

GenCap Retreat

Report from First Retreat for
GenCap Advisers,
Geneva, 11-13 January 2009

IASC

Inter-Agency Standing Committee
Sub-Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action



NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

Index

1. Scope and Objectives of the Retreat
2. Summary Outcomes from the Retreat
3. Structure and Methodology
4. Participants
5. Key Outcomes of each Session
6. Strengths of the Retreat
7. Remaining Challenges for Future Retreats
8. Annex 1: Final Agenda
9. Annex 2: List of Participants

1. Scope and Objectives of the Retreat

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Sub-working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action, in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) convened the First Retreat for GenCap Deployments in Geneva on 11 – 13 January 2009. Since the first group of GenCap Advisors (GAs) in Humanitarian Action was recruited in May 2007, the GenCap roster has grown to comprise 26 gender experts. By October 2008, 23 GenCap Advisors had been deployed to support 18 country teams in applying gender equality and GBV (response and prevention) programming in humanitarian action. As we moved into the third round of training of new GenCap roster members, the Steering Committee believed that the time was right to bring together existing and former GAs to understand their experiences, successes and challenges in order to constantly review and improve the project. For this reason the two and a half day Retreat focused on the following issues;

- Providing an opportunity for current GAs to share experiences from assignments;
- Capturing good practices, challenges and support needs;
- Discussing and confirming GenCap project-related objectives, procedures and administrative needs.

2. Summary Outcomes from the Retreat

Key outcomes of the Retreat are:

1. Given the short duration of GenCap Advisors' (GAs') assignments, highly **strategic, well-coordinated approaches** focusing on selected issues only and based on the development of strong alliances, especially with senior management, are critical to success. However, the ideal environment is rarely in place, so much of the discussion in the course of the Retreat focused on how to identify opportunities and how then to leverage these to achieve the best possible results.
2. The issue of the **sustainability of the GA's work** emerged as one of the main challenges for the GenCap Project. In this regard, a number of key factors and solutions were discussed including the criticalness of the HC/RC support. It was recognised that if there is little support from the HC, then the chances of making sustainable impact on the work of the UNCT is decreased. It is important, therefore, that GAs find ways to increase the involvement of HCs. In addition, the group recognised the importance and the potential of counterpart training and mentoring and of building and coordinating alliances.

3. Directly and inextricably linked to the issue of sustainability of the GAs' work is the **issue of coordination**. In this regard, the group discussed the need to determine where the Cluster is in terms of assessment, strategy development and implementation cycle in order to establish entry points on the ADAPT & ACT-C scale and offer support accordingly, and the need to build on any commitment – policy, strategy or programming; big or small – that the Cluster has already shown towards GEP. The CAP process was also identified as a key entry point and the group explored opportunities for contributing to and enhancing GEP in the CAP process.
4. In terms of GAs' work in the **area of PSEA**, the GAs agreed that only some GAs have the skills and experience to address the issue if requested – and this may be restricted to information only and not address SEA investigations - but, notwithstanding this, it is the agencies' duty to make their staff aware about the mechanisms and the regulations in place. The group also discussed the lack or absence of support mechanisms for the GA if s/he reports cases of SEA that then prevents the GA in doing the rest of her/his work. In brief, without a clear mandate and associated protection and support, GAs should not undertake this work, but rather should focus on gender equality work.
5. In relation to agreeing and **maintaining respect for the ToRs** and avoiding having additional items being 'dumped on' the GAs, the group's discussions focused on the need to ensure the ToRs are enabling and mutually understood and in being proactive from the start of mission in engaging with and managing the expectations of the UNCT. Finally, the GAs agreed that they must be prepared to say 'no' respectfully, and to use the legitimacy conferred by an agreed ToR and work-plan.
6. Ahead of a planned meeting with the GBV AoR the following day, the GAs discussed whether or not GenCap should take up the lead GBV AoR or maintain a strictly gender equality integration across all the clusters. In brief, the group concluded that it is not possible to divorce GE and GBV work and that GAs should not lose the GenCap vision. However, while the issue of capacity in terms of numbers needs to be looked at very closely, it is possible that **GAs could take up the role of GBV AoR where the ToR is clear**.
7. **Minor revisions were made to the ToR** and the Request Form, which would optimize the GAs' integration into the UNCT, the 'buy-in' and commensurate commitment to GEP from the UNCT and the contribution from day one of the GAs' deployment. The revisions were discussed in plenary and will go before the Steering Committee for discussion and approval.
8. The GAs discussed how they felt about **communication with the Steering Committee** Focal Points, between themselves, with the GenCap Secretariat and with NRC and to propose ways in which communication would be improved. The subsequent discussions were very constructive and recommendations were shared with each group.
9. **Liasion between GenCap and ProCap** Advisors to explore synergies and mutual learning was deemed crucial. GenCap asked ProCap to consider advocating for a GA when they are deployed to a country with no GA. In addition, the two groups converged on the challenge of sustainability and agreed to explore this together. ProCap will be undertaking a management review this spring and have requested an input from GenCap.

