



Baseline Report - Ecuador Women's Participation Pilot Project



**Women's Refugee Commission &
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACF	Action Against Hunger (Action Contre La Faim)
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
GBV	Gender-based violence
GoE	Government of Ecuador
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MIES	Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social (Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion)
PWD	Persons with disabilities
WRC	Women's Refugee Commission

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Background	5
Methodology.....	6
Findings	7
Camp Governance Structure	7
Participation and Decision-Making	8
Women’s Participation in Camp Life.....	9
Adolescents’ Participation in Camp Life	10
Decision-making process	11
Barriers to Women’s Participation	11
Limited Interactions Between IDPs.....	11
Lack of Female Livelihood Opportunities.....	12
Limited Existing Mechanisms to Provide Feedback.....	12
Security Concerns.....	13
Cultural Norms Perpetuate Rigid Gender Roles.....	13
Facilitators to Women’s Participation.....	14
Women’s Contribution in Camp.....	14
Opportunities for Capacity and Skills Building	14
Opportunities to Challenge Traditional Gender Norms	14
Recommendations to Foster Women’s Participation.....	15
Conclusion	15
Next Steps.....	15
Appendix	16

Introduction

As part of a global-level project aiming at reducing gender-based violence (GBV) risks in camps and camp-like settings, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Global Cluster sought to understand how women's participation in governance structures could contribute to reducing risks of GBV in camps and camp-like settings. Ensuring meaningful participation of all groups of the population in decision-making and in camp governance structures is an essential pillar of good camp management.¹ It is also essential to contribute to improved humanitarian response, disaster risk reduction, holistic community support, and ultimately, accountability toward affected populations. Finally, meaningful participation of different groups within the displaced community offers a basic step towards making sure that different needs, capacities and expectations of heterogeneous groups within the displaced community are reflected and addressed. Often making up half or more of the entire population in a displaced community, women's representation in camp governance structures have traditionally been limited and restricted. As such, increasing women's participation in camp governance structures could enable them to voice their safety concerns and support the identification of responses to mitigate identified GBV risks.



IOM, in coordination with the CCCM Global Cluster, and with technical support from the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), conducted baseline assessments in five country operations – Ecuador, Iraq, Nigeria, Philippines, and South Sudan – in order to establish the existing levels of women's participation in each location and identify strategies to improve their participation. The identified strategies will inform pilot interventions that assess which approaches improve women's participation and whether they have an additional benefit on perceptions around their risks to GBV.

This baseline report outlines key findings from the assessment conducted in the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps of Pedernales I and Pedernales II in northwestern coast of Ecuador by IOM

between June 13th and 20th, 2016. The assessment set out to map existing governance structures in Pedernales I and Pedernales II and learn how displaced men, women, and various at-risk groups, including adolescent girls and women and girls with disabilities currently participate in camp life and camp decision-making processes. The assessment also examined the barriers and opportunities to increasing women's participation in camp life and camp governance, and explored strategies that could facilitate this. Findings from this study will be used in a learning document that will inform CCCM Global Cluster and the wider humanitarian system on how to improve women's participation in camp governance structures and contribute to reduction in women and girls' risks to GBV.

¹Camp Management Toolkit, IOM, UNHCR, NRC, June 2015, Chapter 3.

Background

On April 16, 2016, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake shook the northwestern coast of Ecuador, resulting in 663 deaths, with 12 missing persons, and 4,859 injured.² An estimated 720,000 people were affected by the earthquake and were in need of humanitarian aid. About 2,000 aftershocks in less than three months have reverberated across the Pacific coast since the initial earthquake on April 16, strongest being 6.7 and 6.8 in the Richter's scale. The magnitude of the seismic event and aftershocks that accompanied it resulted in one of the largest internal displacements in Ecuador's contemporary history.

The most severe damage occurred in the Canton of Pedernales, located in the province of Manabi, which was declared by the Government of Ecuador (GoE) as "disaster area". In addition to Pedernales, the GoE declared a state of emergency in six provinces of Esmeraldas, Guayas, Los Rios, Manabi, Santo Domingo and Santa Elena – in which approximately 50 percent of the Ecuadorian population (7.9 million people) inhabit.

As of July, 80,000 people are estimated to be displaced, out of which 8,632 live in 26 official camps and 15,194 in informal settlements. The remaining people live in informal settlements or with host families in urban and rural settings. Conditions in these displacement sites vary greatly; some have access to basic services while others, especially in rural areas, have very limited access to services. Poor sanitation conditions are increasing the risks of mosquito-borne diseases such as Zika, Chikungunya, and Dengue fever, posing immediate health threats, particularly in rural, informal settlements. Main humanitarian needs are based around the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene, emergency and temporary shelters, health, protection, food assistance and education. While the GoE is addressing the gaps to ensure rapid response, with assistance from UN agencies and other International and local NGOs, limited funding is hindering all humanitarian sector operations.



