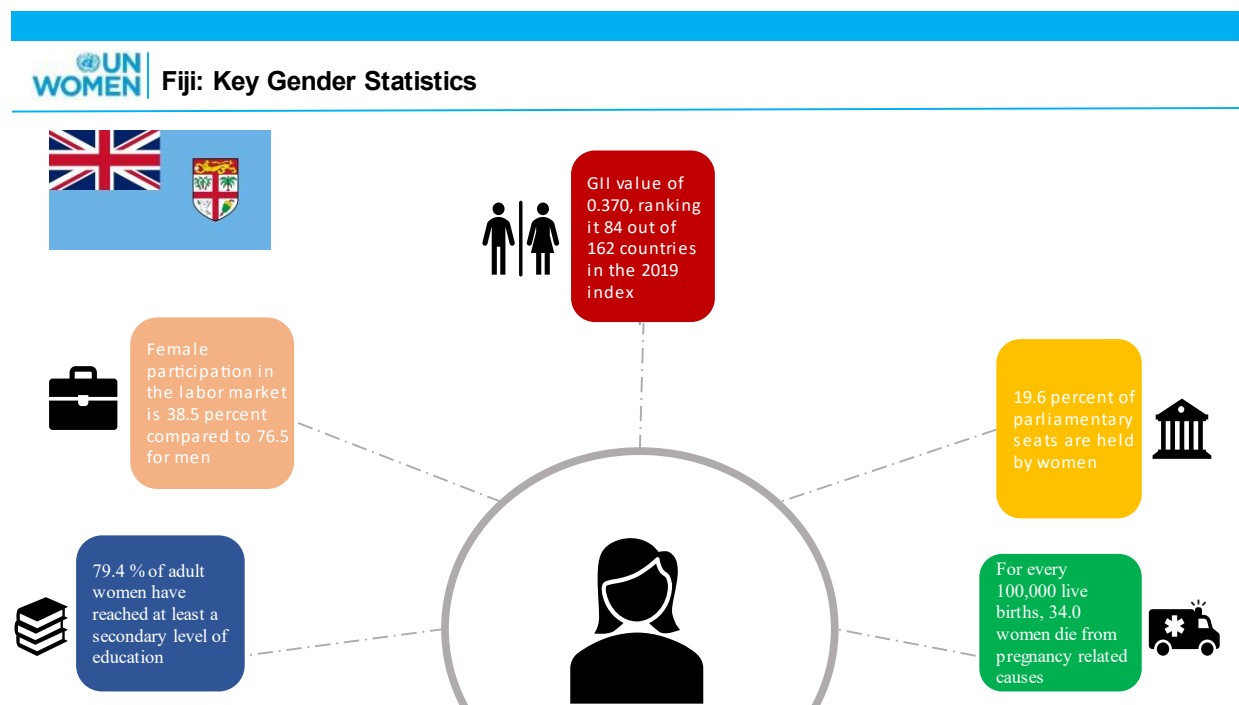
⁴⁹ Population and Housing Census, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2017

⁵⁰ Asian Development Bank (2018). Women and Businesses in Pacific. Accessed from : <https://www.adb.org/publications/women-business-pacific>

⁵¹ Population and Housing Census, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2017

⁵² Edge Effect. 2019. DIVA for Equality, 'Unjust, Unequal, Unstoppable, Fiji LBT and GNC people tipping the scales toward justice, 2019. Accessed from : <https://www.42d.org/2020/07/06/unjust-unequal-unstoppable-fiji-lesbians-bisexual-women-trans-men-and-gender-non-conforming-people-tipping-the-scales-toward-justice/>

Figure 2: Key gender statistics for Fiji as per the GII, 2019.



Due to its geographic location, Fiji suffers from an extended tropical cyclone season, starting in November and ending in April. Cyclones, floods and droughts have become increasingly unpredictable and extreme, with devastating effects. Global research has shown that women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die or be injured in a disaster,⁵³ and women also face increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence; unequal access to humanitarian assistance such as food and shelter; loss of economic opportunities; and increased workloads. COVID-19 exacerbated this situation, with World Bank economic models estimating that all Pacific economies contracted in 2020, particularly those reliant on tourism. In 2020, Fiji’s visitor arrivals declined by 84%,⁵⁴ the reduction in GDP was estimated to be close to 20%.⁵⁵

Tropical Cyclone (TC) Yasa, the second-strongest cyclone on record⁵⁶ to make landfall in Fiji, slammed into the island nation on December 17, 2020, leaving a trail of devastation. Following TC Harold in 2020, TC Yasa was the second Category 5 cyclone of 2020 in the South Pacific. According to Detailed Damage Assessment (DDA) reports, approximately 139,259 people were affected across Fiji, of which 91 percent were living in the Northern Division. The disaster destroyed more than 8,000 homes, and displaced tens of thousands⁵⁷. TC Yasa also triggered flash flooding, landslides, and severe coastal inundation.⁵⁸ The cyclone wiped out entire villages, leaving the government to declare Fiji’s Northern Division

What are Tropical Cyclones?

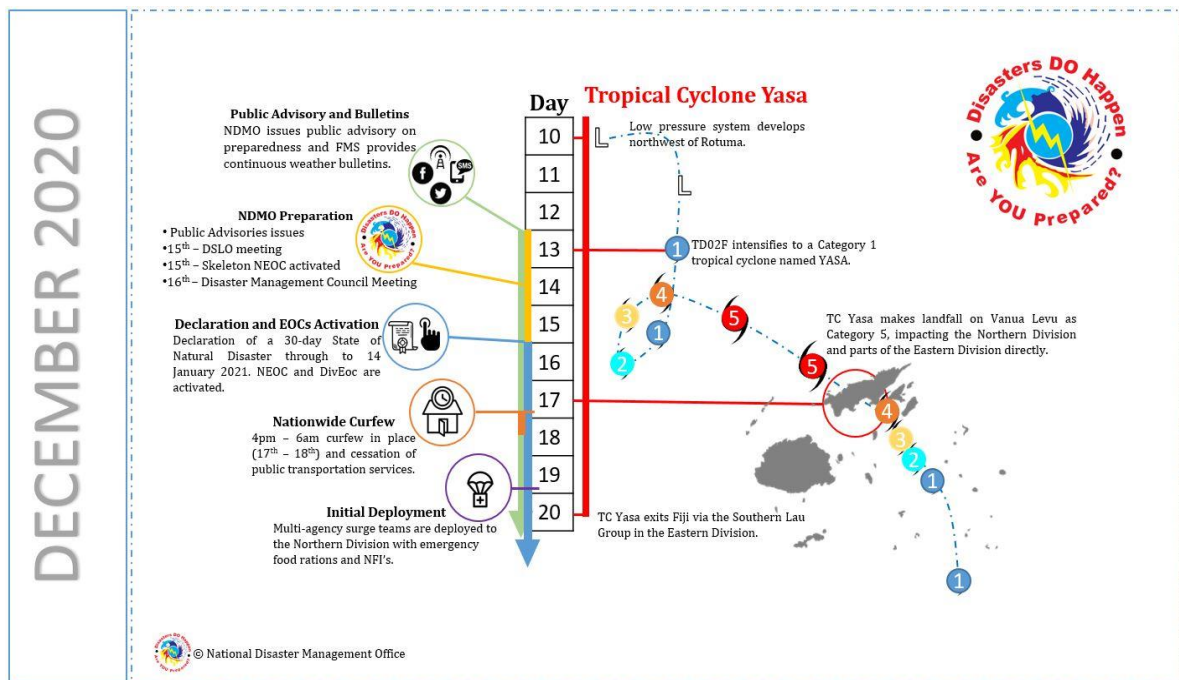
A tropical cyclone is a rapid rotating storm originating over tropical oceans from where it draws the energy to develop. When tropical cyclones hit land, they bring heavy rain, strong winds and storm surges. The winds are so powerful, they can destroy buildings and rip out trees by their roots. Tropical cyclones have different names depending on their location. In the Western North Pacific Ocean, strong tropical cyclones are known as typhoons and in the North Atlantic and the Northeast Pacific oceans, hurricanes. In the southwest Indian Ocean they are called cyclones.

