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Key Development Challenges Around Internal Displacement: A Gender Perspective

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GENDER DIMENSIONS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Understanding Inequality Through Data & Analysis

UKaid
from the British people

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

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Building the Evidence on Forced Displacement

Abstract

At the end of 2020, there were over 48 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) displaced by conflict and another seven million displaced by natural disasters, more than double the number of refugees. The challenges facing IDPs are often less visible than those facing refugees, although accumulating evidence does point to systematic disadvantages, especially for women and girls.

This paper charts the extent to which national and international policies and programmes address gender in displacement settings. Our review finds that while there has been important progress, major shortcomings persist in addressing the gendered dimensions of internal displacement at the international and country levels. Commitments on paper have not consistently translated to change in practice. Gender gaps in livelihoods, social protection, durable solutions, gender-based violence, heath, and education as major challenges requiring increased attention.

Looking ahead, better understanding and greater accountability of the gendered dimensions of internal displacement also requires better data and more systematic tracking of progress and shortcomings. Understanding how gender, internal displacement, and marginalized identities intersect needs to inform efforts to improving conditions on the ground so equal rights, protection, and opportunities are available for displaced and non-displaced people alike.

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1. Introduction and objectives

Forced displacement has moved up the development agenda, not least because the vast majority of internally displaced live in developing countries. Persons forcibly displaced from their homes who cannot or choose not to cross an international border are not considered refugees, even if they share many of the same circumstances and challenges as those who do. Unlike refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) do not have a special status in international law with rights specific to their situation (UN OHCHR 2021). Among the major challenges faced by IDPs is that while they are normally still citizens of the country in which they live and should enjoy the rights of citizens, they may be members of ethnic minorities or opposition groups subject to discrimination or persecution by the authorities.

This paper, prepared as part of the World Bank's Gender Dimensions of Forced Displacement Program, aims to provide an overview of the key international legal frameworks, challenges, and legal, policy, and program responses around internally displaced persons from a gender perspective. The focus is on women and girls. It highlights major gaps and shortcomings in the extent to which gender differentiated needs have been recognized and responded to, including on the data front. It also highlights promising innovations and emerging good practice and seek to bridge existing knowledge from both the humanitarian and development spheres, which all too often remain disconnected.
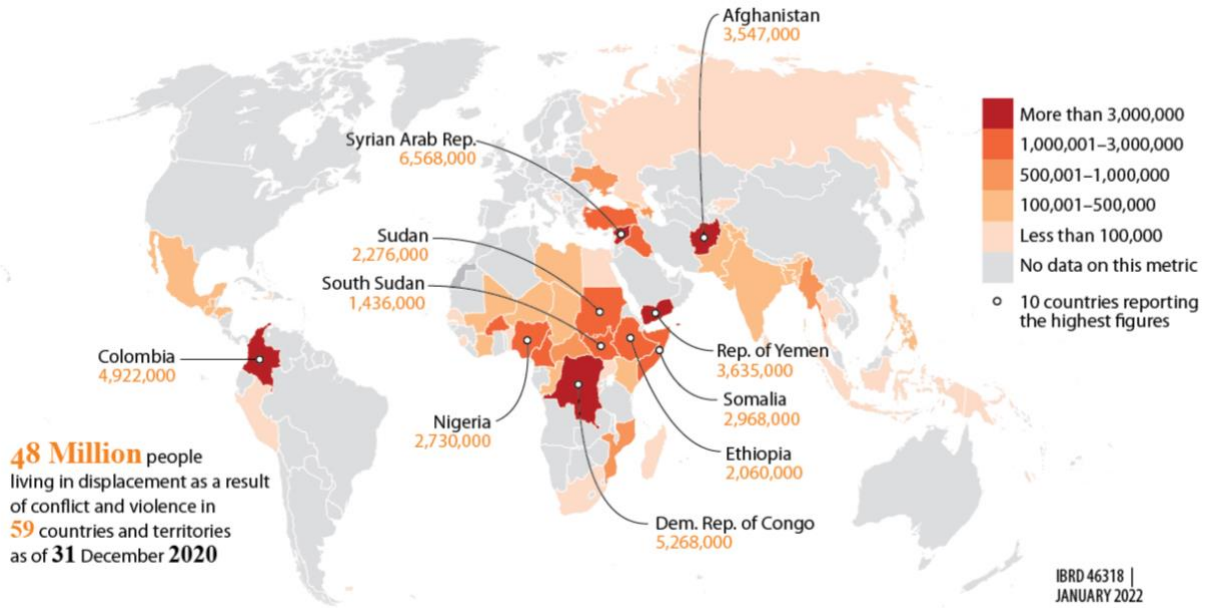
Given the heightened prominence of both displacement and gender on the global agenda, the main audience for the paper is policymakers in governments and humanitarian and development agencies, to provide a ready reference of the state-of-play on displacement from a gender perspective. It is designed to complement both the recent UN Secretary General's High Level Panel Report on Internal Displacement (United Nations 2021a) and the World Bank's Approach Paper on IDPs (World Bank, 2021), which do not fully address gender dimensions.

The paper begins by reviewing estimated numbers, demographic profiles, and location of internally displaced people. It then turns to the international framework, and then move onto review policies and challenges on the ground. An important area of focus is the interplay between humanitarian support and ongoing national policies and programs. Readers who are familiar with the overall global situation can skip section 2 on the current situation, and those familiar with the international frameworks can go directly to section 5 on current challenges facing internally displaced women and girls.

2. A Global snapshot

At the end of 2020, there were about 48 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) displaced by conflict and violence around the world, and about seven million by natural disasters (figures 1 and 2). The number of internally displaced is more than twice the number of refugees (UNHCR 2020a) and nearly all (99 percent) of IDPs live in low- and middle-income countries (Huang and Graham 2019). The most recent global data show that Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest number of internally displaced, 24.1 million, while the countries with the largest numbers of IDPs were, in descending order: Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Colombia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, and South Sudan (IDMC 2021). In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Sub-Saharan Africa, 86 and 61 percent of internal displacements, respectively, were driven by conflict.

Figure 1: Total number of IDPs by conflict and violence, 2020

Afghanistan
3,547,000

Syrian Arab Rep.
6,568,000

Sudan
2,276,000

South Sudan
1,436,000

Colombia
4,922,000

Rep. of Yemen
3,635,000

Somalia
2,968,000

Nigeria
2,730,000

Ethiopia
2,060,000

Dem. Rep. of Congo
5,268,000

More than 3,000,000
1,000,001–3,000,000
500,001–1,000,000
100,001–500,000
Less than 100,000
No data on this metric

○ 10 countries reporting the highest figures

48 Million people living in displacement as a result of conflict and violence in **59** countries and territories as of **31 December 2020**

IBRD 46318 | JANUARY 2022

Source: Reproduced from IDMC 2021.

