

# WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION PROJECT

BASELINE REPORT: KISMAYO, SOMALIA

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## COVER

The photo was taken in July 2021, in Kabasa IDP site, Dollow district, Somalia. The picture shows a woman participating in a life-skills/vocational training (weaving) as part of the WPP. © IOM 2021/Hyungbin LIM



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Woman participating in a life-skills/vocational training (weaving) in Kabasa IDP site, Dollow district, Somalia. © IOM 2021/Hyungbin LIM

## BACKGROUND

The Women's Participation Project (WPP) was jointly developed by WRC and IOM, in coordination with the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. This initiative was part of the global initiative Safe from the Start aiming at reducing GBV in camps and camp-like settings, and it is funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) of the US State Department. The objective of the WPP is to enable CCCM practitioners to gain a broader understanding of what participation is and to develop contextually appropriate strategies to enhance the participation of women and girls in displacement settings.

The WPP started in Somalia in 2019, in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) sites of Kabasa and Qansaxley, in Doolow (Gedo region). Since its launch in 2019, the WPP has helped to increase women's participation in the daily life of the sites and in the sites' governance structures. Key achievements of the last phase of the project include the completion of vocational training in handicrafts by 615 women, the organisation of three community events by women's groups, the establishment of a community-led protection committee, and dialogue sessions between men and women to raise awareness of GBV and the risks and challenges faced by women and girls in the sites.

Building on the success of the project activities in Doolow, IOM is currently seeking to expand the WPP to new regions in Somalia, including IDP sites in Kismayo (Lower Juba region). In September 2022, as a first step in the roll-out of the WPP in Kismayo, IOM CCCM team conducted a baseline assessment in three IDP sites in Kismayo to assess current levels and prospects related to participation and safety, as well as to identify barriers and opportunities to increase the participation of women and girls in decision-making. This report presents the main findings from the baseline assessment.

## METHODOLOGY

To better understand how women and girls are perceived and what barriers and opportunities may exist for their participation, IOM CCCM team conducted a qualitative baseline assessment in three IDP sites in Kismayo: Buurdheer, Mariino and Tawakal<sup>2</sup>, hosting 1,200, 1,148 and 960 individuals respectively. These three sites were selected for the baseline assessment because they are located in three different sections of Kismayo city, which allowed for a greater diversity representation in the findings.

The IOM CCCM team used the WPP qualitative tools, which were slightly revised for cultural appropriateness and translated into Somali Maxaa. These tools included: two Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides – one targeting community leaders and one targeting non-leaders; two in-depth interview guides – one targeting community leaders and one targeting non-leaders; one key informant interview (KII) guide; and one guide to conduct a safety mapping exercise with women and girls.

The data collection lasted four days, from 19 to 22 September 2022. The assessment team consisted of seven female and seven male data collectors from IOM. One of the women on the team is a member of the Bantu community, a minority group in Kismayo. She was an asset to the team, particularly in facilitating in-depth interviews with members of minority groups and ensuring their representation in the study. The team received a four-day in-person training by the WPP team in HQ, the week prior to the assessment. The training covered the introduction of the WPP, barriers and opportunities to women's participation, and ethical data collection. During the training, the team reviewed the tools and practiced facilitation and note-taking. On the last day of the training, the team pilot-tested the tool with members of the IDP community.

In total, during the data collection period, the IOM CCCM team organised 20 FGDs with 205 participants from the IDP community. Safety mapping exercises were conducted during the FGDs with women and girls. In order to capture the voices of commonly excluded groups, the team also held nine in-depth interviews with people with disabilities and with members of minority groups, including minority clans and marginalised ethnic groups such as the Bantus, and the Bajunis. Finally, two KIIs were conducted with representatives of two CCCM partner organisations: ACTED and SADO. A total of 216 individuals (91 women and girls, 125 men and boys) participated in the study. The tables below provide a detailed breakdown of the FGDs and in-depth interview participants by site.

