GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF RECENT HUMANITARIAN CRISES ON WOMEN, MEN, GIRLS, AND BOYS IN PUNTLAND STATE IN SOMALIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Situated in a complex region of the world, Puntland State in Somalia is coping with existing threats and instabilities, such as droughts, floods, locusts, the movement of internally displaced people (IDPs), and armed actors. The COVID-19 pandemic has added yet another strain on its tremendously fragile infrastructure. The impact of the coronavirus has been far reaching, affecting livelihoods, with employment such as construction halted due to pandemic restrictions, fostering fluctuations around household assets, and hampering unpaid and underpaid care work and responsibilities. With climatic shocks and infestations, Puntland State in Somalia residents are experiencing decimated livelihoods, livestock and land, limited movement, increased violence and limited access to opportunities and support services. The multitude of crises and rates of inflation have left the majority of families food insecure and without income, halted education and health services, and exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and the incidence of violence. Needs far exceed the current available resources and capacity.

However, response efforts are under way, with many organizations and institutions adding to existing programming. Organizations such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have established mechanisms such as village savings and loans associations and unconditional cash transfers to help prepare for and alleviate financial shocks, while the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provides vocational training and training for women’s empowerment, gender-based violence (GBV) services, and women and girls’ safe spaces. The ASAL¹ organization works on advocacy and lobbying efforts, socio-economic support and building awareness campaigns. KAALO Aid and Development, a local organization involved in humanitarian and development action in the area, has been working with female-headed households, through cash and in-kind support, on continued awareness of GBV prevention and response and recognizing the importance of engaging boys and men, and religious and cultural leaders as a transformative approach in reaching inclusive and gender-sensitive humanitarian programming. From the government side, the Puntland State in Somalia Humanitarian and Disaster Management Agency (HADMA) provides support to the disaster and crisis humanitarian response.

To better help local government bodies, agencies, NGOs and INGOs grasp the differentiated impact on women, men, boys and girls, and host and IDP communities during this time of intense loss and instability, this gender analysis was conducted and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) in partnership with Oxfam in Somalia and KAALO. The analysis provides an overview of the intricacies of the communities, with recommendations for addressing immediate concerns and future programming. It was conducted across 11 villages (in three districts – Bosaso, Gardo and Garowe), through 34 focus group discussions (FGDs) with women, men, boys, and girls; 18 key informant interviews (KIIs) from the community (of which seven were with women); and nine KIIs with organizations and municipal government officials (of which two were with women).
RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a non-exhaustive list of recommendations based on the findings from the focus group discussions, survey, and key informant interviews. These include observations from government and NGO interviewees of potential areas of enhancement in Puntland’s responses to the current crises.

Recommendations for duty bearers

• Ensure gender-sensitive programming across all sectors and engage with local communities, especially women and girls, for the consultation and creation of projects before they are implemented; use the findings of this analysis to make changes and improve current projects.

• Following direct requests from community members, consider the implementation of educational centres and sensitization on education for girls, but also specific youth projects aimed at boys.

• In line with respondents’ most-requested items, ensure distributions of blankets, firewood, and clothing (for both men and women).

• Ensure gender-balanced teams with the ability to listen to women and men, and girls and boys.

Specific recommendations for Oxfam sectors

Gender

• Build on existing women’s groups in all locations, with training and financial support as well as with awareness raising in the community on the benefits of the women’s groups and the importance of investing in girls’ education. In IDP settings, work to sensitize communities on women’s participation in community decision making and support women to do so.

• On female leadership within mixed community leadership, build on the existing women leaders – such as peace promoters, women doing awareness raising and women fundraising for causes such as a mutual aid fund to help others in the community.

• Provide specific support for women leaders, together with male role models that support women leaders to challenge gender stereotypes at the community level.

• Ensure mixed community meetings are facilitated by both male and female staff.

• Engage community boys and men, as well as religious and cultural leaders, in a transformative male engagement approach.

• Start projects that focus on alleviating the burden of household care workloads, and on gender norm changes at both household and community levels to ensure a gender-equal split of household responsibilities and decision-making responsibilities.

• Ensure delivery of basic gender training for government, local partners, and community leadership.

• Consider learning sessions and reflections with field teams, community leadership, and community groups (men and women separately) on topics such as women’s participation and overcoming barriers to it.
Access to information and community engagement

- Ensure radio distribution across the locations as this is the preferred means of information sharing.
- Continue conducting community consultations with men and women separately to identify their preferred channels of information and consultation.
- Target specific vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women, people with chronic illness, and elderly people though more analysis as to their exact needs and preferred ways to access information and community engagement.
- Engage with women and girls continuously throughout projects and continue planning through engagement with women, men, boys, and girls and their suggestions to improve programming.