Figure 2: Total number of IDPs by conflict and violence, 2020

Afghanistan
1,117,000

Pakistan
806,000

India
929,000

Bangladesh
345,000

Sudan
454,000

Niger
267,000

Rep. of Yemen
223,000

Ethiopia
633,000

Kenya
204,000

Vietnam
162,000

More than 1,000,000
500,001–1,000,000
100,001–500,000
Less than 100,000
No data on this metric

○ 10 countries reporting the highest figures

7 Million people living in displacement as a result of disasters in **104** countries and territories as of **31 December 2020**

IBRD 46319 | JANUARY 2022

Source: Reproduced from IDMC 2021.

How Many Women and Girls are Internally Displaced?

Most global data on IDPs has major limitations including the general failure to sex-disaggregate, so it is not known globally how many IDPs are women and girls (box 1). According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), DRC, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Peru are the only countries that fully disaggregate IDP data by sex for disaster and conflict-driven displacement (table 1).   An additional 17 countries partially sex-disaggregate IDP data, meaning that data from certain regions or for certain types of disasters, for example, may not be disaggregated by sex. This underlines the stark deficits in data availability. The Expert Group on Refugees and IDP Statistics—a group of governments, NGOs, and international agencies founded by the United Nations Statistical Commission— has highlighted the importance of sex-disaggregating IDP data around such themes as poverty, education, informal employment, and land ownership (European Union and United Nations 2020).

The gender balance of women and men among the displaced may differ from population-wide estimates – for example families may separate to cope with conflict, with men moving to urban areas to find work, or women and children moving to locations that are believed to be safer. In some countries, more women are internally displaced by conflict than men, as in Burundi (65 percent), Sudan (57 percent), Chad, and Ukraine (both 56 percent) (UNHCR 2019a). Women are also often disproportionately displaced by disasters, due to their greater reliance on natural resources for livelihoods, and fewer assets that make them more vulnerable to environmental shocks (Habtezion 2017).

Box 1 A Note on IDP Data Sources

No UN agency has an official mandate on IDP data collection. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) has become the world's definitive source of data on internal displacement, since being established in 1998 as part of the Norwegian Refugee Council. Their annual Global Report on Internal Displacement presents the most up-to-date estimates of new displacements by conflict and disasters, and the total cumulative numbers of IDPs worldwide (IDMC 2021). Data are gathered from the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, UN humanitarian clusters, the International Federation of the Red Cross, and local authorities. It is the go-to reference for internal displacement data and analysis, widely used by policy-makers national governments, UN agencies, international NGOs, journalists, and academics. The global figures presented in this note likewise rely on IDMC.

At the same time, IDP numbers published by governments, as well as by humanitarian and advocacy organizations, may not be reliable. According to Dr. Gabriel Cardona-Fox (2020), governments routinely minimize displacement estimates and even block attempts by international organizations to collect and publish more accurate information, motivated by a desire to avoid "unwanted international attention to human rights violations, unresolved conflicts, or simply the erosion of State authority." Displacement crises can call attention to inconvenient realities about countries' ethnic conflicts and social disparities. Conversely, other governments conversely "inflate the numbers of IDPs to attract more humanitarian aid or mobilize international opinion against adversaries accused of being responsible for the displacement." And humanitarian and advocacy organizations involved in data collection also may have a reason to manipulate data or treat it selectively, for example, to "boost their fundraising, or to justify the resources they receive."

Table 1 Countries with sex disaggregated IDP data

Country	Disasters	Conflict
DRC	Yes	Yes
Ethiopia	Yes	Yes
Mozambique	Yes	Yes
Peru	Yes	Yes
Mali	Partially	Yes
Nigeria	Partially	Yes
Afghanistan	No	Yes
Burkina Faso	No	Yes
Colombia	No	Yes
Georgia	No	Yes
Burundi	Partially	Partially
CAR	Partially	Partially
Papua New Guinea	Partially	Partially
Somalia	Partially	Partially
South Sudan	Partially	Partially
Sudan	Partially	Partially
Azerbaijan	No	Partially
Cameroon	No	Partially
Myanmar	No	Partially
Chad	Partially	No
Russian Federation	Partially	No

Source: Courtesy of IDMC, last updated in 2020.
Note: Countries not listed have no sex disaggregated data. "Partially" indicates that only some IDP data is sex disaggregated, for example, data from certain regions or for certain types of disasters.

While disaster-driven displacements do not dominate the total internal displacement numbers, much new displacement has been associated with climate-related instability. At the end of 2020, 13 percent of all IDPs had been displaced by disasters, mostly due to extreme weather events (IDMC 2021). Bangladesh, China, and the Philippines each recorded more than four million new disaster driven displacements, often driven by pre-emptive evacuations.

Gender inequality compounds the impacts of forced displacement

Displacement can reinforce pre-existing discrimination and socioeconomic disadvantages. Displaced women often face greater challenges than men in finding livelihoods with decent returns and can struggle to access education and healthcare (IDMC 2020a). Displaced persons also tend to have less opportunities to participate in decisions on matters that affect them.

A useful snapshot of disadvantage was revealed by a new index of displaced women's status covering Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan (GIWPS & PRIO 2021). Across all five countries, displaced women faced significantly greater disadvantages than host-community women, displaced men, and host community men across a range of outcomes (figure 3). In Ethiopia, for example, one in four displaced women reported feeling unsafe in her neighborhood, more than double the rates for displaced men, host community men, and host community women. Across all five countries, employment rates were at least 90 percent higher for displaced men than for displaced women—nearly 150 percent higher in Nigeria, where about 36 percent of displaced men were employed, compared with about 15 percent of displaced women. The multiple disparities that displaced women experience men highlight how gender inequality and forced displacement can worsen opportunities and outcomes.