3. Structure and Methodology

- The duration of the Retreat was two and a half days.
- As per the recommendations of the Second Annual Orientation Workshop (Geneva, 19 – 23 May 2008) sessions were, for the most part, facilitated by former and current GAs. NRC, the GenCap Secretariat and OCHA also provided input.
- The agenda was driven by conversations with and feedback from former and current GenCap employees to address a number of recurring challenges. A flexible agenda enabled adjustments to be made in order to ensure that participants' needs were addressed. The final agenda for the workshop is provided in Annex 1.
- A social event was arranged on the evening of Tuesday, 13 January with current and new roster members and the GenCap Steering Committee.

4. Participants

Around 25 participants attended the workshop, of which 15 were currently or formerly deployed GAs. In addition members of the Secretariat, OCHA and NRC, ProCap Support Unit and a staff member of the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI), which developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for GenCap also participated. A complete list of participants is provided in Annex 2.

5. Key Outcomes from the Sessions

Session One: Stories from the Field

Each GA made a short presentation on which of the five components of the ToR was the main area of their work and which was the least, comparing what was originally envisaged in their ToR and what occurred in the field. In each of the presentations, the GAs considered in which of the five components of the ToR they believed they had the most success and why (i.e. factors that contributed to their success). This informal session gave the GAs an opportunity to come together in a relaxed and informal manner, which was intended to set the tone of mutual learning and support over the following two days.

Session Two: Monitoring and Evaluation (Andrea Binder, GPPI)

Overall, the impact of the GenCap project has been successful with an impressive impact on programming (an average of more than 2.5 over a six-month period). However, the sustainability of the GAs' impact is much lower and remains the main challenge to the project. In addition, there has been very little documented by way of good practices.

The most successful activities carried out by the GAs were in the areas of Programme Support and Advocacy, while the most problematic was Information & Analysis. The most active Sectors/Clusters in terms of their engagement with the GA and the consequent impacts were GBV and Protection, followed by Health and Emergency Shelter. There is low attention given to Camp Coordination, Environment, Nutrition and no GAs worked in the area of DDR. Factors that contributed to the GAs' engagement with the Clusters included their inter-agency mandate and direct reporting to the HC/RC; the latter was seen to give the GenCaps *legitimacy* and *authority*.

There was some discussion among the GAs about the optimum length of deployment and a general feeling that six months is too short.

In terms of the fulfilment of the ToR, gaps remain that may be explained in part at least by the fact that Cluster Leads are not engaged in drafting the ToR and the UNCT is not usually well prepared for GA's arrival.

Key Discussion Points

1. How to increase the sustainability of the GA's work?
2. Who does GenCap support?
3. Why is it difficult to influence the Health Cluster?
4. Determining success: pre-existing coordination structures
5. The baseline value for gender performance is relatively poor
6. How to access to difficult sectors/clusters?
7. How to better prepare the UNCT for the GA's arrival?
8. How to better integrate the GA into the UNCT's work?

The levels of interventions needed to enhance engagement with the UNCT and subsequently the fulfilment of the ToR include the following:

1. Individual GenCap Advisors
2. GenCap 'management'
3. At the political level

Discussions and Decisions

- HC/RC support is critical. If there is little support from the HC, then the chances of making sustainable impact on the work of the UNCT is decreased. It is important, therefore, that GenCap finds ways to increase the involvement of HCs before deployment.
- GenCap to contribute to HCs' training.
- Agency Representatives in countries may also be important sources of influence on the HC/RC: HQ Agencies should encourage Reps to engage with GAs.
- Issues relating to sustainability that were discussed included the following:
 - The importance of counterpart training and mentoring:
 - Managing expectation - select a few things and do them well and remember that the GA is not likely to be replaced by a full-time/high-level staff member
 - Completing an end-of-mission report (template required, e.g. UNHCR Surge and ProCap)
 - Consider working with middle-level staff and spiral up (rather than meeting top management first), which may better promote 'buy-in' to the GA's work.
 - Look for influential people in the RCs office; identify key people in terms of influence and implementation while continuing to engage the HC/RC in taking a leadership role on gender.

Session Three: Working through the Cluster System - Challenges and Opportunities (Siobhán Foran, GA)

The GA and the Cluster System

- The GA facilitates, coordinates and advocates for the implementation of GEP in accordance with the *Gender Handbook* and *the GBV Guidelines* and companion materials (orientation and training guides, planning worksheets, etc.) to facilitate planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of GEP mainstreaming into each Sector/Cluster in a humanitarian response.

