



# **Baseline Report - Nigeria**

## **Women's Participation Pilot Project**



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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| CCCM .....  | Camp Coordination and Camp Management    |
| DTM .....   | Displacement Tracking Matrix             |
| GBV .....   | Gender-based violence                    |
| IDP.....    | Internally Displaced Person              |
| IOM .....   | International Organization for Migration |
| IRC.....    | International Rescue Committee           |
| NEMA.....   | National Emergency Management Agency     |
| NSCDC ..... | Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps |
| SEMA.....   | State Emergency Management Agency        |
| WRC .....   | Women's Refugee Commission               |

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## 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. 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. As such, women's participation in camp governance structures enables 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 Malkohi Camp in Adamawa State, North East Nigeria jointly by the WRC and IOM in between May 2nd and 10th, 2016. The assessment set out to map existing governance structures in Malkohi Camp and learn how displaced men, women, adolescent girls and other at-risk groups 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 which 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.

## Background

According to IOM's April 2016 Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) report, Adamawa State hosts 150,718 IDPs as a result to the Boko Haram insurgency across Northeast and North Central Nigeria as well as communal clashes and natural disasters affecting parts of the country. The vast majority of IDPs live in host communities, with friends and relatives or in rented/donated houses. DTM data finds over 91% of IDPs living in host communities, while 9% live in camps or camp-like sites. Displaced populations are concentrated around Adamawa's capital city, Yola.

Boko Haram insurgency often resulted in mass abduction, including of women and girls, indiscriminate killings, sexual violence and slavery. These attacks against civilians intensified in 2014, mostly targeting Borno and Adamawa States. Women and girls remain particularly affected by these attacks and subsequently experience multiple displacements. In addition, the Nigerian cultural traditions carry harmful practices against women and girls, such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage and widowhood practices. Due to entrenched, patriarchal tradition within the society, women and girls also suffer from domestic violence and early marriage. According to the British Council Nigeria 2012 Gender Report, one in three of all

<sup>1</sup>Include source – IOM Concept Note

<sup>2</sup>[https://nigeria.iom.int/sites/default/files/dtm/01\\_IOM%20DTM%20Nigeria\\_Round%20IX%20Report\\_20160430.pdf](https://nigeria.iom.int/sites/default/files/dtm/01_IOM%20DTM%20Nigeria_Round%20IX%20Report_20160430.pdf)

women and girls aged 15 – 24 has been a victim of violence. Female adolescents and youth and persons with disabilities are particularly affected by GBV.

The present study has been conducted in Malkohi Camp. One of several “official” camps organized and run by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMA), Malkohi Camp was established in November 2014 as a result of insurgency and counter-insurgency activities in the region. As of May 2016, the camp hosts 614 males and 658 females, with a total population of 1,272. Vulnerable populations include children, who make up 56% of the population, as well as pregnant, lactating, unaccompanied children, or widowed women comprising 40% of the female population.

In addition to management by NEMA, basic services are provided by various international and national NGOs. Security personnel from the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) are also present.

The camp is segregated by sex; men sleep in one section of the camp, while women and children sleep in another. The segregation, according to NEMA, was enacted to ensure that women and children are better protected. During the day, men and women are free of their movement within the camp. IDPs living in Malkohi need to obtain an authorization from NEMA upon justification in order to temporarily exit the camp.

## Methodology

The WRC, in collaboration with 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, 8 focus group discussions were conducted with female and male IDP leaders and non-leaders (3 female leaders; 2 female non-leaders; 1 adolescent girls; 1 male leaders; and 1 male non-leaders). A total of 9 in-depth interviews were conducted with individual IDPs, including leaders and non-leaders, and persons with disabilities. Safety mapping exercises were completed during FGDs with female respondents. Finally, 8 key informant interviews were conducted with staff from NEMA, SEMA, Ministry of Women Affairs, and international organizations providing camp services, including the

<sup>3</sup>National guidelines and referrals standards on gender-based violence in Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Social Development, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Gender in Nigeria report 2012: Improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria, British Council and UKAID, Issues Policies Actions, 2nd Edition, 2012.



International Rescue Committee (IRC), UNFPA, and ActionAid.

Data collection took place in Malkohi Camp from May 2-11, 2016. The assessment team consisted of 4 female and 2 male data collectors who were trained and supervised by three staff from WRC and IOM. Interview tools were revised for cultural appropriateness and phrasing by the IOM Nigeria 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. The WRC analyzed the data on NVivo.

