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Checking a Box or Creating Change? Examining the Overall State of Gender Mainstreaming in Humanitarian Action

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Checking a Box or Creating Change?

Examining the Overall State of Gender Mainstreaming in Humanitarian Action

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Fall 2019

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Abstract

Humanitarian organizations provide aid and assistance to millions of individuals impacted by natural disasters and armed conflict every day. However, not all individuals are equally impacted by humanitarian crises. Since the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women introduced the term ‘gender mainstreaming’, humanitarian organizations have recognized and taken steps to address gender specific needs in crisis situations.

While there is an abundance of research concerning these gender specific needs, there is little research on the overall state of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian policy. This paper seeks to fill this gap by examining gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian community through some of its key actors. Through analysis of primary and secondary sources, along with interviews from key humanitarian organizations working on gender issues, this paper presents an overview of the system as well as some key challenges and limitations surrounding the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

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Introduction

Over two decades ago, in 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. A historic conference, this was where the world formally heard the term ‘gender mainstreaming’. Gender mainstreaming, a concept now frequently used in policy discussions, is a policy approach meant to foster gender equality through consideration of policies’ and programs’ impact on people of different genders. Included in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 189 of the world’s countries unanimously adopted and committed to the ideals expressed in the document (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995) . With such a strong commitment from so many of the world’s governments, it only seems reasonable that gender mainstreaming would be commonplace in all policies and programs over 20 years later. However, this is not necessarily the case, especially in the realm of humanitarian action.

It has been well documented that gender is a key consideration in how people are impacted by humanitarian crises. In 2012, Margareta Wahlström, former UN Secretary General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction stated that “[it] is a plain and simple truth that disasters reinforce, perpetuate and increase gender inequality, making bad situations worse for women” (UNDRR, 2012). While gender mainstreaming does not specifically concern women’s needs, but rather the different needs of all genders, women are often most disproportionately impacted in humanitarian disasters. This has large implications both for global health and international development as failure to consider gender in humanitarian response can harm both of these aims. This is well known and acknowledged among humanitarian

organizations, with nearly all having some sort of statement, commitment, policy, or plan to mainstream or at least consider gender in their operations.

Despite this, there is little evidence examining whether gender mainstreaming is truly being implemented in humanitarian response. This is a large issue, considering the general consensus in the community that people of different genders experience humanitarian disasters in significantly different ways. This paper seeks to address this problem by examining the overall state of gender mainstreaming within the humanitarian community. By examining the topic from a holistic point of view, this paper seeks to add an updated review of the system to the existing body of knowledge surrounding gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action. Throughout the course of the paper, I will address key terminology, review the current literature on the subject, address my research methodology and question, present and analyze my findings, and conclude with lessons learned and key policy recommendations for the future.

Definitions

While a full list of abbreviations used throughout the paper will be included in the appendix, it is necessary to define several key terms that will be used frequently throughout the course of this paper.

Gender

There are a variety of appropriate definitions of the term gender, but this paper will make use of the UNESCO definition as follows:

“Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the

expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. Systems of social differentiation such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more, modify gender roles...It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever” (UNESCO, 2003).

As a point of additional clarification, this paper will often address gender using the binary of women and men (femininity and masculinity). However, these are not the only two genders in existence, nor the only two gender identities that impact individuals in the context of humanitarian emergencies.

Gender Mainstreaming

When referring to gender mainstreaming, this paper will utilize the 1997 ECOSOC definition of gender mainstreaming as

“The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality” (International Labour Organization, 2002).

While this definition has changed in interpretation and implementation over the years and between organizations, this paper will utilize the original definition. There will be a specific

section of the paper further analyzing the debate surrounding this term but for clarity, gender mainstreaming will refer to policies and programs taking an overall gendered analysis approach, not as a synonym for female empowerment or women's rights programs.

Gender Equality

The political, economic, and social equality of all genders. Gender equality does not just refer to women, nor does it refer only to the gender binary of men and women. Gender equality will be achieved when people of all gender identities have access to the same opportunities and are free from discrimination on the basis of their gender.

Gender Transformative Approach

An approach that addresses gender beyond mainstreaming across policy and programmatic considerations, a gender transformative approach seeks to address the root causes of gender inequality, discrimination, and gender-based violence. This is an approach that seeks to fundamentally change the perception of gender roles and expectations in the hope of achieving equality.

Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD)

Data collected by different sexes and ages, that attempt to document the ways that “natural disasters and armed conflict are in fact deeply discriminatory processes that affect women, men, girls, and boys in significantly different ways” (Mazurana, Benelli, Gupta, & Walker 2011).

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence is “violence directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Instances of GBV can include sexual assault, female genital mutilation, intimate partner violence, among other acts.

Literature Review

Formally introduced at the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the use of the term gender mainstreaming has substantially increased in research and policy documents alike. There is a widening variety of literature on the subject of the role of gender in policy creation and implementation, from organizational reports, policies, and evaluations to independent studies and reviews. Although there is some variety of literature on the subject, the scope of each report, policy, or study is fairly narrow. The majority of the available literature, both from organizations and academic journals, focuses on a particular organization, situation, project, country, or tool.

Beginning with independent studies and published journal articles, a number of main discussions emerge. Firstly, there is substantial debate over the term gender mainstreaming itself. This debate concerns whether the term refers to women’s empowerment or full consideration of all genders, and whether it should take an integrationist or transformative approach (Eklund & Tellier 2012; Hilhorst, Porter & Gordon 2018; Cahill, 2013; Foran, Swaine, & Burns, 2012; Quay, 2019; Mukhopadhyay, 2009.) Supplemented by the literature on this topic, an in depth analysis of the debate from the perspectives of practitioners will be included later in this paper.