With regards to gender and violence, national statistics show that 60.6 percent of Ecuadorian women have experienced some form of violence and 1 in 4 have been a survivor of sexual violence.³ In Manabi province, the rate of GBV is slightly less than the national data. However, the communities most affected by the earthquake were already in vulnerable socioeconomic situations and GBV was of critical concern even before the earthquake, with prevalence rates as high as 58 percent in some locations and 37 percent of children between the ages of 5-17 having experienced household violence.⁴ The disaster exacerbated several contributing factors to GBV, including worsening perception of security, dignity and privacy as a result of lack of adequate shelters and multiple displacements many of the affected population have undergone. Moreover, protection partners had a particular concern for at-risk children and adolescents living in informal settlements that are not in school and live in crime-prone areas. Psychosocial support is still critical for the affected population, including children.

²UNICEF Ecuador Humanitarian Situation Report No. 8, 22 July 2016

³La violencia de Género contra las Mujeres en el Ecuador, Análisis de los resultados de la encuesta Nacional sobre relaciones familiares y violencia de Género contra las mujeres en Manabi. (Gender Based Violence Against Women in Ecuador, Analysis of the National Enquiry in Manabi; (INEC - Encuesta Nacional sobre Relaciones Familiares y Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres, 2011)), page 19.

⁴UN OCHA Ecuador Earthquake: Urgent Need at One Month 16 May 2016

It is also worth noting that women's participation in Ecuadorian society in the form of community spaces is very low. Among the total female population nationally, only 6.3 percent claim ever to have participated in such spaces; the data is even lower at around 3.2 percent with regard to women participating in producers, farmers and traders' associations, while slightly being higher for their participation in savings cooperatives.⁵ These indicators show a complex reality and challenges facing women's social participation, inclusion and representation, through which they can express their needs and solutions. While women may be active in political structures in the democratic electoral systems, this has not guaranteed their representation in local and national decision-making processes. According to the National Electoral Council, women's participation in governance account for only 7.8 percent of the mayoral positions at the sub-national level, and 39 percent of legislative positions at the national level.⁶

Against this backdrop, the pilot study was conducted in two IDP camps of Pedernales I and Pedernales II in Manabi Province in June 2016. A total of 350 IDP families with 1,361 individuals, which includes 51.4 percent of females, were residing at the two sites at the time of the study. Both sites are characterized by over half the population being children aged 18 and younger. Vulnerable groups include children, pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, elderly, refugees and other minority groups, and persons with disabilities.

Methodology

The WRC and IOM developed a qualitative study methodology with the research question: Does women's participation in camp governance contribute to reducing their perceptions of GBV risks in the displaced community?

Goal: To improve women's participation in governance structures in camps and camp-like settings to reduce women and girls' perceptions of risks to GBV.

Objectives:

1. To map existing governance structures.
2. To identify barriers and opportunities for women and girls to voice their safety concerns, ideas, and questions.
3. To identify barriers and opportunities for women and girls to meaningfully contribute to decision-making processes in planning, programming, monitoring and evaluating service provision.
4. To obtain a baseline among women and girls as to their perceptions of current GBV risk in their community.

In order to reach these objectives, interview tools, inclusive of a safety mapping exercise, were developed to facilitate focus group discussions and in-depth interviews among female and male IDP leaders; female and male IDP non-leaders; displaced adolescent girls; and displaced persons with disabilities. In total, nineteen (19) focus group discussions were conducted with female and male IDP leaders and non-leaders (3 pilot groups, 5 groups of female leaders; 4 groups of female non-leaders; 2 groups of adolescent girls; 3 groups of male leaders; and 2 groups of male non-leaders). A total of 8 in-depth interviews were conducted with female IDP leaders and other under-represented individuals, including refugees, female heads of households, elders, and persons with disabilities. Safety mapping exercises were completed during FGDs with female respondents. Finally, 6 key informant interviews were conducted with representatives from the MIES and the Armed Forces, as well as IOM's Project Support Officer working in these sites since the onset of the crisis and who is also a member of the affected population. A total of 149 individuals participated in the study.

⁵SENPLADES, *Tendencias de la participación ciudadana en el Ecuador, (Trends of Citizen Participation in Ecuador)*, page 70.