## Findings

### Camp Governance Structure

Camp managers in Malkohi are NEMA, with the support of SEMA, who oversee all activities related to camp life and camp governance, including what assistance is provided in the camp. Although NEMA/SEMA established a formal camp governance structure, most decisions are made by them without consulting this existing structure or the broader camp population. The IDP leadership is comprised of an IDP Chairman and four deputies, as well as a Women's Leader and her assistant, and a Secretary. The leadership structure is also made up of camp committees, including Vigilante (i.e. Security), Elders, Room, Sanitation, and Kitchen Committees, each headed by a committee leader. The Executive Committee consists of 12 individuals, including the camp Chairman and deputies, Women's Leader, Secretary and the committee leaders. In total, among the 12 IDP leaders, 3 are female and 8 are male. Most of the leaders in the camp are either chosen by IDPs by informal processes and with the facilitation of NEMA, or appointed by NEMA based on their traditional leadership roles in their community of origin. Committee members are appointed by the existing leaders with limited consultation of the camp population.

There are no terms of reference or a code of conduct that governs the work of the camp leadership structure. Other than that of the committee leaders, no clear directives drive the work of the camp committees. Leadership terms are indefinite “until he or she leaves the camp.”

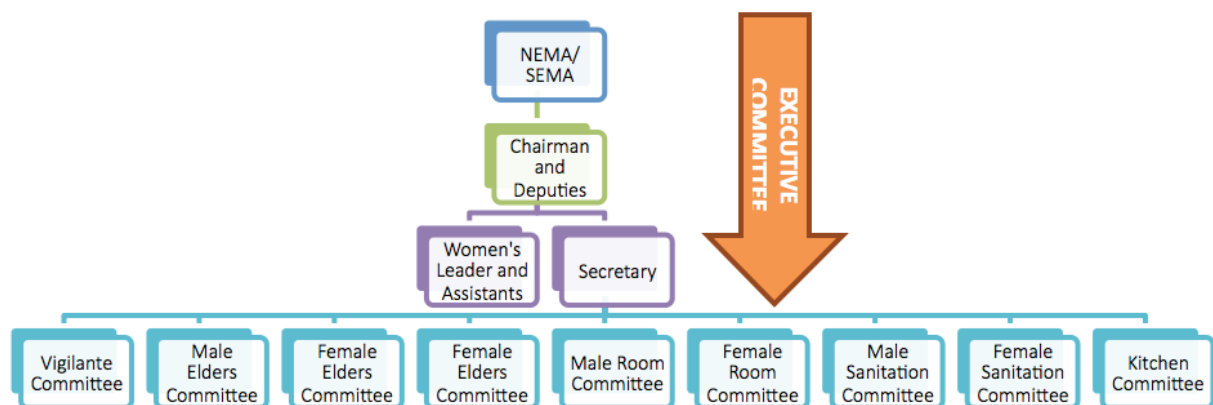


Figure 1 Camp Governance Structure in Malkohi

# Participation and Decision-Making

## Decision-Making Process

In Malkohi Camp, all decisions regarding the camp life are taken by NEMA with the support of SEMA. The perception from IDPs is that they are not in a position to make decisions in the camp life. IDPs have little authority on any decision-making processes in the camp life; at best, knowledge is shared with them through the camp leaders. Moreover, camp leaders' roles, such as those of the Camp Chairman and Women's Leader, are limited to monitoring the situation in the camp and referring concerns to NEMA/SEMA, especially in their absence. While camp leaders participate in Executive Committee meetings where some decisions are discussed, their decision-making power is limited. There are no formal mechanisms in place for leaders to relay the concerns of the IDPs to NEMA/SEMA. Preferential treatments of community members by leaders and NEMA/SEMA were reported in the provision of the assistance or selection for camp activities (i.e. livelihood programs). The study team could not confirm whether the camp leaders represented the views of the whole community members.

## Women's Participation in Camp Life

The study demonstrated that the participation for most women and girls living in Malkohi Camp is focused on the following activities: cooking, cleaning the camp, eating food, sleeping, and selling small goods. One woman with disabilities lamented that all she can do is "just sit to eat." Most of them do not participate in making decisions for the camp because they are not part of the leadership structure and have limited opportunities to share their views in the patriarchy that dominates local culture: "it [participating in making decisions] would be difficult to get men's approval". Therefore, the scope of their participation is limited at the household or individual level, rather than community or camp-level. Women have limited participation in collective action influencing the camp life. While men are seen as more legitimate in voicing their opinions in public and participating in collective action, due to the monopoly of the decision-making by NEMA/SEMA, there is a general feeling of disempowerment of communities where they do not have ownership and initiatives on activities in the camp.