Challenges

- Membership of Clusters or leads not always same as the Global Clusters – e.g. *UNHCR is the Global Cluster lead for protection. Within the Protection Cluster, UNFPA is the global focal point agency for GBV. However, at field level, the responsibilities, capabilities and coordination mechanisms between Protection and GBV are not clear, due primarily to UNFPA's limited field presence. The unclear responsibilities and capabilities with regard to GBV, especially at field level, hinder effective work of GAs.*
- Cross-cutting issues often not implemented as Cluster Leads are not always clear on how and why
- No Gender Focal Point (GFP) has been appointed to each Cluster or Cluster Coordination
- Issues with the role and level of responsibility of the GFP (where one does exist)
- No inclusion of gender equality in the Cluster's ToR
- Gender Mainstreaming is poorly situated e.g. Yogyakarta/Central Java earthquake, where gender was housed with GBV within a sub-group of the Protection Cluster. Gender mainstreaming got marginalised: confusion with GBV / sub-group deemed to have little legitimacy to influence Clusters.
- No Plan of Action/Plan of Action does not include commitments to GEP and/or GBV
- Performance is inconsistent; varying significantly
- The Cluster is dominated by the UN, both in terms of organisational representation and by leadership; it does not engage and mobilise non-UN actors where they may in fact have more field experience and may not be constrained by same security protocols
- Cluster Leads do not have the full range of technical and management skills to ensure effective leadership (including integration of cross-cutting issues)
- Poor management of meetings with little produced/achieved and no follow-up (i.e. another bureaucratic layer that does not provide a commensurate level of improved coordination). During a period of time, where there are multiple demands of people's time and energies, this is a further disincentive for NGOs and other potential cluster participants to attend and actively contribute.
- Clusters have not been mobilised.
- No interagency/inter-cluster cooperation and no coordination between GBV Task Force and other Cluster/Sectors
- A GA's lack of familiarity with a particular Cluster/Sector's work
- Time factor for the GA – so many Clusters; so little time!
- Some GAs may find it difficult when they meet resistance from Cluster/Cluster Lead
- Some GAs may not be comfortable escalating the issue to HC or other
- Some GAs may feel unsupported; that there is nowhere to go for support.

Discussion Points:

- Why is it challenging if the field Cluster is different from the global level? If help is needed at a higher level, there are no existing organisational links and, therefore, it may be harder to establish relationships and access support
- Group Feedback on challenges:
 - Clusters either do not exist or have no formal structure
 - Cluster Leads do not know their roles and responsibilities ('provider of last resort', responsibility to Cluster before Agency), especially in terms of cross-cutting issues such as gender
 - May be large programmes that have no equivalent Cluster, e.g. money for Iraq goes through a structure that has nothing to do with the cluster system

- Some Clusters are too technical and this might be intimidating to a GA
- Some are so large that they cannot address all sub-cluster and cross-cutting issues within the limited agenda/time
- The Cluster is not very proactive
- Field-based Cluster ToRs are different than the global or HQ-based Cluster ToRs; disconnect between field and HQ
- The added challenge of remote management – Iraq, Somalia, etc.
- Control imposed by the Cluster Lead on how/when information is shared
- Challenge when the Cluster Lead is not an operational partner and has limited understanding of processes
- No accountability mechanisms in place to facilitate Cluster Leads responsibility towards GEP
- Lack of GE competence in inter-cluster fora and dialogue. Hence synergy between Clusters is lost. Needed is senior gender competence in the Cluster coordination body
- How do we address the above challenges? some suggestions to be considered at the different levels of influence (GAs, Gender SWG, IASC)
 - Bring all Cluster Leads together to train them on their responsibilities in relation to GEP
 - Regularly attend the Cluster Leads meetings/intra-cluster meetings
 - Establishment of accountability mechanism
 - Stronger ToR coming down from the global level and significant inclusion of GEP in it (currently being developed)
- Example of good practice: In Afghanistan, OCHA is very strong at coordination of the cluster structure, and the GA's role was included and reinforced by OCHA on her arrival. OCHA's role was integral – Cluster Leads were informed that this was now a priority of their work.

Additional Challenges and Solutions identified by the GenCaps

- No gender competence at the inter-cluster coordination level to facilitate GEP.
- GE is minimised in Protection Cluster as it is dominated/perceived to be dominated by GBV
- May be very large programmes that have no equivalent Cluster
- Some Clusters are so large that the GA cannot address all sub-Clusters and cross-cutting issues
- Little proactivity; Clusters are not action-orientated, but rather are limited to sharing information with limited availability of good practices *vis-à-vis* GEP
- UNHCR (Protection) is not forthcoming with information or partnership (to be addressed at global level)
- UNFPA as GBV sub-Cluster – at field level, UNFPA often has challenges doing operational work of sub-cluster
- Capacity or 'rank' of those sent to the Cluster meetings meaning that Clusters are not important, decision-making forums.
- In Darfur, the Cluster system is useful, especially with the impetus provided by the yearly work planning process.
- Need for partnerships, collaboration and capacity-building
- Clusters are a great avenue for data collection
- GAs' timeframe – takes time for people to buy-in to the idea of GEP