⁶UN Women: <http://ecuador.unwomen.org/es/que-hacemos/liderazgo-y-participacion-politica#sthash.myzB6ZMo.dpuf>

Data collection took place in Pedernales I and Pedernales II from June 13 to 20, 2016. The assessment team consisted of 8 female and 5 male data collectors from IOM and UN Women who were trained and supervised by the Global-level CCCM GBV Specialist. Interview tools were translated and revised for cultural appropriateness by the IOM Ecuador office, and further adjusted with the data collectors after pilot testing the tools among IDP community members. Facilitated transcription techniques were used to transcribe the data during daily debriefing sessions. Transcripts were translated from Spanish to English by certified translators. The WRC analyzed the data on NVivo.⁷

Findings

Camp Governance Structure

Pedernales I and Pedernales II are managed by GoE's Armed Forces and the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES), under the overall coordination of the Coordinating Ministry of Security, as established in the National Camp Management System after the earthquake. The Armed Forces and MIES appear to oversee all decision making in the camps. While participation and community engagement is a key component of the GoE's Guidelines for Camp Management (as released in July 2016), work remains to fully implemented this in the camps. The model consists of guidance for coordination of management of the camps between various government agencies, including the Ministry for the Coordination of Security, Ministry of Defense, MIES, Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education, among others. Moreover, the model establishes a code of conduct, roles and functions for the performance of duties for officials working with displaced populations within the camps. However, the process for establishing the guidelines had little input from the displaced population themselves; as such, standards and codes of conduct were developed through a top-down approach, which proved difficult to implement when it came to aspects of everyday life of the displaced populations and their responsibilities. This may have been an inhibiting factor for building trust relationships among displaced communities. It is, however, important to highlight that, at the time of the study, the camp management teams had been in place for just a few weeks.

The study shows that community participation in camp management at the time is limited to maintenance activities for the camp. Camp committees that are formed include cleaning and cooking committees in which women are mainly involved. The level of decision-making involved in these committees is limited or nonexistent; successful operation of the committees is dependent on compliance of the tasks assigned by MIES and the Armed Forces.

The IDPs reside in tents that are organized by blocks, A through G in each site. For each block, one female and one male leader (block leader) are appointed by either the Armed Forces or the MIES to monitor and provide information to the households living in that block. In total there are 7 blocks with 8 female IDP leaders (in one block in Pedernales II there are 2 female leaders) and 7 male IDP leaders in each site. For each block, there is an MIES focal point as well as a focal point from the Armed Forces.

The selection process of the block leaders depends more on their willingness to assist in the maintenance of the camp and availability of leisure time, rather than their capacity and desire to take on leadership roles. One key informant shared that the military personnel selects the block leader "a dedo" which means "by pointing the finger" – an expression implying that it was not voluntary or based on any apparent criteria, and denoting some level of compulsion. One female leader, when asked why she was chosen to be the block leader, responded "I have no idea - there was a meeting to which I arrived last and people said "here is the person you need", and they all agreed." However, one leader among the study respondents said that he had been elected as representative of his block by the block residents.

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⁷NVivo is software that supports qualitative and mixed methods research.

