

Case Study 4 - Integrated Approach to Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection

Integrating Protection: An Integrated Approach to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection (CP) works by combining the delivery of information sessions of GBV and CP with communities, increasing their commitment and knowledge to address the issue, and assisting in the use of established mechanisms of resolution.

Context on the area of implementation:

- Mali: As one of the countries in the Sahel Area facing political instability since 2013, Mali received the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission as an international effort to stabilize the country. More recently, the presence of Boko Haram represents a regional instability. According to UN Women in 2017,¹⁹ 83% of girls and women aged 15 to 29 years have undergone Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. UNICEF 2018²⁰ reports that 2.4 million children currently need humanitarian assistance.

- Niger: As another country in the Sahel Area, Niger presents one of the highest population growth rates in the world. However, its population has consistently suffered from chronic food insecurity and recurrent natural crises. More recently, the presence of Boko Haram presents a regional instability. According to UNICEF 2018²¹, 1.2 million children need humanitarian assistance, with 380,166 children affected by Severe Acute Malnutrition. UN Women 2018²² cites that 76% of women 20 to 24 years were first married or in union before 18.

- Pakistan: One of the most populated countries in the region and the world, Pakistan presents a very diverse population, depending on the area and social, economic class. The country faces a relevant issue of under-registration of births. According to UNICEF (2016),²³ only a third of Pakistani children under five are registered, with the figure dropping to 5% amongst the poorest. Also, according to UNICEF (2016), 6% of women aged 20-49 were married before 15, and 32% before 18.

The Project

The Integrating Protection: An Integrated Approach to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection (CP) program aims to promote gender justice and child protection, by “promoting safe and accessible services and case management for survivors of GBV, child abuse, and exploitation” (Islamic Relief 2017). The

Quick-Facts

Area of Implementation: Mali, Niger and Pakistan

Mali:

- Human Development Index: 0.442
- HDI Rank: 175
- Population: 17,6 million
- Adolescent birth rate (birth per 1,000 women ages 15-19): 174.6
- Expected years of schooling, female: 7.5 years
Mean years of schooling: 1.7
- Expected years of schooling, male: 9.4 years
Mean years of schooling: 3.0
- Human Development Index, female: 0.385
- Human Development Index, male: 0.491

Niger

- Human Development Index: 0.353
- HDI Rank: 187
- Population: 19.9 million
- Adolescent birth rate (birth per 1,000 women ages 15-19): 202.4
- Expected years of schooling, female: 4.7 years
Mean years of schooling: 1.1
- Expected years of schooling, male: 5.9 years
Mean years of schooling: 2.3
- Human Development Index, female: 0.291
- Human Development Index, male: 0.397

Pakistan

- Human Development Index: 0.550
- HDI Rank: 147
- Population: 188.9 million
- Adolescent birth rate (birth per 1,000 women ages 15-19): 38.7
- Expected years of schooling, female: 7.4 years
Mean years of schooling: 3.7
- Expected years of schooling, male: 8.8 years
Mean years of schooling: 6.5
- Human Development Index, female: 0.452
- Human Development Index, male: 0.610

Organization: Islamic Relief Worldwide

Timeline: From June 2016 to May 2017

Scale: 11,000 male and female beneficiaries in awareness-raising sessions and 44 Gender Based Violence and child abuse reported and referred for support

Funding: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

¹⁹ <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/fr/countries/africa/mali>

²⁰ https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/2018_Mali_HAC_Revised_June_2018.pdf

²¹ https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Niger_Humanitarian_Situation_Report_May_2018.pdf

²² <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/fr/countries/africa/niger>

²³ https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/UNICEF_Pakistan_-_Annual_Report_2016_-_Version_6.0.pdf

project focuses on ending three harmful practices inflicted on women and girls: early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, and domestic violence. By considering the overlapping nature of these practices concerning child protection, the project provides an integrated approach. By using pre-existing social networks, the project provided interactive awareness-raising workshops to both men and women, focusing on communities' leaders, elders, and religious leaders. Since all three countries are of Muslim majority, religious leaders provided the organization with the trust needed and could influence and support the project goals. The project also aimed to help survivors access the existing referral pathways. Finally, it also aimed at establishing a reporting mechanism for commitments and actions on the topic.

Results

The project collected data on the topics which allowed the recognition of different layers of vulnerability in the different areas of implementation. For example, as the result of the analysis of the project, it was found that there were cases of child abuse of Afghani refugees in Pakistan and that HIV occurrence in Mali represented an increase in vulnerability to GBV. The data also allowed the organization to determine that young girls are at higher risks of EFM and to find a correlation between domestic violence and EFM. The cultural adaptation done by the organization's staff allowed the recognition that, regardless of official pathways to deal with GBV and CP cases, most of the communities had alternative resolution methods. As a result, the organization arranged discussions and groundwork with the communities to better deal with the problems. Also, the project was able to conclude that were not only public services insufficient but also that many cultural barriers harmed the access to them. For survivors in crisis, the project also provided funds to help access the public services which required a fee. Even though participation was difficult, especially considering the communities in question, the project was able to influence both community leaders and religious leaders successfully. In this matter, the project created Community Hope Action Teams (CHATs) to sustain future advocacy and awareness raising better.

Conclusion

One of the lessons learned with the project was, considering cultural sensitivity, adaptations were necessary to develop activities better and build upon the participant's context and openness. A continuous process of awareness-raising was also needed since important information about the effects of GBC and CP were unknown by participants. Similarly, when working with local staff, the deeper capacity building is needed since they can share much of the cultural understanding of the participants.

The participation of religious leaders in the project and in the work of ending GBV and child abuse is significant since local organizations trying to raise awareness would only discuss the issues when religious edicts supported the subject. Religious leaders were also agents that helped undermines myth or religious interpretations that were actually cultural factors allowing GBV.

Finally, the integration approach of the project allowed a better understanding of the intersections between sex, age, disability, and other forms of excluding factors that contribute to the suffering of GBV and child abuse. Also, the use of referrals approach was seen as positive by the staff, who also stressed the need to continue partnerships with services providers. Funds to help survivors in these referrals were also recognized as important by all offices.

Documents consulted

Islamic Relief – Integrating Protection: An Integrated Approach to Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection²⁴
UNDP – Human Development Reports, Mali country profile, 2016, Niger country profile, 2016, Pakistan country profile, 2016
UN Women – Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2018
UN Women in Pakistan Country Profile 2018-2022, 2018
CEDAW – Concluding comments of CEDAW: Niger, CEDAW/C/NER/CO/2, 2007

²⁴ <https://jiflfc.com/resources/integrating-protection-integrated-approach-gender-based-violence-child-protection/>