### BUURDHEER IDP SITE

Type	Number of FGD/Interview conducted	Number of participants
FGD with women leaders	1	12
FGD with women non-leaders	1	10
FGD with men leaders	1	12
FGD with men non-leaders	1	10
FGD with boys	2	23
FGD with minority groups (men)	1	9
In-depth interview with minority groups (men)	1	1

## MARINO IDP SITE

Type	Number of FGD/Interview conducted	Number of participants
FGD with women leaders	1	12
FGD with women non-leaders	1	10
FGD with girls	1	12
FGD with men leaders	1	10
FGD with men non-leaderds	2	23
FGD with boys	1	9
In-depth interview with minority groups (women)	1	1
In-depth interview with persons with disabilities (women)	1	1

## TAWAKAL2 IDP SITE

Type	Number of FGD/Interview conducted	Number of participants
FGD with women leaders	1	12
FGD with women non-leaders	1	10
FGD with girls	1	12
FGD with men leaders	1	10
FGD with men non-leaderds	2	23
FGD with boys	1	9
In-depth interview with minority groups (women)	1	1
In-depth interview with persons with disabilities (women)	1	1

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

- As this research is qualitative, the results may not be representative of the views of the whole community. In fact, only three of the 168 IDP sites in Kismayo were covered by the baseline assessment, due to limited time and resources. However, in order to increase the relevance and representativity of the information collected in each site, the team ensured that they engaged with all population groups (men, boys, women, girls, leaders, non-leaders, members of minority groups, people with disabilities). The three sites targeted for the assessment were also chosen strategically as they are located in three different sections of Kismayo city.
- Some women were feeling shy and did not engage as much during the FGDs, which hindered their contribution during the discussions. As a mitigation action, female staff were engaged to facilitate the FGDs with women and girls, and the sessions were held in a private space with only women present. This methodology allowed female participants to slowly build their confidence up and share their views during the discussions.

## MAIN FINDINGS

### MEANING OF 'PARTICIPATION'<sup>1</sup>

Most FGD participants – regardless of gender, age, and role – defined 'participation' as voluntarily taking part in daily activities related to site maintenance (e.g., cleaning campaigns, waste disposal, latrine maintenance), as well as engaging in awareness raising campaigns (i.e., hygiene promotion was mentioned several times by different profiles of participants). However, some trends in the way different participant profiles define 'participation' were found, as described below.

For participants in **leadership positions** – both men and women – 'participation' also means advocating for people in need, including newly arrived families, and dealing with issues faced by the community. For example, male leaders cited dealing with eviction threats, while female leaders cited resolving family disputes, including cases of gender-based violence (GBV).

**Young male** participants defined their participation as helping to maintain site security by patrolling, especially at night, as some IDP sites are not fenced and have previously experienced intruders and theft. Most **male participants** – regardless of age and position – also mentioned their participation in construction work (e.g., repairing shelters, wells, latrines).

Another recurring theme among all types of participants, but even more so among **women**, was support for families in need. Female FGD participants were the only ones to mention contributing money or sharing food and water with families in need, as form of participation. Some women talked about a community savings initiative, some form of 'common pot' to help families in need, but also to help develop small businesses in the community or in case the community faces a sudden challenge.

Interviewees from **minority groups** – both men and women – indicated that they were also involved in activities related to camp life, such as clean-up campaigns and awareness-raising sessions. They stressed that as a minority group it was important for them to be able to participate in such activities.

Finally, **interviewees with disabilities** also shared their definition of 'participation', which was mainly about being involved in community work and helping people in need. One man also expressed concerns about not being invited to participate in community meetings.

It is interesting to note that participation in community meetings and engagement with site leaders was not a recurring theme for most FGD participants and interviewees, when asked to define what participation in camp life meant to them.

### ROLE OF LEADERS & DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

In Somalia, IDPs usually organise themselves, on their own initiative or with the support of CCCM partners, to form what is called a Camp Management Committee (CMC). The CMC is usually composed of five to ten members, including IDPs and members of the host community. As participants pointed out, women are also often members of the CMC, which is partly due to the advocacy of CCCM actors for a quota of women in the CMC, but also a matter of course, as the majority of the site population is composed of women and children, with many women being heads of households. The leaders and members of the CMC are often elected by the IDP community members themselves, and sometimes appointed by the local authorities. In addition to the CMC, other IDP groups/committees that influence camp decisions include women committee, persons with disabilities committee, youth committee, elders committee, among others.

<sup>1</sup> The question asked in the tool was the following: Could you please describe what it means for you to participate in the life of the camp? What specific activities does that entail? What role do you have in those activities?



For most FGD participants - regardless of gender, age and status - the role of the site leaders is to listen and respond to the concerns of the site population, and to advocate for their needs with the authorities and humanitarian actors.

Most FGD participants stated that site leaders are the main decision-making authority in the sites, along with the elders. According to the participants, elders have a specific role in conflict resolution. Some also mentioned that religious leaders hold decision-making power within the site.