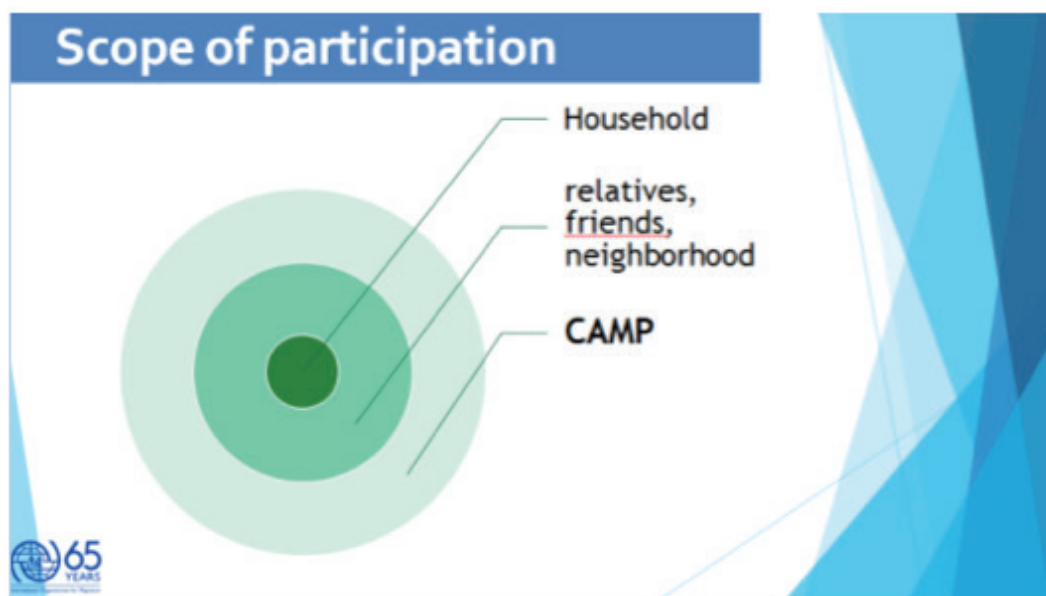


Figure 2 The Ecological Model of Participation



Apart from NEMA/SEMA and the IDP leadership structure, other key actors that influence community participation of women and girls specifically, include the Ministry of Women's Affairs, IOM, UNFPA, and various international NGOs providing camp services. The roles of these actors in camp participation are primarily in serving the needs of the camp population and coordinating and communicating with NEMA, such as problem solving to address special food needs for diabetic persons. Safe spaces offered by UNFPA and NGOs where tailoring and other skills are taught to women were seen as opportunities to discuss camp life and voice concerns. The selection of beneficiaries to participate in these trainings or activities is arbitrary and does not follow specific procedures formalized and disseminated to the camp population. This generates a perception of favoritism and mistrust from the camp population. Some male community members also shared that they feel that they do not benefit from activities compared to women and girls that are targeted by more activities.

## **Barriers to Women's Participation**

### **Limited Existing Mechanisms to Provide Feedback**

There are little mechanisms in place for the community to provide positive or negative feedback on decisions that affect camp life. Very few avenues exist where women and girls can voice their opinions, ideas, and interests. If any feedback is to be provided, they are raised through the committee leaders, the Women's Leader and the Camp Chairman who relay these to NEMA/SEMA. However, the general perception appears that "they [women and girls] don't come forward to seek anything" where even male community members find the leadership structures reluctant to accommodate feedback. There are also views that "most of them [women and girls] are too shy" and even if opinions or suggestions are provided, "no one listens" or "nothing is done about it." Feedback, positive or negative, to NEMA/SEMA are seen as complaints and are at times responded with negative consequences, such as temporary withholding of services. Challenges faced by the study team to hold consultations and discussion with the camp population reinforced this finding. There is a general feeling from the camp managers that allowing IDPs to raise their concerns equals to questioning their capacity to serve the camp population.