Secondly, most of the literature offers an overview of the gender specific and sensitive needs that exist in humanitarian conflict, with special attention paid to GBV (Cahill, 2013; Wells & Kuttiparambil 2016; Zeid et al., 2015; Hilhorst, Porter & Gordon, 2018).

Finally, there is also some literature that evaluates particular tools and programs concerning implementation. There is far less literature on this particular aspect of gender mainstreaming as opposed to literature that discusses the gender-specific needs seen in humanitarian situations. Furthermore, this topic is discussed from the perspective of specific programs and tools rather than from an overall perspective. For example, Quay (2019) discusses the implementation and impact of Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA), a tool developed by CARE International. Additionally, Foran, Swaine, and Burns (2018) also discuss implementation from the perspective of the IASC's Gender Marker. While insightful, these pieces of literature focus on individual tools and programs rather than examining the system as a whole.

A review of policy documents and reports from individual organizations yields a similar issue; each document is rich in detail and analysis of gender mainstreaming, but the analysis is from the perspective of each particular organization. However, by analyzing these policy documents from organizations such as the World Food Program, Plan International, International Organization for Migration, CARE International, Norwegian Refugee Council, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, a more complete picture of gender mainstreaming begins to emerge. Among these documents, which are incredibly detailed and specific to each organization, some overarching guiding principles and policies also emerge. The most noteworthy of these come from the IASC, including their Policy Statement for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance and their

Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action, which outlines best practices for the design and implementation of programs that consider gender (IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action, 2017). It is important to have an understanding of the key policies on gender mainstreaming in order to understand and critique some of the barriers and issues regarding implementation.

The key concepts that emerged from the literature were the discussion of gender mainstreaming as a concept, the specific gendered needs that arise in humanitarian emergencies, the role of data, and the barriers and challenges for implementation. The relatively narrow scope of the existing research on gender mainstreaming in humanitarian policy inspired the focus of this paper. This paper, through analysis of these primary and secondary documents as well as expert interviews, seeks to understand the overall state of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian policy and implementation.

Research Methodology

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach, chosen in order to best understand the wide range of policies and actions surrounding gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian community. The paper employs both primary and secondary sources in order to have the fullest analysis possible. Beginning with secondary sources, independent studies and policy reports were vital in establishing a base understanding of the overall state of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action. These sources provided definitions for basic terms, history of policies and development, and delved into more particular projects, capturing the nuances of the subject.

After establishing this base of knowledge from secondary sources, use of primary sources provided the most substance for analysis of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action. The most significant of these sources were interviews conducted with practitioners and policy makers from key humanitarian organizations. The interview process gave tremendous insight into the inner workings and politics of gender mainstreaming. In order to build a profile of the overall state of gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian community, I wanted to compare, synthesize, and analyze perspectives from practitioners from as many different organizations as possible. By conducting interviews with specialists and practitioners, I was able to gain a greater perspective on each organization's policy approaches and priorities within the topic of gender mainstreaming. By subsequently comparing answers to the same interview questions, the research provides a preliminary assessment of the overall progress, priority, and sentiments towards gender mainstreaming in humanitarianism.

In total, eight individuals agreed to be interviewed for this research; three were in-person interviews and five were conducted over video call. However, over 50 individuals and agencies were contacted via email for the possibility of being interviewed. Essentially, any international organizations working both on issues of gender equality and humanitarian emergencies qualified for this research and the majority were contacted for an interview. The following humanitarian organizations are represented in this paper: the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Programme, Plan International, CARE International, the NORCAP division and GenCap program (Norwegian Refugee Council), and the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility Coordination Team, part of the United Nations Population Fund.

Finding individuals for interviews proved to be the most difficult part of the research process due to the lack of response and availability of many individuals. Although I was able to interview a considerable amount of individuals given the short time frame of my research, there are many more organizations and practitioners making valuable contributions in this field. It should be noted that the individuals interviewed were all individuals living in Western nations and working at organizational headquarters and secretariats. This excludes some of the most important perspectives of humanitarian field workers. The findings of this paper should be considered with these limitations in mind.

Considering the ethical concerns of conducting interview-based research, all the research for this paper was conducted in full accordance with all ethical principles. Prior to beginning research, the topic and methodology were approved by the School for International Training Local Review Board for ethical considerations. In addition, when conducting interviews, all participants were informed of the ability to remain anonymous in the final paper and permission was asked before any audio recordings were made for the purposes of transcription. All interviewees were given information about the research, the researcher, and were informed that they would receive a copy of the paper upon completion. Finally, all interviewees consented independently to be interviewed.

Research Question and Framework for Analysis

In response to the lack of literature seeking to provide a comprehensive overview of gender mainstreaming, this paper seeks to understand, from the perspective of as many actors as possible, the overall state of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian policy. In order to achieve

this, the research was conducted with the following main research question in mind: What is the overall state of gender mainstreaming policy and implementation in the humanitarian community?

Each question asked of practitioners and scholars aims to answer this overarching research question from a variety of perspectives. Overall, the set of interview questions was designed to understand each organization's conceptualization of gender mainstreaming, policy and programmatic approach, utilization of the cluster approach and partnerships, the most pressing issues in the field, challenges for implementation, and the overall improvements and future directions for the organization itself, as well as for the humanitarian community at large.

While the responses from practitioners and scholars constitute the bulk of the data collected for analysis, their responses were supplemented and affirmed by information from the existing literature on the topic, both academic and policy based.