Source: World Meteorological Organization

⁵³ IUCN Factsheet. Disaster and gender statistics. Accessed from : https://www.unisdr.org/files/48152_disasterandgenderstatistics.pdf
⁵⁴ Fiji Village. 2021. Accessed from <https://www.fijivillage.com/news/Fijis-GDP-unlikely-to-return-to-pre-COVID-19-levelsat-least-for-the-next-3-years---AG-5frx48/>
⁵⁵ PINA. Accessed from <https://www.pina.com.fj/index.php?p=pacnews&m=read&o=16064509985fe15bfe99d8929f7f26>
⁵⁶ Yale Climate Connections. 2020. Tropical Cyclone Yasa makes landfall in Fiji with 145 mph. Winds. Accessed from : <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2020/12/tropical-cyclone-yasa-makes-landfall-in-fiji-with-145-mph-winds/>
⁵⁷ Direct Relief. Responding to Fiji’s Category 5 Cyclone Yasa. Accessed from : <https://www.directrelief.org/2020/12/responding-to-fijis-category-5-cyclone-yasa/>
⁵⁸ Super cyclone hits Fiji bringing floods, landslides. 2020. <https://phys.org/news/2020-12-super-cyclone-fiji-landslides.html#:~:text=Super%20cyclone%20Yasa%20slammed%20into,in%20the%20Pacific%20island%20nation.&text=%22Over%20850%2C000%20Fijians%20are%20in,our%20population%2C%22%20he%20said.>

in a 60-day State of Natural Disaster.⁵⁹ It has caused an estimated loss of nearly \$250 million to infrastructure, livelihoods, and agriculture.⁶⁰ The TC Yasa timeline and sequence of events has been presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: TC Yasa timeline and sequence of events



COVID-19 exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and magnified the impacts of the cyclone. Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic hindered foreign aid workers from bringing food and medicine to those affected by TC Yasa. Restrictions, while necessary to contain the spread of the virus, prevented agencies from moving crucial items to hard-hit communities. The impact of the cascading crises was massive, with thousands of people stuck in temporary shelters without safe drinking water and hygiene requirements to stop the spread of the virus. The most vulnerable groups include women, women survivors of violence, children, people with disabilities, women and girls living in urban and rural and maritime settlements, older women, single mothers, LGBTQI people, sex workers, people living in poverty, young women, women and girls with limited access to technology and women who depend heavily on the informal economy and precarious work; amongst others.

III. Crisis Response Setting and UN Women’s Response

Humanitarian Response Architecture

The Fiji response, preparedness and planning process is situated within the overall Disaster Risk Management context, which includes prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery measures. Fiji has a strong national structure for disaster preparedness and emergency operations. This is composed of the National Disaster Management Council and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) at national level and of Disaster Management Committees at the provincial and district level. The country has the National Disaster Management Plan of 1995, the Natural Disaster Management Act of 1998 and draft Standard Operating Procedures for disaster response. Critical agencies including the Fiji Police, Fiji Military Forces, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Fiji Roads Authority, Water Authority of Fiji, and Energy Fiji Limited as well as non-governmental partners including the Fiji Red Cross Society, Fiji Council of Social Services and Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council supported the coordination and response effort.

⁵⁹ Declaration Of State Of Natural Disaster Extended For Northern Division. 2021. Accessed from : <https://www.fiji.gov.fi/Media-Centre/News/DECLARATION-OF-STATE-OF-NATURAL-DISASTER-EXTENDED>

⁶⁰RNZ. Cyclone Yasa damage to Fiji worth nearly \$US250m. Accessed from : <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/436485/cyclone-yasa-damage-to-fiji-worth-nearly-us250m>

The Fiji National Cluster System consists of nine humanitarian sectors led by the Government ministries with international agencies as co-leads that support Emergency response and relief efforts (refer to Table 1). UN Women co-leads the Safety and Protection cluster and also co-leads the GBV Working Group under this cluster. The UNOCHA established Pacific Humanitarian Team's (PHT) resource mobilization is carried out through the Fiji Cluster system based on the needs identified by the Fijian Government.⁶¹



Table 1: Fiji National Cluster System

Cluster	Cluster Lead	Cluster Co-Lead
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MoHMS)	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Food Security and Livelihoods	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)	Ministry of Fisheries *Partner Support Agency: Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
Health And Nutrition	Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MoHMS)	World Health Organisation and (WHO) and UNICEF
Education	Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MoHMS)	World Health Organisation and (WHO) and UNICEF
Safety And Protection	Ministry of Social Welfare Women and Poverty Alleviation	UN Women ⁶²
Shelter	Ministry of Housing and Community Development	Habitat for Humanity Fiji and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
Communication	Ministry of Communications	National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)
Logistics	Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MoHMS)	World Health Organisation and (WHO) and UNICEF
Infrastructure	Ministry of Infrastructure and Meteorological Services	Fiji Roads Authority, Water Authority of Fiji, Energy Fiji Ltd.

Figure 1: TC Yasa Timeline and sequence of events. Source: NDMO

The TC Yasa response,⁶³ which informed the recovery and reconstruction activities, recognised the lead role of the Fiji Government through the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC) in coordinating cyclone response activities. Given that the dual impact of the cyclone and COVID-19 have had a far more adverse effect on groups that are already at risk, efforts were made to integrate gender, disability and protection perspective in the response plan, while ensuring cross-sectoral synergies amongst various clusters.

⁶² Under the Safety and Protection cluster, UN Women co-leads the GBV Working Group (Sub-Cluster) with MWCPA – Department of Women as the lead. UNICEF co-leads the Child Protection Working Group (Sub-Cluster) with MWCPA – Social Welfare as the lead.

⁶³Tropical Cyclone Yasa Response and Disaster Resilience Plan, January 2021

IV. Findings

4.1 Relevance/Appropriateness Is UN Women's response to crisis relevant and appropriate in the context of the international standards, needs and priorities of the affected populations, particularly those left furthest behind (women with disabilities, LGBTIQ)?

Finding 1. The Multi-Country Office crisis response efforts are aligned with international commitments and national priorities and informed by civil society.

Overall, UN Women's approach to crisis response is aligned with international commitments such as Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the World Humanitarian Summit, Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific - An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (FRDP) 2017 – 2030⁶⁴ and aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other global normative and policy frameworks, not least the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The MCO efforts are also aligned with the UN Women Global Strategic Plan 2018-2021 Outcome 5: Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action and Output 15: More women play a greater role in and are better served by disaster risk reduction and recovery processes.

The MCO's leadership on GEEWG in Fiji is highly regarded: external stakeholders consulted noted that UN Women is recognized as a key player and leader within the UN system in the Pacific. Stakeholders consulted identified the key coordination role that UN Women plays in crisis response as highly relevant and informed by national priorities including civil society voices representing the most vulnerable groups within Fiji: women and girls, SOGIESC, elderly, and persons with disabilities. The evaluation observed from PHPC meeting minutes that civil society was engaged in coordination groups as an active contributor. Stakeholders also referred to the efforts of UN Women being fully guided by national priorities given the close relationship UN Women has with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA), Department of Women as a close and trusted technical advisor. It has also been reported by the office, that as co-lead of the GBV working group, the coordination with Department of Women has been robust because of the investment of funds and human resources in the Department of Women for GBV national systems strengthening, which pivot for emergencies. This strong working relationship extended across development and emergencies, and technical support was identified as useful and timely in disaster response efforts. Rapid gender protection assessment conducted in the immediate aftermath of TC Yasa informed strategies and brought to the attention of national authorities the needs of vulnerable groups.

4.2 Coherence/Coordination: To what extent are crisis response efforts more gender responsive due to UN Women coordination efforts?

Finding 2. The Multi-Country Office has filled a critical gap in the humanitarian coordination structure, by co-leading the regional Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster, co-leading the Fiji National Safety and Protection cluster and co-leading the Fiji GBV-iE Working Group.

UN Women is very active in the overall UN coordination space, including the humanitarian coordination efforts. It leads the Gender and Protection Cluster under the Pacific Humanitarian Team – one of a few UN Women office's globally to do so. The leadership capacity and technical expertise have been recognized by partners as contributing to strengthened regional and national capacities to respond to crisis by promoting coordination and coherence of efforts of UN System partners, INGOs, and Civil Society.