### **Movement Restrictions and Security Concerns**

Restrictions on movement outside of the camp also limit women and girls' participation in camp life. NEMA/SEMA requires the camp population to submit requests in order to be allowed to leave the camp temporarily. This procedure applies to all movements outside the camp, including when IDPs are seeking medical services (i.e. clinical management of rape). Requests are examined and approved solely by NEMA/SEMA. In some cases, such as medical treatments outside the camp, IDP leaders will be invited, alongside medical staff and camp managers, to discuss the eligibility of the requests. It was reported by one key informant that NEMA/SEMA restricts movement of women and girls in order to discourage their involvement with men outside the camp. It was also reported that male IDPs tend to abuse alcohol when leaving the camp which create security concerns when they return to the camp. These allegations were not confirmed by other respondents.

Moreover, NGOs and UN agencies shared that many GBV cases have been reported outside of the camp, but not inside. Community members corroborated this and mentioned that the camp was safe inside. It is worth noting that the camp is heavily patrolled in response to a bomb explosion inside Malkohi Camp in September 2015. Whether or not there is reporting of GBV cases inside the camp, there is no initiative that could mitigate the safety risks of different groups, let alone any space for discussion around such issues for women and girls. Furthermore, the study team struggled to gather examples on safety concerns faced by women and girls in the camp, which may be as a result of NEMA/SEMA's scrutiny during the study leading to respondents' apprehension to disclose their safety concerns.

In addition to the security concerns, the restrictions on movement also reduce livelihood opportunities for women which, in their opinion, further limit their capacity to participate in the camp life. The lack of livelihood opportunities indeed fuels dependency among women, except for the few that are engaged in UN or NGO-supported income generation activities. Other livelihood activities in camp, such as petty trading, that are independent of UN or NGO-supported ones, are also limited.

## **Cultural Norms and Power Relationships**

Existing cultural norms and power relationships in the camp are characterized by a patriarchal system where women and girls have little ability to participate in decision-making publicly or privately inside the household. Men described the way women ought to behave: “once the husband counsels on what to say, then women can say it in public.” Moreover, women and girls simply lack knowledge that participating in decision-making is within their prerogatives. They do not necessarily claim that right or complain about their lack of participation. They perceive their scope of participation as fulfilling their duties within their household. Both men and women both admitted that “women are shy,” that they “never spoke in public” and as a result, “do not know how to claim their rights”.

## **Facilitators to Women’s Participation**

### **Unexpected Consequences of Sex-Segregation in Malkohi Camp**

Despite the challenges to family life, some expressed how the gendered living quarters may actually contribute to greater participation of women in the community life. One key informant shared that if they lived in the same household, “they would fall under the representation of their head of household,” but as they are represented by a governing structure, they have to be consulted as women’s groups. For example, dedicated female and male committees have been created for Sanitation, Elders and Room committees to govern related activities and quarters for females.

In addition, although women have little power over any decisions, some may influence some decisions at the household levels through discussing problems, concerns, and needs with their husbands. Women shared that they participate in decisions inside the family by “telling our husbands what we feel”. These opportunities for household discussions and decision-making, however, are challenged, as “separation of families is affecting [their] stay in the camp”.

While gendered living quarters create barriers for women to participate more fully at the household level, as well as cause family separation, they appear to create a natural environment for women to organize at the community level. Although they hold little authority over decisions, three of the IDP women, including the Women’s Leader, hold leadership roles in the camp committees and others are part of the committee membership. Further, stakeholders and the Executive Committee report that gender norms are in fact being broken down; wherein, while the Kitchen Committees mostly involved women, some tasks required hard labor and were more appropriate to bring men in (i.e. digging holes, cutting wood, and stirring communal pots). Men, as a result, are also serving in committees that were traditionally designated to address women’s roles in society, such as in cooking.

## **Opportunities for Skills-Building**

Some 120 women and 20-30 adolescent girls in Malkohi Camp participate in small-scale, skills-building activities, such as knitting, bead-making, and hat making, facilitated by IRC and ActionAid. Women and girls not only learn marketable skills through these activities, they also provide social support to each other in a safe space. For example, the Women’s Leader coordinates the activities conducted in the Women Friendly Space. These activities are also viable ways women and girls participate in camp life. Additionally, adult education (i.e. learning

English) is seen as a positive means of participation to improve future prospects upon return. This thought was shared widely across the camp population, IDP leaders and key stakeholders such as International NGOs, UN agencies and NEMA/SEMA.