Results: The Current State of Gender Mainstreaming in the Humanitarian Community

Conceptualizing Gender Mainstreaming: A Community-Wide Debate

In regards to the principle of gender mainstreaming itself, there is an ongoing debate in the humanitarian community about the term. This original definition is frequently critiqued as causing confusion within the humanitarian community about who gender mainstreaming is supposed to target. While originally assumed to be targeting specifically women and girls, many have argued that by focusing on just women and girls, gender mainstreaming's larger aim of equality is ignored (Foran, Swaine, & Burns, 2012). One individual interviewed for this research

made clear the distinction between gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, stating that the work their organization did was not just targeted at women, but rather at people of all genders. Most individuals interviewed also stressed this point that gender mainstreaming should not be conflated with women's empowerment.

Despite the relative agreement on the fact that gender mainstreaming specifically refers to examining the ways that crises and policies impact all genders, there is still debate about the necessity of focusing explicitly on women's empowerment and protection. An official from the IASC suggested that in the future, gender mainstreaming may not even exist as a concept as women are now included in conversations and more intersectional issues like ethnicity or disabilities are considered (IASC Official, personal communication, November 6, 2019). However, from organizations such as Plan International and CARE International that are known for their strong focus on women and girls, there was a different perspective. Enzo Tabet Cruz from Plan International remarked that women, especially girls, still face specific challenges in the time of crises and Isadora Quay from CARE International emphasized that even when women are technically included in the conversation, their voices are too frequently ignored (E. Cruz, personal communication, November 13, 2019; I. Quay, personal communication, November 14, 2019).

In addition, some suggest that by focusing just on women's issues, the community neglects "questions of agency and the dynamic and changing realities of gendered power relations" (Hilhorst, Porter, & Gordon, 2018). Proponents of this critique argue that by focusing solely on women's issues, the community inevitably perpetuates the victimization of women and ignores the issues faced by people of all genders during humanitarian emergencies (Hilhorst,

Porter, & Gordon, 2018). This sentiment was echoed by several interviewees who noted that in humanitarian emergencies specifically, women are seen as victims, not as individuals having their own agency and contributions to make.

Finally, as expressed in Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay's controversial paper, there is an ongoing debate about whether gender work in humanitarian action should be done in an integrationist or transformative approach. Alternatively, this is considered the debate between 'gender mainstreaming' and 'gender transformation.' The former, gender mainstreaming, takes an integrationist approach, suggesting that all areas of humanitarian action must consider the way their work impacts different genders differently. The latter, gender transformation, refers to work that seeks to eradicate inequality at the source by changing community perceptions of gender (Mukhopadhyay, 2009). Many of the organizations interviewed attempt to blend the two together in their work, suggesting the importance of both types of work. However, there is still tension regarding which element is more essential and which should be prioritized.

Gendered Needs in the Humanitarian Emergency Context

Although this research is primarily concerned with policy and policy implementation, it is still necessary to have a base understanding of the issues that gender mainstreaming seeks to address in humanitarian emergencies. The largest breadth of literature discusses the actual socioeconomic and health challenges women face in humanitarian emergencies, rather than evaluating the policies designed to mitigate these issues. Cahill (2013) very succinctly characterized the issues women face in humanitarian emergencies as a lack of protection and limited access to services.

Although not always neatly sorted into these two categories, the existing literature does identify challenges relating to protection and access to services. Some of the largest issues encountered are the lack of access for women to relief items, shelter, food, water, education, and employment opportunities post disaster or crisis (Cahill, 2013). Other studies also address some of the more socioeconomic barriers that women face in humanitarian emergencies. These studies cite examples of women in Syria who had been forced to assume the role of head of the household due to the conflict. In these instances, women are especially in need of employment, education, and training opportunities (Wells & Kuttiparambil, 2016). Cruz of Plan International additionally highlighted the need for non-emergency services such as access to education even in times of crisis. He stressed that especially in emergency situations, education is essential for all children but specifically girls. Cruz noted that many of the aforementioned services are included in programming centered around adult women's needs but that the needs of young girls, including education, are frequently forgotten (E. Cruz, personal communication, November 13, 2019).

The Focus on GBV

While these are all essential services for women in humanitarian emergencies, the issue that by far receives the most attention is gender-based violence and access to sexual and reproductive healthcare for women and girls. According to Zeid et al. (2015), 75% of the 84 million people impacted by humanitarian emergencies were women and girls, thus emphasizing the need for specific sexual and reproductive care. As noted by these and other researchers, conflict or natural disaster can significantly weaken existing medical institutions and infrastructure, creating a large demand for sexual and reproductive health services. The

weakening of medical, governmental, and law enforcement infrastructure creates an environment where women and girls are especially at risk of gender-based exclusion, rape and sexual assault, and forced marriages (Zeid et al., 2015). The large issue surrounding GBV has not gone unnoticed in the humanitarian community as demonstrated by the creation of the GBV Area of Responsibility within the Protection Cluster for humanitarian action.

Although the GBV AoR does not address all areas of gender mainstreaming, its creation has been an important step recognizing and addressing the GBV aspects of gender specific needs in humanitarian crises. Shiva Sharifzad, Consultant and Communications Assistant with UNFPA for the GBV AoR emphasized the importance of having a coalition that streamlines and provides consistent policy for actors working on the issue of GBV. She explained that by utilizing IASC tools and guidelines, the GBV AoR has developed tools and strategies like the 2018-2020 strategy that provides consistent objectives to the community. The AoR has been able to produce and share sex and age disaggregated data through annual, country-specific Humanitarian Needs Overview reports (S. Sharifzad, personal communication, November 22, 2019). In addition, a GBV Program Officer for IOM highlighted the significance of the 2013 Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (IOM Official, personal communication, November 22, 2019). This document, which is supported by the GBV AoR, brought attention to the issue of GBV in emergencies as well as created a global, unified plan for support and mitigation (Call to Action GBV, 2017).