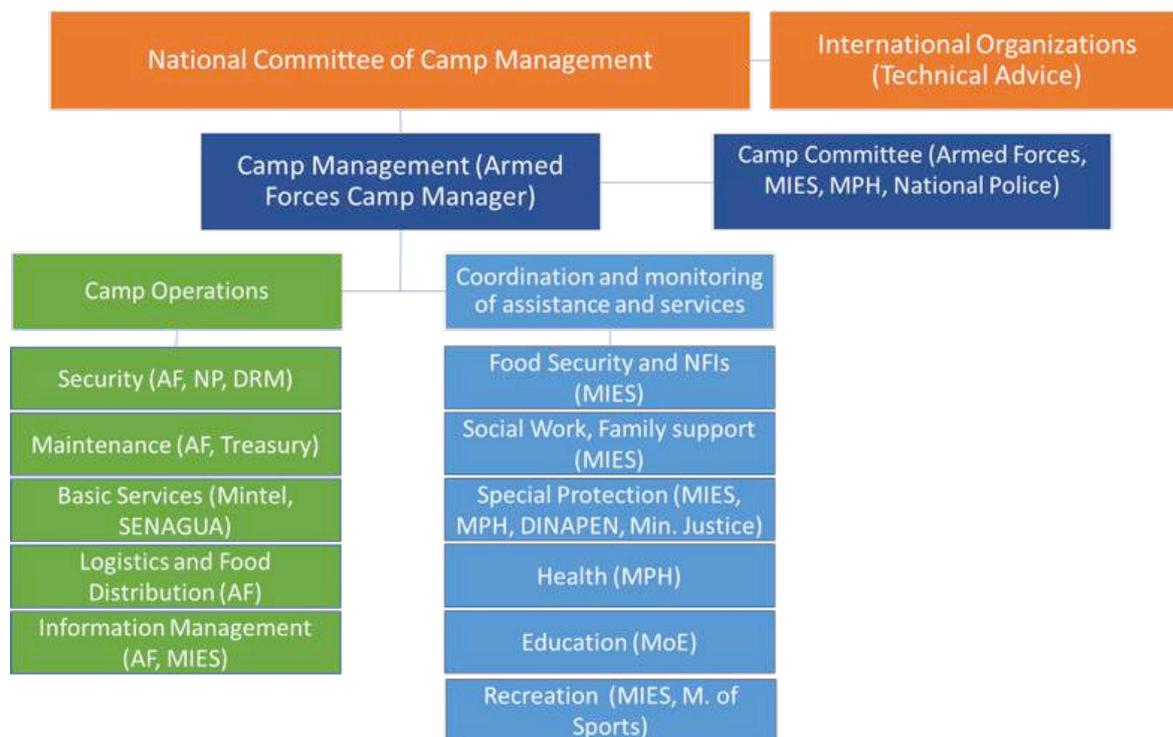


Figure 1 Camp Governance Structure in Pedernales I and II

Although the IDP block leader structures are in place, most or almost all decisions appear to be made by either MIES or the Armed Forces “it’s the authorities [MIES and military] who decide,” as explained by the majority of the IDP respondents. If a decision cannot be taken by either MIES or the Armed Forces, it is escalated up to the national level. IDP leaders mostly play the role of communicating decisions and information to and from the camp population and the MIES/Armed Forces.

In terms of female representation in the governance structure, the most “active” leaders are females. Half the block leaders are females in Pedernales I while females outnumber male block leaders by one in Pedernales II. Women also lead the kitchen committee which is responsible for food preparations, and cleaning committees, of which there are three – responsible for the cleaning of the dining area, common spaces of the camp, and toilets. There is a male cleaning group which is responsible for cleaning of men’s toilets. Block leaders are responsible for mobilizing volunteers from their blocks to participate in the kitchen and cleaning committees. For the kitchen activities, each block takes turns on a weekly basis, and the cleaning activities on a daily basis. IDP groups also participate in various activities in the camp, such as football, dance therapies, other recreational activities, as well as programs offered by various local NGOs. In regards to the MIES and Armed Forces focal points for the blocks, majority of the MIES focal points are females while all of the Armed Forces are males. There are a total of 40 Armed Forces representatives which support the Pedernales camps. However, the power structure is male-dominated, as one female IDP block leader explained, “among authorities, the ones deciding are males”

Participation and Decision-Making

Participation in camp management as defined by CCCM is an ongoing process that requires planning and resources and where individuals and groups from the displaced community identify and express their own views and needs and where collective action is taken to significantly contribute to solutions.⁸ In efforts to understand how displaced men and women participate in Pedernales I and II, the study team asked female and male IDP groups to describe what it means for each members to participate in the community. The study team noted that the concept of participation as understood by the IDPs was fragmented and focused on tasks they are told to perform, rather than a process for which they share actions that

⁸Camp Management Toolkit, IOM, UNHCR, NRC, June 2015, Chapter 3.

impact the community and for which they take joint responsibilities. Participation of IDPs was therefore limited to daily subsistence activities – cooking, cleaning, reporting maintenance issues that may arise, such as tent/water pump repairs. Where coordination meetings are held for decision-making, community participation is limited to transfer of information from the authorities to the community via block leaders. One male community member aptly described the existing dynamics, “the sergeant or the [block] leaders come and tell us who has to do what, either clean the tables in the dining room, or do the bathrooms. They just come and tell us what to do.”

Coordination meetings are held in the camps and such activities could provide opportunities for strengthening community capacity and cohesion; however, the meetings do little to build leadership or empower community about their rights to participate in decisions that affect their daily life. Camps seem to run in a military-like efficient manner, with authorities rapidly delivering basic services like food, water and sanitation – something at which the authorities have been very successful – but leaving little room for participation from the IDPs themselves. While there seems to be some consultation by the authorities’ block focal points with the community, as shared by some community members, “our block focal points consult us and then they make decisions”; the processes by which block focal points consult with their block leaders and residents are neither systematic nor consistent. Moreover, because the selection of the leaders was not participatory, there is a lack of legitimacy around decisions and representation of the needs of the population. When leaders were asked, in a group discussion, how they mobilize their blocks, one male leader shared, “people don’t participate. In most cases, from ten invited only one or two show up,” and another shared that their block members “participate only in what we must, that is in cleaning and in the kitchen... when we do suggest an activity or something for people to come out they just stay in their tents sleeping”. In some cases, leadership responsibilities create additional stress for female leaders who feel their contributions are not appreciated by the community.