The National Fijian Safety and Protection Cluster was revived in late 2019 with the support of UN Women and is co-chaired by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and UN Women. The cluster functions as a coordination forum through which the protection actors prepare for and respond to disasters to ensure the protection needs of vulnerable groups in affected areas are addressed. The Cluster has over 40 member agencies

⁶⁴ SPC, SPREP, PIFS, UNDP, UNDRR and USP (2016). The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (FRDP) 2017 – 2030.

including government ministries, international and national NGOs and networks and UN agencies. The Safety and Protection Cluster conducts post response reviews and planning workshops well in advance of the cyclone season to reflect on response efforts and prepare for the next cyclone season.⁶⁵ The Fiji Safety and Protection cluster hosts monthly meetings during the disaster preparedness, response, and recovery period. UN Women attended meetings on behalf of the Fiji S&P Cluster, when required by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and promoted gender mainstreaming across the eight clusters in Fiji. There are Technical Working Groups with the Fiji S&P Cluster on key priority issues including Gender Based Violence, Child Protection, Information Management and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support. UN Women is a co-lead for GBV and Information Management Technical Working Group.

External stakeholders consulted highlighted UN Women contributions in support of the Ministry of Women during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the immediate aftermath of TC Yasa through situation reports and detailed needs assessments.⁶⁶ The GBV-iE sub-cluster (Technical Working Group) was also active, and the office reported robust support in the aftermath of the cyclone and in response to COVID-19 in coordination of service providers, safety audits and cluster assessments, ensuring access to essential services advocacy efforts, information management (dashboards and M&E for GBV response, COVID-19 GBV Administrative Data) and training and capacity building for frontline service providers. Evidence of this support include the advocacy note that was supported by UN Women in the immediate aftermath of TC Yasa⁶⁷ and external stakeholders highlighted the support distributing the referral pathways.⁶⁸ The MCO also supports capacity building of personnel of the Ministry of Women and holds awareness raising sessions, along with providing technical assistance and support to the Fiji Red Cross. Partners consulted noted that UN Women's leadership of the protection cluster helps the UN system to deliver as one by facilitating coordination with the government. Furthermore, stakeholders noted that without UN Women the gender focus would not be as strong.

The MCO personnel consulted noted that the secretariat work is very time intensive, given the need to coordinate, collate documents, consolidate information, and manage the database of protection information. The MWCA noted that they are attempting to find resources to fund a position who can provide secretariat support, but it was not certain that funding would be granted by the government. The office has funded a one-year seconded consultancy to the Ministry to support them with cluster coordination as a transition strategy to hand back the secretariat functions while the office retains the co-lead to provide technical assistance.

Finding 3: Potential for overlap persists in the Gender Based Violence (GBV-iE) domain. Although there have been concerted efforts to demarcate responsibilities in this space, a solution has not yet been institutionalized creating potential for duplication and inefficiencies in crisis response.

UN Women was recognized by partners as the leading agency on GBV/ EAW in the Pacific, with much higher donor investment than its sister agency UNFPA. Yet, GBV work was noted as a necessarily crowded space with UNFPA and UN Women working on key initiatives given the high rates of violence in the Pacific. However, with respect to the crisis response efforts, UN Women and UNFPA have experienced challenges negotiating space. There was confusion amongst UN, national partners and the government on which UN agency is doing what at the sub-cluster on GBV-iE. Although UNFPA has the official mandate to lead the GBV-iE work under IASC membership, given that UN Women has both strong technical expertise and long-standing and strong networks in the GBV space, particularly with respect to essential services coordination, GBV-iE working group is a subcluster of the Protection and Safety Cluster, and is co-led by UN Women with the Government at National level, while UNFPA leads the regional GBV-iE working group. This has caused some friction in the past, although mapping out roles and responsibilities and a joint work plan have helped to smooth relations. However, without clear institutional guidance, this will continue to be an issue as personnel change.

⁶⁵Fiji Safety and Protection Cluster Review and Planning Workshop, Suva, Fiji 22nd July 2020

⁶⁶ For example, Community Response and Referral Guidelines Basic Guidelines for Responding to cases of gender-based violence and child welfare reports during COVID-19 – Version 2, 24 April 2020

⁶⁷ Gender-based violence in the aftermath of the Fiji Tropical Cyclone Yasa, 2 January 2021.

⁶⁸ COVID19 Referral pathway

In other areas, UN Women has actively sought to coordinate with other UN agencies. For example, FAO wanted to distribute dry seeds, thus UN Women was able to bring in the networks it had developed with the market vendors and FAO brought in the resources.

4.3 Organizational efficiency: To what extent is UN Women responding in a timely manner and with sufficient capacity in recent crisis response situations?

Finding 4: Given that most crises the Office responds to are sudden onset where prompt action is critical, the limited funding for personnel and short-term contract modalities and limited interaction from HQ and RO may have limited the organizational efficiency of the MCO’s crisis response efforts.

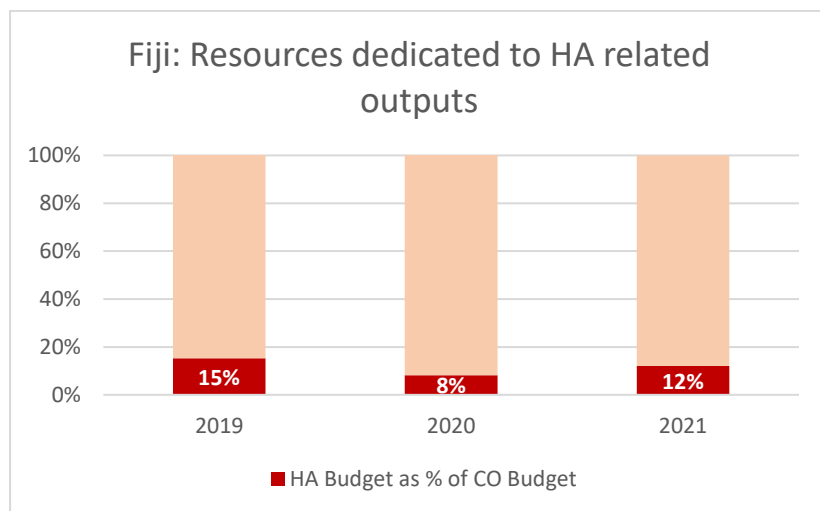
As of August 2021, the Fiji MCO had 44 personnel, 11% (4 personnel) are partially dedicated towards the programme on gender and protection in humanitarian settings, out of which only 2 are Fixed Term Appointments (table 2). Later in the year, all but one was moved to Women’s Resilience to Disaster project. The office notes that in addition to these personnel, the EAWG unit contributes in emergencies through financial resourcing, technical expertise and personnel and has emergency funds which are a part of larger EAWG projects with flexibility to allow for these funds to be used during emergencies. It was also reported by the office that staff from the EAWG unit (such as the EAWG Technical Advisor and the EAWG Technical Specialist at the MCO level and field-based staff who are the EAWG focal points) are significantly involved in emergency response, including COVID-19 response, with the ability to pivot their efforts to respond to the crisis. However, there is no standalone dedicated GBViE staff person(s) in 2021 in the EAWG unit.

Table 2: Humanitarian Action Staff based on Contract Type

S. No	Functional Title	Contract Type
1.	Gender and Protection Specialist	FTA (International)
2.	Gender and Humanitarian Affairs Analyst	FTA (Local)
4.	Protection Advisor	RedR deployee partially funded by UN Women
5.	Programme Associate (Gender and Protection in Humanitarian Action)	Service Contract

In 2021, out of the total budget of the MCO (US\$ 9,769,437), 12% (or US\$ 1,172,395) was dedicated towards Humanitarian Action related outputs. While this is an increase from the previous year – where HA related outputs received only 8% of the overall funding from the 2020 budget (or US\$ 674,989 of US\$ 8,292,984) – it is a decline of 3 percentage points when compared to overall budget dedicated towards HA outputs in 2019 (15% or US\$ 1,278,269 of US\$ 8,378,907) (Figure 4). The personnel consulted noted that the budget is primarily focused on the project on disaster resilience and funds cannot be allocated towards coordination efforts.

Figure 4: Resources dedicated to Humanitarian Action related outputs as part of overall Country Office Budget. Source: RMS, Annual Work Plans. 6th, October, 2021.



The Humanitarian Action related outputs are funded by a combination of core and non-core resources (Figure5).. UN Women humanitarian actions cover the areas of technical assistance, capacity building trainings, coordination and advocacy. A majority, i.e., 75% of the resources have been dedicated towards capacity building efforts (table 1 in sub annex 2).

