

Tearing Down the Walls: Confronting the Barriers to Internally Displaced Women and Girls' Participation in Humanitarian Settings

Summary of Key Findings

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Methodology

- Literature review on themes of internal displacement, participation, and gender equality in humanitarian settings
- Fieldwork in Niger and South Sudan
 - Focus group discussions with IDP women and girls
 - Semi-structured interviews with key informant
 - Observation of relevant events

Seeking Survival and Missing Participation

- Meeting basic survival needs consumes the majority of IDP women and girls' time and energy
- Loss of livelihoods results in a loss of personal agency and autonomy for IDP women and girls
- SGBV disempowers IDP women and girls and discourages participation
- Militarization of the humanitarian space creates risks for IDP women and girls

Participation Archetypes: What is working well, what needs improvement

- “Consultation fatigue”
- Women and girls’ safe spaces (WGSS) are lifeboats of participation in humanitarian settings
- Women’s rights and leadership are viewed as “foreign” concepts
- A disconnect between IDP women and girls’ participation at local levels and national levels

Policies Versus Practice

- Despite advances in the policy architecture, policies are not yet meaningfully touching IDP women and girls' lives
- There is a conspicuous absence of IDP women and girls in spaces of visible power, particularly at national levels
- Denying 1325: People in positions of power often delay women's participation until peace

Confronting Gender Inequality

- Men and boys still control decision-making and resources in IDP communities
- Gender inequalities are embedded within the humanitarian system and prevent the realization of gender equality for IDPs and other populations
- “Meet women where they are:” A need to validate and nurture IDP women’s leadership at all levels

Tearing Down the Walls: Key Recommendations

- Continued need for **technically sound, women-focused WGSS** approaches
- Support and upscale technically competent and strategic **women's economic empowerment** projects
- **Tackling gender inequality** within the humanitarian system

Tearing Down the Walls: Key Recommendations Continued

- A clear need for **longer-term financial commitment of donors** to strategic women's participation projects
- Supporting partners who can carry out **strategic engagement of men and boys** that is accountable to IDP women and girls
- Uphold UNSCR 1325: **Never delay women and girls' participation**