However, many are critical of the disproportionate attention GBV receives regarding gender mainstreaming policy. Many scholars and practitioners argue that the community's focus on GBV often reduces gender mainstreaming and gender specific programming to just

addressing GBV. These individuals suggest that rather than potentially creating programs for women to claim more social and political power, all of the resources are allocated towards sexual and reproductive care (Wells & Kuttiparambil, 2016). Isadora Quay from CARE International added that no area in gender programming has enough funding, not even GBV, but that GBV is often conflated with gender mainstreaming in the minds of donors. This has consequences for other programs such as ones for women's empowerment and leadership that receive even less funding. By equating protection against GBV to gender mainstreaming and equality, it is not just other programs that suffer, but rather the field as a whole (I. Quay, personal communication, November 14, 2019). Multiple experts interviewed noted that when donors and policy makers conflate protection against GBV with gender mainstreaming, it perpetuates the victimization of women impacted by conflict and other humanitarian emergencies, rather than focusing on their agency (E. Tabet Cruz, personal communication, November 13, 2019).

When both Shiva Sharifzad and the expert from IOM were asked about this criticism, they both highlighted some of the work their respective organizations do to go beyond preventing GBV and supporting survivors (S. Sharifzad, personal communication, November 22, 2019; IOM Official, personal communication, November 22, 2019). In IOM's strategy, preventing GBV and supporting survivors are two key pillars but the third involves addressing some of the root causes of GBV. Actions within this pillar of programming move into a more gender transformative approach by supporting programming that engages people, especially men and boys, on dialogue about gender roles and stereotypes in an attempt to address GBV at the root of gender inequality in many societies (International Organization for Migration, 2018). For the GBV AoR, Shiva Sharifzad referenced the work that the group does in conjunction with

development organizations and initiatives, most of which is focused on women's livelihoods and empowerment (S. Sharifzad, personal communication, November 22, 2019).

The Role of Sex and Age Disaggregated Data

One commonly discussed elements of policy and implementation in the community is the role of SADD in ensuring successful development and implementation of gender mainstreaming. Despite its importance, there is often a lack of data, especially quantitative data. Researchers have found that accurate and recent data about how men and women are impacted differently by humanitarian emergencies is key in successful implementation of gender mainstreaming policies. However, one study found that in both academic and crisis literature, there was a severe lack of data that was disaggregated by sex. According to the study, this was something about which practitioners frequently complained (Eklund & Tellier, 2012). An extensive 2011 study from Tufts University noted that even when data is available, it's not used as frequently or as fully as necessary. The study determined that the failure to use SADD can lead to misguided interventions that exclude vulnerable groups (Mazurana et al., 2011).

Enzo Tabet Cruz from Plan International emphasized the lack of SADD as an issue throughout the humanitarian response community, specifically highlighting the age component of SADD. Cruz emphasized that age is frequently forgotten as an important factor in humanitarian response, especially when it comes to the protection of adolescent girls. He explained that when age isn't considered in data and in response, girls tend to get grouped in with responses either geared towards children or responses geared towards adult women. Plan International is one of the few organizations that focuses specifically on girls in humanitarian emergencies and has made data collection, both quantitative and through interviews with girls

themselves, a main priority. Cruz stated that he considers this lack of data as perhaps the greatest barrier to successful implementation of gender mainstreaming policies and the protection of girls in emergencies (E. Cruz, personal communication, November 13, 2019).

Challenges for Implementation

From the interviews with practitioners, a number of common challenges for implementation emerged. This is perhaps the most important finding from the research as it serves as a basis for recommendations and future improvements in the community. The main challenges that emerged were training, time, and resources, ineffective leadership and prioritization, and a lack of Inter-Agency coordination and accountability.

Training, Time, and Resources

The first set of barriers to implementation of gender mainstreaming policy-- training, time, and resources-- were mentioned by every practitioner interviewed. Beginning with the issue of training, several sources indicate that there is a lack of clear policies and expectations surrounding gender issues for field workers, with one study from the UN's Office on Internal Oversight Services finding that 78% of program-level respondents and 52% of program managers only '*sometimes*' understand how to implement gender-mainstreaming policies (Foran, Swaine, & Burns, 2012). Other pieces of literature indicate that even when gender-mainstreaming policies are understood by field responders, the extremely high turnover rate of employees makes it difficult to keep up with training and education (Cahill, 2013).

An official from the IASC identified the lack of training for responders in the field as the main reason why gender mainstreaming policies fail to make it to implementation at the field

level. The official explained that while policies are understood at the international and even regional level, country and field offices are not often well trained on best practices for response (IASC Official, personal communication, November 6, 2019). On the other hand, an official from WFP argued that in the context of WFP that it isn't a lack of training materials and resources but rather a lack of use of those services. From examining the WFP's programs surrounding gender equality and mainstreaming, it becomes clear that there is no shortage of training. From online toolkits and workshops to monthly training lunches for practitioners, WFP has one of the most developed training programs in the humanitarian community. However, according to the official from WFP, field offices still aren't fully trained on best practices due to a lack of time, resources, and prioritization (WFP Official, personal communication, November 13, 2019).

According to the GBV Program Officer at IOM, training has actually been a point of success for the organization, with the organizational goal of having all field workers have basic training in GBV. This expert suggested that this success might be due to the multi-sectoral approach and nature of IOM. Whereas other organizations deploy individuals focused on a singular aspect or mission, IOM deploys people working on shelter, engineers in WASH, doctors working to support local health services, among others. While there is no expectation that each of these individuals become gender experts, there are coordinated efforts to train each of these individuals so that they can help respond to GBV when it occurs and mainstream prevention efforts into their programs and plans (IOM Official, personal communication, November 22, 2019).