Women’s Participation in Camp Life

The study demonstrated that the participation of women in Pedernales I and II in camp life is primarily through conforming to the socially and traditionally accepted roles. The activities that women perform are routed to kitchen, cleaning, and washing duties – these activities are not only unpaid, but have extended working hours of more than 8 hours, sometimes starting as early as 4 am and completing at the closing of the kitchen at 10 pm. Nonetheless, because majority of men, according to one key informant, “must work, they leave early in the morning and return late in the evening”, women are perceived by their partners and camp management institutions alike, as having more time, and thus “women help more than men”. The lack of value in women’s work and leadership in the camps is clearly illustrated by one female leader’s frustration: “they don’t value that. I’m about to quit... I’ve been in charge of a large group of people from the day the earthquake struck, and all I want is for my block to support me and acknowledge my work”

The testimonies of women living in Pedernales I and II reflect the society’s expectation of rigid gender roles, isolating women’s activities in the private sphere within the camps while men perform activities perceived to be more productive outside the



camps. The study team noted that women were more active in the camp life by default, not because women had the freedom to choose to but out of necessity as one woman shared, “most men work out of the camp, so we are left in charge of what happens here (meaning day to day maintenance of the camp)”. Moreover, as one woman expressed, “men get comfortable, they want us women to do it all”, illustrating that men accept women’s role in maintaining the camps and engaging in communal cooking and cleaning, activities that are perceived as not holding any real power, just as women are expected to take care of cooking and cleaning in their own homes. However, when it comes to the distribution of power in decision making at either camp- or household-level, women believe that they do not have the freedom to participate, explaining that “men feel unease if we [women] participate”. The men shared with the study team that as the “head of the house” at least at the household level, they are the ones who make the decisions, hence having the power to control household affairs.

As early recovery activities progress and structural repairs and constructions and restoration of basic services is expected to generate demand for skilled labor, the general perception is that the patriarchal tradition that exists in these communities will perpetuate the narrow gender roles which keep women from being included in the local labor markets. Prior to the earthquake, women had skills in service provision, including in the tourism sector. The earthquake collapsed most of the hotel infrastructures, as did the dining, shopping, recreational industries and many families lost part or all of their livelihoods. Women therefore depend more on the incomes their partners bring home than before; this is reflected in what women in the study shared, that “women stay and endure because they have no profession, no occupation to get ahead; thus, they stay with their husbands”

Adolescents’ Participation in Camp Life

The female participatory trends in Pedernales I and II led the study team to question the situation of the adolescent girls, not only because they are female, but also because they are wedged between childhood and adulthood, and as a result, one of the most excluded groups within the camp. When asked if adolescents participate in any information sharing or decision-making, common responses from all adults in the study were that “adolescents don’t make any decisions here” and that “there are activities for children but not for adolescents”. Responses from adolescent girls were equally telling as they exclaimed, “how can we participate if we are not invited?” Girls are perceived as being excluded and without much support, as one key informant shared, “sadly, women and girls are lacking a voice. Especially girls,” a comment often heard about girls. As for adolescent boys, the study team noted they are primarily perceived as being “disrespectful,” and as one male community member remarked that “they misbehave and are very vulgar with young ladies and nobody controls them”.

However excluded they may be in wider camp activities and decision-making processes, adolescents and youth in Pedernales I and II appear to have some opportunities to participate in the camp life; adolescent girls who participated in the study team mentioned activities that they are (or have been) involved in, including football matches, “dance therapies”, and taking computer classes at the internet café they had in one of the sites from which they were relocated (they no longer have access to the internet café). Some of the girls also mentioned groups of adolescents and young adults, “called the “Foundation 7.8” which is called that because of the earthquake and is composed of young people who came from other camps” and about a music group made up of Colombian boys. The study team could not discern, however, to what extent adolescent girls actually interacted with those groups or how active they were among the adolescent population in the camp. One girl-respondent in a safety mapping exercise shared that “all the activities here are for children, nobody takes us into account. We have nothing to do here.” When probed why they could not participate in those activities, another girl responded that girls “can’t participate because they need to look after their younger siblings.” Another group of girls told the study team that the tent that they usually use to practice dance or gather with other adolescents was installed for children’s activities and that they were repeatedly asked to leave.