- Sometimes the GFPs' role is not recognised and they are not held accountable to their organisation for their work.
- What are the Clusters' accountability mechanisms for GEP?
- Turnover – affects continuity
- Difference in the ToR of the Cluster at capital and field levels – disconnect
- Highly political – different agendas, egos
- Lack of strong Cluster leadership
- Low attendance rate/lack of interest at Cluster meetings
- Lack of focus on issues and no follow-up on identified issues
- Lack of knowledge and capacity (human resources) to deal with gender issues

Opportunities

- The Cluster Approach is relatively new (September 2005; much more recent in some settings), therefore we should see it as iterative and evolutionary. And, as iterative and evolutionary, we might see our role as assisting constructive evolution and strengthening the process. Where possible, pre-crisis socialization of the Cluster Approach is useful so that roles are sorted and relationships are established. At this time, responsibility for timely recruitment of gender specialists (e.g. each cluster and coordination centre) can be identified. Such contingency or advanced planning will nurture more timely and appropriate gender support.
- Determine where the Cluster is in terms of assessment, strategy development and implementation cycle in order to determine entry points on the ADAPT & ACT-C scale and offer support accordingly.
- To understand the easiest and most appropriate entry points, assess each Cluster's –
 - knowledge about GEP
 - agreement with the integration of GEP
 - previous, demonstrated support for integration of GEP
 - potential interests/benefits of GEP
 - 'influencers' (secondary audiences who can exert influence over the Cluster)
- Look at the Cluster Agency's policy/ies, commitments to GEP and remind them
- The CAP process as a key entry point
 - How-to Guide 'Opportunities for Contributing to the CAP Process'
 - Timing of CAP process (and the GA's deployment) and opportunities to influence. See 'How-To' Guide
 - Understand roles and responsibilities of various actors in development/review
 - Identify and exploit important entry points
- Good Clusters engage non UN agencies, value and link with the field, are proactive, task people with jobs, follow-up actions, mobilise fast when reaction is needed, strong leadership, co-chair, facilitation skills, prioritisation and preparation (admin)

Session Four: GenCaps and PSEA work: Facilitator - Kate Burns

Discussion Points

- Data collection must be done with sensitivity and people need to be trained in this
- In UN Missions, there are disciplinary units but they work in their own mission only – we need to see how this is done and learn from it
- GAs can play a support role in awareness-raising and training, but it is essentially a HR issue
- PSEA work must be considered within the broader GE framework
- GAs must have access to information on the UN's Code of Conduct Unit's mandate.

- GAs may be able to help when requested, but it is the agencies' duty to make their staff aware about the mechanisms and the regulations in place
- Need to collect data on complaints in order to know the extent of the problem
- Issue of no support mechanism for the GA if s/he reports cases of SEA that then prevents the GA in doing the rest of her/his work. System of support for GAs is required if s/he is going to get involved in this area of work. Also, what is the GA actually doing- is it information only or investigation? It has to be defined very carefully.
- Without a clear mandate and associated protection and support, GAs should not undertake this work, but rather should focus on GE.
- Not all GAs have the skills and experience to undertake PSEA work
- Awareness-raising and prevention work is one thing but investigations require a whole different skills set.
- According to the SG's bulletin, everybody has an obligation to report, not only GAs. But there must be mechanisms that protect the 'whistleblower'.
- During the security and administrative briefing, GAs should ask what mechanisms are in place for SEA.

Session Five: Agreeing with Agencies the Lines of Responsibility. Facilitator - Linda Pennells, GA

ToRs should be enabling and mutually understood. This would overcome the challenge of host agencies bending and stretching the GA's ToR.

Suggestions for avoiding being 'dumped on' -

- Be proactive from the start of mission
- On arrival, do an information-tour to explain GenCap and to listen to people's needs
- Before the GA arrives, develop the ToR into a work-plan, which can then be discussed, revised if necessary and agreed with the HC and Cluster Leads
- Be prepared to negotiate space for a realistic ToR
- Establish priorities as part of the work-plan – GAs are there to support the UN agencies, so the work-plan should be to the benefit them and their work
- Be prepared to say 'no' with respect, and use the legitimacy conferred by an agreed ToR and work-plan.
- The GA is there to report to the RC NOT to a Government Ministry

Suggestions on what can be done to ensure the HC, UNCT and the host agency have the common realistic expectations of a GA?