Figure 3: Gender inequality compounds the effects of forced displacement
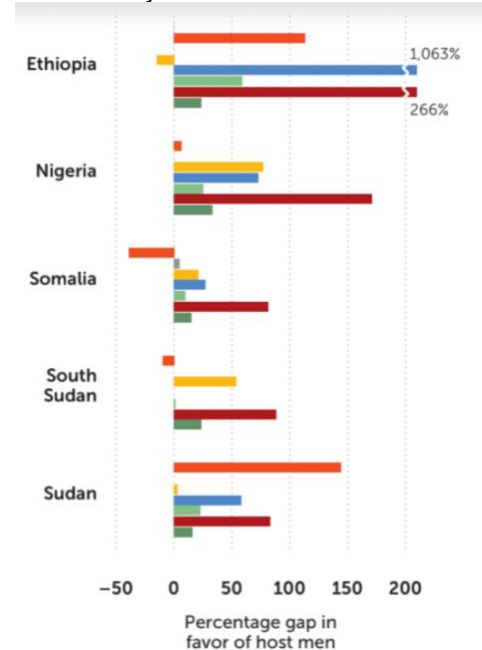
3a Gaps between displaced women and host community women
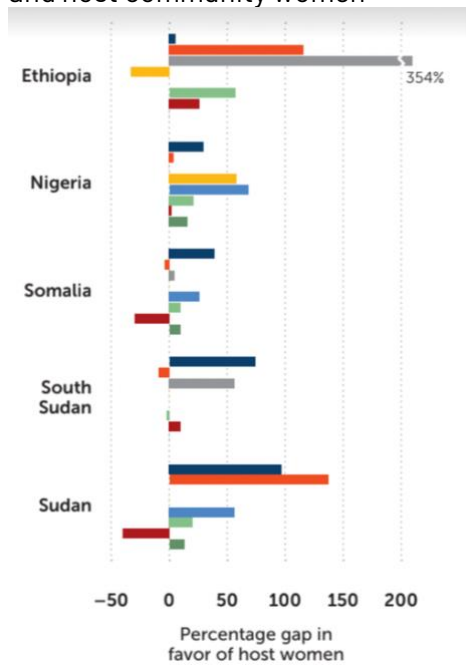
3b Gender gaps between displaced women and displaced men
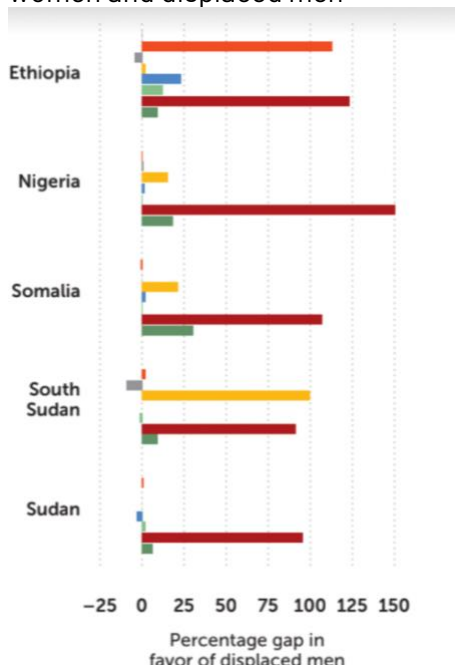
3c Larger gender gaps between displaced women and host community men

Legend:
- Current intimate partner violence
- Community safety
- Mobility
- Legal identification
- Financial inclusion
- Cellphone access
- Employment
- Education

Source: GIWPS and PRIO 2021.

Emerging evidence also suggests that displaced women have been hit disproportionately hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, as box 2 outlines.

Box 2 The impacts of COVID-19 on internally displaced women

For displaced people, the risks of COVID-19 are amplified. In the short run, limited access to essential services and crowded living spaces increases the likelihood of infection and severe illness. A recent study from the city of Kaya in Burkina Faso found that 87 percent of displaced households were not being able to isolate a sick member, compared to 64 percent of non-displaced households (UNCHR and REACH 2020).

An International Rescue Committee/Overseas Development Institute report on conditions in Greece, Jordan, and Nigeria reveals that displaced women have been less likely to earn income during the pandemic than displaced men, in part because they rely heavily on the informal jobs which has been severely impacted by the pandemic (Clingain et al. 2021). In Nigeria, 75 percent of displaced women reported struggling to cover their basic needs during the pandemic, and in Greece, only half of displaced women felt that their current wages were enough to meet their household needs.

Displaced women have also faced increased exposure to GBV during the pandemic. In mid-2020, the IRC spoke with 852 displaced women and women settings across Africa, and nearly three quarters (73 percent) reported increases in intimate partner violence since the onset of the pandemic (Abwola and Michelis 2020). Commonly cited reasons were the added stress of lockdown and financial uncertainty triggering violent behavior from husbands. Women also reported traveling more often to collect water due to new hygiene practices, and 31 percent of women reported harassment *en route* to water collection points.

Women interviewed by the IRC called for ensuring the availability of services to address gender-based violence, coordinated with local authorities and religious leaders, and proving sufficient access to personal protective equipment.

Section 5 below explores challenges facing IDP women and girls across livelihoods, social protection, GBV, health, and education. We now turn to review international frameworks and initiatives, and then look at national policies to address the challenges faced by IDP women and girls. An important area of focus is the interplay between humanitarian support and ongoing national policies and programs.

3. International IDP frameworks and initiatives from a gender perspective

It is useful to recap the normative framework for internal displacement and major international initiatives from a gender perspective, before turning to national laws and policies protecting IDPs, and key international actors.

The Guiding Principles and progress since 1998

The Guiding Principles, which were presented to the Commission on Human Rights in 1998, are the authoritative and normative standard on internal displacement (Global Protection Cluster n.d.). The 30 principles restate the rights of IDPs, as enshrined in international human rights and humanitarian law, recognized by the UN General Assembly and others.

Most notable from a gender perspective, the Principles explicitly state that:
- IDPs are entitled to the same rights and freedoms as others in their country, and that they must not be discriminated against on the basis of their displacement status, "race, sex, language, religion, social origin or other similar factors";
- Women and men should have equal rights to obtain necessary legal documentation;
- Special efforts to be made to ensure the full participation of girls in educational programs;
- Authorities should seek to involve those affected, especially women, in planning relocation if displacement occurs in situations other than during the emergency states of armed conflicts and disasters;
- Authorities should ensure the full participation of women in the distribution of basic needs and supplies;
- Special attention should be paid to the health needs of women, including reproductive healthcare and counseling for victims of sexual abuse;
- IDPs must be protected in particular against: "rape, mutilation, torture...and other outrages upon personal dignity, such as acts of gender-specific violence, forced prostitution and any form of indecent assault...sale into marriage, [and] sexual exploitation".

More generally, the Principles state that national authorities have primary responsibility to ensure their IDP population have access to food, water, shelter, dignity, and safety and that if they are unable to meet these requirements, that they are required to accept international assistance to fill this gap.

As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on IDPs, the Guiding Principles provide the basis for a human rights-based approach to internal displacement (United Nations 2021c). The principles become effective at the national level when these are adopted into national law and policy frameworks (Global Protection Cluster 2020c). Examples of the Guiding Principles' relevance to national policies and laws dealing with IDPs include Afghanistan's 2013 National Policy on IDPs and South Sudan's 2017 National Framework for the Return, Resettlement and Reintegration of Displaced Persons.