Decision-making process

In Pedernales I and II, all decisions regarding the camp life are made by the Armed Forces and MIES. Displaced communities have little authority on any decision-making processes in the camp life; from meal planning to what time IDPs need to sleep is decided by the authorities. All decisions regarding the camp life are shared with communities through the block leaders. As key informant from MIES remarked, “[Block] leaders cannot decide, they just look after their blocks. Decision making here is centered around the Armed Forces and the MIES, who work in coordination.” Block leaders’ roles are limited to overseeing the maintenance of the camp and referring concerns to MIES/Armed Forces. While they participate in coordination meetings where some decisions are discussed, their decision-making power is non-existent. As of the study date, formal mechanisms for leaders to relay the concerns of the IDPs to MIES/Armed Forces were lacking.

Besides the MIES and the Armed Forces, among those that influence activities in the camp and decisions therein also includes all government agencies within GoE’s Guidelines for Camp Management, such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and others. Non-governmental influencers include the UN agencies, international organizations, local NGOs, and other service providers, including SOS Villages, Plan International, ACF and Terre des Hommes. The study team noticed the lack of IDP groups within the list of those who influence decisions within the camps. Coordination meetings take place daily between the block focal points from MIES and the Armed Forces as well as among members of the Security Committee, all made up of ministry representatives. IDP block leaders are not included in these coordination meetings; according to one key informant, “block coordinators from MIES and UEMPE (Armed Forces) meet every morning... they make the decisions and communicate them to the block leaders”. Thus the decision-making in the camp is primarily top-down and without consultation with the IDP groups. (However, as of September 2016, this has changed in Pedernales I whereby IDP leaders have been invited to join weekly coordination meetings.)

Barriers to Women’s Participation

Limited Interactions Between IDPs



The study found several factors which inhibit IDPs from building a sense of community, collaboration between people living in the camps, and hence in collective actions in the camp life. There is a lack of community cohesion - the earthquake displaced thousands of people some of whom had been displaced previously as a result of coastal floods in the past. Many residents of Pedernales I and II have been displaced multiple times due to the earthquake, some as many as for the fourth time. Residents of Pedernales I primarily come from three informal sites while the residents of Pedernales II come from two other informal sites, all of which were spontaneously created at the onset of earthquake. Most of the population residing in the current camps was relocated by government authorities. The study team was unable to confirm existence of any previous community networks among the current residents of the camps; many are temporary residents, as one government key informant described, “the camp population is here temporarily, they arrive and wait for benefits, and then leave.” Community members

also mention a rumor where they will be forced to leave the camp within the next six months; and in fact, several respondents expressed the transitory nature of their stays in the camps: “if I had the means to go, I would leave tomorrow”

Instability in living situations and lack of sense of community and trust among camp residents particularly affects women and girls’ perceptions on safety and reduces their ability to participate in the community life, often more so than for men and boys. One female respondent shared with the study team that “there is fear and mistrust” in her block and of other residents in the camp. Sense of community, shared trust, and extended support networks are protective factors for women and girls that can contribute to more active participation. Few camp activities and programs help to identify common values and foster group identity among women and girls. The study identified only one activity – weekly football matches – which seem to bring people together, and where everyone gets involved, women, men, girls and boys, players and spectators alike. It is also worth noting that there are few open community spaces that IDPs can use for social or recreational activities, at least until the “IOM houses”⁹ were recently installed in each camp where IDPs can gather together for sensitization campaigns and other programs. While activities open to everyone are important in building community, activities and spaces dedicated for women-only and girls-only are also necessary, as public spaces tend to be most often dominated by men and boys.

Lack of Female Livelihood Opportunities

Among the female respondents in the study, the study team heard little mention of what opportunities exist for women within or outside Pedernales I and II. Participation in collective action among women is reduced to fulfilling the kitchen and cleaning tasks for their block residents, or taking care of children. No male respondents mentioned sharing the burden of childcare within their households. As a result, the study identified an exacerbation of traditional gender roles, restricting women to spend most of their time in caregiving roles, rather than developing skills to enhance their economic prospects. Although women spend all their time in the communal kitchen, cleaning outside and inside their tents, child-rearing, their work is unpaid and under-valued. IDP women shared their frustration in the inability to access livelihood options and to contribute to the economic life of the community, “we can’t go out and work... we can do nothing” as one woman stated. However, many female respondents, even if they were illiterate, expressed desires to learn and study. Many mentioned interest in making handicrafts, sewing, beauty care, and painting that could help them earn a living, build their self-confidence, and increase their feeling of safety and independence. Before the earthquake, the women shared that they had been engaged in service provision and tourism industries; the loss of women’s livelihood after the earthquake reduced their self-reliance and may have weakened their confidence to contribute to and participate in the camp life.