According to participants, there is some level of community consultation in decision-making, through community meetings to which different representatives are invited or have seats, including representatives of women's groups, youth representatives, representatives of people with disabilities. Most consider that decisions are made collectively, with leaders consulting the community before making a decision, and then the final decision being shared with the community.

One young man said: *"Camp leaders and elders have the final say in decision-making."*

One man from a minority group said: *"The leaders sit and decide for the site, then share the message with the rest of the community, and we agree because they are our leaders."*

One young man said: *"Taking part in round table discussions during site meetings is something that makes me feel very proud."*

According to both male and female participants, women are included in the decision-making process, with some women holding leadership positions (chairperson, site leader), and women's groups have seats at site meetings. However, women leaders said that sometimes their male counterparts do not invite them to meetings. This view was also shared by a male leader who said: *"Some site leaders ignore decisions made by women, which affects all female residents."*

Quotes from female leaders: *"I started supporting the camp members while not holding any leadership position."; "A good female leader can raise the concerns of women without fear."*

Key informants from CCCM partner organisations also indicated that women are often formally included in governance structures, as members and sometimes even in higher positions such as vice-chair. CCCM partners stated that they support governance structures in IDP sites and advocate for a minimum percentage of female representatives (between 30 and 40 per cent, according to key informants). However, according to these partners, the actual role and participation of women is limited because they are often fewer in number than their male counterparts, but also because of cultural and religious beliefs that consider women's opinions to be of less value.

During interviews with people with disabilities, some participants said that they were excluded from the decision-making process as well. One man said, *"We cannot attend the decision-making meetings because we are not considered or invited to the meetings."*



## CURRENT ISSUES EXPERIENCED BY IDPs IN THE SITES

The table below summarises the current issues experienced by IDPs in the sites, categorised by participant's profiles. Some themes were recurrent for all types of participants, such as cholera or acute watery diarrhoea (AWD), access to basic needs (food, water, education, sanitation, health, shelter). Other themes, in **bold**, were only mentioned by certain participant profiles.

Participants profile	Current issues experienced by IDP in the sites
Men	Cholera/AWD; Drought and hunger; Lack of access to education; Lack of latrines; Theft, particularly at night.
Men from minority groups	Cholera/AWD; Drought and hunger; <b>Exclusion of minority groups and inequality in access to services and assistance; Job/livelihood opportunities</b> ; Lack of access to clean water; Lack of access to education; Lack of access to health facilities; <b>Lack of garbage disposal and garbage collection system</b> ; Lack of latrines; Poor shelter conditions; <b>Risks of eviction</b> .
Men with disabilities	Cholera/AWD; Lack of access to clean water; Lack of access to education; Lack of access to health facilities; Theft particularly at night.
Boys	Cholera/AWD; Drought and hunger; <b>Harassment from the police</b> ; Lack of access to education; Lack of access to health facilities; Lack of latrines; Poor shelter conditions; <b>High prices of food</b> ; Theft particularly at night.
Women	Cholera/AWD; Drought, hunger, and <b>malnutrition</b> ; <b>Exclusion of persons with disabilities and inequality in access to services and assistance; Insecurity at night; Job/livelihood opportunities</b> ; Lack of access to clean water; Lack of access to education ( <b>school fees</b> ); Lack of access to health facilities; <b>Poor hygiene and sanitation conditions; Risks of eviction</b> .
Women with disabilities	Cholera/AWD; <b>Exclusion of persons with disabilities and inequality in access to services and assistance</b> ; Lack of access to health facilities; Lack of latrines.
Women from minority groups	Cholera/AWD; <b>Lack of garbage disposal and garbage collection system</b> ; Lack of latrines; <b>Malnutrition</b> ; Poor hygiene and sanitation conditions.
Girls	Cholera/AWD; Drought and hunger; <b>High prices of food</b> ; Poor hygiene and sanitation conditions.

## BARRIERS TO WOMEN AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN CAMP LIFE

The table below summarises the barriers to women and girls' participation in camp life, categorised by the different profiles of the participants in the study. The results have only been disaggregated between male and female participants and no further disaggregation has been done for participants from minority groups, people with disabilities or adult/youth, as no major differences were found between these different participant profiles. Some additional elements from CCCM NGO partners, gathered through key informant interviews, have also been included. Cultural and religious norms that perpetuate male authority in decision-making, and women's low level of education were the main barriers cited across all types of participants.