- Hold talks with HC/RC and UNCT as early as practical. Go through the ToR and agree on priorities and expectations and highlight any gaps they may want to consider.
- Agree on timing and, if later on they want to add items, the GA can show they will need to drop something or renegotiate the timing with you.
- Emphasise that the GA is a temporary intervention to support sustainability.
- Keep revisiting the work-plan as a living document.
- Need to do homework before we arrive in the country – if there has already been a GA look at their recommendations.
- Secretariat to revisit their introductory letter.
- Make sure GAs' identity is inter-agency – include 'Inter-agency' in the GA's job title.
- The HC/RC must endorse the request form.
- ToR should be endorsed by all agencies, not just by the host agency.
- The GA may need to emphasise her/his role in addressing issues connected with humanitarian emergencies.

- Reporting – send one page updates on what you have done – to the RC/HC and the UNCT – at least monthly.
- GenCap to consider development of a set of Humanitarian Gender indicators.
- Meet with gender theme group and work with them.

Session Six: Nexus between GBV and Gender Equality Work. Facilitator - Simon Opolot, GA

The premise of the session is on the M&E finding that a significant proportion of work undertaken by GAs is in the area of GBV coordination, when this was not necessarily the intention of the ToR or the GenCap mandate.

Liz Pender spoke about her experiences in Darfur and Myanmar. In Darfur, Liz tried to use GBV as an entry point into GEP into each Cluster. In this instance, it was useful as the participants found it was a tangible example of a more abstract concept. In Myanmar, Liz feels that she has been able to find the balance between GE and GBV work; one has not dominated the other. But, she still feels that GBV provides a stark and meaningful example of the benefits of GEP and the link has been very useful.

Beatrix Attinger spoke about her experience in Guinea, where she is charged with ‘supervising’ the national survey on GBV, which the GoG is taking very seriously as there is no national data on the nature and extent of the issue. In attempting to find the balance between GBV and GE work, Beatrix referred to CEDAW, which contains about 60 recommendations for combating GBV and this is framed within the overall GE context.

Victoria Rames’ ToR (Chad) does refer to GBV but, on her arrival, she was asked to concentrate on coordination of the GBV forums. She has tried to put this within the framework of GE and the gender dynamics that were occurring before the conflict and what has changed or being amplified within the context of the conflict. Victoria is encouraging UN Agencies to enhance their analysis of the root causes of GBV, embedded within gender inequality.

Follow-on Questions for the Participants

1. On a scale of 1-to-10, where one is stand-alone, multi-agency, GBV AoR and 10 being the implementation of the GBV Guidelines on a cluster-to-cluster basis, where would you place yourself?

Of the 11 response, seven said they were working on both, one is working on the stand-alone only/GBV AoR and three are focused on the GBV Guidelines/ the integration across the Clusters.

2. On a scale of 1-to-10, how knowledgeable are you on GBV implementation?

Average of a score of 8.1. If we take out one outlying score of four, the average goes up to 8.5.

Ahead of a planned meeting with the GBV AoR the following day, the question was put to the group whether it believes that GenCap should take up the lead GBV AoR or maintain a strictly gender equality integration across all the clusters? Comments from the group included:

- Some agencies have responsibility for this work and we cannot divest them of this.
- There are also issues of sustainability to be considered.
- It is not possible to divorce GE and GBV in any emergency and ultimately it comes down to the question of doing or facilitating and sticking to the mandate to enable, to facilitate, to build capacity.

- It would very much depend on what structures are in place already and how they are functioning. GAs could not come in for a six-month deployment and start things up and for it to be sustainable.
- If GenCap does not take this on, then UNFPA, UNICEF and UNHCR will consider the establishment of another emergency roster. Would this be a duplication of resources? Could this get confusing? Could GAs act as interim GBV Coordinator before UNFPA, UNHCR and/or UNICEF take up their role?
- GAs' experience has been, for the most part, that the issue has been delegated to GAs after their arrival rather than specified from the outset.
- GAs should continue to advise, facilitate, capacitate rather than 'do' GBV: GAs catalyse GBV work through the ADAPT & ACT-C framework [which is focused on prevention rather than on response work].
- Some GAs felt strongly that there is so much GE work to be done in humanitarian work in most countries – where even very basic SADD data is missing – to make sure that each of the Cluster is optimising their outcomes and impacts, and no-one else is doing this work, that they would be reluctant to see a move into GBV. First and foremost, they maintain, the focus should remain on GE and, through this, feed into the GBV work. Some GAs whose expertise is in GBV work could be used for this task.
- In conclusion, it is not possible to divorce GE and GBV work; we should not lose the GenCap vision but perhaps we need to consider the possibility of those with expertise in the area of GBV could be deployed to be GBV AoR.

Session Seven – Revising the ToR and Request Form

The GAs worked in two groups to discuss possible revisions to the ToR and the Request Form, which would optimize the GAs' integration into the UNCT, the 'buy-in' and commensurate commitment to GEP from the UNCT and the contribution from day one of the GAs' deployment. The revisions were discussed in plenary and will now go before the Steering Committee for discussion and approval.