## **Suggested Opportunities to Enhance Women's Participation in Camp Governance and Camp Life**

Camp leadership mentioned that if more opportunities existed for women to play additional roles in camp management, more equitable representation may be achieved in the camp. Although only one individual, the Women's Leader takes part in meetings with those that are decision-makers and informally represents women's issues before the camp managers and in liaising with NEMA. One key informant also shared that strengthening support for women in the camp through increasing their roles in existing initiatives, including in formal and informal roles in education and other service provision may foster participation of women in broader camp governance.

## **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.

- Increase their access to existing skills-building initiatives. Supporting women and girls' skills-building will not only provide them with improved livelihoods options, which could reduce their dependency on aid but also increase their social networks and confidence to participate in camp life. Skills building will also improve future prospects for women and girls when they are ready to return to their communities.
- Create adult learning opportunities and train female teachers in children's education. As learning English, raising health awareness, skills in accounting, etc., are seen as beneficial skills in participating in camp governance structure and beyond, such opportunities can encourage more women to participate and engage in roles that strengthen community cohesion and improve camp life. Training female teachers in schools can multiply benefits for girl-students as well as increase recognition for female leadership in the community.
- Provide leadership training to camp management leaders to raise awareness on women's and girls' right to participate. Leadership training among both camp leaders and NEMA staff can increase support for women's participation while reducing the misconceptions that empowering women and the community will threaten their authority. Training may include topics on camp management, principles of respect and rights, good governance, participatory processes on decisions, information dissemination, ethical approaches in governance, communication skills, and gender issues.
- Improve the operational capacity of existing camp committees. Defining the roles and responsibilities of camp committee leaders and members, and establishing standard procedures for decision-making (i.e. voting process) will enable a greater sense of purpose among the leaders and foster trust and accountability among the wider community.
- Establish women's' and girls' committees. Females make up more than half of the camp population and yet, do not have equal representation in camp committees and have limited opportunities to voice their views and concerns. A separate space where women and girls can come together, without reprisals, to identify and express their views and needs regarding camp services will be beneficial. Persons with disabilities



- and other at-risk groups should also be actively recruited to participate.
- Create a space for dialogue with men. Without the support of men, efforts to foster women's participation can result in further mistrust and backlash. Men and boys must be involved and actively engaged in creating a supportive environment for women and girls; a space is needed where men and boys can openly dialogue about their roles in improving the quality of life for all members of the community.

## Conclusion

Women and girls in Malkohi Camp have limited opportunities to participate in decisions that affect the camp life due to multiple reasons, including existing cultural norms that maintain women's low status, lack of channels to voice their opinions and provide feedback, gendered living quarters between men and women, and restrictions on their movement. As for camp governance, structural limitations on how decisions are made in the camp hinder women from taking a more equitable leadership role. The study identified many challenges to women and girls' participation in the camp, but it also determined several opportunities that are entry points for ensuring that different needs, capacities, and expectations of under-represented groups are considered. With increased support for skills-building efforts, adult learning opportunities, and spaces where women and girls can voice their ideas can help build women and girls' agency. Furthermore, leadership training, capacity building of camp committees, and space for men to dialogue can help to increase support for women and girls' increased roles in camp life and camp governance.

## 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 (NEMA/SEMA, key informants, community leaders and members). The team developed an action plan and skeleton of project design for a pilot approach to implement in consultation with communities and NEMA/SEMA.

Based on the study recommendations, the pilot intervention will focus on the following activities:

- Provide skills trainings in different skills such as knitting, weaving, tailoring, etc. to selected beneficiaries based on participatory identification of the relevant skills and selection of beneficiaries; the training will be facilitated by female trainers who specialize in these skills.
- Create a safe space for entrepreneurship/skills acquisition that will be used to foster dialogue among peers and with men and boys on participatory processes.
- Disseminate regular information to communities on the skills-acquisition activities.
- Set up feedback mechanisms to ensure that beneficiaries are able to provide positive and negative feedback on the skills-acquisition activities.
- Conduct two cycles of leadership training for IDPs leaders and camp managers guided by practical discussion with deliverables to enhance leadership. Topics on leadership skills may include camp management, principles of respect and rights, good governance principles, participatory process on decisions and information sharing, ethical approaches, good communication, gender roles, etc.
- Formalize mechanisms and structures of existing committees in the camp, including developing a terms of reference and code of conduct, and developing and documenting roles and responsibilities for community members in existing committees to improve services.
- Provide minimum lighting in areas surrounding women's toilet, living areas and

## Appendix

### Interview tools