

Protection of Children & Women Cluster

Results of the Cluster Effectiveness Survey

10 November 2008

Content of the Cluster Meetings

Overall, Protection of Children and Women (PCW) Cluster meetings were rated as being useful. There was general agreement that “Situation” updates and a focus on sharing more analytical information about the situation at field level, including gaps in geographical coverage, is what members should be engaging on. “Agency” updates were not found to be particularly useful, especially as it was felt that they lasted too long and were not adequately strategic. The Cluster needs to ensure that issues discussed in the meetings relate to strategic subjects directly connected to ways of improving the response to Cyclone Nargis.

In response to this concern, the Cluster changed the format of the agenda in early September 2008, and Cluster Lead agencies at the Township hubs are now being asked to report back on strategic issues raised at field level PCW Cluster meetings. Guidelines have been prepared to focus the reports on key issues, achievements, challenges, and advocacy efforts. However, there are still challenges in ensuring that the information shared is strategic and concise.

In addition to the feedback discussed above, respondents also commented that meetings should be more action oriented, with follow up to ensure that principles discussed in meetings are put into practice. Links with other sectors could also be strengthened. Despite improvements, the Cluster discussions still do not adequately reflect Women’s Protection issues.

The most popular options for additions to the agenda were field/geographical updates, links with other sectors, and program implementation challenges, in that order.

Agenda Item	Usefulness*			
	1	2	3	4
Situation Updates	III (3)	III (3)	IIII III (8)	IIII I (6)
Agency Updates	IIII (4)	IIII (5)	IIII III (9)	II (2)
Cluster Coordination and Emerging Issues/Events		IIII (4)	IIII IIII (10)	IIII I (6)
Women’s Protection Technical Working Group feedback		IIII (5)	IIII IIII (10)	IIII (5)
Child Protection in Emergencies Working Group feedback	I (1)	III (3)	IIII I (6)	IIII III (8)
Cross cutting issues		IIII II (7)	IIII IIII (9)	III (3)
Feedback from other Clusters or working groups	I (1)	IIII II (7)	IIII II (7)	II (2)

* 1 being the lowest rating, 4 being the highest

Achieving Objectives

Generally respondents indicated that the objectives of Cluster coordination and information flow had been achieved. Strengths of the Cluster are in sharing information with members about field work activities, awareness raising initiatives, training and sharing information on capacity building opportunities, activity mapping exercises, and carrying out initial assessments on children and women’s protection needs (though it should be noted that the Women’s Protection needs assessment is still on-going). Other strengths include assessing program challenges, establishing monitoring indicators, work on advocacy and developing a systematic data collection system that allows for inputs from both children’s and women’s protection actors, as well as others such as those working in the area of mental health and psychosocial support.

Areas of weakness were thought to be in the development of an inter-agency work-plan, standard operating procedures, and supporting the inter-agency development of Information Education and Communication materials. The Cluster did, however, develop a Cluster Response Plan but as there has been a frequent turnover of those attending the Cluster meetings not all respondents may have been aware of the existence of this plan. The surveys also show contradictory messages on financial and supply distribution information sharing. Respondents stated that they felt that the Cluster did not share enough information on this subject, but when asked if they would like to see funding and financial issues added to the agenda people did not prioritise this. The OCHA exercise to update financial tracking information by Cluster has been carried out three times since the emergency response commenced, each update is distributed to Cluster members in hard copy at Cluster meetings, and disseminated with the meeting minutes.