Figure 5 : Humanitarian action related outputs core Budget vs non-core budget. Source: RMS, Annual Work Plans, 6th, October, 2021.

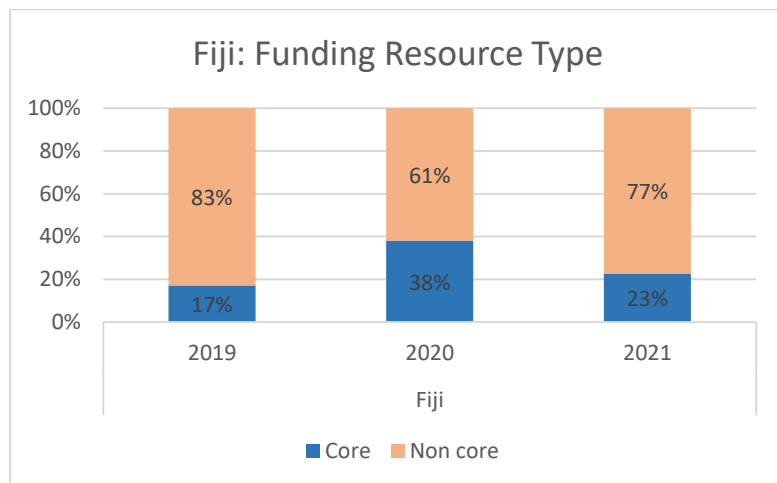


Table 3: Humanitarian Action related outputs core vs non-core budget. Source: RMS, Annual Work Plans. 6th, October, 2021.

Year	Core	Non-core	Total
2019	US \$ 218,769	US \$ 1,059,500	US \$ 1,278,269
2020	US \$ 256,989	US \$ 418,000	US \$ 674,989
2021	US \$ 256,989	US \$ 875,406	US \$ 1,132,395

External stakeholders consulted appreciated UN Women personnel technical expertise in the field of gender but noted that the team is small and stretched thinly over a variety of crisis response activities, especially given the frequent disasters in Fiji and the Pacific. The MCO has identified the need for UN Women to invest in longer-term contracts for personnel to support humanitarian coordination work, in particular through core (OEEF) supported personnel to lead the gender humanitarian coordination work (e.g. Protection cluster). During the period under review, the MCO had on board a RedR personnel who was leading the protection cluster. On the one hand the MCO has the highest amount of core resources amongst the case studies, however, the MCO has identified that these resources are spread across three offices: Vanuatu, Solomon Island, Fiji and costs are high in the Pacific. One of the key challenges identified by the MCO is that despite the significant and growing demands in one of the most disaster-prone regions, lack of donor interest in funding humanitarian work combined with the expectation that donors expect project funded staff to focus on project implementation. Donors, CSOs and UN Women personnel consulted have underlined the issue on the shortage of personnel due to which the office has not been able to adequately address certain issues in crisis response, for example GBV risk mitigation or PSEA. Respondents to the UN Women personnel survey also highlighted these shortcomings, with one respondent underlining how the situation has resulted in burn out of the existing personnel engaged in humanitarian work. In its 2021 Annual Work Plan, the MCO has proposed the establishment of a P3 support and facilitate priority areas of the Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster (PHPC) at the regional level.⁶⁹

Personnel consulted have expressed that while there is still some communication with the Regional Office to reflect on the situation on the ground during a crisis in Fiji and guidance has been provided by the RO (for example on receiving CERF funding), overall, there is a perception that the Pacific is often forgotten or missing out on interactions – which is often due to the lack of flexibility to adjust to the Pacific time zone. While the office undertakes internal after-action reviews, personnel consulted have noted that there is a lack of debriefing at the regional level to understand what other offices are doing, opportunities for collaboration and consultation on good practices with respect to crisis response. This has improved with respect to COVID-19 response through the weekly coordination meetings.

The Office has also identified that limited support from HQ and RO has been provided in times of crisis, for example with respect to communications, RM support and rapid procurement. For instance, a partner requested a generator to be able to continue operating, however, it took over three months from the request until the Purchase Order was issued, which was almost four months after the TC Yasa made landfall (see box x). Timely procurement has been challenging and the feedback received on fast-track procurement procedures, particularly during COVID-19, has been largely negative from personnel consulted. Given that Fiji is small, with a limited number of companies to procure from, stocks often run out due to guideline-centric procurement procedures and limited understanding or confusion about appropriate the procurement procedure to follow in crisis response amongst personnel may also have further complicated the MCO's ability to aid CSOs on the ground. Further, personnel noted that given the lack of clarity on the menu of services, and the limited direction provided by HQ on the direction of response that the MCO should take in crisis situations has caused confusion.

Box 1: Procuring a generator in Fiji to support civil society to respond to Tropical Cyclone Yasa

After the Tropical Cyclone Yasa that hit Fiji on 17 December 2020, a partner requested support to purchase a generator so that they could continue operating in time of need. Delays were experienced on both ends – from UN Women side and from the partner side, mainly due to overstretched personnel during the response period. Another bottleneck was obtaining three quotes for the generator, which according to the MCO's understanding was a requirement to proceed with the procurement process. It was noted that it can be difficult to get quotes particularly during an ongoing crisis response. It took ~three months from the date of the request to the time the Purchase Order was issued, and by then the generator may not have been necessary for the original purpose.

Timeline of procurement of a generator after TC Yasa

17 December 2020 – TC Yasa made landfall

5 January 2021 – initial request from partner

7 January 2021 – request sent to HA team for processing – then sent to programme associate for processing.

2 Feb, 2021 – UN Women requested the partner to provide a concept note on need for generator.

5 February 2021 – UN Women received quote from partner and concept note

15 February 2021 – Request to progress the request

⁶⁹ As per update received from the office, P3 level support for one year has been confirmed.

16 March 2021 - Request for contract
24 March 2021 – PO initiated

4.4 Effectiveness: What does UN Women's performance look like in crisis response?

Finding 5: The Multi-country Office's strategy in contributing to evidence and knowledge generation through rapid assessments, advocacy briefs, toolkits and IEC materials has bridged the research and information gap on gender during emergencies in Fiji.

Stakeholders consulted across the board have appreciated the MCO's knowledge generation function, especially within the cluster system. The MCO reported that not only the PHPC cluster members, but also clusters such as WASH and Food Security, have received tailored protection mainstreaming advice in ensuring protection is at the centre of all members' programming and humanitarian response. The MCO's contribution to ensuring a "ONE UN" response in the face of crisis was also noted by stakeholders consulted, especially UN system partners. For instance, as part of the COVID-19 response during the second wave, while the MCO was supporting a hotline for protection concerns, those affected also raised concerns regarding food security and service providers triangulated this information to note that food insecurity is a contributing factor for VAWG and tried to redirect women to appropriate food distribution options. The MCO reached out to FAO emphasising the need to set up an information flow system so that these issues could be addressed adequately. UNFPA has also been supported by the MCO to develop its key messaging in support of their programming around women, adolescent girls and young people being at the centre of humanitarian action. The MCO has also updated a PHPC tool which outlines protection structures and preparedness activities across the Pacific region. The Mental Health and Psycho-social Support Cell (MHPSS) was supported by the MCO to develop key messaging in support of programming around MHPSS to ensure a gender and protection lens was included in all activities and messaging. The Safety and Protection Cluster's Information Management component has been strengthened through the support of the Information Management and Monitoring and Evaluation (IM&ME) Technical Working Group which is led and coordinated by the MCO. The National Disaster Management Office in Fiji is currently being supported through the Technical Working Group by MCO's support in the collation of members response activities feeding directly into NDMO disaster management dashboard for COVID-19.⁷⁰ The MCO worked with partners including the MWCPA to provide information about women's rights to access quality essential services for victims and survivors of violence. Apart from Television adverts, development, printing and dissemination of close to 200,000 IEC materials promoting the national helplines, national and community referral guidance for women and children, gender and protection emergency phone tree were undertaken.⁷¹

In the aftermath of TC Yasa, the MCO sent out alerts to PHPC, including information on evacuation centers, water, electricity and police services, apart from collating information through the 5 W's to ensure there was clarity on responsibility of different stakeholders involved. Stakeholders consulted appreciated the immediate deployment of a team by the MCO on the ground who were able to reach the field to do a needs assessment to understand protection needs, supporting the national cluster system and the overall national response. Stakeholders noted that these rapid assessments have informed strategies in terms of responding to COVID – 19, not only with the MWCPA but also with other partners in how to address concerns of GBV, health and economic empowerment. Donors consulted also noted that cluster-coordinated efforts led by the MCO have led to highlighting the need for, and the subsequent provisioning of certain services (such as sanitary pads, psychosocial support) as part of cyclone response efforts which have not been considered before. It was reported that the MCO led the drafting of the Fiji cluster Response and Resilience plan for TC Yasa, including reviewing the TC Harold response plan, tracking the path and damage of the cyclone and reviewing data from the Northern Division on initial needs. The MCO has also taken steps to capture information that seek to improve future response efforts, given the recurrent nature of cyclones in the region. It has led an analysis of work being done by clusters and members including what locations are being reached aiming to improve Fiji's COVID-19 response. Further, the MCO provided technical protection guidance on the Evaluation Centre Checklist

⁷⁰ Quarterly Monitoring reports, 2021.