Progress on the international agenda since 1998 has been mixed. The 2009 Kampala Convention, representing the first binding regional agreement of its kind, aims to protect the rights of IDPs in African Union countries and addresses all phases of displacement, ranging from prevention to response (African Union 2009). The Convention includes several gender focused clauses, including state obligations to protect IDPs from sexual and gender-based violence, ensure access to reproductive health, and ensure that men and women have equal access to identity documentation. As of June 2020, some 31 AU countries have ratified the agreement (Adeola 2021).

However, IDPs were not included in the UN's 2018 Global Compacts on Refugees, despite the relevance of the principles and objectives of self-reliance, safety, and dignity (UNHCR 2018). While article 23 of the UN Resolution on the 2030 Agenda does explicitly recognize that IDPs constitute a category of the most vulnerable people requiring particular attention and specific action to ensure that they are not left behind (United Nations 2015a), and Goal 5 commits to gender equality, there is no specific SDG goal or target on internal displacement, nor the gender dimensions thereof.

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which recognizes displacement as a major global consequence of disasters and includes a goal to reduce the risks of disaster and displacement (United Nations 2015b). There is not much explicit attention to gender, beyond noting the disproportionate impacts of displacement and climate change on women and calling for greater female participation in decision-making.

UN High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement

In 2019, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres established the first ever High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, tasked with finding "concrete long-term solutions to and raising global awareness of internal displacement…to improve efforts to help all those affected, including both the displaced and their host communities" and focused on the humanitarian-development nexus, to "coherently address people's vulnerability before, during and after crises (United Nations 2019). The Panel comprised eight members and four expert advisors with experience in human rights, the private sector, academia, and international organizations. Inputs were received from over 100 governments, UN agencies, and NGOs, and more 12,500 IDPs and host community members were consulted (United Nations 2021a).

The HLP approached gender as a cross-cutting issue. Some submissions included calls to protect women from GBV and recommended responding to specific needs of individuals linked to age, gender, ability, and diversity, including through disaggregated data collection, and building momentum for gender equitable and non-discriminatory laws, policies, and approaches to displacement (ACT Alliance et al. 2020).

The panel's ten overarching recommendations for addressing internal displacement include calls for whole-of-government approaches, engagement with the private sector, strengthened accountability in the UN system, increased funding, higher-quality data, and better humanitarian responses (United Nations 2021a). The final report recognized that internal displacement disproportionately affects women through higher risks of GBV, legal discrimination in citizenship and official ID access, economic marginalization, and exclusion from decision-making bodies. However, gender is seldom mentioned in the recommendations, except for noting that IDPs of all ages, genders, and diversities should be consulted in national response planning and in peace processes.

4   National laws and policies

Over 75 countries have national laws, policies, decrees, protocols, strategies, and action plans relevant to internal displacement that are either in place or under development (United Nations 2018). However according to the UN, only 14 countries have formal laws in place to protect IDPs, while a further 13 countries have legal and policy-related processes underway (Global Protection Cluster 2020a). For example, formal legislation protecting the rights of IDPs in the Philippines has been pending in the National Senate since 2016. Similarly, South Sudan drafted its first law protecting IDP rights in 2019, that reportedly remains under review by government ministries. A recent review found that actions adopted within two years of peace agreements, independent domestic institutions (such as courts and NGOs), and international support can increase the likelihood of enforcement and full implementation of national laws and policies related to IDPs (Adeola and Orchard 2020).

Several national laws and policies include provisions specifically protecting displaced women (Global Protection Cluster 2020a). Major themes include:
- **Women's participation**: It appears that the most frequent gender-related theme in IDP policies promotes the participation of women in decision-making. For example, Angola's decree on the resettlement of displaced persons mandates that women, traditional authorities, and local authorities be involved in planning and overseeing the resettlement process. Iraq's 2008

National Policy on Displacement underlines that the voices of displaced women and people of all ages should be amplified throughout all stages of return and reintegration.

- **Equitable land restitution and inheritance**: Colombia's 2011 law on armed conflict reparation states that displaced women and women heads of household will be prioritized in land restitution proceedings. Sri Lanka's National Policy explicitly protects the property rights of displaced women and Liberia's goes a step further by pledging to inform displaced women of their property and inheritance rights before resettlement begins.
- **Access to healthcare**: National policies in Nepal and Somalia commit to providing targeted healthcare services for displaced women and girls, including counseling for victims of sexual violence.
- **Skills training and livelihood support**: South Sudan's 2017 Framework commits to providing education and skills training targeted at women and girls to help rebuild livelihoods. Liberia's community-based recovery strategy includes leadership training for displaced women and girls to enhance economic opportunities.
- **Sex-disaggregated data**: Bangladesh and Vanuatu's policies recognize the importance of disaggregating displacement data by sex, alongside other identities such as age, disability status, and minority status to ensure that overlapping disadvantages are accounted for in policymaking.
- **Gender-based violence:** Kenya's policy on the Prevention, Protection and Assistance to IDPs and Affected Communities pledges to protect IDPs from rape and sexual slavery and states that the government is responsible for "providing immediate health care, including post-exposure prophylaxis for prevention of HIV/AIDS, and psycho-social counseling for male and female victims of sexual and gender-based violence and other abuses".

The extent to which national laws and policies on internal displacement have been implemented is unclear. Recent empirical work suggests that internally displaced women do still tend to be systematically disadvantaged in terms of poverty and livelihoods and face higher rates of intimate partner violence, as discussed in the following section on current challenges. The reasons for implementation gaps are generally well understood, but may be traced to competing priorities and resource constraints. In some cases, there may be social and political tensions associated with displacement. As highlighted by the HLP on Internal Displacement, strong political will and a whole-of-government approach, coordinating across national and municipal levels, is needed to prioritise the needs of IDPs (United Nations 2021a).

The state of play suggests that greater efforts are needed to ensure that the status and opportunities of women and men who have been internally displaced are on a par with those of the rest of the population in terms of progress towards the SDGs. This aligns with the HLP's recommendation that the whole of society be invested in advancing the status and opportunities of IDPs, including through the legal protection of IDP rights, media coverage that makes IDP issues visible, and partnerships with civil society organizations to spread awareness (United Nations 2021a).

5. Current policy challenges and responses

Since almost all IDPs are in low- and middle-income countries, many are already disadvantaged in terms of economic opportunities (Huang and Graham 2019). And their governments are often resource-constrained in providing assistance and access to services. The influx of displaced can put burdens on host communities and raise challenges and tensions when assistance is targeted

and limited to the displaced, and has led to greater attention to including host communities and promoting social cohesion (World Bank 2017).