Participants profile	Barriers to women and girls's participation in camp life
Themes shared by <b>both men and women</b>	Additional challenges for women with disability (e.g., distance, accessibility, discrimination); Cultural and religious beliefs; Fear for their safety if they must travel to attend meetings (e.g., if information centre or government buildings are located far from the site); Fear of site leaders and committee members; Lack of support/approval from their families and husbands; Lack of training and capacity building opportunity for women; Low level of education and illiteracy; Men's negative perceptions of women; Fear of speaking in public; Women are too busy with the many household chores and taking care of their children.
Themes shared by <b>men only</b>	Divorce, as women become the breadwinner of the household in addition to housework and childcare, they may also be discriminated against; Early marriage because once girls are married they are busy at home and participate less in community activities, they also often drop out of school; Female Genital Mutilation often results in girls dropping out of school for a few weeks or more as it can lead to health complications. In addition, after FGM, girls are now considered adolescents and it is less accepted that they participate in community activities and are expected to stay at home; Lack of opportunity, "not given a chance to participate"; Some women do not want to participate in camp decision-making.
Themes shared by <b>women only</b>	Lack of information about the camp-life; Lack of support from men in leadership positions; Lack of women representatives for women to share their concerns with; Low self-esteem; Most women are not aware of their right to participate; Lack of livelihood opportunities for women, forcing them to constantly look for daily work.
Additional themes shared by <b>CCCM NGO partners</b>	Frequent evictions affect IDPs' access to information, as they often move to new areas, affecting women to a greater extent; Low level of funding from donors to focus on women's participation and women empowerment; Trainings conducted by humanitarian organisations often targets Camp Management Committee (CMC) members only, often resulting in less women participating in trainings.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE

### WOMEN AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN CAMP LIFE

The table below summarises the opportunities and recommendations to increase women and girls' participation in camp life identified by the different participants in the study. The results have only been disaggregated between male and female participants and no further disaggregation has been done for participants from minority groups, people with disabilities or adult/youth, as no major differences were found between these different participant profiles. Some additional elements from CCCM NGO partners, gathered through key informant interviews, have also been included. Women and girls' education, capacity building (literacy and numeracy, leadership, crafts skills), awareness raising, and women's economic empowerment were the opportunities most cited across all profiles of participants.

Participants profile	Current issues experienced by IDP in the sites
Themes shared by <b>both men and women</b>	Awareness raising on GBV; Awareness-raising on sharing household chores with men; Awareness raising on women's right to participate; Build women's confidence and self-esteem through trainings; Capacity building for women on leadership, problem solving and public speaking; Give women the opportunity to be leaders, attend and participate in site meetings; Humanitarian organisations should always have separate discussions with women and girls to understand their views and needs; Literacy and numeracy classes for women; Provision of separate and private space for women to meet; Site leaders and family members should encourage women participation; Support creation of/existing women's groups; Support girls' education; Support income generating opportunities for women (small businesses); Vocational handcraft training for women;
Themes shared by <b>men only</b>	Awareness raising on the inclusion of persons with disabilities; Bring information centres closer to IDP sites to facilitate access for women; Organise cultural and festive events to promote interactions among women;
Themes shared by <b>women only</b>	Capacity building for women from minority groups and women with disabilities; Inclusion of minority groups and persons with disability in leadership structures; Increase women and girl's safety in the sites; Listen, respect and value women's opinions; Job opportunities for women with disabilities; Organise dialogue sessions between men and women; Share information about the daily camp activities and decision-making with women and girls; Support existing women's initiatives, for example community savings initiatives; Women in leadership positions should advocate for other women and encourage other women.
Additional themes shared by <b>NGO CCCM partners</b>	Establish referral pathway for GBV cases; Humanitarian organisations should conduct more gender analysis throughout their programming; Humanitarian organisations should have a ratio of 50 percent men and 50 percent women in their project teams; Humanitarian organisations should promote women and girls' participation in their programming; Installation of solar lights in IDP sites to increase safety at night.

Quotes from male participants: *"If they have more information, women would be more able to participate."; "Girls' education should be a priority".*

Quotes from female participants: *"We can't even operate our phones by ourselves, to register contacts or check our account balance, we have to get help from someone else"; "The women and girls in the camp really need vocational training programmes to improve their daily lives."*

Quotes from CCCM NGO partners: *"During meetings, we can see that women are not able to write their names. Sometimes women cannot read the hotline number or call the hotline by themselves."*

## MEN AND BOYS' PERCEPTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Cultural and religious beliefs, as well as men's negative perception of women, were repeatedly cited by all participants as significant barriers to the participation of women and girls. To better understand what this means, participants were asked about men and boys' perceptions of women and girls. Some quotes from the discussions are presented below.