Safe programming and safeguarding

- Given the vulnerability of women and girls highlighted in this report, all Oxfam safeguarding and safe programming steps must be taken before any intervention to ensure that all programme beneficiaries have equitable and safe access to the projects.
- Conduct thorough risk analysis and continuously monitor data to identify any potentially harmful impact and adapt the response accordingly.
- Work with protection teams and safeguarding focal points to establish confidential referral information within the project teams and within the communities.
- Ensure that only female staff work with women’s groups, and male staff with men groups.

WASH

- Urgent WASH measures should be taken to provide an immediate solution to the inability to use the toilet at night (consider pots or other hygienic solutions instead of the existing plastic bottle solution), as well as measures to ensure clean water.
- Construct and install sufficient safe and sex-disaggregated WASH facilities and consult women and girls on water point, latrine, and bathing locations to ensure safety and privacy. At a minimum, ensure locks and lighting (either by distributing lanterns or by providing lighting around the entire area, not just the toilets).
- Ensure sufficient and regular soap distribution across communities.
- Ensure gender-sensitive dignity kits and hygiene items are provided in all project locations and, following more in-depth consultation with women and girls on menstrual hygiene management, ensure they are provided in sufficient quantity and regularly. If they are reusable, ensure access to soap and safe water for hygiene maintenance.
- Consult women and girls, and men and boys, on ways to reduce and redistribute the care work of women and girls around WASH.
- Conduct sensitization sessions by women staff for women and girls on menstrual hygiene management beliefs, and the cleaning and disposal of menstrual items.

EFSVL

- To meet the huge need, consider cash assistance across locations if possible and conduct a risk analysis to consider all possible risks to such distributions (safety around where to keep the money, safety for female heads of households, increased risks of IPV, etc.).
- Ensure programmes tackle women’s care load versus decision making around EFSVL, so that care work is reduced and redistributed among spouses and decision making is shared. The few role-
sharing examples should be used as positive models across communities and sensitization around this included in any EFSVL project.

- Consider educational and vocational skills training and formal education for young men and women, with a specific youth programme.
- Consider the creation of women’s savings groups, but with similar support to men and with sensitization around role change at the household level to minimize IPV.
- Build on current women’s groups and provide capacity building and training on empowerment.
- Consider further business and financial literacy programmes.

Protection and GBV

- Respond promptly to any protection risk or violation of the rights of women and children by establishing efficient referral systems with locally available service providers and facilitate inter/intra-organizational referral of cases.
- Establish positive and constructive relations with local communities, IDPs, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the protection of vulnerable groups.
- Coordinate with CARE and IRC around the case management of GBV survivors.
- Assist GBV survivors with psychosocial first aid services.
- Contribute to the organization and implementation of awareness campaigns on GBV.
- Assist in the training of communities, partners, and other stakeholders to further capacitate and strengthen their understanding of international protection principles and practice.
- Conduct a quarterly protection, gender, and accountability joint monitoring mission to the areas where the humanitarian programme is running WASH and EFSVL projects.
- In coordination with protection actors, find solutions and community protection methods to the risks from drug use, youth conflicts, and theft.
- Provide support with GBV sensitization, specifically around IPV and early marriage sensitization.
- Community-based protection programming is needed across locations.
- Community cohesion programmes are needed to reduce tensions around armed groups and tribal conflicts in the IDP settlements.
- Address the most common forms of violence experienced by adolescent girls at the inter-personal, family, and community levels, engaging the support of parents and caregivers and establishing community accountability for the safety of girls.
- Engage on information sharing and creating support networks for families and communities around early and/or forced marriage, including the practice of Qudbo Siro.
- Provide economic support initiatives or incentives to families to help alleviate financial strains that may lead to child labour or early marriage.
- Prepare all project teams with referral information for instances when feedback included references to GBV or other protection-related concerns that required a specialized response.
Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

- Ensure gender-sensitive and anonymous feedback and complaint mechanisms are available, so that women and men feel confident when filing their complaints or feedback.
- Establish gender-specific platforms for in-person feedback, allowing male and female beneficiaries to feel comfortable discussing sensitive information in the assessments, and in implementation conducting separate and age-appropriate FGDs for collecting feedback and recommendations.

NOTES

1. Action In Semi-Arid Lands (asalsom.org)
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Research reports

This research report was written to share research results, to contribute to public debate and to invite feedback on development and humanitarian policy and practice. It does not necessarily reflect the policy positions of the publishing organizations. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the publishers.

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KAALO

KAALO Aid and Development (KAALO) was established in March 1991 just after the collapse of Somali central government. It is one of the most successful and consistent community based, non-profit, humanitarian and development NGOs in Somalia. KAALO operates in the Puntland Regions, and Somalia at large and is involved in relief aid, rehabilitation, and development programs in various sectors. http://www.kaalo.org/.