Session Eight – Discussion about GBV AoR

Attendees from the GBV AoR Working Group - Maha el Muna (UNFPA), Massimo Zucco (UNICEF), Heidi Lehmann (The IRC) and Claudia Garcia Moreno (WHO).

GBV is one of the five areas of responsibility (AoR) of the Protection Cluster (the other four being mine action, rule of law, child protection and housing and land rights). The ToR of the GBV AoR WG of the PCWG was distributed – two levels (global level and field support). The GBV AoR workshop is to revisit the ToR and to re-work them in line with issues that have emerged that require change of the ToR. The Third Trimester Review of the GBV AoR Portion of the Protection Work Plan 2008 was also distributed

There appears to be two schools of thought among the GAs; one is that working on GBV is integral to our work and is our priority and the other was that, with a broader ToR, GBV can be consuming of time spent on pure GE work, i.e. coordination and leading vs. supporting the coordination and leading the GBV work

GAs would have to complete the Ghent training, etc. in order to be deployed with a mandate with a clear GBV AoR mandate. For many GAs, the issue is around the sustainability of their work in the absence of a more permanent coordinator being appointed.

UNFAP, UNHCR and UNICEF should 'co-chair' with the GA so that they do not abdicate their responsibilities and so that there is a focus on continuity and capacity-building.

In the end, it was agreed that the GenCap Project would take a pragmatic view. There are [only approximately three] people on the roster who have the competencies to take on GBV work. While the issue of capacity in terms of numbers needs to be looked at very closely, it is possible that GAs could take up the role of GBV AoR where the ToR is clear.

Session Nine: Communications when in the Field (Linda Pennells)

The participants were asked to discuss how they felt about communication with the Steering Committee Focal Points, between themselves, with the GenCap Secretariat and with NRC and to propose ways in which communication would be improved.

Steering Committee Focal Points

The GAs found the theory of the Steering Committee FPs a very good one (it must be noted that not all of the GAs had experience of this recently instituted practice). Some GAs noted that the FPs' response was fast and supportive and served as a useful first port of call for addressing problems.

Suggestions for enhancing this channel of communication included an introduction conversation as standard; an emphasis on informal (relaxed) communication; some GAs stated that they would like to have a choice on their designated FP; some GAs felt that been 'paired' with someone from the hosting agency could be somewhat limiting; it was suggested that a ToR be drawn up for the FP.

Peers (GenCaps)

GAs found it useful to have a list of deployments and peer linkages (website, Google-group) and also found this Retreat a helpful forum for exchanging ideas, experiences, etc.; some GAs noted the usefulness of a structured handover and/or an end-of-mission report where there was a deployment to the same UNCT.

In terms of enhancing peer communication, it was suggested that those who are not currently deployed should continue to correspond with those in the field in order to support; update the webpage more frequently; access to end-of-mission reports for mutual learning; establishment of peer-to-peer buddy system of support; the establishment of generic GenCap email addresses (e.g. iraqgencap@un.org) to provide continuation in the event of a handover and to raise the profile of the GenCap role.

GenCap Secretariat

On the positive side, the Secretariat was found to be nurturing, good in preparing the GA for deployment; good and positive efforts in terms of problem-solving: the BIQB is a good reporting tool; efficient, organised and consultative.

In order to improve the communication between the Secretariat and the GAs in the field, it was suggested that the Secretariat provides more information on possible deployments; share reports and good practice from other countries; increase the frequency of check-ins with the GAs; support GAs in training/orientation needs (e.g. Ghent Training, ProCap, etc.)

NRC

On the positive side, NRC was found to be prompt, responsive, caring, honest, professional, objective, attentive, reliable, proactive, organized and personally interested. In addition, the GAs appreciated that their salary was always paid at time

In terms of improving communication between the GAs in the field and NRC, it was suggested that more information be given on what to expect on arrival; that a distinction be drawn between NRC's and GenCap's reporting guidelines. There was also a suggestion that NRC look again at the 100% (60 days) / 60% thereafter DSA system, as well as paid R&R for roster GAs.