⁷¹ Annual Report 2020. Many activities were undertaken during 2021 as noted by the personnel including supporting safe shelters that are COVID-19 compliant, COVID-19 Administrative Data, training on helplines for phone counsellors, coordinating advocacy as well, but this case study was drafted prior to the year end annual report completion.

development to ensure key protection perspectives are observed, recorded and remedied in evacuation centers.⁷²

However, there is a perception from partners consulted that limited resources may have impacted the timeliness of needs assessments and aid to CSOs, viz-a-vis other UN agencies who were able to quickly mobilize funds during crises.⁷³ The MCO personnel consulted noted that they believe this is partly due to lack of corporate policies to enable quick response as well as guidance and dedicated staff to support resource mobilization and partnerships in the face of emergencies which has impacted its ability to engage with CSOs, whereas other UN agencies are agile due to the capacities in place to respond in a timely manner. While the MCO has been able to highlight needs of vulnerable populations such as LGBTIQ+ persons, stakeholders have reported that this has translated to insufficient effort on the ground. For instance, in the aftermath of TC Yasa it was reported that evacuation centres did not have provisions to meet the special needs of these vulnerable groups in order to make them feel comfortable or safe. This is an area where there is potential for the office to advocate for ensuring that the needs of those who are most vulnerable are integrated into preparedness planning and budget allocations for safe facilities in evacuation centres. Likewise, more support is needed to develop better data management systems to plan and coordinate and report on response efforts as was recommended in the cluster review meeting from July 2020.

4.5 Contributions towards impact and connectedness/ sustainability / Gender and Human Rights: What crisis response strategies have the highest potential to result in immediate benefits in the lives of women and girls, and the most marginalized groups, that are connected with longer term resilience building efforts?

Finding 6. Fiji MCO has placed a strong emphasis on engaging marginalised voices, with the Office calling attention to vulnerabilities of women with disabilities, rural and elderly women and persons with diverse SOGIESC through engagement with civil society as equal partners in co-creation.

Stakeholders consulted also noted that there is a strong emphasis on the MCO's work with people with disabilities, rural women, GBV survivors and SOGIESC. This is well articulated in preparedness plans, assessment reports, communication/advocacy strategies, programmatic work, consultations and inclusion workshops. Stakeholders also noted that UN Women had successfully acted as a bridge between the MWCPA and CSOs in this space by raising their concerns and magnifying their voices in cluster meetings. Conducting rapid assessments with elderly women, minorities, LGBTIQ+ persons and women with disabilities, which has helped to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19, has been acknowledged as one of the most impactful contribution of the MCO overall, especially within the cluster system. UN Women personnel reported working closely with Disabled People's Organizations and desk offices of the government that were caring for persons with disability in the areas affected by the Tropical Cyclone, including conducting a workshop on disability inclusion in Humanitarian Actions with the Pacific Disability Forum in 2020. As part of the PHPC, cluster members, with the support of UN Women, have begun planning for upcoming for LGBTIQ+ Inclusion capacity building training for cluster members. This training will enable PHPC members to better support an inclusive humanitarian response.⁷⁴

The strategy that has worked best is engaging civil society partners in co-creation – for example the Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network was invited to participate in the initial disaster needs assessment along with UN Women and the government officials. This was the first time that LGBTIQ+ organization was directly contributing to collection of information on the needs and set up of shelters for LGBTIQ+ persons. Civil Society stakeholders consulted appreciated the role UN Women has played in magnifying SOGIESC voices,⁷⁵ due to which they have

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ It has been noted by the MCO that protection needs in the Pacific are often not very well understood or well funded and amplified only when there are intense protection needs that emergencies exacerbate.

⁷⁴ Quarterly Monitoring reports, 2021.

⁷⁵ CSO members of the Safety and Protection Cluster include Pacific Disability Forum, Empower Pacific, Fiji Disabled People Federation, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Homes of Hope, House of Sarah, House of Khameleom, Adra Fiji and Rainbow Pride.

been able to advocate for SOGIESC inclusion in DRR, amplify their voices in this space and get other organizations in the protection cluster interested in this area.

The UNHCR Global Protection Cluster Coordinator noted in a letter of thanks to UN Women Fiji that, “capacity development of members and national protection partners in the areas of disability and LGBTQI+ inclusion in humanitarian action has been noteworthy”.⁷⁶

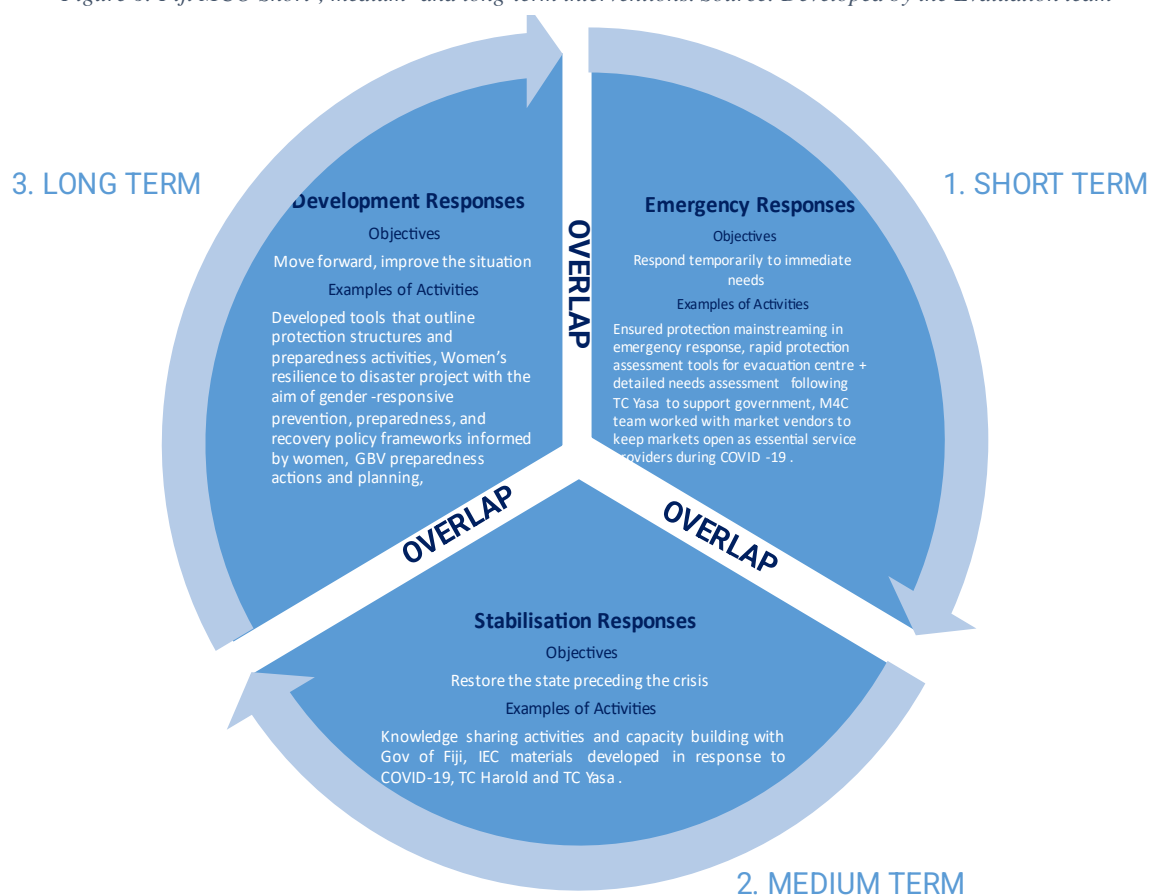
One area where there may be room for strengthening is with respect to engagement of men and boys: two external stakeholders noted that they have a perception that Fiji MCO personnel do not want to engage with men or understand/ advocate for their engagement in efforts related to gender equality and/services for victims of violence (shelters). One stakeholder noted that this is particularly important given the high rates of violence and that the cycle of violence starts from a young age – thus engagement and protection of boys is imperative for breaking the cycle and this may need to be done through male social workers. Fiji MCO personnel consulted noted that this is a very sensitive space, but the office practices equal partnership, analyzes power dynamics and works closely with the women’s rights movement to advance key issues. Further, as put forth by a stakeholder consulted, while the needs of vulnerable groups are captured through these needs assessments, there is no evidence on their integration into planning and actual execution in crisis response activities. For instance, safe spaces and special needs for LGBTQI+ persons in emergency shelters have still largely been neglected, though the office has highlighted the need for a broader dialogue and social norms change on inclusion of LGBTQI+ peoples in the region for their needs to be integrated in practice.