Limited Existing Mechanisms to Provide Feedback

There are few mechanisms in place for the community to provide positive or negative feedback on decisions that affect camp life. Very few avenues exist, none of which are formal processes, where women and girls can voice their opinions, ideas, and interests. If any feedback is to be provided, they are raised through the IDP block leaders, who then relay them to MIES and Armed Forces focal points. The general perception, from several study participants’ remarks, appears that “they [women and girls] are shy, they do not have the confidence to express themselves”. Even if feedback is provided, there are views that “nothing happens afterwards”. When camp managers are approached about ways for women and girls to channel their concerns and ideas, they responded that there are ways “through MIES. They do it directly” and that MIES, Ministry of Interior and the Armed Forces coordinate and “talk all the time” since their “tents are next to each other”. The study team could not corroborate how much of the IDP concerns are addressed during the daily coordination meetings.

⁹There are women-friendly spaces, called “IOM Houses”, where various programs targeting women and girls are implemented.

Security Concerns

There is a police force which patrols the camp at night time, but there are still security concerns that study respondents have mentioned: theft and stealing being the most predominant from the male respondents, followed by fears about rape and harassment of young girls. Women and girls' predominant fear seem to be physical insecurity at nights around common spaces, including near the edges of the camps where warehouses, laundry rooms, bathrooms and showers are located, as "these are empty at night, there are no lights and things have happened there over the last week." Families live in small tents that are cramped, easily broken into, and lack privacy; many women and girls expressed the overall lack of safety, "I don't feel safe even in my own tent." At the time of the study, women were very concerned about strangers entering their tents at night. An incident was reported as having happened only the night prior to one of the focus group discussions, as one woman shared, "you know that if a man gets in your tent there's an actual risk of rape." When asked about whether they report incidents when they happen, several women and girls responded that "we do not expect any case to be solved because many times nothing has happened when an incident has been reported."

Aside from these concerns, many respondents also mentioned general fears related to the experience of the earthquake, where even the "football field is not safe" because "there is a light pole that could fall". In fact, many of the mothers in the study highlighted this as one of their concerns and voiced their need to learn how to comfort their children after a life-threatening event such as the earthquake. Although some service providers do provide psychological support for children and their families and provide case management for individual survivors of GBV, the study team found no initiative or space that could support to mitigate the safety risks of different groups, address fears people have, or hold discussions around safety issues for women and girls. Additionally, adolescent girls in particular, expressed avoiding going to the psychologist in the camps, as they fear that they "end up giving her too much information"—inferring that confidentiality concerns prevent them from sharing information with public servants, including the psychologist from the Ministry of Public Health in the camps, who is bound by mandatory reporting rules when a GBV case is disclosed. Fears and concerns about safety restrict women and girls' most basic rights, including freedom of movement and participation. They keep women and girls from fully participating in the camp life as personal and communal security affects patterns of daily life, whether inside the home or outside in the camp and the community.

Cultural Norms Perpetuate Rigid Gender Roles

As mentioned above, the exaggeration of gender roles within Pedernales I and II keep women and girls primarily engaged in "domestic work" in food preparation, cleaning and caregiving activities, rendering women and girls little opportunity to participate in "public" decision-making. Both women and men seemed acutely aware of the gender norms that dominate the culture. While most female respondents lamented that "women almost never make decisions; men want to be at the helm, they say 'you need to do this because I say so'", men admitted that they "still live in a sexist environment." Women and girls seemed to lack knowledge about their rights to participate in decision-making, and as a result, lack the power to claim those rights within their household and outside. Moreover, the study team observed attitudes and sentiments among many of the female participants that they had nothing to offer but to do what they are told.

Facilitators to Women's Participation

Women's Contribution in Camp

Although camp authorities shared that there are informal, direct channels for women and girls to bring up their concerns to camp management, they also conceded that women and girls are not consulted for decisions on activities apart from the kitchen and cleaning work. Key

informants from the MIES and the Armed Forces however identify the roles of women leaders being critical to the operation and maintenance of the camp and appreciate the work they do: “they [women] are the ones who care the most and look after groups such as people with disabilities and children”. Raising awareness among the camp authorities about the importance of inclusion of women beyond the traditional roles and in decision-making spaces could help to shape a different perception around the balance of power in camp life and camp governance.