Session Ten: ProCap and GenCap: Synergies and Mutual Learning

From ProCap - Belinda Holdsworth, Merethe Nedrebø, Laurie Wiseberg, Steve O and Kate Norton

- ProCap supports capacity on the ground through deployments to the field. Senior Protection Officers also support global processes, tools and help link field-global level.
- Work with other stand-by partners (seven): training of SBP (L2/L3 level) members to build skills in protection analysis, development strategy, programme development in field in order to build mid-level capacity.
- ProCap Technical workshops: technical challenges/substantial issues as well as specific topics. In addition, they discuss issues of deployment itself. How to tackle challenges (problems in CT/agencies)?
- ProCap ToR: Generic ToR exists. Protection is a broad concept, and protection staff come with different skill-sets. PSU/SC help develop realistic ToR.
- ProCap deploys to protection mandated agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, OHCHR, OCHA and/or HC. Reporting lines and inter-agency context can be challenging. Tensions not apparent in ToR, but exists in the field between agencies, Protection Cluster (field and global) and HC.
- Length of deployment? Six months used to be standard, now leaning towards nine months. Some technical/specific missions might take shorter.
- Sustainability: what happens when SPO leaves? Encourage CT to consider options as request is being processed.
- Cross-fertilize good deployments into other settings. Take successful lessons learned and implant into other operations.
- Ongoing work: Fine tuning the ToR, update guidelines, look for partners, increase cooperation (including GenCaps)
- GenCap/ProCap: what are the synergies? Are inter-agency 'teams' a possibility?
- Questions: Do ProCaps feel there is a difference between being placed with HC or agency? The ProCap SPO replied that the introduction to the CT is more important than where you sit. If you are introduced as a senior adviser who will work on strategy, and has access to HC, the deployment tends to be more successful. Tensions between inter-agency and agency. Confidence building is crucial, and takes time. Longer assignments are more effective.
- ProCap in Somalia served as entry point for GenCap. Sharing information on deployment is important.

- How does ProCap deal with PSEA work? Has been dealt with/requested, i.e. training. Important to identify who should do it. ProCap training has a section on ethical dilemmas (along PSEA lines, etc.)
- Would it be possible/feasible to deepen ProCap's capacity on GBV? ProCaps do try to ensure that someone is working on GBV, but ProCap should not do.
- GenCaps will continue to attend ProCap training? (Nairobi in April/May, Australia in the Summer and Geneva in the Autumn.
- Collaboration between ProCap and GenCap in the field should be encouraged; the two should work closer together to ensure more impact and to act as support for each other.

Take away messages:

- GenCap asked ProCap to consider advocating for a GenCap when they are deployed to a country with no GenCap
- Advocacy with UNCTs: ProCap and GenCap should consider advocating together

Way forward:

- Open discussion between GenCap and ProCap on sustainability
- ProCap to undertake management review this spring – input from GenCap
- In Kenya, the HC meets with all Advisors once a week, and then take their messages to the UNCT. Efforts to have the HC to discuss this during the next HC retreat.

6. Strengths of the workshop

The following aspects of the workshop should be retained and/or expanded:

1. While responding to the needs of the Steering Committee, continue to let former and current GAs dictate the Retreat's agenda so that it responds to their needs.
2. The pace, the schedule and the number of topics covered seemed to work well and should be replicated again in following Retreats.
3. Expand further the opportunity for structured discussion among participants in the context of the Retreat, with the greater portion of every session being given to discussion than to presentation.
4. Retain the facilitation by currently serving GAs, providing guidance on facilitation skills as needed and discouraging the over-reliance on PowerPoint.
5. Expand the flexible and responsive approach to participant needs, and the systematic use of participants as resource-people.

7. Remaining challenges

The following aspects of the Retreat could be reviewed for improvement

1. Allow time and space to address issues that emerge in the course of the Retreat but were not foreseen in the agenda.
2. Consider providing some facilitators and participants with basic facilitation skills, especially in the Socratic method, participatory training and leadership of consultative processes
3. A donor event should be arranged and confirmed early in the planning of the next Retreat, as the sharing of experiences between donors and GAs from the same country would be an efficient way of communication with donors.

Annex 1: The Final Agenda

Sunday, 11 January		
Time	Session	Content/Objectives/Comments
17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Introduction • Setting the agenda <i>Facilitator: Kate Burns</i>	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Workshop Objectives and Expected Outcomes</p> <p>Purpose and expected outcomes of the Retreat</p>
17:45	<p>Stories from the Field</p> <i>Facilitator: Kate Burns</i>	Each GA to tell one story from the field
19:00	Close	