Finding 7: Given the recurrent nature of cyclones in Fiji, the MCO has embedded disaster preparedness, resilience, and response in its programmatic approach, which contributes to its potential to bridge the humanitarian – peace – development nexus.

The Multi Country Office has taken steps- in line with the principles of the Humanitarian, peace, development nexus continuum- to proactively support institutions and build capacities for gender responsive crisis response, in addition to contributing to addressing immediate needs in the aftermath of TC Yasa and COVID-19. A snapshot of the short-, medium- and long-term interventions (to demonstrate the MCO’s emergency, stabilization, and development response respectively) have been presented in Figure 6.

⁷⁶ UNHCR, Global Protection Cluster Coordinator, Letter of thanks, September 2021

Figure 6: Fiji MCO Short-, medium- and long-term interventions. Source: Developed by the Evaluation team



The MCO’s ability to work across siloes in a complementary and synergistic manner was demonstrated by its ability to adapt the Markets for Change (M4C) project on account of the dual crisis. The MCO reported that the project had embedded resilience to disaster within the project design, and was able to pivot to support COVID-19 response. The established relationships with Market Vendor Associations provided a key entry point for reaching the community and distributing information related to the safety and protection during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also reported that this information support extended to timely distribution of relevant awareness materials on vaccination and advisories on proper wearing of masks. These networks also aided the procurement, organization and distribution of WASH and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) supplies to the marketplaces across Fiji. In partnership with the FAO,

Box 2: Women's Resilience to Disasters Programme

Women’s Resilience to Disasters (WRD) Programme	
Duration:	June 2021 – June 2025 (4 years)
Collaborative Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australian Government) - Global and regional partners, including UNDRR - Government partners, selected local women’s organizations
Implementing Party:	UN Women
Project Outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: Prevention, preparedness, and recovery policy frameworks, systems, processes, and tools are gender-responsive and implemented as a result of local women’s and girls’ advocacy</p> <p>Outcome 2: Women and girls have voice and agency to withstand multiple hazards, recover from disasters, and increase their resilience to future crises</p>

on proper wearing of masks. These networks also aided the procurement, organization and distribution of WASH and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) supplies to the marketplaces across Fiji. In partnership with the FAO,

by the end of 2020, M4C had coordinated and distributed packs of dry seeds to 1500 market vendors.⁷⁷ The MCO was able to leverage these networks through a built-in resilience-oriented approach. For instance, with the support of the MCO, leaders of market vendor associations applied lessons learnt from leadership and disaster risk management training, supporting immediate preventative actions as recommended by authorities, and maintaining a presence in decision-making spaces to ensure their voices were heard.⁷⁸ The integration of this nexus approach is also visible from the MCO's EVAWG programme. For instance, the Ministry of Women has been able to put in place a strong multisectoral GBV-iE prevention and response plan, with the technical support of the MCO, which also ensured consultation with stakeholders from the National LGBTQI+ and the National Disabled Persons Organization throughout the planning process. The Women's Resilience to Disasters (WRD) Programme (box 2) is a positive step in the direction of this nexus approach.⁷⁹

On the coordination front, the MCO reported supporting the Fiji Safety and Protection Cluster during TC Yasa by deploying a team to ensure a well-informed (conducting a Detailed Needs Assessment, providing situation reports to name a few) coordinated response with the government. The deployment included 3 GBV personnel to support coordination of the GBV response with government. As part of information management role for the cluster, UN Women collated the 5Ws preparedness data, as well as 5Ws response activities from cluster members for TC Yasa and Ana response. The MCO also supported UNFPA to develop key messaging in support of their programming around women, adolescent girls and young people being at the centre of humanitarian action. As with its programmatic interventions, the MCO has also contributed towards enhancing resilience through its coordination function. The MCO, as co-lead to GBV WG with MWCPA, supported coordination and the start-up of the Northern Division's GBV coordination structure. It coordinated with the ministry to localize and socialize the national Multi-Sector Service Delivery Protocol for Responding to GBV (SDP) in the Northern Division. The office notes that the GBV WG and Child Protection WG were combined during TC Yasa response in the north and met frequently. Inputs into the Safety and Protection cluster were provided from the GBV and Child Protection areas of work. As part of the PHPC, the MCO supported a SOGIESC inclusion DRR training for cluster members to enable a more inclusive humanitarian response. The MCO has updated a PHPC tool which outlines protection structures and preparedness activities across the Pacific region and has started work on creating a mainstreaming brief for protection focal points.⁸⁰

Given the recurrent nature of cyclones in Fiji, it is evident from stakeholder consultations and desk reviews that the MCO uses the down time to ensure that crisis response is not a knee-jerk reaction, but rather meticulously plans in a way to maintain the development and peace-building continuum. While there are lessons to be learnt from the office in terms of diversifying programmes such as M4C, several issues with respect to funding gaps and its consequences on the ability of the MCO to ensure sustainability of its interventions emerged. Stakeholders consulted, particularly CSO representatives and donors, expressed the lack of funding in the GBV/protection space and the challenges with securing CERF funding. This has limited the ability of the office to directly support CSOs. Further, with unstable contract modalities due to the lack of core funds, especially in the gender and protection in humanitarian action team, (refer finding 4 – on personnel) knowledge and experience gained, such as by leading the protection cluster, is often lost due to high staff turnover. The EVAWG team has also noted the requirement of a dedicated personnel for GBVIE.

An integral part of ensuring sustainability of interventions is making sure there is national ownership and buy-in from the government. Even though the MCO has worked closely with the government, especially MWCPA in providing technical expertise, stakeholders expressed the need to strengthen the capacity of the ministry by establishing, and at least initially supporting, a position within the Ministry to closely provide technical expertise and support the secretariat and response work.

V. Observations/lessons learned and way forward

- Given the certainty of cyclones in the region– cascaded by the COVID-19 pandemic– and the subsequent humanitarian support needed immediately to ease the aftermath, more stable staffing to support the coordination function, specifically Gender in Humanitarian Action is needed to minimize

⁷⁷ M4C 6 monthly July-Dec 2020 update and UN Women interview

⁷⁸ Annual Report 2020

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Quarterly Monitoring reports, 2021.

turnover and loss of institutional memory and thereby enhance efficiency. While staff of a more permanent contract type is required to lead the coordination functions of the MCO, additional humanitarian staff to expand the activities of the office, for example on building capacities of grassroots women’s leadership or for immediate deployment on the field in response to a cyclone, needs to be dedicated to solidify the space that the MCO has carved out in mainstreaming gender in responding to crisis in the Pacific. The appropriate seniority of staffing should also be considered to ensure that the individual can influence the wider system response.