In addition to inconsistent levels of training for practitioners, the interviewees mentioned a lack of time and resources as a compounding factor in the lack of training. Many individuals emphasized the fact that, in the humanitarian community, everyone is lacking time and resources and that workers are spread too thin. This causes issues with field implementation, especially when there aren't specific individuals focusing on gender mainstreaming. There is often so much pressure to provide clean water or shelter in the aftermath of an emergency that gender mainstreaming can get pushed to the side, even if humanitarians do value it as part of the programmatic process. An official from the WFP emphasized that within their own organization as well as the humanitarian community as a whole, the area of gender is very under-staffed and resourced (WFP Official, personal communication, November 13, 2019). Indeed, for the majority of individuals interviewed for this paper, they expressed being the only one or being one of a very small team working on gender mainstreaming.

Leadership and Prioritization

While issues of training, time, and resources are all barriers to effective implementation of gender mainstreaming, those interviewed for this paper stressed that these issues are underpinned by a lack of prioritization and leadership. The impact of leadership and overall organizational culture on gender mainstreaming in humanitarian emergencies is not something thoroughly discussed in the literature and only came to light through the interview process. In the literature, prioritization of gender mainstreaming is discussed from a field-level context, suggesting that often local level agencies view gender mainstreaming as an extra or 'add-on' policy if there is enough time and resources. (Foran, Swaine, & Burns, 2012).

Multiple interviewees echoed this sentiment but argued that the reason these policies aren't prioritized in the field is because they're not prioritized throughout the organization, especially at the top levels of leadership. For example, with WFP, there is an abundance of training materials for practitioners and humanitarians but the lack of leadership prioritization limits their efficacy. An official from WFP explained that gender mainstreaming isn't highly prioritized throughout the organization partially due to the organizational culture itself. WFP, like many UN agencies, was created with a highly patriarchal and hierarchical structure that wasn't designed to value gender equality. The official noted that organizational culture does vary between organizations and that some do prioritize gender more effectively but that especially in the UN system, a more patriarchal approach remains (WFP Official, personal communication, November 13, 2019).

Deborah Clifton from the IASC echoed this point, arguing that the work of gender mainstreaming is an attempt to shift values and belief systems about gender. She stated that the community has all of the tools and policies needed but that implementation continually fails because at the top of the humanitarian community architecture are a group of mostly older, white, male leaders who do not truly appreciate the necessity of gender equality (D. Clifton, personal communication, November 19, 2019).

Isadora Quay from CARE International agreed, pointing to the patriarchal and colonial roots of the humanitarian system as something that can inherently be part of the organizational culture. She suggested, however, that it's not so much an issue of commitment from leaders but rather something that she called the "lip service challenge" where leaders will verbally commit to gender equality but that there is no accountability or follow-through (I. Quay, personal

communication, November 14, 2019). This issue directly connects to the issue of Inter-Agency coordination and accountability mechanisms, which is discussed below.

Inter-Agency Coordination and Accountability

Perhaps the most complicated and most important element of successful implementation is the role of coordination and accountability among and within humanitarian organizations. According to practitioners in the field, effective implementation often doesn't occur due to a lack of coordination between different branches of the humanitarian response community as well as a lack of accountability for implementation. From a macro perspective, the largest mechanism for humanitarian coordination is the cluster approach developed by the United Nations. However, the cluster approach is not the only mechanism for coordination and accountability. This section will also explore the role of GenCap and the IASC Gender and Age Marker.

The Cluster Approach

The cluster approach, developed by the UN in 2005, ensures that each humanitarian organization has a certain focus area so that there are no gaps in services or repeats. According to UNOCHA, the “clusters are groups of humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action, e.g. water, health and logistics. They are designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and have clear responsibilities for coordination” (UNOCHA 2019). An official from the IASC commented that while the cluster model has made many improvements in humanitarian action, there is still a long way to go in terms of implementing gender mainstreaming (IASC Official, personal communication, November 6, 2019).

Part of the issue can be attributed to the lack of a formal gender mainstreaming cluster in the model. Although there is a GBV AoR within the protection cluster, Isadora Quay from CARE International emphasized that the GBV AoR doesn't really manage gender mainstreaming in the other clusters or throughout the humanitarian community. According to Quay, this is a huge problem in the humanitarian community. She argued that "gender mainstreaming doesn't work for the cluster model and the cluster model doesn't work for gender mainstreaming" (I. Quay, personal communication, November 14, 2019). Shiva Shazifad from the GBV AoR agreed that the cluster still has issues mainstreaming the issue of GBV throughout the humanitarian community (S. Sharifzad, personal communication, November 22, 2019). Both Shazifad and the expert from IOM, which works closely in conjunction with the AoR, stated that engaging with other clusters on GBV requires all groups to essentially learn a new language. The two identified that it is often difficult for people from other clusters to understand language and importance surrounding GBV while the GBV AoR community does not always understand the language of the other clusters. Both emphasized the need for increased and continued dialogue and training with these other clusters (S. Sharifzad, personal communication, November 22, 2019; IOM Official, personal communication, November 22, 2019). IOM to some degree has attempted to rectify this issue and has seen some success with the inclusion of GBV training modules in training programs across clusters. The IOM official explained that GBV is addressed more and more at the cluster level but that there is still much more work to be done (IOM Official, personal communication, November 22, 2019).

Enzo Tabet Cruz from Plan International echoed these concerns, stating that despite the cluster approach, the humanitarian community still works in very defined siloes without much

promotion of gender throughout clusters. He suggested that the overall humanitarian community still very much sees those that work on gender issues as a self contained group, and not as an issue that should be considered in every response- from WASH to food security (E. Tabet Cruz, personal communication, November 13, 2019).