In their new locations, the main challenges facing IDPs vary, but often include food insecurity, lack of livelihood opportunities, and tensions and competition over resources with host communities (IDMC 2020b). After their lives are uprooted and assets lost, it can be very challenging for IDPs who were farmers -- especially common in low-income countries where livelihoods were largely based on agriculture and access to land. The loss of land and other assets, separation from family members, lack of local networks and lack of skills required for labor markets in host communities can all limit the economic opportunities of male and female IDPs.

In many contexts, humanitarian assistance has played a large role in helping to meet the basic needs of IDPs, in terms of food, health services, and shelter, especially for IDPs living in camps. This comes from various sources, notably government programs, local and international NGOs, and international organizations, such as UNHCR, UNDP, IOM, and NRC (see box 3). The HLP calls for greater transparency and accountability within humanitarian responses, and, where possible, working through local structures rather than establishing parallel systems for service delivery (United Nations 2021a).

The total size of international assistance is unknown, since IDPs are not a specific tracking category like refugees (Christian Aid 2018). While support for IDPs appears to constitute a major portion of spending for some international agencies, the recent report of High-Level Panel notes that "there is no data on funding for IDPs and host communities specifically, which is itself an indication of the difficulties on this issue" (United Nations 2021a).

To promote coordination in humanitarian responses, the Global Protection Cluster was established in 2005, led by UNHCR which includes NGOs, UN agencies, and other international organizations, with several Areas of Responsibility, including Gender-Based Violence. In 2020, nearly 31.5 million IDPs received assistance through the GPC (UNHCR 2020b). A three-year Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for IDPs adopted in 2018 emphasizes that data tracking should include disaggregation by age, sex, location, and diversity (Global Protection Cluster 2018).

NGOs and governments have increasingly focused on self-reliance approaches for displaced populations, self-reliance being broadly defined as the ability for displaced persons to live independently from humanitarian assistance from governments, NGOs, or international organizations (Easton-Calabria et al. 2017). This is especially relevant for livelihoods.

Box 3 International actors and the gender dimensions of internal displacement

A number of UN and other major agencies are involved in supporting IDPs at global, national, and local levels. Here we highlight some of the key players, and the ways in which gender dimensions are being addressed.

- **UNHCR** is the leading organization on displacement, with its largest operations in the DRC and Iraq (UNHCR 2020c). UNHCR has committed to mainstreaming age, gender, and diversity into policies and operations to ensure that all people of concern enjoy equal rights and participate in decision-making, grounded in the understanding of multiple and overlapping disadvantages (UNHCR 2019b).
- In 2020, 83 field offices of the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** reported work aimed at ending violence against women and girls and 74 implemented projects advancing decent work and equal employment opportunities for displaced women (IOM 2021).
- In the period 2000-2019, the **World Bank** financed 85 projects that had IDPs as direct beneficiaries or had the presence of IDPs within a community as a criterion for site selection (World Bank 2021). The 2021 approach paper commits to addressing the long-term socioeconomic impacts of forced displacement, promoting whole-of-government responses, working closely with host communities and local authorities, leveraging analytical tools to better assess situations of internal displacement, and targeting IDPs as a core beneficiary group in projects. Instead of earmarking separate IDP funding, it advocates for mainstreaming IDP needs across the World Bank portfolio. While there is limited explicit attention to gender in the approach paper, it notes the differential impacts of internal displacement on men and women, and highlights the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data to better inform responses.
- **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** delivers humanitarian assistance to communities affected by conflict, disaster, and forced displacement. For example, in Afghanistan, where internal displacement has soared in 2021, the IRC is reaching millions of IDPs through providing basic necessities, safe learning spaces, health facilities, employment advice, and safe spaces for women and girls (IRC 2021).
- **The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** specialises in providing legal counselling and assistance to displaced populations. In 2020, they reached approximately 366,000 internally displaced women through these services, supporting the realization of their rights to property ownership, identity documentation, employment, and essential services.[1]

Livelihoods

IDPs typically have lower employment rates than their host counterparts. For example, 53 percent of the working age host population of Somalia was employed in 2020 compared to 46 percent of their peers in IDP camps. The situation was worse in Ethiopia where 61 percent of the host population was employed, compared to only 22 percent in IDP camps (Paper and Sharma 2020).

The employment situation among IDPs is generally worse for women. A survey in Ethiopia found that 35 percent of women became unemployed due to displacement, compared with 30 percent of men, and 40 percent of those women remained unemployed compared to 20 percent of men. For those who found new jobs, women reported average monthly income of $47, while men reported $55

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[1] Estimates courtesy of NRC staff.

(Cazabat et al. 2020). Average monthly income dropped for both men and women IDPs surveyed in Kenya since fleeing their homes, but it dropped by 12 percentage points more for women than for men. Female IDPs in Colombia reported 18-37 percent lower wages than those who moved for reasons other than violence, compared to 10-29 percent lower for men (Schuettler 2020).

Among 260 displaced women surveyed in Iraq, the most common employment challenges were competition for jobs, insufficient education, and lack of relevant skills and experience (Cazabat et al. 2020). About one in eight IDPs surveyed in Kenya reported receiving financial assistance from friends or family before displacement, compared to close to one in five after displacement. However, while the amounts received by men did not vary over time, average monthly support for women fell from $37 to $18, suggesting women's support networks were also disrupted by displacement.

The displaced often leave assets behind, thus hampering their employment opportunities, particularly where self-employment is a major source of income. They may not speak the language of their new region and may not be aware of local labor laws or customs. The traumatic experience of forced displacement adversely affects the mental health of many IDPs, which can lead to negative outlooks on prospects of social mobility and higher risk aversion, and hinder long-term investments. There may also be legal or discriminatory barriers to employment faced by IDPs (Schuettler 2020). For example, employers in Ukraine expressed an unwillingness to hire IDPs, claiming that the investment in job training might not pay off if the new hire left to return home (ILO 2016).

In cases of separation from or loss of male family members, displaced women become heads of households, often leaving them responsible for both providing financially and taking care of their families (ILO 2016). The GDFD research program revealed that displaced households headed by women in Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Sudan were more likely to experience multidimensional poverty than displaced households headed by men, pointing to the compounding effects of gender inequality on displacement and poverty (Admasu et al. 2021). In Ethiopia, 58 percent of female-headed refugee households are impoverished compared to 19 percent of male-headed refugee households, which was associated with lack of physical safety, early marriage, and lack of legal identification.

Another study examining panel data for over 300 female-headed IDP households in Iraq similarly found that 43 percent reported lack of education and training as the leading barrier to employment, and another 33 percent cited family disapproval, underlining the power of gender norms in limiting women's opportunities (Davis and Al-Sham 2020). Low levels of school enrollment impeded employment for displaced mothers who had to stay home to provide childcare. Lack of land to cultivate was reported as a challenge for displaced agricultural workers (Cazabat et al. 2020).