Quotes from **male** participants:

*"Some men think that if women and girls are educated, they become troublesome to their male counterparts."*

*"No husband would allow his wife to behave like the men in the meetings."*

*"We are comfortable with women and girls making decisions in the camp because we know that they have a good knowledge and understanding of the problems faced by the community and family issues."*

*"We support women because they are our parents, our relatives, our daughters, they are part of the community."*

Quotes from **female** participants:

*"In Somali homes, when a husband asks his wife for an idea and she gives him a brilliant idea, he will never show her how that idea helped him."*

*"Some men think that women's voices should not be heard because they are not allowed by religion."*

*"Men do not spend on women, for example they do not educate girls to improve their future lives."*

*"Some men believe that women and girls can make good decisions because they know about very sensitive family issues and are the backbone of the community."*

*"Men consider decisions made by women to be valueless."*

Quotes from **CCCM NGO** partners:

*"Traditionally, when a woman takes a leadership position and speaks in an influential way to men, they are not seen as suitable wives in the future, so because of this misconception, they remain silent and do not want to participate."*

*"If a woman is involved in decision-making, people will say that she is not looking after her children or her husband, so women are shy."*



## SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION MAPPING

At the end of the FGDs conducted with women and girls, participants conducted a safety and participation mapping exercise. The objective of this exercise was to capture women and girls' perceptions of risk and safety on a map. Women and girls drew places of importance to them, indicating where they feel safe or unsafe in the site where they live. The findings of this participatory mapping exercise are summarised in the below table.

	During the day	During the night
<b>Places where women and girls feel safest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places where women gather in large number: under a tree, community centre, market, hospital, mosque</li> <li>• In their shelter or their relatives' shelters</li> <li>• At school (for girls)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In their shelter</li> <li>• Near the police station</li> <li>• Places with street light and where people gather: hospital, mosque, market</li> </ul>
<b>Places where women and girls do not feel safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolated and remote places: forest, bush</li> <li>• Water points (fight over water resources)</li> <li>• On the way to the market, to fetch water or firewood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolated, remote, and dark places: forest, bush</li> <li>• In the street (dark corners)</li> </ul>

Through the safety mapping, women and girls also identified the places where and/or people who they can go to, to voice their concerns, ideas and questions. They mentioned the site leaders, the community centre and the complaints and feedback mechanism. Women's shyness and men's lack of consideration for women were cited as barriers to women's access to these places.

The participants also identified the places where women and girls go if they are injured or have experienced violence. The places identified were the police station and the hospital or health centre. The participants said that they knew about these places from word of mouth from other women who had already used these services. They expressed concerns about confidentiality and fear of how their husbands or parents would react if they knew they had gone to these places without their authorization. With regard to the police station, participants said that it would be easier for women if there were more female police officers.



## CONCLUSION

Although efforts have been made to involve women in governance structures within the Kismayo IDP sites, and some women do hold leadership positions, meaningful participation remains a challenge due to several factors. These include cultural and religious norms that perpetuate male authority in decision-making and the lack of consideration for women's opinions, which fuels women's shyness/fear and lack of confidence to participate, women's low level of education, and women's limited time due to heavy household duties.

However, the study participants also outlined a number of ways to encourage more active participation of women in camp life and decision-making: increased support for girls' education and adult learning, vocational training, economic empowerment, leadership training for women leaders, and opening up more spaces exclusively for women.

To be successful, these efforts must also involve men and boys. Participants suggested that awareness-raising and dialogue sessions between men and women could be beneficial in challenging cultural views of women. Although the perception of women by men and boys seems to be quite negative overall, some male participants also recognised the added value of women in decision making, particularly because of their better understanding of the struggle and needs of the community and within the family. This could be an angle to explore for starting such dialogue sessions.

## NEXT STEPS

Following the baseline assessment, the Kismayo CCCM team will present and reflect on key findings with community leaders and IDP community members, particularly women, to jointly develop an action plan to address the identified barriers to participation, and capitalise on the opportunities to the extent possible. The CCCM team in Kismayo will work closely with their colleagues in Doolow to learn from their experience and replicate successful activities, particularly literacy and numeracy classes, vocational training, and business development support. IOM CCCM team will also share the main findings of the baseline study with key partners working on women's engagement in the Somalia response, in order to promote women's equal participation in all aspects of camp life.