Quay from CARE International also stressed the point that even if there is some coordination between agencies, there is still no mechanism for accountability and that the community as a whole doesn't even have information about the success of gender mainstreaming when implemented. She discussed the struggle of mainstreaming of gender throughout the clusters, suggesting that when gender is mainstreamed throughout sectors and areas of responsibility, ensuring gender equality in humanitarian emergencies simultaneously becomes everyone's responsibility and no one's responsibility (I. Quay, personal communication, November 14, 2019).

The Gender Capacity Standby Project

The Gender Capacity Standby Project (GenCap), developed in 2007 and managed by the NRC, deploys Gender Advisers to humanitarian emergencies as a resource for agencies and field responders in an attempt to ensure that gender is considered in all actions. Katia Urteaga Villanueva, Project Manager of GenCap for NRC, emphasized that GenCap is focused on supporting and promoting gender mainstreaming at the senior management level. The program itself is comprised of a pool of Gender Capacity Advisers that work with country level officials and programs to help ensure that gender is a top consideration throughout the humanitarian response process. In order to facilitate this, in 2014, GenCap launched the first Gender in

Humanitarian Action Training (GiHA) which provides practitioners with necessary tools and information (Humanitarian Response, 2019).

Urteaga Villanueva, like many other practitioners, emphasized that while there are numerous trainings, policies, and tools available, there is an issue with consistent commitment and follow-through from senior management. She stated that GenCap has a unique challenge in working with these individuals as these individuals determine the allocation of resources and overall priority placed on gender in the field (K. Urteaga Villanueva, personal communication, November 20, 2019). The most recent evaluation of the GenCap system in 2011 found similar challenges and obstacles for true effectiveness. The report found that there was weak follow-up from individual institutions, due to the lack of leadership on gender from these organizations. This lack of follow-up was said to diminish coordination and the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts from individual organizations (Steets, Meier, & Paul 2011).

The Gender and Age Marker

The IASC Gender and Age Marker (GAM), formerly known as the Gender Marker, is still a relatively new way of tracking the success of gender-mainstreaming efforts. The original gender marker was created in 2008 as a tool to determine the success of gender mainstreaming implementation in various humanitarian situations. However, as Deborah Clifton, the individual responsible for the GAM, noted, the old gender marker had some key flaws that prevented its success. Clifton explained that with the old gender marker, it was often used as a way to choose or fund different programs. As a result, it became known in the humanitarian community that if a program scored highly on the gender marker, it would be more likely to be funded. Clifton stated that the IASC found that organizations would check ‘yes’ to every requirement just to receive a

better score. In addition to the fact that the marker left out the crucial consideration of age, it also didn't do much to hold actors accountable and improve programming (D. Clifton, personal communication, November 19, 2019).

The GAM, Clifton explained, was created in response to practitioners asking for not just another tool, but for actual help creating good, gender sensitive policies and programming. The GAM has been piloted since 2015 but has only been in full use for a year, so any data collected is preliminary and doesn't yet reveal any concrete trends. Despite this, Clifton feels that the new GAM is a very promising tool for improving gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action. It assesses projects and programs on a 0-4 scale based on 12 different gender equality measures. Clifton stressed that the 0-4 score refers to the consistency of gender and age mainstreaming throughout the given responses and doesn't impact funding or project selection. She emphasized that this is something that still isn't fully understood within the community and there needs to be further communication about the tools purpose (D. Clifton, personal communication, November 19, 2019).

Rather than determining funding or acting as a compliance tool for projects and programs, the GAM is much more about creating a platform for reflection and education for practitioners so that they can improve their programs. For example, one of the 12 indicators asks questions about complaint and feedback mechanisms in the program. This question is asked not to judge programs without these mechanisms but to give practitioners an opportunity to pause and reflect on if their program has feedback mechanisms and if these are also adapted to different gender and age needs (D. Clifton, personal communication, November 19, 2019).

As noted by Clifton, the new GAM has not been in existence long enough to derive any meaningful conclusions about its efficacy or about the state of gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian community (D. Clifton, personal communication, November 19, 2019). While the design of the GAM seems to address some of the key issues the community had with the IASC's old Gender Marker, but there are certainly still issues that will continue to arise. For example, Isadora Quay from CARE International stated that the humanitarian community itself doesn't fully understand the efficacy of gender mainstreaming and there is also no way to hold organizations accountable for actually implementing these policies (I. Quay, personal communication, November 14, 2019).

It appears that the first Gender Marker was an attempt to rectify this problem by tying scores to funding and program selection. However, this did not function as intended as organizations inevitably were not truthful about the extent of gender mainstreaming in their programs in order to receive funding. The new GAM eliminates this problem by dissolving the connection to funding and program selection, but the new marker is also not designed to hold organizations accountable for gender mainstreaming. It appears that the hope with the new GAM is that accountability will increase, not by putative mechanisms but rather by education. Of course, as Deborah Clifton stated, the underlying problem that prevents organizations from actually following through with gender mainstreaming is the lack of prioritization by the leaders of humanitarian organizations. Clifton emphasized that, unfortunately, the lack of interest and true commitment to gender equality in humanitarian action is not something that can be changed with tools and handbooks but is rather a question of changing values and beliefs (D. Clifton, personal communication, November 19, 2019).

Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Policy Recommendations

Since the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, a great deal of progress has been made to mainstream gender across policies and programs in the humanitarian field. However, as this research reveals, there are still many challenges the community faces and many areas for future improvement and development. From the responses of practitioners, along with the analysis of the relevant literature, many lessons can be learned and applied to policy recommendations for the community. Each of the main themes studied throughout this paper reveals a main lesson to be learned:

1. There is no true, clear, and universally agreed upon working definition for gender mainstreaming.
2. Gender strongly impacts the way that people experience humanitarian crises but these complex experiences can often be reduced to an increased risk of GBV for women in humanitarian emergencies.
3. Data, disaggregated by sex and age, is not well collected and when it is collected, it is frequently under-utilized by humanitarians.
4. The humanitarian community is under-resourced in terms of time, training, and human resources surrounding issues of gender.
5. Many organizations, especially within the UN family, maintain hierarchical and patriarchal organizational cultures that work against gender mainstreaming efforts. Leaders often are only superficially committed to implementing gender mainstreaming in the organization's humanitarian responses.