A number of IDP-targeted programs have sought to promote the economic self-sufficiency, partly motivated by the objective of avoiding long term dependence on international humanitarian assistance. Examples where there has been an explicit focus on the inclusion of women include Blue Nile Sudan, which offered vocational training and housing for returning IDPs, and UNHCR activities in Syria to support small business activities (Zeender and Crowther 2019).

Self-reliance approaches raise the concern that displaced people lose access to humanitarian assistance when their earnings from paid work are too limited to sustain their families. The focus on "self-reliance" may also neglect the gendered constraints which limit women's paid work outside the home (Easton-Calabria et al. 2017). Because women are often responsible for caregiving and

unpaid household labor, programming designed to encourage participation in the formal labor force can result in a 'double burden' for women.

Some programs supporting IDPs have specifically worked to offset added burdens facing women. For example, in Burkina Faso, the International Catholic Migration Commission and the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees teamed up to provide a safe space to over 80 displaced children, with education, healthcare, psychosocial care, and childcare, so that displaced parents, especially mothers, have the opportunity to seek paid work and become self-sufficient (ICMC 2020).

Social protection

While IDPs are entitled to the same rights as their peers, their access to formal social protection is often limited. In situations of conflict or natural disaster, the state's capacity to deliver services at the local level may have been disrupted (Sabates-Wheeler 2019). IDPs may have had to flee without their identification, or they may be participants in the informal economy without traditional tax records, thus lacking the documentation necessary to access services (Williams 2008). If the state is hostile to the displaced groups, for example in the context of civil conflict or in regions associated with rebel groups, IDPs may face discrimination from the institutions supposedly meant to protect them (Sabates-Wheeler 2019). For example, many displaced by ethnic violence in India were reportedly legally classified as "migrants" rather than IDPs to avoid the requirement for humanitarian assistance (Rao 2013).

Evidence is accumulating about the relative effectiveness of cash and in-kind transfers in the context of displacement. A study of cash transfers and voucher programs on household consumption and well-being in an IDP camp in the DRC found no difference in food consumption or other measures of well-being, but cash transfers were cheaper to implement than a voucher program, costing US$11.35 versus US$14.35 per recipient. The study found that the flexibility of cash transfers allowed households to invest in non-food items such as education, but did not track gender dimensions (Aker 2015). On the other hand, among surveyed IDPs in Afghanistan, 57 percent of females preferred a combination of cash and in-kind assistance, whereas 58 percent of males expressed a preference for cash only, possibly due to gender differences in control over household resources (DRC and Samuel Hall 2013).

To the extent that economic hardship and financial stress increase tensions in the household, social protection may alleviate the risks of violence. A significant share of IDPs receiving cash transfers in 2015 in Afghanistan (46 percent) stated that gender-based violence was less frequent after receiving assistance (UNHCR and NRC 2015).

Durable Solutions

An oft stated goal of humanitarian work on displacement is "durable solutions". In 2009, the UN established the Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs, which relate to the responsibility of authorities (e.g. local and national governments) to allow IDPs to "return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, to their homes or place of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country" (Global Protection Cluster n.d). In general, durable solutions refer to return, reintegration, or resettlement of IDPs elsewhere in the country as well as protection against

arbitrary displacement, and indicate the stage at which an individual is no longer regarded as displaced.

Several critiques have emerged (Beyani, Baal and Caterina 2016), the most important of which, from a gender perspective, are:

- **An over-emphasis on return**. Return is often seen as the ideal solution to internal displacement without sufficiently considering IDP's own preferences and whether conditions are conducive to return. From a gender perspective, return and resettlement to areas that are still fragile may disproportionately jeopardize girls' safety, who are more at risk of sexual violence and domestic abuse amid instability.
- The focus on returns seems to have been associated with the la**ck of new thinking around the solutions, and the question of when do people stop being IDPs if they do not go home** -- for example because they have rebuilt their lives in another place, or the children of the displaced who have grown up in places that are very different from their parents' places of origin.
- **Limited availability of IDP data.** Comprehensive and up-to-date data on displacement is lacking, which obstructs displacement-sensitive development approaches. As noted above, sex-disaggregated data on displacement is even more scarce, masking the ways that displacement and resettlement processes affect men and women differently.

More generally, as noted by the ODI and others, gender is still frequently sidelined from conversations about durable solutions. As Oxfam recently highlighted in South Sudan, for example, decisions to stay or to move are made based on complex motivations, in the face of high uncertainty and, especially for women, limited information (Buchanan 2019). Oxfam argues that given the complexity and non-linearity of movement, and because women and girls face distinct threats during displacement and return, a more gender-sensitive approach is needed. Consultations in South Sudan with women and girls raised particular challenges in achieving durable solutions, including sexual and gender-based violence; access to housing, land and property; and extremely scarce resources. Indeed, the report notes that in some cases returns may be driving even higher needs, as finite resources are split to accommodate more people. Women also noted continued insecurity and threats of inter-communal violence, criminality and the continued presence of armed actors. Many internally displaced women also said they were unwilling to return until they were convinced that the peace agreement would lead to lasting peace.

The World Bank sometimes refers to sustainable solutions, rather than "durable solutions", which emphasize closer coordination between different institutions around financing responses to displacement and the need to strengthen understanding of the environment in which IDPs integrate or return to (World Bank 2021).

Gender-based violence

Displaced women and girls can experience heightened risks of gender-based violence, because displacement often separates them from their families and communities that otherwise may protect them, which can also increase the risk of trafficking and forced marriage (Cazabat et al 2020). In the wake of disasters, UNEP estimates that the risk of human trafficking can increase by up to 20-30 percent (Tower 2020).

Several studies have linked displacement to heightened risks of intimate partner violence, possibly as a result of increased levels of stress and trauma. We know from a broad range of studies, enhanced by the Gender Dimensions of Forced Displacement research program, that women and girls who experience more acute levels of armed conflict or have been displaced have an increased likelihood of experiencing IPV. Displaced women in Colombia and Liberia have been 40 and 55 percent greater odds of experiencing past-year IPV compared to their non-displaced counterparts, with conflict and displacement independently and significantly associated with abuse (Kelly et al. 2021a). Women were more likely to experience abuse at the hands of acquaintances, intimate partners, family members, and people in their community than at the hand of armed actors. By contrast, a 2018 study conducted among residents of an IDP camp in southern Nigeria who had fled the Boko Haram insurgency found that 14 percent of IDP women experienced GBV post-conflict in the camp, and that 96 percent of the reported perpetrators of sexual violence were policemen or paramilitary personnel, eroding trust in authorities, safe reporting mechanisms, and access to survivor support services (Adejumo et al. 2021).