- The MCO, to a certain extent, has integrated the nexus approach in terms of programmatic flexibility in the face of a crisis such as in its Markets for Change and EAWG/GBViE efforts. Lessons on embedding a disaster resilience approach within all programmatic efforts should be shared with other offices in the region. There is scope for inclusion of mitigation measures, given the increasing frequency of cyclones in the region, for example collecting and maintaining gender disaggregated data (to support targeted efforts), stocking up NGOs with essential supplies and ensuring inclusion of women in disaster risk management strategies.
- The MCO shares a close working relationship with the government, particularly with the MWCPA. Building capacity of the Ministry in terms of technical expertise on gender mainstreaming during crisis should be prioritised going forward. For GBV-iE, it would be helpful to have a staff person in the Department of Women dedicated to GBV Service Delivery to liaise with UN Women and other organizations involved in GBV-iE coordination. Further, the MCO must continue to act as a bridge and facilitate dialogue between government and the civil society to enhance coordination, a function that has been appreciated by stakeholders consulted.
- Given the GBV-iE area is a space in which confusion continues to persist between UN Women and UNFPA, institutional clarity on global mandates must be operationalized and grounded in the reality of engagement, capacities, investments and relationships in the region in order to best serve women and girls, GBV service providers and national women’s machineries. At the HQ level, this would mean clarity and guidance at a strategic and technical level is required for country-based personnel to sufficiently operate. At the Pacific regional level, further dialogue is needed between agencies to identify and leverage points of strength in order to operate and serve women and girls in the region as One UN. The MCO has done substantial work in this space in the Pacific and needs support and backing from the top to ensure that there is efficient division of labour between the two agencies’ areas of intervention and so that they are able to function without the need to renegotiate every time personnel changes.
- There is an opportunity for integrating existing primary prevention efforts on changing social norms with men, boys and communities into the emergency response space, including engaging men and boys when responding to crisis, such as in emergency shelters, in becoming champions of change for gender equality. Further, considerations need to be made on tackling not only violence faced by the male child, but also addressing the diverse needs of young men who have been deprived and displaced, an area that has not gained sufficient traction from the MCO.
- Collaborative efforts with government agencies and UN actors such as UNFPA, UNICEF and FAO, as mentioned above, have the potential to deliver on collective outcomes that transcend humanitarian-development divide. Given the MCO is at the forefront of coordinating gender mainstreamed crisis response, it can provide leadership to institutionalize a coherent strategy of the UN system in embedding resilience in programming and aligned to the New Way of Working (NWOW) principles.

Sub Annexes

Sub Annex 1. List of KIIs

#	Organization, Title	Method (interview/GD)	Male	Female
UN Women Fiji MCO				
1	Programme Specialist (WEE) Communications & M&E Officer	Interview		2
2	Technical Advisor EAWG	Interview		1

3	UN Gender Group Coordinator Protection Advisor Programme Analyst, Gender in Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction Programme Associate GPHA Gender and Climate Change Programme Support Officer	Group Discussion		5
4	Operations manager	Interview		1
5	Humanitarian and Resilience Officer	Interview		1
6	UN Women representative, Fiji	Interview		1
Civil Society				
7	CEO, Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network	Interview	1	
8	CEO + team, Empower Pacific	Interview	2	1
Government				
9	Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation	Interview		1
10	National Disaster Management Office	Written Feedback		1
UN System Partners				
11	Director and Representative Deputy representative UNFPA Fiji	Interview		2
12	Spotlight M&E officer, RCO, Fiji	Interview		1
13	Representative, UNOCHA, Fiji	Interview		1
14	Emergency and Resilience Expert / Regional Pacific Food Security Cluster Coordinator FAO	Interview		1
15	Child Protection Specialist (Social Welfare)	Interview	1	
Donors				
16	Development Programme Coordinator, MFAT			1
17	Senior Program Manager, Gender and team DFAT	Group discussion	1	4

Sub Annex 2. Portfolio Review Graphs, Charts and Table

The activities have been categorised to reflect the area of focus of the CO in relation to its humanitarian/crisis response activity. This analysis has been presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Budget dedicated towards HA related activities. Source: RMS, Annual Work Plans. 6th, October, 2021.

HA related Activity	Percent of budget
<i>Capacity Building</i>	75%
<i>Technical assistance</i>	9%
<i>Technical assistance and capacity building</i>	9%
<i>Coordination</i>	5%
<i>Advocacy</i>	2%

A year-wise budgetary distinction has been made on the type of output- Humanitarian Action (HA), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Women Peace and Security (WPS), and, where applicable, a combination of these outputs. For

each of these types, a further distinction is made on their source of funding (core vs. non-core). This has been presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Year and output wise funding for crisis response

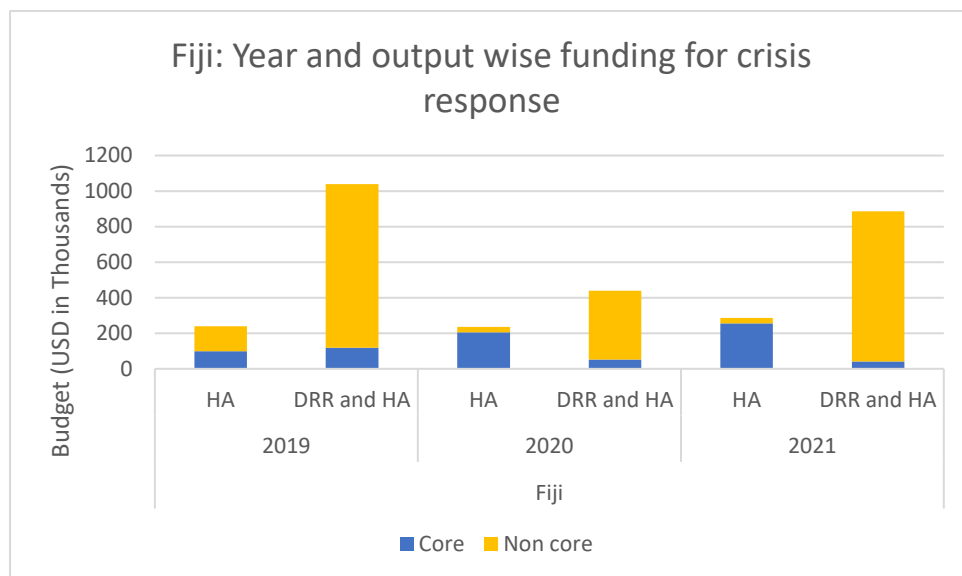
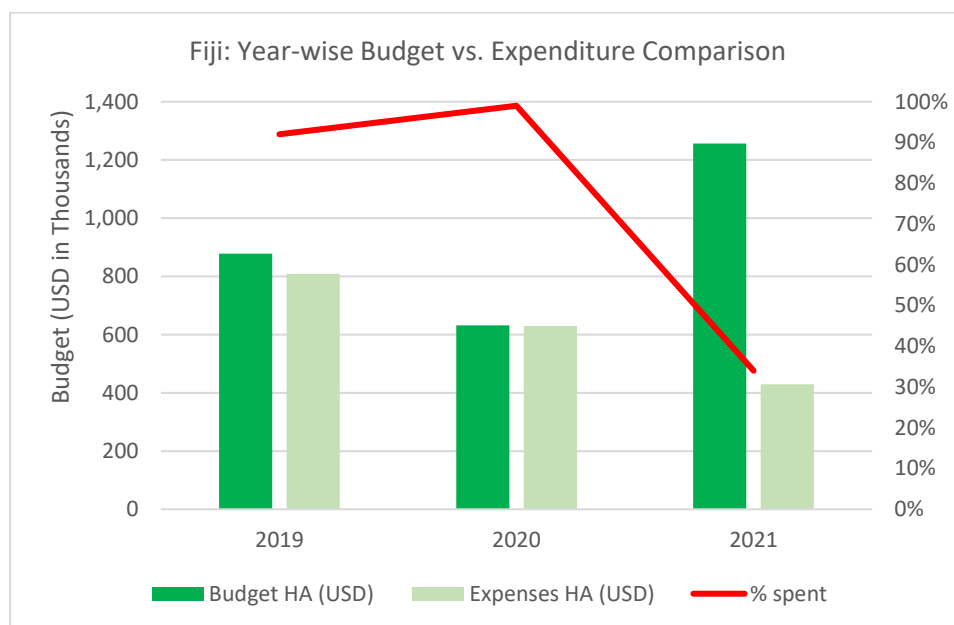


Figure 2 below present a comparison for the amount budgeted for HA outputs vis-à-vis the amount spent for the Fiji MCO.



Sub Annex 3: UN Women Annual report/Quarterly Monitoring reports summary of activities by mandate.