Objectives of the Cluster	1*	2*	3*	4*
Map and update the 3 Ws (who, what, where) for Protection of Children and Women Cluster activities	I (1)	IIII (4)	IIII IIIII (10)	IIII I (6)
Provide a forum for sharing information on activities, programme challenges, to plan inter-agency activities, etc.	II (2)	IIII I (6)	IIII (4)	IIII III (8)
Develop an inter-agency workplan or strategic framework to ensure cohesiveness and minimize duplication	III (3)	IIII II (7)	IIII (4)	IIII II (7)
Develop Standard Operating Procedures (e.g. to formalize referral mechanisms, ensure multi-agency accountability, etc.)	IIII (4)	IIII I (6)	IIII (5)	IIII (4)
Define clear roles and responsibilities of each of the different partners	II (2)	IIII I (6)	IIII IIIII (10)	II (2)
Carry out an initial assessment of Children and Women's protection needs	I (1)	IIII (5)	IIII IIIII (10)	IIII I (6)
Establish monitoring indicators		IIII (5)	IIII II (7)	IIII III (8)
Establish a data collection system (standardising intake forms, creating information sharing protocols, analysing aggregate data, operationalising the feedback loop, etc.)		IIII (4)	IIII IIIII (9)	IIIIII (6)
Develop an advocacy plan for liaising with government authorities, donors, the media, and other relevant actors	I (1)	IIII (5)	IIII IIIII (10)	IIII (5)
Document and disseminate information on best practices and lessons learned for multiple agencies	II (2)	IIII (4)	IIII IIIII (10)	IIII (4)
The Protection of Children and Women's Cluster regularly shares information with members about field work carried out by the Cluster		IIII (4)	IIII IIIII I (11)	IIII I (6)
The Cluster regularly shares information about initiatives of the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU)		IIII I (6)	IIII IIIII I (11)	III (3)
Financial and supply distribution reports on the work of the Cluster for the Protection of Children and Women is openly shared with all members	IIII (4)	IIII (5)	IIII IIIII (9)	II (2)
Provide training and technical support and alert members to other training opportunities		III (3)	IIII III (8)	IIII III (8)
Engage in inter-agency, multi-sectoral field missions to assess programming successes and challenges and identify gaps in programming	II (2)	IIII (4)	IIII IIIII (10)	IIII (5)
Identify resource gaps and advocate for increased funding to fill these gaps (e.g. in the context of humanitarian funding processes)	III (3)	IIII I (6)	IIII II (7)	III (3)
Actively liaise with relevant sector/Cluster working groups to ensure that Protection of Children and/or Women issues are integrated into all humanitarian response efforts		IIII I (6)	IIII III (8)	IIII (5)
Supporting inter-agency development of Information Education and Communication materials to ensure consistency of messaging and reduce duplication of effort	II (2)	IIII IIIII (9)	IIII III (8)	III (3)
Organise opportunities for awareness-raising	I (1)	III (3)	IIII IIIII II (12)	IIII (5)

* 1 being the lowest rating, 4 being the highest

Principles of Partnership

There was broad agreement that the principles of partnership had been practiced, and actively encouraged. Particular strengths in terms of partnership included the ability to comfortably express different opinions within the Cluster, the ability to add or remove items from the agenda, and opportunities to contribute to the development of monitoring indicators. Within the last two months the Cluster has also actively sought inputs into the agenda prior to each meeting however, to date, no feedback has been received. The Cluster also received good feedback on the clarity of its strategy and response plans, on collaborative efforts within the Cluster's

technical working groups, and the sharing of information with Cluster members about work done by other Clusters.

Positive feedback on the ability to contribute to plans contradicts the response from the “Achieving Objectives” section above where people felt that developing interagency work-plans to ensure cohesiveness and to minimize duplication was not very successful. The perceived poor collaboration with other Clusters was the greatest weakness, this possibly reflects the fact that the Protection of Children and Women Cluster Co-Leads have tried to find ways to encourage other Clusters to take into account the needs of women and children, but little information and guidance has flowed in the other direction. Furthermore the Co-Leads may not be adequately feeding back to members on the work they have done with other Clusters.

Principles of Partnership	1*	2*	3*	4*
Clear strategy and response plans exist and were developed jointly with members	I (1)	IIII (4)	IIII IIII (9)	IIII III (8)
The Protection of Children and Women Cluster Response plan and strategy are regularly reviewed	II (2)	IIII I (6)	IIII III (8)	IIII II (7)
Cluster members had an opportunity to contribute to the development of Cluster monitoring indicators		III (3)	IIII IIII I (11)	IIII III (8)
Able to add or remove items mentioned on the Cluster meetings' agendas	II (2)	II (2)	IIII III (8)	IIII IIII (10)
Able to influence decisions and direction of the Cluster	II (2)	IIII (4)	IIII IIII (9)	IIII I (6)
Able to comfortably express different opinions within the Cluster	II (2)	II (2)	IIII IIII I (11)	IIII II (7)
Local NGOs members can participate and contribute ideas and experiences to Protection of Children and Women Cluster	II (2)	IIII (4)	IIII III (8)	IIII II (7)
Meetings are open to all partners (“open door policy”)		IIII (5)	IIII (4)	IIII IIII (11)
There is good collaboration with Cluster Working Groups (Women’s Protection, Child Protection in Emergencies, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support) in strategy and response		IIII (4)	IIII IIII (9)	IIII III (8)
There is good collaboration with other Clusters (e.g. Shelter, WASH, Food, Education, etc) in strategy and response	II (2)	IIII I (6)	IIII III (8)	IIII (4)
The Protection of Children and Women’s Cluster regularly shares information with members about work done with other Clusters	I (1)	III (3)	IIII IIII (9)	IIII III (8)

* 1 being the lowest rating, 4 being the highest

Why do you come, what do you feel is useful?