Together, these results underscore that displaced women affected by conflict can face safety threats from a range of actors, whether it be known acquaintances or authorities abusing power. Interestingly, the Nigeria study showed that a longer duration of time spent in the camp was significantly associated with a lower risk of GBV, suggesting that the camp offered some protection for women. Greater education attainment was also associated with a lower risk of GBV post-conflict.

Results from Eastern DRC showed that displacement and past experiences of war-related abuses, including looting, physical violence, and forced harm to others, significantly increase the likelihood of experiencing lifetime and past-year IPV (Kelly et al. 2021b). An earlier study in Afghanistan, found that around two-thirds of internally displaced women surveyed reported domestic violence, and 12 per cent said it had become more common since their displacement (Samuel Hall et al. 2012). In Côte d'Ivoire, focus groups with IDP men and women found that urban poverty and high male unemployment, food insecurity, financial stress, and cramped housing were associated with IDP women's risk of intimate partner violence (Cardoso et al. 2016).

The economic and social stressors of internal displacement and conflict, such as financial insecurity, the breakdown of state authority, and lack of access to healthcare and other services, can also lead to forced or coerced marriage among IDP adolescent girls, although studies have found mixed results across countries. For example, a 2021 study of IDP communities in Yemen found that the prevalence of child marriage among IDP girls ages 10-19 was 18 percent, compared to about 13 percent for girls in the host community, and that never attending school increased the odds of early marriage (Hunerson et al. 2021). Higher risks of child marriage among IDP girls have also been documented in Iraq (UN OCHA 2018.) In Afghanistan, a 2012 study found that 27 percent of internally displaced girls were forced to marry against their will (Samuel Hall et al. 2012). In Cote d'Ivoire, a 2016 study found that unpartnered IDP women, or girls, are at risk of forced marriage because they are "compelled by complete desperation or forced by their parents to marry in order to secure their own survival and/or provide for their nuclear and extended family" (Cardoso et al. 2016). Child marriage among IDPs can lead to additional forms of violence, as girls who marry before 18 are more likely to experience domestic violence and less likely to remain in school (UNICEF 2021).

In Cote d'Ivoire (Cardoso et al. 2016), South Sudan (Oxfam 2017), Ethiopia (United Nations 2021b), DRC (Lugova, Nandeeta and Haque 2020), and Uganda (Ager et al. 2018), economic desperation, the lack of food, and the lack of essential personal and household items were reported to be key forces

leading IDP women and girls towards engaging in transactional sex with men. In Haiti, all the IDP women in focus groups reported either direct engagement or witnessing transaction sex (UNHCR 2011). In 2016, OCHA found that women and girls in IDP camps in Maiduguri, Nigeria were "increasingly resorting to survival sex", in exchange for money of food to feed their families (UN News 2016).

Natural disasters, the leading cause of internal displacement in 2020, can also increase the risks of GBV. Field research from the IFRC in 2015 across a range of countries, including Bangladesh, Haiti, and Samoa, found that factors such as the weakened capacity of law enforcement, protracted displacement, and transactional sex as a negative economic coping strategy were linked to higher risks of GBV in the wake of natural disasters (IFRC 2015).

UN guidance since the early 2000's has underlined the need to protect the rights of internally displaced women and girls, including against violence. However, this remains a challenge in practice (Cazabat et al. 2020). In October 2020, UNHCR updated its Policy on the Prevention, Risk Mitigation, and Response to GBV with additional commitments for displaced adolescent girls and older women, livelihoods programming for those at-risk and survivors, as well as safe shelters and access to justice (UNHCR 2020). This update also included commitments to increase inclusion of IDP women's groups at the local and national levels and implement GBV programs in IDP contexts.

It is increasingly well recognized that policies and programs need to work to prevent GBV, as well as respond appropriately to the needs of survivors. It may be that, even if GBV services exist for IDP women and girls, they may not know how to access them (Buchanan 2019). For example, in Akobo, South Sudan, newly arrived IDP women did not know where the women's centers in the area were or noted resources being located in areas where women did not feel safe.

There have been efforts to utilize community, school and faith-based programmes that targeted attitude, behaviour and social norms in the DRC, Somalia, and Afghanistan which have shown promising results (Murphy et al. 2019). Another example includes training of municipal staff in Colombia to raise awareness about GBV and responses (Stark 2016). In 2006, a promising intervention in Darfur identified local midwives as sexual violence protection focal points whom internally displaced women could more easily and confidentially approach these focal points for support and referrals (Global Protection Cluster and IASC 2015). More recently, the Johns Hopkins 'Assessment Screen to Identify Survivors Toolkit for GBV has shown promising results, improving rates of confidential disclosure and increasing IDP referrals to available services in Ethiopia, Colombia, and Uganda (Vu et al. 2017).

The Global Protection Cluster has produced guidance on addressing GBV, most recently a reference tool on human trafficking for field workers supporting IDPs in the midst of the pandemic (Global Protection Cluster 2020b). It recommends that those working with IDPs: conduct gender-responsive risk mitigation measures; spread information about the potential risks of trafficking; distribute hygiene kits; and ensure that organizations responding to incidents of GBV are aware of the trafficking risks that women and girls face.

Barriers to addressing gender-based violence in IDP settings and policies include inadequate funding for GBV prevention and response. In 2021, about $190 million in humanitarian funding was channeled towards addressing GBV, representing just over one percent of the total humanitarian budget (Arango et al. 2021). Another limitation highlighted by feminist critics is that local women's

organizations with contextual expertise are often not prioritized nor integrated into greater humanitarian responses.

The urgency of reducing GBV against IDP women means that efforts to better enhance prevention, as well as building knowledge about effective responses are both important. More deliberate efforts are needed on the parts of international agencies as well as national and local authorities.

Health

According to IDMC, displaced women and girls "receive less antenatal care and are more exposed to violence, malnutrition, poor hygiene conditions and communicable diseases than non-displaced women and girls" (Cazabat et al. 2020).

The health needs of women and girls are often unmet in displacement settings, due to a number of factors, including the limited availability of health services and facilities, stigma associated with sexual and reproductive health, lack of gender-sensitive information, and financial barriers. For example, in Iraq, 25 percent of displaced households reported that women of reproductive age in their households had no access to specialized healthcare. In Afghanistan, 34 percent of displaced households had pregnant women give birth outside of a healthcare facility compared to 18 percent of host community households (Cazabat et al. 2020).