6. There is a lack of coordination and accountability within the humanitarian community on the issue of gender.

From each of these six lessons learned throughout the duration of the research, a number of policy recommendations can be made. These recommendations are not meant to be an exhaustive representation of the possibilities for improvement, nor are they meant to be detailed plans or fleshed out policies ready for implementation. The following recommendations are meant to synthesize the research conducted and provide suggestions for further action from individual organizations, as well as the humanitarian community as a whole.

1. Develop a universal definition of gender mainstreaming that all organizations can use to develop policies and programs. Delineate between gender mainstreaming, gender transformation, and women's empowerment.
2. Clarify and promote the different needs faced by people of different gender identities in humanitarian situations. Advocate for issues beyond GBV.
3. Set organizational policies and requirements for data collection and gender analysis before conducting humanitarian response efforts. Include beneficiaries in the data collection process.
4. Advocate for increased resources for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action including more human resources and better access to educational and training materials.
5. Select leadership with their genuine interest in and commitment to gender mainstreaming and gender equality as a key factor in the decision.

6. Reflect on internal gender biases and inequalities within organizations. Seek to implement policies that will dismantle any patriarchal structures within organizations.
7. Create a specific gender cluster as part of the Cluster Approach to take responsibility for gender in humanitarian action and to mandate its consideration in all other clusters.
8. Develop a more universal accountability mechanism that requires organizations to present evidence of their implementation of gender considerations in their projects and programs.

In the future, more research must be conducted on this essential, but under-researched area of humanitarian action. This paper provides an overview of the current state of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action but it is by no means an exhaustive examination. It would greatly serve the humanitarian community if this sort of research were to be repeated with a larger sample of practitioners, from a wider range of backgrounds. For the sake of time, logistic, and ethical constraints, this research was restricted to professionals working in Geneva, Switzerland or in other organizational headquarters and secretariats in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway. To develop a truly comprehensive understanding of gender mainstreaming would require much more time, resources, and ability to access individuals working in the field, as well as beneficiaries of humanitarian action.

In conclusion, this research has revealed a wealth of information about the overall state of gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian community. The examination of academic literature, policy documents, and interviews with practitioners all reveals a thoughtful consideration of gender in the humanitarian community with devoted advocates and practitioners supporting the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Overall, it appears very much that the issue is not the

development of tools, policies, or programs but rather an issue of true commitment to seeing these things be implemented. It appears that with the proper information, leadership, and commitment from the humanitarian community, gender mainstreaming can and will be implemented, saving and protecting the lives of millions throughout the world.

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Tables

Organizational Responses to Key Themes from Interviews

Organization	Sector	Conceptualization of Gender Mainstreaming	Approach to gender mainstreaming	Main challenges of implementation	Role of the Cluster Model
Inter-Agency Standing Committee	UN- Policy Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersectional • Focused on mainstreaming all genders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of policies, guidelines, and materials (eg. Gender Handbook) • Responsible for the Gender and Age Marker, a tool that helps organizations reflect on gender mainstreaming within individual projects and programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing implementation at the local level • More clear policies and procedures • Lack of adequate training at the field level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster approach has made a difference, difficult to quantify how much progress • New intersectional components constantly added, difficult to assess the success of implementation
Plan International	INGO- Children (girls) in emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having tools, programs, policies, and needs assessments to capture and respond to needs on the ground • About the needs of all genders, not just girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender advisor employment to develop tools and policies on the ground • Focus on accurate needs assessments, specific focus on the needs of girls • Currently revising Emergency Response Manual to include gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of leadership buy-in • Lack of intersectionality, need to focus on girls • GBV frequently discussed, but can overshadow other needs such as education and autonomy during crises for girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster approach has helped but gender needs to be a larger focus • Organizations still work in silos and gender is not considered in each part of the cluster approach
World Food Programme	UN- Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating gender into every policy, principles of inclusion, voice, agency • Focus on gender transformation, not just on women's roles or empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with humanitarian cluster and Gender Reference Group • WFP Program: Gender Transformation Program, seeks to implement at country level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-resourced • Lack of strong leadership and prioritization so that training resources will be utilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involved in Cluster Approach but still need for stronger partnerships, especially at the local level
CARE International	INGO- Humanitarian and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated and occasionally problematic term • Organization focuses more on gender transformation and gender equality • Addresses gender roles and relations as well as specific work on women's participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with internal examination of gender, ensuring understanding of gender role and relations and how they relate to humanitarian situations • RGA (rapid gender analysis) for every large emergency and done in other emergencies for other organizations • Dual focus on women's leadership and participation and GBV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of time • Lack of human resources • Lack of accountability and follow-through from leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cluster approach doesn't work for gender and gender doesn't work for the cluster approach • Potential merit in adding a gender cluster • Other clusters don't take responsibility for gender
Norwegian Refugee Council (GenCap)	NGO- humanitarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to the first two steps in the gender approach to humanitarian action: collection of data and completing gender analysis • Development, design, and evaluation of programs refers more to gender transformation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GenCap program: deploys gender advisors to humanitarian crises to help senior management incorporate gender into programs and responses; support and advocacy at the senior level of the humanitarian sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal commitment from leaders which can often be superficial • No commitment to monitoring or evaluation • Question of resourcing and budget; gender not always a priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GenCap is an inter-agency project but there isn't much accountability from the GenCap end; up to individual organizations to monitor and measure deliverables
Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility (UNFPA)	UN- Cluster Model/Sexual and Reproductive Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches gender mainstreaming from the perspective of GBV • Not limited to just women and girls, but often focused on this population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes IASC tools and guidelines to direct GBV protection and risk mitigation throughout the community • Attempts to integrate GBV consideration throughout humanitarian response through trainings and policy protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination throughout clusters; like speaking a different language among different clusters • Difficulty in holding actors accountable • Working in often conservative communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs more work for complete mainstreaming • Community needs to be able to understand how GBV impacts all areas of humanitarian action
International Organization for Migration	UN- Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on all genders, GBV is not just violence against women and girls but can happen to men, boys, or gender diverse individuals • Adding in a gender analysis and gender perspective as part of normal program development across sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on GBV, utilizes Call to Action (2013) as framework • Institutional Framework for Addressing Gender Based Violence: focuses on mitigation of risks, support for survivors, and addressing the root causes of GBV • Multi-sectoral support- shelter, WASH, education, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in conservative communities; challenges around addressing GBV as well as groups such as the LGBTI community • Security aspect; areas are often unsafe • Differing levels of commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still needs more mainstreaming throughout clusters • GBV is now beginning to be included in training in other clusters • Most work done at the field level- providing basic GBV training for all sectors