Monday, 12 January		
Time	Session and Facilitator	Content/Objectives/Comments
09:00	<p>Short presentation by each GA of their deployment focusing on the main areas of their ToR, including challenges and successes</p> <i>Facilitator: Mirjam Sørli</i> <i>Presenters: GenCap Advisors</i>	<p><i>Each GA should prepare a short (five minutes maximum) presentation on which of the five components of the ToR was the main area of their work and which was the least, comparing what was originally envisaged in their ToR and what occurred in the field; and in which of the five components of the ToR do they believe they had the most success and why (i.e. factors that contributed to their success)</i></p>
10.40	Break	
11:00	<p>M&E: Presentation of findings and feedback on the use of the tool</p> <i>Facilitator: Andrea Binder (GPPI)</i>	<p><i>GPPI will update the group on the findings on the use of the tool and receive constructive feedback from the group on its application and utility.</i></p> <p><i>In the course of this session, the group will attempt to interpret the results of the findings and, subsequently, to develop strategies to address outstanding gaps and challenges.</i></p>
12.30	Lunch	
14:00	<p>Working through the Cluster System – challenges, successes and opportunities</p> <i>Facilitator: Siobhán Foran, GenCap Advisor (C.A.R. and Iraq)</i>	<p><i>Each GA has the opportunity to comment on what work they were able to undertake with each of the clusters; what contact they had with the different clusters; and what was the quality of this interaction. It is proposed that this session will reveal those clusters who consistently engage with the GA and those that do not and, if possible, what are the determining factors in the quality of work.</i></p> <p><i>We will also consider the use of the Gender Handbook and the ADAPT and ACT-C framework during this session.</i></p>
15:00	Break	
15:15	<p>Working through the Cluster System – challenges, successes and opportunities - continued</p> <i>Facilitator: Siobhán Foran, GA</i>	
15:45	<p>GenCaps and PSEA work</p> <i>Facilitator: Kate Burns</i>	<p><i>The UN made a serious commitment to establishing zero tolerance for sexual abuse and exploitation and to the receipt and investigation of reports of such abuse. Work in this regard is included in the GAs' ToR yet it appears as little is happening in the field to advance this work.</i></p> <p><i>GenCap needs to determine the extent to which it will support PSEA work in the field.</i></p>
17:30	Close	

Tuesday, 13 January		
Time	Session	Content/Objectives/Comments
08:50	Welcome to the day <i>Facilitator:</i> Madhumita Sarkar, GA(Sri Lanka; currently in Liberia)	<i>Summarizing the progress made on Monday and the proposed agenda for the day ahead.</i>
09:00	Agreeing with agencies the lines of responsibility. <i>Facilitator:</i> Linda Pennells (GenCap Advisor oPt and Indonesia)	<i>Some GenCap Advisors have reported that, once in place, some UN agencies believe that they can delegate responsibility for everything to do with gender and/or GBV to the GenCap. What do we do when this happens? In this session, we will also consider the questions on the request form and some ideas for revising the form and improving engagement with the UNCT before deployment to avoid this situation.</i>
10:30	Break	
10:45	GBV and Gender Equality work <i>Facilitator:</i> Simon Peter Opolot (GenCap Advisor Darfur)	<i>It seems that the preponderance or significant proportion of work undertaken by GenCap Advisors is in the area of GBV coordination, when this was not necessarily the intention of the ToR or of GenCap's mandate. We would like to understand the GAs' experiences in this regard.</i>
11:40	Policy Discussion : Gender Equality and/or GBV <i>Facilitators:</i> Kate Burns and Maha el-Muna(UNFPA, Protection Cluster GBV AoR)	<i>To examine and resolve the seeming tension between GenCap's mandate, the ToR and the demands and expectations in the field for work on the coordination of GBV response and prevention work. Is there one solution, i.e. either/or, or is there a case for a hybrid model?</i>
12.30	Lunch	
13.30	Group Work: Revising the ToR and the Request Form and Procedure <i>Facilitators:</i> Kate Burns, Mirjam Sørli (GenCap Secretariat), Astrid Sween (NRC)	<i>Working in three small groups of five people, the group will consider whether and where the ToR and the Request Form and Request Procedure might be revised in order to optimize the use of the GenCap GAs' time and expertise.</i>
14.30	Presentation of proposed revisions (above) <i>Facilitator:</i> Kate Burns	<i>Each group will have 10 minutes to present their proposed revisions with time afterwards for questions, discussion and comments.</i>
15:30	Break	
15:45	Communications when in the field <i>Facilitator:</i> Linda Pennells, GenCap Advisor	<i>In this session, we will review the issue of communication and support to GAs in the field from the SC (focal points), GenCap Secretariat, NRC and web forums – what works, what doesn't and what could be done to improve the support given to GAs in the field? In this session, we will also look at the initiative by the UNGEI/INEE e-discussion to see if we can take anything from it and replicate same.</i>
16:45	Presentation by ProCap <i>Belinda Holdsworth ProCap and SPOs</i>	<i>In this session, ProCap will share their experiences and challenges for the purposes of mutual learning.</i>
17.30	Being on a roster <i>Facilitators:</i> Mirjam Sørli and Astrid Sween	<i>To review the challenges and opportunities of being on a roster and to understand some of the members' issues and concerns.</i>
18:00	GenCap 2009 & Summary session <i>Facilitator:</i> Kate Burns	<i>Conclusions, recommendations, moving forward and some preparations for the Orientation Training</i>
18.30	Close	
20:00	Dinner with new GenCaps Venue: Hotel Epsom	

Annex 2: Participant list

Name	Role	E-mail
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