Access to safe and affordable housing is also a health issue for displaced women, who often lack access to proper facilities including water and sanitation, when living in temporary or improvised settlements (Goga et al. 2021).

Displaced communities, especially women, also endure substandard access to hygiene, including lack of adequate gender-segregated water and sanitation facilities, privacy, and safety. Especially at night, lack of lighting in camps and risks of harassment can limit women's safety and mobility, and thus access to essential facilities (Goga et al. 2021). For example, Rohingya and Kaman women in IDP camps in central Rakhine in Myanmar reported feeling unsafe leaving their shelter at night, especially when walking to public latrines (Oxfam 2020). Interviews with internally displaced girls in Myanmar revealed challenges safe, private menstrual hygiene. Specifically, informants highlighted the lack of enforced gender-segregated facilities and locks on latrine doors as barriers to menstrual health (Schmitt et al. 2017).

There is evidence that mental health can worsen among internally displaced –- IDPs who experienced "violence, lost relatives and friends or had to leave them behind, or otherwise went through traumatic experiences during their flight to safety, are likely to suffer from the psychological effects, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder" (Schuettler 2020, 8).

Displaced women and girls also reportedly suffer more from PTSD, depression, and anxiety than both displaced men and non-displaced women – likely linked with the increased risk of violence they experience, poor living conditions, and the disruption of their lives (Cazabat et al. 2020). It was estimated that 31 percent of women IDPs in Darfur in 2017 suffered major depression (Kim, Torbay and Lawry 2007), while a study in Northern Uganda found that women were twice as likely as men to exhibit symptoms of PTSD and over four times as likely to exhibit symptoms of depression (Roberts et al. 2008).

Education

There are many barriers for displaced children accessing education, including lack of capacity and resources, insecurity, and discrimination. In Nigeria, for example, in 2015 only 19 out of 42 displacement camps had some sort of education facility. Data from 2015 showed that in Iraq, only one third of IDP children had access to education (UNESCO and UNHCR 2016). However, because IDP children are largely unaccounted for in both global and national data, there is no current global estimate of how many IDP children do not have access to education (UNICEF 2020).

Data suggests that displacement can disproportionately obstruct education opportunities for girls and IDP girls are more likely to be out of school than boys (Cazabat et al. 2020). This may be partly due to insecurity, as well as adverse norms that prioritize boys. Other factors that exclude displaced girls from school are: concerns about girls' safety outside the home, lack of female-only toilets, lack of female teachers, and the need for girls to help with household chores.

For example:

- In Afghanistan in 2018, 76 percent of IDP girls between the ages of 13 and 18 were not enrolled in school compared to 57 percent for boys (UN OCHA and REACH 2018). Overall, the gender parity index (GPI) is .69 in primary school and .55 in upper secondary (UNESCO 2019).
- In Iraq in 2019, 25 percent of displaced girls were not in school compared to 19 percent of displaced boys and 12 percent of non-displaced boys (IAWG and REACH 2019).
- In Mogadishu, Somalia in 2016, only 22 percent of displaced girls over the age of 5 had ever attended school, compared to 37 percent of boys (JIPS 2016). The national gender gap in education in IDP households in Somalia is 15 percentage points, compared to just one percentage point in non-IDP households (Admasu, Alkire and Scharlin-Pettee 2021).

Displaced families may see early marriage of girls as a way to cope with economic hardship, which in turn leads to higher risks of drop out and domestic violence (Cazabat et al. 2020). Girls may also be at risk of experiencing violence and harassment on their way to school, which is one reason why some girls do not attend school in Afghanistan (UNICEF and IDMC 2019).

However, some evidence does suggest that educational outcomes for displaced girls are improving across generations. For example, learnt that in Darfur, for example, the educational achievements of girls and young women were much better than their mothers and grandmothers (Stojetz and Brück 2021).

IDPs sometimes lack documentation which prevents them from accessing public education. For example, in Maiduguri, Nigeria in 2018 the International Committee of the Red Cross found that IDPs who had moved to urban areas often did not have documentation, which hindered their access to schools, hospitals, and property (ICRC 2020). The study also found that displaced people in urban areas, compared to rural areas, are less likely to receive assistance "based on the assumption that they are self-reliant".

While urban areas may offer more access to schools compared to rural areas, there are still significant financial barriers to education for IDPs (ICRC 2020). Research among IDP families in Banaadir, Somalia found that when families could not afford for all their kids to go to school, they gave priority to boys, with the expectation that their girls would marry young or stay at home, further

perpetuating gender disparities. Despite efforts to provide education to IDPs, the Ministry of Education was constrained in terms of capacity, especially in areas with ongoing conflict (UN OCHA 2019). In Nigeria, free basic education was passed into law in 2004 and a 20212 policy guarantees access for IDPS, but since parents are still expected to cover the financial costs associated with school (e.g. uniforms, materials, transportation), poverty is reported as the main barrier for school attendance, especially for families in the Northeast where poverty is rampant (Save the Children 2016).

Unfortunately, gender disaggregated evidence about what works to increase inclusion of internally displaced children is scarce, creating stark blind spots in policymaking. One problem is that existing studies typically fail to distinguish between IDPs and refugees, and do not show results for girls and boys.

6.   Conclusions

Internally displaced people around the world are grappling with a range of challenges, from accessing health care to finding gainful paid work. The extent to which national and local institutions, and development policies and programmes effectively reach displaced people and address the needs of women and girls appears to be uneven at best, despite some efforts to assure inclusion.

There is clearly a need for development partners to accord more explicit attention to the needs of internally displaced people and especially women and girls in settings of protracted displacement. This has now been recognized for some time, in the humanitarian-development-peace triple nexus (Nguya and Siddiqui 2020). The recent High Level Panel also found that internal displacement is still primarily treated as a short-term humanitarian issue rather than a more deeply embedded symptom of development challenges and chronic instability (United Nations 2021a). This can mean that IDP issues become less visible and are not prioritized. The HLP on internal displacement calls for heightened attention to addressing IDP issues through a range of mechanisms, including expanded funding, coordination, and accountability.

Looking ahead, better data is required to understand the needs of displaced women and girls and what works, and more systematic tracking of gaps and progress. The International Recommendations on IDP Statistics, compiled by expert statisticians from national governments and international organizations, call for IDP data to be sex-disaggregated across multiple issue areas including poverty, education, informal employment, unemployment, land tenure, and duration of displacement (European Union and the United Nations 2020). It is also important to harmonise data collection and methodology so that statistics are comparable across settings. Understanding how gender, forced displacement, and other marginalized identities intersect is a prerequisite to improving conditions on the ground and ensuring that gender gaps do not impede equal rights, protection and opportunities for displaced and non-displaced people alike.

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