Organizational Responses to Key Themes from Interviews

Organization	Sector	Overall state	Areas for Improvement Within Organization	Areas for Improvement within Humanitarian Community at large
Inter-Agency Standing Committee	UN- Policy Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant progress made, more still to do • Has seen increased support, Secretary General has made commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better framework for accountability • Better training for organizations and individuals at the local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intersectional and inclusive in their efforts
Plan International	INGO- Children (girls) in emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many commitments made • Lack of implementation and support for implementation • Intersectionality, especially the needs of girls, is largely ignored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more data to better capture how boys and girls are impacted differently in humanitarian crises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More data collection • Need stronger leadership buy-in • More intersectional focus • Focus on women and girls' power and agency, rather than victimization
World Food Programme	UN- Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed from organization to organization • Dependent on cultures and structures of organizations; many are hierarchical and patriarchal • Commitments but lack of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More investment in planning • More investment in human resources • Need for better partnerships, especially local partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More prioritization and resources for gender mainstreaming • Need to change attitude that gender mainstreaming isn't a priority and something to be dealt with only after stability has been achieved in the crisis
CARE International	INGO- Humanitarian and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many different commitments by organizations that are not implemented or translated into action • Huge lack of data and knowledge about if gender mainstreaming is effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking to improve analysis and leadership • More evaluations to demonstrate the impact of gender specific work • More work with localization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More accountability • Better coordination • Better tools and approaches • More data • Better investment in gender specific programming and follow-through
Norwegian Refugee Council (GenCap)	NGO- humanitarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much progress has been made; there is still a lot of work to do, especially in terms of organization structure • More women needed at higher levels of leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-instating the Gender Advisor Position for NRC that is currently non-existent • Helpful technically but also politically; renewed commitment to gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better reflection on gender biases, especially within organizational structure • More substantial commitment from leadership
Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility (UNFPA)	UN- Cluster Model/ Sexual and Reproductive Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster approach has helped to mainstream GBV considerations but there is still a lot of work to be done • Not entirely mainstreamed throughout, some clusters more reluctant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More localization of programs; not viewing local actors as just partners in implementation but partners in creation of programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More awareness about GBV among different clusters • More training • More localization • More prioritization
International Organization for Migration	UN- Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differing levels of commitment across and within organizations • Interest and commitment has greatly improved in recent years, partially due to the Call to Action from 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased support of gender transformative programming for long-term crises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More mainstreaming of GBV throughout humanitarian clusters, increased understanding • More coordination • More funding regardless of number of incidents of GBV

Appendix A: Abbreviations

UN- United Nations

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

ECOSOC- United Nations Economic and Social Council

IASC- Inter-Agency Standing Committee

WFP- World Food Program

IOM- International Organization for Migration

NRC- Norwegian Refugee Council

UNFPA- United Nations Fund for Population Activities

GenCap- Gender Capacity Standby Project

GBV AoR- Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility

GAM- Gender and Age Marker

Appendix B: Interview Questions

The following information was submitted to interviewees upon request and this set of basic questions (with modifications made and follow-up questions added based on relevance) were asked of interviewees.

Research Description

Humanitarian organizations provide aid and assistance to millions of individuals impacted by armed conflict every day. Among these affected individuals, women often are impacted disproportionately to men and other populations. Many organizations working in the field of humanitarian aid have recognized and taken steps to address the specific health and humanitarian needs of women impacted by conflict. While there is an abundance of research concerning the way conflict disproportionately harms women as well as policy responses and recommendations from individual organizations, there is little research on the overall state of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian policy. This paper seeks to examine the differences in gender mainstreaming efforts between humanitarian organizations in conflict zones to determine main processes, policies, and impact on the affected population.

Main Research Question

What is the overall state of gender mainstreaming policy and implementation in the humanitarian community?

Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about your work and how it relates to gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action.
2. How do you define gender mainstreaming in the context of humanitarian action?
3. What is your organization's approach to gender mainstreaming?
 - a. What kinds of international/cluster guidelines does the organization use?
4. What are some of the most pressing issues in humanitarian emergencies that gender mainstreaming seeks to address?
5. How does gender mainstreaming on paper and within policy translate to the field?
 - a. What are the largest barriers to implementation?
6. What is the role of the Cluster model/other inter-organizational guidelines in gender mainstreaming?
7. What are some areas for improvement you see within your organization?
8. What are some areas for improvement you see within the humanitarian community as a whole?