Opportunities for Capacity and Skills Building

Women living in Pedernales I and II have more flexibility in their use of time and have greater availability of time to enhance their capacities than they did before displacement, both in leadership skills and vocational skills that could prepare them for life beyond the camp. As the prevailing gender norms often do not allow women to leave the camp for earning money, opportunities for women to learn skills to produce goods that could be sold and traded within the camp can help them earn incomes again. One male leader shared that “women and girls should have access to courses and not be taken into account only for home chores”, clearly being supportive of females to expand their skills beyond traditionally accepted roles. Furthermore, women and girls shared that they had many ideas for new skills they would like to acquire, both productive skills that could help them earn money, as well as “activities to become motivated... and learn to become future leaders”.

The study team learned that there was at least one block which had an incentive structure (in the form of small food or non-food items) for cleaning work; although it appears to be highly beneficial, it is an isolated practice. Providing wider incentive structures for volunteering in the communal cooking and cleaning activities, or instituting a small cash-for-work scheme for such activities, may help to provide small incomes for women, reduce their work burdens and properly compensate women for their contributions.

Opportunities to Challenge Traditional Gender Norms

Women’s skills training should not be limited to gender-traditional activities, such as sewing, knitting, and handicrafts, but should include developing technical skills and activities linked to early stages of recovery and reconstruction, including woodworking, construction, carpentry, etc. This will not only challenge the traditional gender norms, when such skills-building initiatives are carefully designed, they can also help sensitize both men and women on the positive impacts gender norms transformation could achieve for the wider community, including gender equality and improved social and economic outcomes.

As women are already embedded in block leadership and working outside the household in communal food preparations and cleaning of common space, structures exist for women to contribute to decision-making. These structures lend to a natural environment for women to organize at the community level. As such, the study team found that there are opportunities to work directly with women in these structures to build their confidence and awareness about their rights to participate in decision making processes. This can serve as a stepping stone in creating alternatives to the traditional, rigid gender norms that currently exist in the camps and foster solidarity among female camp leaders.

Recommendations to Foster Women’s Participation

Upon the strategies shared by the study respondents, the study team identified several recommendations to foster greater participation of women in camp life and camp governance.

- Train camp authorities in participatory approaches and strengthen women’s participation in camp governance
- Increase women and girls’ access to skills-building initiatives, including training in

various livelihoods activities and effective communication, as well as establishment of safe spaces for adolescent girls

- Provide training in micro-enterprise development and foster business exchanges with women and men to enhance IDP livelihood prospects
- Improve safety around tents and communal spaces through improving lighting and sign posts

Conclusion

At the time of the study, women and girls in Pedernales I and Pedernales II reported few opportunities to participate in decisions that affect the camp life, including factors relating to limited interactions between IDP groups, restrictive gender and cultural norms, inadequate channels to provide feedback, and lack of women's economic opportunities that negatively impact their ability to fully participate in the communal life of the camp. Structural limitations within the camp governance, including the top-down approach to camp management on how decisions are made, hinder displaced women and men from contributing to those decisions. The study identified challenges that women, adolescent girls and other groups often face in getting their voices heard and their concerns being equally represented. However, the study also found several entry points which could help ensure that different needs, capacities, and expectations of women, girls, and other groups are considered. With increased support for skills-building efforts and learning opportunities, spaces where women and girls can voice their ideas and concerns can be expanded. Leadership training of camp authorities and block leaders can help to increase support for women and girls' roles in camp life and camp governance. Furthermore, supporting micro-enterprise development and business associations can increase their ownership of resources and build a stronger sense of belonging and lead to collective action.

Next Steps

Following the study and upon reflecting on the initial findings, IOM field team met to review and reflect on all recommended ways to improve women's participation proposed by the study participants, including community leaders, community members, and key informants from MIES and the Armed Forces. The team developed an action plan and a preliminary project design for a pilot approach to implement in consultation with communities and MIES/Armed Forces:

- Train camp authorities in participatory approaches and strengthen women's participation in camp governance
- Foster leadership and self-esteem through psychosocial sessions and confidence building workshops
- Increase women and girls' access to skills-building initiatives, including training in various livelihoods activities and communication, as well as establishment of safe spaces for women and adolescent girls
- Establish and support micro-enterprise development and foster business exchanges with women and men to enhance IDP livelihood prospects
- Improve safety around tents and communal spaces through installing improved lighting and strengthen local knowledge and capacities to prevent gender based violence
- Support the community and the authorities in creating an environment free of gender based violence

Appendix

Interview tools