People attend the meeting to represent their agencies and to raise the profile of their organisation’s activities, to learn from others work, and to share and gain information - not just on other agencies but also on the activities of other Clusters, OCHA and the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU). PCW Cluster meetings are considered to be a good forum for identifying gaps, needs, potential duplication and ways of ensuring better coordination. It is also a good platform for advocacy.

What could be improved?

The meetings need to be more action oriented. Better inclusion of field actors and integration of field issues would be useful. There needs to be better reflection of women’s protection issues in the meetings, this point was raised throughout the survey. Part of the challenge remains (as was discussed at the creation of the Cluster), that the majority of the field actors are focussed on Child Protection activities. Agency mapping could be more helpful, especially with regards to inclusion of smaller local actors, with greater detail of information at the field level; at present the MIMU maps are technically only able to show activities at Township level, despite the Cluster also providing comprehensive information about agency coverage at the Village Tract and Village levels. The current agenda format is too full and a shorter list of agenda items would give more time for in-depth discussions on certain topics.

Inclusion of Local Actors

Some respondents noted that the Cluster had been trying hard to include local actors, but that this was challenging. Others also commented that it would be good to encourage more feedback from local actors. There has been wide appreciation of the efforts the PCW Cluster has made to provide translation at their meetings. One respondent advised that it would be even better if meetings were held in Myanmar language first, with translation into English. It was also thought that agencies should do more to encourage the participation and attendance of their Myanmar staff at meetings. At the field level, it is felt that agendas should be more focussed to save time, and that this would encourage more implementing staff to attend the meetings.

Links with other Coordination Systems

More work needs to be done on identifying gaps and potential overlap in activities across different sectors (e.g. education and child protection). Regular meetings should be held with other Clusters, this could assist this process. The Cluster also needs to identify pre-existing coordination structures and link in with them.

Priorities over Next 2 Months

- Need to build links with other Clusters and improve ways to address broader cross-sectoral issues, for example livelihoods programming
- A shift to medium and long term planning. To a certain extent this process has already commenced as the Cluster has contributed to the development of the Early Recovery Plan, and to the ongoing preparation of the Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP). The Cluster needs to ensure that the coordination methods used from now on reflect the shift to medium- and long-term recovery and a broader range of actors are included in these processes, linking the immediate relief response to previously existing development programming
- Better inclusion of women and gender issues into the meeting discussions. Adequate contributions need to be made from those working on these issues.
- Improve and support coordination at the field level.

Overall Recommendations

- Given that inter-agency plans and IEC materials do exist, poor feedback on their presence would indicate a need to raise awareness of these documents among the Cluster members. Thus it would be worthwhile for the Cluster to remind attendees of their existence. Several requests have been made at Cluster meetings for organisations to share IEC materials but to date this has not been as forthcoming as desirable, other than the regular update to the Supplies and IEC Materials Tracking list.
- Similarly, though the Cluster Leads are engaging with other Clusters through the weekly Cluster Leads meetings, the Early Recovery Cluster meetings, and other formal and informal avenues for information sharing (feeding into plans, joint development of training, etc), this is clearly not adequately communicated to Cluster members as they appeared to be unaware of the links existing between the various Clusters.
- Field staff come to the Cluster meeting when in Yangon (as UNICEF staff have done).

Survey Data

- 22 respondents - UN Agency (14), Local NGO (2), INGO (5), other (MRCS 1)
- Location of respondents – Yangon (15), Field office (7)
- Of those who responded, 11 had attended more than thirteen meetings, 7 had attended three to five meetings, and 1 had been to one or two meetings
- In addition, 12 respondents also attended the Child Protection in Emergencies Technical Working Group meetings, 11 attended the Women's Protection Technical Working Group Meetings, and 7 attended the Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support Technical Working Group meetings
- To a lesser degree, a small number of respondents also attended the following Cluster and Network meetings: Early Recovery Cluster, Education Cluster, Health Cluster, Shelter Cluster, Vulnerability Network meetings, and Accountability Network meetings