Mandate	AR 2020	Q. Monitoring reports 2021
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Women Co-Chairs the UN Pacific Strategy (UNPS) Outcome Group 2 - Gender Equality (OG2) and the broader Pacific Gender Coordination Group that includes Council of Regional Organisations in 	<p>PHPC level:</p> <p>i.Co-coordinated emergency meetings of the Regional level Protection Cluster (PHPC) following TC Yasa. Activities include writing PHT level sit reps as well as connecting PHPC agencies to work together in identifying the needs and gaps in the North Division.</p>

the Pacific (CROP agencies), donors, and civil society.

- UN Women tried to ensure that the UN Pacific Strategy (UNPS) 2018-2022 commitment to a gender outcome, in addition to gender being mainstreamed in the other outcomes, is implemented and is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals.

- In 2020, despite the devastating cyclones and onset of COVID-19, UN Women continued to convene regular coordination meetings and continued to support UN system coordination, especially advocating for gender mainstreaming in the response to COVID-19.

- Fiji Safety and Protection Cluster was re-activated late December in 2019 in response to a tropical cyclone. One meeting was held with two CSOs (Medical Services Pacific and Fiji Women's Crisis Centre) which are active in humanitarian work.

ii. UN Women ensured protection mainstreaming during the emergency response by assigning one member of the protection cluster to each of the other clusters and sharing key guidance documents. PHPC cluster member have received one-to-one tailored protection mainstreaming advice through UNW ensuring protection is at the centre of all members programming and humanitarian response.

ii. UNFPA was supported by UN Women to develop its key messaging in support of their programming around women, adolescent girls and young people being at the centre of humanitarian action. The messages and actions were to ensure the protection, safety, and dignity of women. This included appropriate messaging on GBV, as well as ensuring WASH kits are properly outfitted to meet menstruation needs and have relevant GBV/CP IEC materials.

v. As part of the PHPC, cluster member through the support of UNW have begun planning for upcoming for LGBTQI+ Inclusion capacity building training for cluster members. This training will enable PHPC members to better support an inclusive humanitarian response.

v. The Mental Health and Psycho-social Support Cell (MHPSS) was supported by UNW to develop key messaging in support of programming around MHPSS. These messages were to ensure a gender and protection lens was included in all activities and messaging. This included technical support to ensure appropriate GBV and youth messaging during COVID-19 emergency response.

vi. UNW update a PHPC tool which outlines protection structures and preparedness activities across the Pacific region. UNW circulated this tool for inputs by members. UNW has also updated the contents of this tool, pertained to regional protection structure through reaching out to protection focal points across the Pacific. UNW through its role in the PHPC has also set up a protection focal points system. UNW has started work on creating a mainstreaming brief for protection focal points.

ii. UNW facilitated deep dive discussions and member lead presentations through the PHPC on important regional protection issues. E.g. WRD, Menstrual Kits, UNW Humanitarian Strategy, with the aim of increasing coordination and capacity amongst members. In addition, a planned LGBTQI workshop will be carried out from the 25th - 27th Oct, supported by UNW and targeting PHPC members and partners.

Fiji Safety and Protection Cluster Level

- i. UNW provided technical support in the design and review of the evacuation and community level questionnaires for the Detailed Needs Assessment (DNA) following TC Yasa. This activity

aims to ensure the finalisation of a gender and protection assessment tool, that is in line with global best practice (GPC standards). As co-lead of the Safety and Protection Cluster, UNW led the DNA in the Northern Division following TC Yasa as well as supported in the finalising of the subsequent report. Once finalised this report aims to inform and strengthen the capacity of regional and national actors to incorporate gender and protection into humanitarian action.

ii. The Safety and Protection Cluster's Information Management component has been strengthened through the support of the IM&ME Technical Working Group which is led and coordinated by UNW.

iii. The National Disaster Management Office in Fiji is currently being supported through the TWG by UNW's support in the collation of members response activities feeding directly into NDMO disaster management dashboard for COVID-19. Analysis of work being done by clusters and members including what locations are being reached aims to improve Fiji's COVID-19 response. Furthermore, the lessons learned workshop for the cluster is now in the planning stage. Knowledge sharing activities and capacity building planning has begun in preparation for the workshop including UNW's planning for the virtual capacity building session with women's interest officers.

iv. The support for the cluster include: organising of monthly cluster meetings collation of response activities in a simple, user friendly template developed in kobo application ongoing set up of central focal depository where members and partners can easily access and views resources development of briefings and presentations whenever required by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Women Represent the cluster in meetings, functions or workshop whenever required by the Ministry ensuring cluster workplans and activities are implemented in a timely manner.

v. Moving forward UN Women will be moving away from secretariat support to the Safety and Protection cluster, providing more technical support. A six-month timeline and transition plan has been shared with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA). With the long term support, a terms of reference has been developed to support this role (secretariat and information management) with the Ministry.

Other:

- Appropriate messaging on GBV/CP IEC materials have been included in WASH kits for the Fiji National WASH cluster. Documentation procured and printed by UNW EAWG team. UNW Humanitarian Protection Specialist provided protection

mainstreaming advice to ensure that WASH kits are properly outfitted to meet menstruation needs. Furthermore UNW connected WASH cluster members with PHPC members working in provision of menstruation items, ensuring response was targeted and duplication did not occur.

Operational

- The Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG) programme team worked across all partners to quickly develop COVID-19 protocols for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Service Providers.
 - The Humanitarian team, as well as EVAWG and M4C, supported response to the complex emergency setting of COVID-19, TCs Harold and Yasa through coordination of the Protection Cluster at the regional and national levels
 - The Markets for Change (M4C) project team swiftly worked with vendors and market management to keep markets open and operating as essential service providers and to implement COVID-19 operating protocols in health and hygiene and social distancing.
 - IEC materials were used in response to COVID-19, TC Harold and TC Yasa. In Fiji, UN Women worked with partners including the Ministry for Women to provide information about women's rights to access quality essential services for victims and survivors of violence. Apart from Television adverts, development, printing and dissemination of close to 200,000 IEC materials promoting the national helplines, national and community referral guidance for women and children, gender and protection emergency phone tree were undertaken. This work is pertinent, not only in times of
- WPHF grantees received feedback and support of their first quarter reports (both financial and narrative) allowing for further capacity building and building of programme management skills. As part of WPHF, UNW have also begun planning for upcoming capacity building regarding Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) and Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) training for each partner which will allow CSO's to better integrate gender in their emergency's response programmes.
- Women's resilience to disaster project: This is a new project with 2 outcomes:
- i. Prevention, preparedness, and recovery policy frameworks, systems, processes, and tools are gender-responsive and implemented as a result of local women's and girls' advocacy
 - i. Women and girls have voice and agency to withstand multiple hazards, recover from disasters, and increase their resilience to future crises

disaster (such as COVID-19 and the recent TC Yasa), but also in future preparedness.

Normative

- The Fiji MCO has been the primary technical partner to the Fiji Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA) in developing the Fiji National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (NAP). Despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19 and tropical cyclones during the year, work on the NAP continued through strategic adaptation and commitment.
- A cornerstone activity of the Markets for Change Project (M4C) is the establishment or strengthening of representative bodies for market vendors who then seek to influence policies governing the market space in which they conduct their businesses. While scheduled activities had to be cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19, UN Women transitioned to response work to ensure effective and timely interventions. Leaders of market vendor associations applied lessons learnt from leadership and disaster risk management training, supporting immediate preventative actions as recommended by authorities, and maintaining a presence in decision-making spaces to ensure their voices were heard. Markets for Change has engaged with the Ministry for Local Government in Fiji to review the Market By-law across 12 municipal councils in Fiji, resulting in the adoption of a gender responsive/ consultative process with the women market vendors. It is anticipated that the revised By-law will be gender inclusive.
- With support and collaboration with key stakeholders including women's ministries, CSOs/NGOs in

the cluster and other cluster lead agencies, gender and protection gained more attention and focus in the overall humanitarian response systems in the region through multiple emergencies, including TC Sarai (early Jan), Covid-19 pandemic, TC Harold (April) and TC Yasa (Dec).

- Provisioning of Gender-Based Violence in Emergency (GBViE) technical expertise and coordination on both preparedness and response. Ministries of Women and civil society organizations (CSOs), with support from UN Women, have advocated to ensure domestic violence services continue to operate during various states of lockdown and curfew, ensuring that shelters and counselling services are considered essential services.
- Technical assistance and inputs from gender and protection perspective was provided to the following policies and frameworks: Fiji (National disaster management policy, national displacement guideline, national relocation policy)